PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, INC GAZETTE

Member of APCUG
An International Association of Technology & Computer User Groups

October 2023

This Month's General Meeting
Tuesday, October 10, 2023
will start at 3:00 P.M. @
FFG Christ Lutheran Church

October 19th Presentation @ 3:00 P.M.

This month's program will again be given by our President George Sengstock.

First will be a short APCUG Video followed by prior submitted questions by guests on:
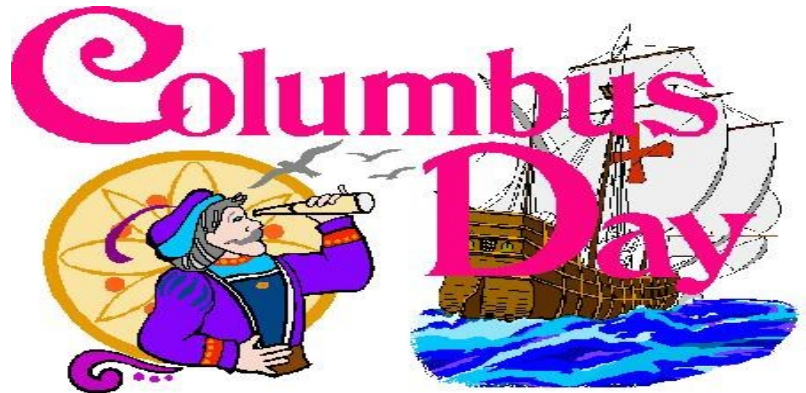
Printer problems.

Backup basics and reinstalling on your computer.

Finding and deleting programs.

These questions will be answered in depth.

There will be an open general round table session for resolving computer problems, so put on your thinking caps and enjoy todays program.

Columbus Day

Monday October 9, 2023

Inside This Issue

Problem Solution

Please Note: All Meetings will now be on the second Tuesday of each month. Starting at 3:00 P.M.
Location: Christ Lutheran Church
481 Snead Drive, Fairfield Glade TN

Join the Club!

Anyone interested to attend the general meeting or any of the SIG meetings as a guest will be charged $3.00 per person for any or all meetings in that month. Afterwards, you are encouraged to become a member of the Plateau PC Users Group. Our Club cannot exist without you, the members.

Membership Dues

Our annual dues are now payable July 1st. of each year. Annual dues are $24 per single person / $30 per family. Persons/families joining during the fiscal year have dues payable as follows:

Join In	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - June
Single	$24	$18	$12	$6
Family	$30	$22	$15	$7

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DISCLAIMER

All members of the Plateau PC Users Group are willing to help one another in the area of advice and tutorial instruction over the phone. If you should require more involved services or instruction, we have a few members who are very knowledgeable in several areas. As a responsible
consumer, it is up to you to discuss, before retaining a member, any and ALL charges for repair services and time consuming tutorial activities.

It is not the desire of this Board of Directors to set fees for individuals for services rendered, nor the responsibility to intervene between members who enter into a contract among themselves.

The GAZETTE is published using the following: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher, and Microsoft Windows. The Gazette is the monthly newsletter of the Plateau PC Users Group, Inc.

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All images used in the newsletter, website, blogs, class materials or handouts ("media") are obtained from a "free use" source, preferably images that have been released as "CCO Public Domain".

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Cool Tips

A Common Computer Problem and How to Fix It

By Mark Presky, Director, Los Angeles Computer Society
User Friendly, January 2022 issue
https://www.lacspc.org/
leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net

Over the years, computer hard drives have gotten larger and larger. But programs and the other files we load onto our computers have also gotten larger and more numerous. Eventually, this often becomes a problem when one's computer starts running slower or informs you that it just cannot hold anymore.

One way to deal with this problem is to free up space on the hard drive or SSD (solid-state drive). Use the built-in Disk Cleanup tool in Windows 10. Click on the Start menu. Choose All Programs—select Accessories, then System Tools. Click on Disk Cleanup. Under the Files to delete heading, choose which file types you want to remove. If you're unsure which file types to get rid of, select each one in turn and read its description. When you've selected the file types to delete, click OK.

Another method to free up space is to manually go through your files and delete the many of them that you don't need or want. Image (photos), audio (music), and video (audio and image) files can take up vast amounts of file space. How many photos of little Tommy or Grandma from your last birthday celebration do you need? I'll bet you have many duplicates of virtually every shot. Delete the copies, at the least. Have music files on your computer that you never listen to? Again, delete 'em. Now repeat this process with your vacation photos. Lots of old photos of your ex? Remember that song from the movie "South Pacific?" Wash those files right out of your computer.

Another trick here is to reduce the file size of those photos. Most cameras produced in the last several years take photos over two megabytes (MB) in size. Unless you plan to print those large file-size photos, you might think about reducing each image to between 200 and 400 kilobytes (KB). The reduced file size photos won't look any different when you view them on your computer. One can even reduce the photo file sizes en masse. If taken on your iPhone, the phone will ask you what size you want the file to be when you send them, via email, to your computer. I use IrfanView, but several other programs do this.

Going through those extra, unneeded files can be laborious and time-consuming, but that might beat having to buy another computer, having a larger hard drive installed and having all the files transferred, or having your computer crash

Who's Watching You?

By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, CKCS Newsletter
October 2022 Issue
https://ckcs.org/
lextown2 (at) gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you missed Tech Night, check out A Beginner's Guide to Understanding VPNs.

If you're ready to choose a VPN, see what Top10VPN considers its best VPN services.
Tom's Guide lists its top choices in the best VPNs.

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

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

What To Look For In a VPN

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

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

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

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

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

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

"One quarter of all Internet users have accessed a VPN in the last month," wrote Rob Mardisalu on the thebestvpn.com website in January 2020.

Here's a breakdown by device:
Desktop: 17% (had used a VPN in the last month as of Jan. 2020.) Mobile: 15%

Tablet: 7% For some, using a VPN was as common as washing their hands. bestvpn.com reports in early 2020, 35% of desktop computer users and 42% of mobile users (phones, laptops, iPads) had used a VPN every day.

VPN Users by Age (source: thebestvpn.com)
55-64 years old: 4%
45-54: 9%
35-44: 19%
25-34: 33%
16-24: 35%

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

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

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

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

How–To–Geek   Tricky Enough   Forbes Advisor

"That's not how you put 'do not disturb' on your phone."

Where to Get E-Books

By Tom Burt, Vice President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
https://www.scscc.club
tomburt89134 (at) cox.net

A perennial challenge is to find suitable gifts for friends and family. Books have always been a popular choice. Now, with the maturing of the electronic book (e-book) format and industry, it should be easier than ever to find just the right title, purchase it and email a link for your giftee to use to access and read the book. Of course, things aren't so simple in practice, so you may want to read on.

This article is based on a seminar I gave in December 2020 titled "E-Books and E-Readers." My seminar slides are at: https://www.scscc.club/smnr/E-Books_and_E-Readers_Seminar.pdf .

E-book formats

There are two main formats: Amazon Kindle and E-Pub. There are hardware and software readers for each. Both formats support digital rights management (copy protection) so that the purchaser of a book can't share it with more than a few others. Amazon mainly uses the Kindle format. E-Pub is used by Barnes and Noble and Kobo and for many self-published books. Adobe PDF and HTML are also often used for e-books. Apple's iBook format is a variation of E-Pub.

When buying an e-book, it's important to know what format it is in so you can be sure your reader device or program can read the book. A common problem for owners of Amazon's Kindle or Fire tablets is that they do not support the E-Pub format. The Amazon app store does not offer an E-Pub reader app. It's possible to "jailbreak" a Kindle or Fire tablet so that it can install Android apps from the Google play store, including Adobe's Digital Editions E-Pub reader. But that's a topic for another day.

E-Book Websites

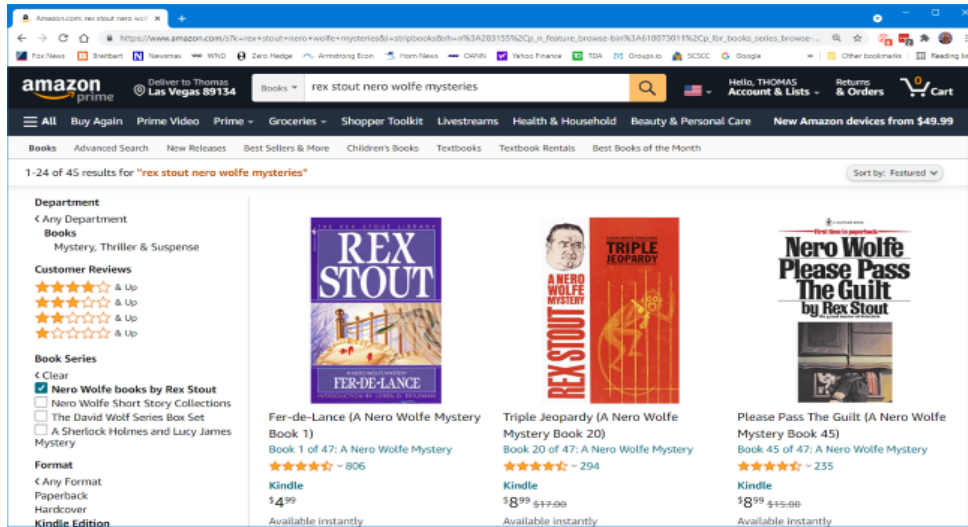Here's a list of e-book websites with links to each:

- **Amazon Kindle Store www.amazon.com**

- **Barnes & Noble http://www.barnesandnoble.com**

- **Google Play Store Books https://play.google.com/store/books**

- **Kobo www.kobo.com**

- **Las Vegas / Clark County Library (via OverDrive) http://lvccld.org**

- **Open Library https://openlibrary.org/**

- **Project Gutenberg (60,000 free ebooks) https://www.gutenberg.org/**

Let's look at a few of them in more depth.

Amazon Kindle

The Amazon bookstore is vast. You can buy books in hardcover, paperback, audio, and e-book format. As with all Amazon shopping, the search is very smart, and you can set filters to narrow choices. In addition, you can click on items in the search results to view details and, from there, add them to your shopping cart.

If buying for yourself, E-books are delivered (downloaded) to the reading device you specify. You can also specify you are buying for someone else and enter the giftee's information so they can receive the book.

You need an Amazon Kindle or Fire Reader tablet or Amazon's free Kindle Reader app to read Kindle books. There are versions for Windows, macOS, Linux, Android, and iOS.

If you subscribe to Amazon Prime, you have access to an extensive collection of e-books at no charge via the Prime Reading service. In addition, you can have free access to up to ten e-books for as long as you wish. Then, return or buy one of the ten you have when you want another.

The Amazon Fire HD 10 tablet with 32 GB of storage lists for $100.

Barnes and Noble

Barnes and Noble sells books in "Nook book" (E-Pub) format and paperback and hardcover. B&N also sells a family of Nook reader tablets and has a free reader app. In addition, you can set up an account on B&N and enjoy special pricing, free e-books, and other perks.
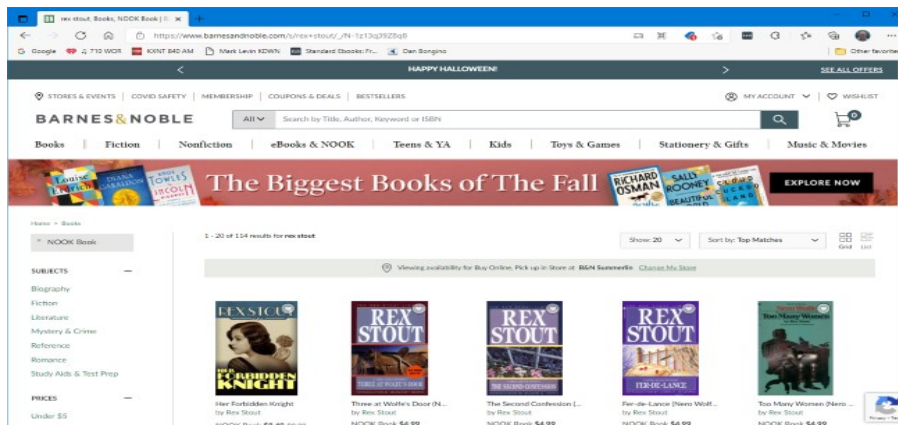
See the screenshot below to get a sense of their online store. The search window is very smart.

The Nook book reader is a 10-inch Android tablet (made by Lenovo) with 32 GB of storage, listing at $130. It has full access to the Google Play Store apps.
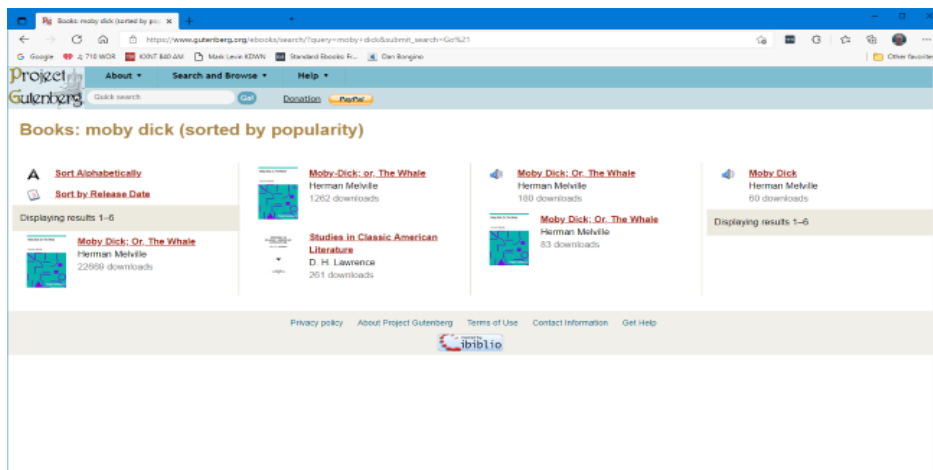
This would include the free Amazon Kindle Reader app for Android. So, a Nook reader tablet could double as a Kindle Reader, allowing you to shop for books in either Nook or Kindle format.

Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg was founded by Michael Hart, who invented e-books in 1971. Its website claims to have 60,000 titles in its library. All these titles are completely free. Most are "classics" that are out of copyright. For example, I searched for Albert Einstein and found an English translation of his Special and General Relativity expositions.

I tried downloading a copy of Herman Melville's "Moby Dick" in Kindle format and read it using the free Calibre book reader app on my PC. But unfortunately, the Amazon Kindle Reader app wasn't able to open the book.
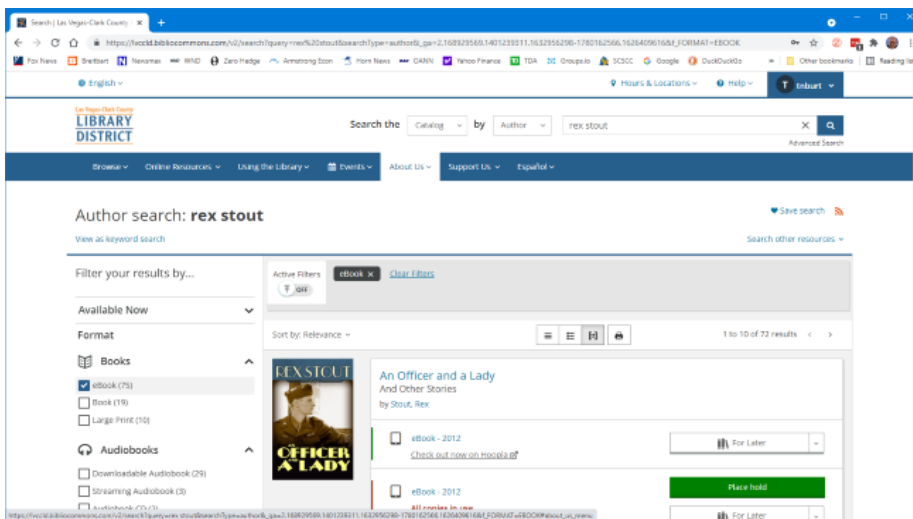
Las Vegas Clark County Public Library

The Las Vegas Clark County Library District website offers a rich collection of e-books and other e-media that you can borrow for up to 21 days. The only requirement is a library card number and an associated PIN.

For APCUG readers, your public library very likely offers comparable services.

To check out a book, use the search by author, subject, or title to find the desired e-book, click the "Check Out" button, select your format (Kindle, E-Pub, OverDrive Read) and then click the Download button. For Kindle format, you get redirected to the Amazon bookstore to download the selected e-book. Amazon handles it as a sale for $0.00 that grants you 21-day reading privileges for that book. After 21 days, the book is automatically "returned," and you can no longer read it.

You get an alert email after 18 days that your "loan" is about to expire. You can also return books early.

It's polite to do that, as others are often waiting to borrow the book. The library has to pay for each lending license, so they often only license a few copies.

Hopefully, that helps you know more about e-books and how to get them. I love them because of the convenience and the ease of reading. And they take up zero space in the house.

"I did you a huge favor. I shredded the paper you had all your passwords written on. Now no one can steal them."

The Other Side of the Bitcoin

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
https://www.scscc.club
Dkretch (at) gmail.com

In the April 2021 edition of the Gigabyte Gazette, I contributed an article titled "Bitcoin - the New Gold?". I stated that "Gold and Bitcoin, as different as they are, both have characteristics of good investment vehicles and sound money."

In the April article, I emphasized the positive aspects of Bitcoin (along with other cryptocurrencies). I concluded by stating, "Bitcoin is becoming a valued currency not by force of government declaration or people's acquiescence, but by recognition and popular acceptance."

Yet any investment with tremendous past profits and massive future potential also necessarily has tremendous *downside* potential. In this article, I will discuss what I think could be the downfall of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies.

Scarcity?

Under current protocols, the maximum number of Bitcoins that can ever be mined is 21 million. There are approximately 18.8 million bitcoins in circulation today. It is estimated the last bitcoin will be mined in 2040.

Many cryptocurrencies have a finite limit, and the speed at which they will be increased is largely unknown and not controlled by any authority. But the scarcity element exists only within some specific cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin, Cardano (45 billion limit, 32 billion in circulation), and Litecoin (84 billion limit, 24 billion in circulation).

Other cryptocurrencies, such as Ethereum and Dogecoin, have no limit. There are well over 1,000 cryptocurrencies in existence, with new ones being created seemingly weekly. The potential supply of cryptocurrencies is infinite, limited only by the human imagination and the willingness of individuals to fork over their cash. Cryptocurrencies are far from scarce.

Loss of Key

The key is the secret code required to access a cryptocurrency wallet. The loss of this code means the loss of all assets stored in the wallet. If the PC hard drive or flash drive fails or is accidentally discarded, this can happen. According to estimates, this is common; it has happened with up to 25% of crypto-wallet owners who have lost over 18 billion dollars' worth of digital currencies. Unfortunately, it is impossible to restore the code and recover the currency if lost.

Technical issues

Technical problems on the servers where cryptocurrency wallets are stored happen with disturbing frequency. Investors who have suffered losses cannot claim a refund regardless of whose fault it is. Usually, the problems are caused by hackers and occasionally by bugs in software or hardware, but no matter – when the money disappears, it is gone.

Government Intervention

Some governments seem willing to accept or at least accommodate cryptocurrencies, such as the US and Canada. However, other nations, such as Russia and China, have denounced or outlawed cryptocurrencies within their borders. In late September, the Chinese government expanded its ban on Chinese financial institutions providing crypto-related services. In addition, it restated its goal of forcing miners out of business. This announcement knocked 10% or more off of the values of many cryptocurrencies on 9/24/21 before a small recovery.

Governments lose the ability to use fiscal policies to control their economies when they allow the widespread adoption of digital currency. In addition, if cryptocurrencies were widely adopted, nations would lose the purpose and power of their national banking systems.

There are fears of rising cybercrime and other crime rates due to the increased ability to transfer value through untraceable financial transactions. In addition, some claim the rise of crypto-based payments could increase the ability of people to engage in illegal activities without leaving a trail, another reason many governments opposed the adoption of cryptocurrencies. However, I believe these fears are overstated since law enforcement has been able to trace and recover some cyber ransom proceeds, which would probably be impossible with cash.

Speculation Gone Wild?

On a Sunday afternoon in early September, my wife and I almost accidentally wandered into a "cryptocurrency seminar" held in a small meeting room at DV here in Sun City. We soon discovered that we were in a multi-level marketing rally, including testimonies of several people stating they had made hundreds and thousands of dollars in seconds or minutes by using the system the presenters were promoting. Loud claps and cheers followed each testimony. They named several cryptocurrencies; most were unknown to me.

One MLM rally provides anecdotal evidence of probably nothing. However, I have to wonder how many other like-minded individuals worldwide have embraced the suspension of logic and critical thinking required to be swept up by the allure of quick profits in cryptocurrencies.

Conclusions

Many of us can remember the "dot com" boom at the end of the last century. Any company claiming to have an idea relating to providing anything through the then-new internet could issue stock and reach a substantial valuation. Many new companies had no earnings or revenues, yet they doubled in price the day they started trading. Investors knew these stocks had no intrinsic value, but no matter if they could sell them at a higher price than they paid. That sounds very much like most cryptocurrencies today.

When the crash came in 2000, even the few good internet companies such as Amazon and Priceline (Booking.com) saw the destruction of a substantial majority of their market value. This persisted for many years until they eventually recovered and went higher. Unfortunately, most of the dot com companies whose value soared astronomically came crashing back to earth, becoming worthless losing investors billions of dollars
.

The current cryptocurrency craze exhibits many similarities to the dot com boom and echoes many speculative bubbles of the past. For example, the Dutch "tulip mania" in the 17th century is considered

the first recorded speculative asset bubble. Prices for some rare tulip bulbs reached amazingly high levels, $750,000 in today's money, then dramatically collapsed to virtually nothing.

A $50k cryptocurrency investment has the potential to become a half-million dollars or more or to become worthless; you won't even be left with a beautiful flower. And remember, there exists no centralized exchange like there was with stocks and even for tulip bulbs. So, it could be very ugly. History never repeats, but it certainly rhymes.
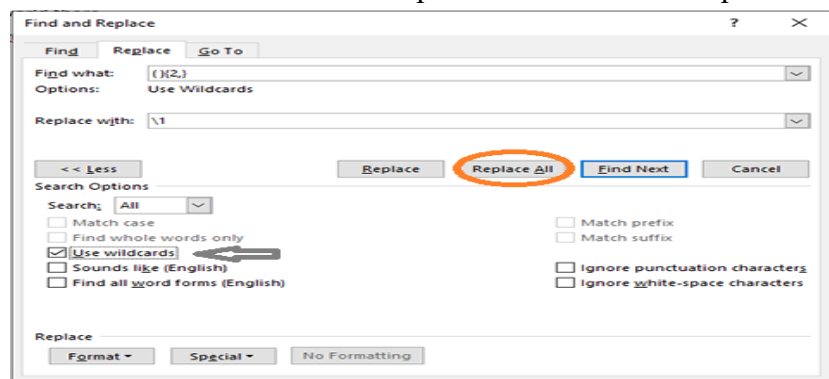
How to remove extra spaces from Microsoft Word document

Ashutosh Kushwaha No comments

While creating a document, we all make mistakes which we correct either immediately or during the proofreading. A common mistake most of the people make is adding two spaces between two words and later on, they struggle to correct it.

I would tell you about the **easiest and fastest way to remove extra spaces from any Word document**. But this method works only with Microsoft Word desktop application, not with Google docs or Word online. Let's see what are the steps to remove the extra spaces from any Word document:

How to remove extra spaces from Microsoft Word:

1. Open your Word document and click on "Replace" which is at the rightmost of the Home tab.
2. Now click on "More" in the Find and Replace dialog box and check mark "Use Wildcards".
3. In the "Find What" section, type **( ){2,}** and in the "Replace with" section, type **\1**
4. Now click on "Replace All".
5. That's it, all the extra spaces from the documents would be removed.

Plateau PC Users Group, Inc.

Application for Membership for 2023/24

------- New Member   ------ Renewing Member

Return this application with a check for annual dues payable to "PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP"
Return to the club Treasurer during our meeting or mail to:
"PPCUG Treasurer. 215 Highland Sq. PMB 11, Crossville TN 38555"

Our annual dues are now payable July 1st. of each fiscal year.

Persons// families joining during the fiscal year have dues payable as follows:

Join In	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - June
Single	**$24**	$18	$12	$6
Family	**$30**	$22	$15	$7

Date: _____   Amount Paid: $ _____ by Cash _____ , or Check (# _____)

------------------------   ------------------------   --
Last Name   *First Name*   *Family Member (if family membership)*

Address:

-------------------------------------   --------   ---------------   (_____) _____
City   *State*   *Zip Code*   *Phone Number*

E-Mail address: ---
                          Please Print

I have belonged to a Computer Club before: Yes _____   No _____

I have used PC's since (year): _____

I have knowledge in the following areas that I would be willing to share with club members:

_____

_____

_____

November 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 **10:00 A.M. PPCUG Board Meeting**	**2**	**3**	**4**
5	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**
12	**13**	**14** **3:00 P.M. General Mtg. Presentation. Followed by Q&A Session**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**
19	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**
26	**27**	**28**	**29**	**30**		