



# *The Cursor*

*Monthly Newsletter of the  
Washington Area Computer User Group*



Meeting Location  
OLLI, 4210 Roberts Road,  
Fairfax, VA



Next Meeting:  
September 18, 2010



## Presidential Bits

by Geof Goodrum, President WACUG, [president@wacug.org](mailto:president@wacug.org)

At the August meeting, Chuck Roberts gave us a course in Genealogy 101, with an emphasis on organizing information. Although Chuck noted some useful web sites and software in his briefing slides, most of his advice came down to a system for maintaining old-fashioned file folders for forms and photocopies and a computer database to keep track of it all. An interesting note: Chuck now uses Microsoft Windows 7, but years ago invested in a database of Census records on CD designed for use with Windows 98 and earlier. Although the vendor now offers a subscription for web access to their Census database, they no longer support the software with the CDs and it does not run under Windows 7 -64 Bit. However, Chuck discovered that he could still run the software using the XP emulation in the Windows 7 Virtual PC feature. Chuck's briefing slides and handouts were available to attendees who brought a flash drive with them, but will also be available on WAC's recent meetings web page at <http://www.wacug.org/recmtgs.html>.

At the Learn 30 tutorial session, Paul Howard finally had a chance to demonstrate the Roboform form manager (<http://www.roboform.com/>) to generate passwords, fill in online forms, and organize information. Paul also demonstrated how he uses Roboform to create and manage "proxy" identities for web sites that he does not want to share his personal information with. The advantage of Roboform over some of the free password managers is that it remembers and automatically fills in more than just user IDs and passwords, but a wide variety of information commonly encountered on web forms such as addresses and phone numbers.

Our APCUG representative Gabe Goldberg provided information on the Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG, <http://www.facug.org/>) sponsored Technology Conference Cruises, which merge the user group meeting and cruise experience over several days. Gabe said he had a great time on a recent cruise. The next FACUG Technology Conference Cruise to Mexico is scheduled for 27 to 31 January 2011, with early bird discounts until 27 October 2010. More information and registration is available

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# Lloyd's Web Sites for September, 2010

by Lloyd Johnson, WACUG Member

<http://www.wacug.org/> is the URL for the Washington Area Computer User Group. Visit it for past issues of Web Sites with hyperlinks.

1. Volunteer techies give free advice on computer problems – <http://www.fixya.com/>
2. Owner's manuals are often missing when you buy bargain electronic devices or appliances. Many are free at Retrovo – <http://www.retrovo.com/> or <http://www.manualsonline.com/> or <http://www.usersmanualguide.com/>
3. 3. Ways to get rid of bugs, moles, leaf fungi, etc – <http://www.garden.org/pestlibrary/>
4. Set up a free account at Rminder and the service will call you to remind about appointments and events. Free for 8 reminders a month; If more there is a charge – <http://www.rminder.com/>
5. Contact elected officials. Enter your zip code Include last 4 digits to find out where to write or telephone – <http://www.congress.org/>
6. Listverse: Ultimate Top 10 Lists A website dedicated to top 10 lists of trivia from a variety of categories – <http://listverse.com/>
7. Stay Healthy. FitDay isn't the only site that assists with nutrition and weight control, but its easy to use layout lift it above the rest – <http://www.fitday.com/>
8. 10 present and next generation ROBOTS and what they do – <http://www.kiplinger.com/links/robots>
9. Snopes.com: Urban Legends Reference Pages Internet reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and misinformation – <http://www.snopes.com/>
10. Hands-only CPR Enough to Save a Life. More bystanders are willing to attempt CPR if an emergency dispatcher gives them firm and direct instructions. The two new studies conclude that 'hands-only' chest compression is enough to save a life. They are the largest and most rigorous yet to suggest that breathing into a victim's mouth isn't needed in most cases – <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38455047>
11. Newsweek: The World's Best Countries. This site takes a lot of work, but very interesting – <http://www.newsweek.com/photo/2010/08/15/best-countries-in-the-world.html>



## NCTCUG

Visit our "sister" user group. The National Capital Technology and Computer User's Group meets the first and fourth Wednesday of the month. They meet in Carlin Hall in Arlington at 5711 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Visit their web site for more information, a map and directions:

<http://www.nctcug.org/>

Meetings start at 7:00 PM

**Washington Area User  
Group Partners  
Working Together For  
Our Members**

**NCTCUG**

**WACUG**

**OPCUG**

## Taking Command: Calendars Made Easy

There are a lot of little gems available from the GNU/Linux command line. One of my favorites is `cal`, a nifty command to print simple text calendars. For example, simply typing `cal` at the command prompt (either in a console or terminal window) generates a calendar for the current month with the current day highlighted in reverse color, like so:

September 2010						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Using the simple redirect operator (`>`), the output can be sent to a file (e.g. `cal > this-month.txt`). Of course, the screen output can also be cut & pasted into documents (like the example above).

Even better, `cal` can create neatly formatted calendars for an entire year (e.g. `cal 2011`) or any specified month (e.g. `cal 15 8 2005` to highlight the 15th in a calendar for August 2005). There are several options, such as `cal -3` to output the previous, current, and next months, and `cal -j` to output calendars with day of year (erroneously referred to as Julian day) instead of day of month. Type `man cal` for the complete manual page about `cal`.

## GNU/Linux Distribution Releases

GNU/Linux distributions are bundled collections of software including a set of applications and an operating system built on the Linux kernel. Some distributions include general applications such as office suites, music players, and web browsers, while others may have specific purposes such as computer system recovery, network firewall, media center, or gaming. Individuals, community projects, or businesses create distributions. While some distributions are commercial and include fee-based technical support, other distributions are freely downloadable or can be ordered on CDs or DVD at low cost.

WAC can provide CD-R and DVD±R media for any downloadable GNU/Linux operating system distribution (e.g. Fedora, Mandriva, Ubuntu, Debian, Knoppix). Please note that downloadable distributions do not include official technical support nor printed documentation. Single CD-R discs are available with a \$3 donation; GNU/Linux distributions on multiple CD-Rs or single DVD±R are available with a \$6 donation. Discs are available only by pre-order. Contact Geof Goodrum by e-mail ([linux@wacug.org](mailto:linux@wacug.org)) at least 48 hours before meeting day to order or for more information.

DistroWatch.com lists the following distribution release announcements for the period August 5, 2010 – September 1, 2010.

### Distribution

[Alpine Linux 2.0.0](#)  
[ArtistX 0.9](#)  
[BackTrack 4 R1](#)  
[BlankOn 6.0 "Sajadah"](#)  
[Chakra GNU/Linux 0.2.0](#)  
[eBox Platform 1.5-1](#)  
[Frugalware Linux 1.3](#)  
[Greenie Linux 7.1L](#)  
[Linux Mint 9 "Xfce"](#)  
[Lunar Linux 1.6.5](#)  
[NetSecL 3.0](#)



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[Ojuba 4](#)

[Parted Magic 5.3](#)

[Peppermint OS One-08042010](#)

[Puppy Linux 5.1](#)

[Salix OS 13.1.1](#)

[Trinity Rescue Kit 3.4](#)

[Ubuntu 10.04.1](#)

[Untangle Gateway 7.4](#)

[VectorLinux 6.0 "SOHO"](#)

[Vyatta 6.1](#)

[Zentyal 2.0](#)

[Zenwalk Linux 6.4 "Live"](#)

## Linux Software of the Month

The software described below is downloadable at the links provided or copied onto a USB flash drive at the WAC meeting.

### September 2010

**FlightGear** – v2.0.0. <http://www.flightgear.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code by the FlightGear community and executable package for Slackware GNU/Linux. The FlightGear is a sophisticated flight simulator with a graphical user interface realistic enough for real-life pilot training, and mathematical flight models accurate enough for serious scientific research. FlightGear's free and open license also makes it great for educational exploration, or just for fun. FlightGear aircraft types include gliders, historic warbirds, commercial jets, experimental, lighter than air, fixed wing, and rotary wing. Tools are also available to edit existing aircraft models and create new models. Scenery modules with accurate land elevation are available via download covering the entire world (also available for purchase on three DVDs), with over 20,000 airports included along with navigational aids. Many cities feature 3D buildings and landmarks. Scenery can also be edited with freely available tools. Requires hardware accelerated 3D video card that supports OpenGL 2.0, 128 to 256 MB video memory, 512 MB to 1 GB free memory, and a 1 to 2 GHz processor. Compiling from source requires additional libraries (e.g. SimGear, pplib, OpenSceneGraph).

**Goggles Music Manager** – v0.11.1. <http://code.google.com/p/gogglesmm/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executable package for Debian, Ubuntu, Mandriva and openSuSE. Goggles Music Manager is a music collection manager and player that automatically

categorizes Ogg Vorbis, FLAC, MP3, MP4, ASF, and Musepack files based on genre, artist, album, and song. It supports gapless playback, features easy tag editing, and allows scrobbling tracks to last.fm.

**OpenOffice.org** – v3.2.1. <http://www.openoffice.org/>. Free GNU Lesser General Public License source code and executable packages for Fedora, Mandriva, open-SuSE, Debian, and Ubuntu Linux by the OpenOffice.org (OOo) community. OOo is a complete integrated office productivity applications suite, including a full-featured word processor, spreadsheet, database manager, drawing editor, presentation manager, and equation editor. OOo natively supports the international standard OpenDocument file format and exports to PDF files, but also reads and writes Microsoft Office file formats, including the latest Office XML formats. OOo supports international languages, including dictionaries and thesauri, as well as extensions to extend OOo functionality. OOo requires Linux kernel version 2.4 or higher, glibc2 version 2.3.2 or higher, 256 Mbytes RAM (512 MB recommended), 400 Mbytes available disk space, and X Window Server with 1024 x 768 or higher resolution with at least 256 colors.

**tintii** – v2.4.0. <http://www.indii.org/software/tintii>. Free GNU General Public License source code by Lawrence Murray. Tintii is a photo filter that takes full color photos and processes them into black and white with some select regions highlighted in color. The technique is known as color popping or selective coloring – tintii makes it easy. This is the free standalone version for Linux, but tintii is also available for purchase as a plugin for Adobe® Photoshop®, Photoshop Elements and Corel® Paint Shop Pro® (see website). New features in this release: sliders for adjusting the hue, saturation, and lightness of each detected color have been added; a new hardness post-processing option for working with gradients has been added; the interface has been freshened and full online help is now included.

**Workrave** – v1.9.2. <http://www.workrave.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code by Raymond Penners and executable packages (v1.9.1) for Debian, Ubuntu, Mandriva and Fedora GNU/Linux. Workrave is a program that assists in the recovery and prevention of repetitive strain injury (RSI). The program frequently alerts you to take micro-pauses and rest breaks, and restricts you to your daily limit. Requires Gnome desktop environment libraries, included in most GNU/Linux

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distributions.

**Kernel Source** – v2.6.35. <http://www.kernel.org/>. Free GNU Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.



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Presidential Bits from page 1

through the FACUG web site.

If you visited the WAC web site home page (<http://www.wacug.org/>) recently, you probably noticed the addition of Amazon banners. WAC joined the Amazon Affiliate program. If you click on the banner from the WAC page whenever you shop at Amazon.com, WAC will receive a small payment for purchases you make without any additional cost to you! Please help WAC by making your Amazon.com purchases by clicking through the WAC banner links.

WAC's meeting on September 18th will feature Walter Fraser's introduction to building and using a simple database of names and addresses using Microsoft Access 2007. Still in the productivity applications theme for the Learn 30 tutorial session, I will discuss why and demonstrate how to use style settings in documents with OpenOffice.org Writer (also applicable to Microsoft Word).

*See you there!*



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## An Introduction to Databases

by Walter Fraser, WACUG member

Access2007 is a Relational Database Management System, i.e., a RDBMS. Probably the most widely used RDMBS program, Access was still last on Microsoft Office Professional 2007 box list of programs. Access was listed after Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Publisher.

Many Access users may believe that it was listed last because it had the hardest task. Access was developed to support designing, building and managing meaningful, flexible, editable databases. This is a more difficult task than that faced by any of the other programs on the list.

But Aristotle is said to have written: We learn how to do a thing by doing that which we wish do when we have

learned it, we become builders by building.

This brief review of Access2007 will focus on the initial steps required to design and implement a sensible, flexible and robust name and address listing in Access2007. The review is offered in hopes that it will provide a good starting place for beginners as well as opportunity for amplification by those better informed than the presenter.

At the very least, it is to be hoped that even users, sensible enough to let others do the work required to develop the databases for them, will become better informed users of the databases they do use.



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## Portable Utilities to Remove Malware

by Ira Wilsker , APCUG

WEBSITES:

<http://www.superantispyware.com/portablescanner.html>

<http://www.freedrweb.com/cureit>

<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/eeek/>

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/probably-best-free-security-list-world.htm>

A few months ago I wrote about what I carry on a flash drive on my key-chain to clean infected computers. Now that thousands of new malware threats are appearing every day, and many of those threats are explicitly designed to penetrate most security software, it seems to me that more computers than ever are being infected. Hardly a day goes by without my getting a phone call or email about cleaning an infected computer; just yesterday, I received an early morning phone call from a former faculty member who had a badly infected computer that would not load any of her programs, as it had been hijacked by malware. She had one of the top-selling commercial security suites on her Vista laptop, and could not understand how it became so thoroughly violated by malware that she could not use it. I met with her, and using the utilities on my flash drive, it took me about three hours to totally clean her computer, and restore all of her files.

In inspecting her computer and files, it appeared that one of the Russian sourced rogue antivirus programs had penetrated her security suite, and taken over her com-

*See Portable Malware Removal Utilities on next page*

puter. Whenever she clicked on any icon, or tried to load any program manually, an official looking window opened that said that the file was infected, and that she needed to click on the window to remove the malware. When she clicked on the window, an antivirus utility appeared (not the one that she had installed), pretended to scan her computer, and (falsely) reported that she had over 300 viruses. In order to remove the infections, she would have to click on a link to register the software, and use her credit card to pay the \$49.95 fee to activate the (rogue) program. This is where she became suspicious and called me. If she would have given her credit card number to this scam artist, the software would appear to remove the malware and tell her that her computer was clean. Not just would her computer still be infected, but would possibly have had even more malware installed on her computer by this scam. Common secondary infections include key logging software that can be used to steal usernames, passwords, credit card numbers, and other personal information, for sale to identity thieves. Another very common secondary infection is a type of trojan that converts the computer into a zombie, under the control of a "bot master" who sells access to thousands of compromised computers to spammers to send out countless spam emails, and even in some cases to terrorists to launch cyber attacks on computer networks. All of the time that this trouble was going on, the icon by her clock indicated that her computer was being faithfully protected by her premium name brand security suite.

When I booted her computer, it seemed to boot smoothly until the desktop appeared, and then every program that started to load was alleged to be infected. I plugged in my flash drive, selected a scanner, and was told that it too was infected and could not be run. I repeated the process with all of the security programs on my flash drive, and all were met with the same window. I rebooted her computer in safe mode (F8 on most computers at the very beginning of the boot process), selected just the "safe mode", and was able to sequentially run all of my security utilities. Three hours later, after removing 157 viruses, worms, trojans, tracking cookies, and other threats, her computer worked fine. Booting fully into Vista, and running an independent online scan (TrendMicro's Housecall), her computer was verified as clean. The only significant loss on her computer was her premium commercial security suite which had been totally neutralized, deactivated, and otherwise destroyed

by the malware on her computer. I told her to immediately reinstall her security suite from the factory CD and update it. I gave her the information and suggested that she consider installing a layered security approach like I use on all of my computers.

Since the threat scenario is very dynamic, and constantly changing with new threats being released on a massive basis, I frequently update the security utilities on my flash drive. Some old favorites I no longer use on my flash drive, as the malware authors have become better at self-defense, blocking programs that can kill them from loading. Some other flash drive based security utilities use a randomly generated file name in an attempt to fool the malware authors and prevent them from being blocked. All of them need to be updated frequently, as the portable versions are often fully updated when downloaded, and most do not require any installation and are ready to run as downloaded. Just before leaving home to help my former faculty member, I plugged my flash drive into my home computer, and downloaded fresh copies of the selected security software.

The first portable utility that I used was the newly released Emsisoft Emergency Kit 1.0 (<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/eeek/>). This newly released free software kit replaces the now discontinued (but excellent) Emsisoft USB Stick Files, which I had used many times in the past. The file is always fully updated as downloaded, and is in the compressed zip format. The zip file only needs to be expanded to the flash drive, which will set it up as needed, with no other installation necessary. According to the Emsisoft website, "The Emsisoft Emergency Kit contains a collection of programs that can be used without a software installation to scan and clean infected computers for malware. Run the Emsisoft Emergency Kit Scanner with a double click on a2emergencykit.exe. Found Malware can be moved to quarantine or finally deleted." The graphical interface offers the user the choice of which utilities to run. I recommend that the user perform one of the scan options; a quick scan will detect any memory resident and registry based threats, as well as any infected system files, and is a good choice to start. While a quick scan is fast, and will detect most threats, the more complete scan options are more thorough, but may take several hours to complete. I typically perform a quick scan, and then ask the user to perform one of the full or deep scan options after I leave; this will detect any fragments or traces of mal-

See *Portable Malware Removal Utilities* on next page

ware that might have been missed with the quick scan. Emsisoft releases several updates a day, and while the kit is fully updated when downloaded, it can be updated manually online prior to any subsequent scans.

One of my favorite portable scanners that is also up to date when downloaded, and that requires no installation, is the SuperAntispyware Portable Scanner, available for free download from <http://www.superantispyware.com/portablescanner.html>. This file uses a random file name to evade detection by malware, and is ready to run. By opening the file (my recent filename was SAS\_84123495.COM, but yours may be different), the classical SuperAntispyware front-end will appear offering all of the options of the full (free) version. Clicking on the scan option will run one of the most comprehensive scanners available, and is a very capable utility to detect and remove malware. While fully updated when downloaded, SuperAntispyware also releases several updates every day, and the portable version can be manually updated if online. I have always been very pleased with the performance of the SuperAntispyware products, and recommend them without question.

The last utility that I downloaded to my flash drive is one that is fairly new to me, but is now the top rated portable security scanner as rated by the Gizmo freeware community. This product is Dr. Web CureIt (<http://www.freedrweb.com/cureit>), which is free for personal use. The file name is somewhat bazaar, this download being named "5r2p4ark.exe", but it worked very well scanning her computer and removing malware. This program would also be an excellent way to check any computer for infection, and verify that the security software installed is indeed working.

Sometimes a computer is so badly infected that it will not boot into windows, and in those cases, a bootable CD (or other bootable device) containing the scanner software may be necessary instead of using the utilities on a flash drive. I wrote about free bootable scanner CDs several months ago, but an updated column on them will be forthcoming. An updated listing of free bootable scanner CDs is available under the heading "AV Rescue CD" on the Gizmo website at <http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/probably-best-free-security-list-world.htm>.

While any one of these three free, portable utilities is capable of performing an adequate scan and removal of malware on an infected computer, I prefer the redun-

dancy of multiple utilities in order to insure that the computer is indeed clean of malware. No single utility is absolutely 100% effective, but by sequentially using a variety of updated utilities, the probability of detecting and removing all of the malware is increased.



## FlashSecurity1-DrWeb-2

Dr.WEB® Anti-virus

Dr.Web CureIt! Dr.Web CureNet! Dr.Web LiveCD Dr.Web LinkChecker

30 Demo Buy full version Sysadmin First aid kit Profit with us Experts' opinions For web-sites

Dr.Web CureIt!®

Do you have anti-virus software installed on your computer, but still worry about its effectiveness?

Run Dr.Web CureIt!® (no need to install it) to quickly scan your computer and cure it of any malicious objects.

How will I find out if my computer has been infected?

1. Download Dr.Web CureIt!.
2. Double-click on the downloaded file.
3. Choose a desired protection mode.
4. Wait while the utility scans your system. When the scanning is finished, view the scan report. Do you still have doubts?

Dr.Web CureIt! Free download For home PCs

Purchase Dr.Web CureIt! license For office machines or customer computers

## FlashSecurity2-Emsisoft-1

Emsisoft Emergency Kit 1.0 NEW!

[Software collection] Version 1.0.0.11 - 8/10/2010

- Your emergency kit for infected PCs!
- Detects and removes Malware
- >4 million known dangers
- 100% portable - perfect for USB sticks
- HiJackFree and BlitzBlank included

Download guaranteed for free!

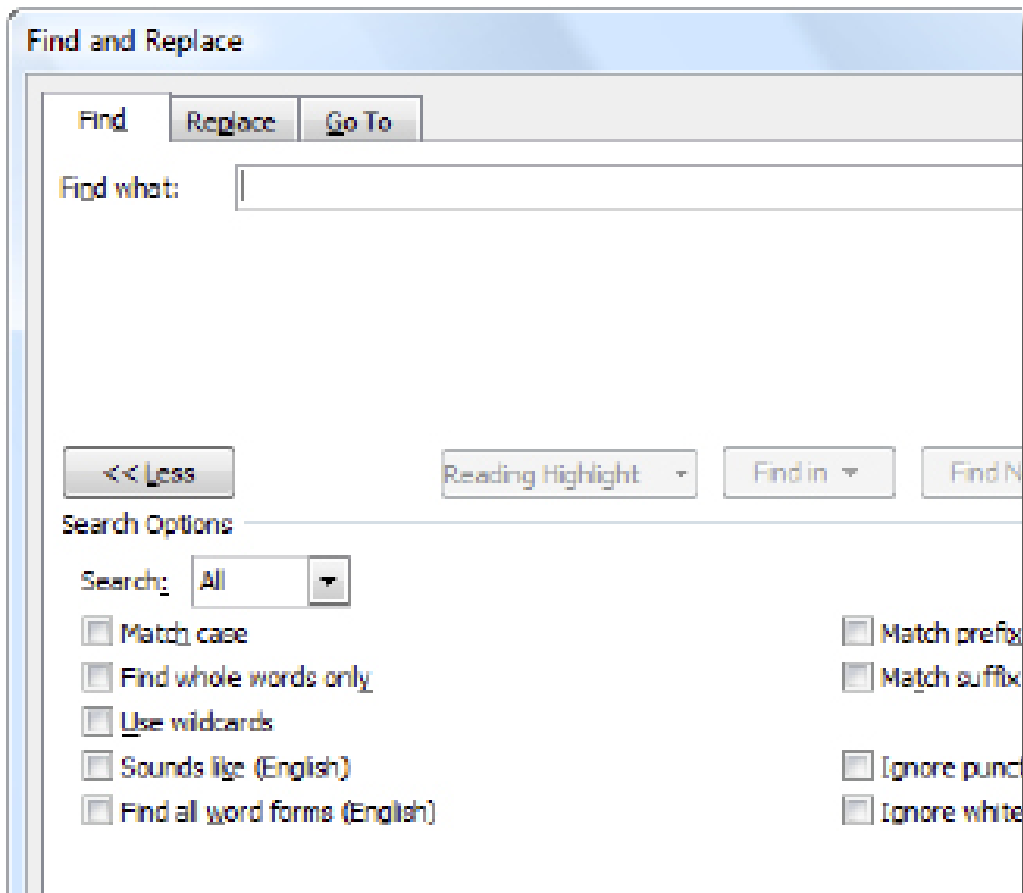
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## Searching for Paragraph Formatting

From Sharon Parq Associates

Word has a very powerful search capability that allows you to find not just text but the formatting of text as well. To search for paragraph formatting, follow these steps:

1. Press CTRL+F to display the Find tab of the Find and Replace dialog box.
2. Make sure the Find What box is empty.
3. Click on the More button if it is available.



The expanded Find tab of the Find and Replace dialog box.

4. Click on the No Formatting button, if it is enabled.
5. Click on the Format button and select Paragraph. The Find Paragraph dialog box appears.
6. Select the paragraph attributes for which you want to search. When selecting attributes that use check boxes, a check in a check box means the matching paragraph must have the attribute. If the check box is empty, then the paragraph won't have that attribute. A shaded box means the attribute doesn't matter.
7. Click on OK.
8. Click on Find Next.

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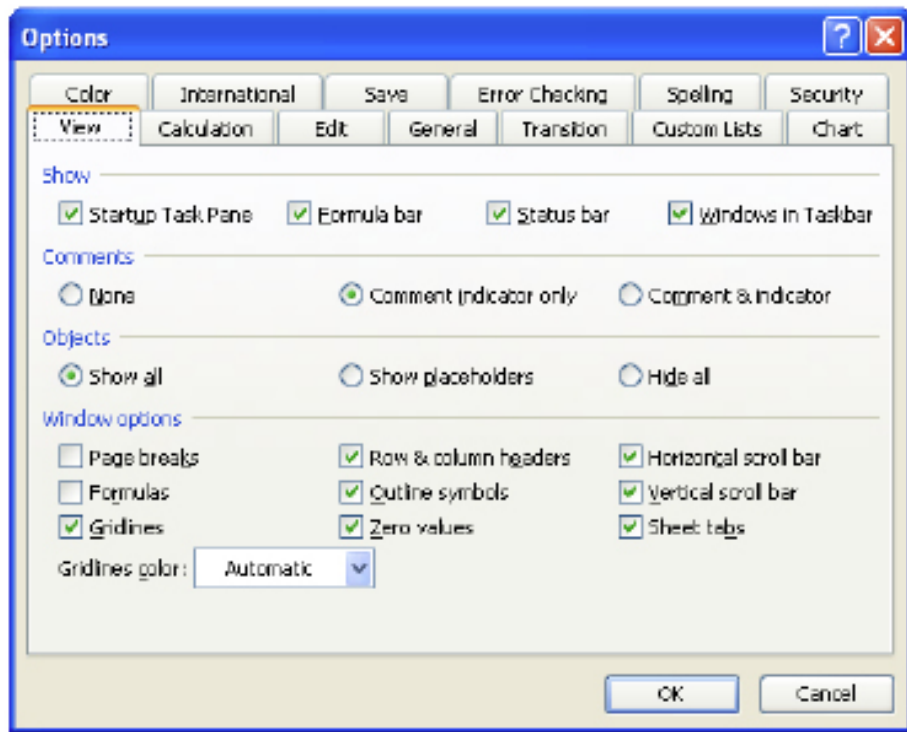
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## Controlling the Display of Page Breaks

When you are formatting a worksheet, you may want to see where Excel will insert page breaks in your printout. This is easily done by using the Print Preview option, or by using the Page Break Preview feature. You may also want to see the page breaks when you are again editing the worksheet.

Excel can display page breaks as dashed lines between rows or columns on your worksheet. To enable this display, simply follow these steps:

1. Choose Options from the Tools menu. Excel displays the Options dialog box.
2. Make sure the View tab is selected.



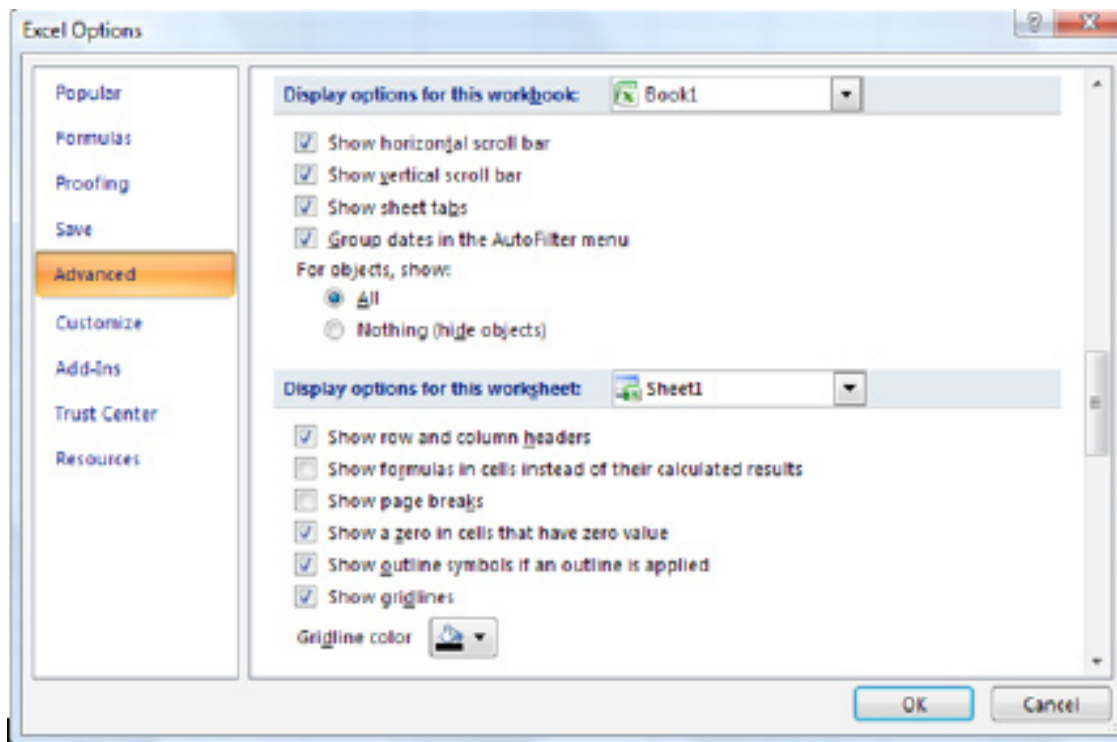
The View tab of the Options dialog box.

3. Make sure the Page Breaks check box is selected.
4. Click on OK.

If you are using Excel 2007 or Excel 2010 then the steps to follow are a bit different:

1. Display the Excel Options dialog box. (In Excel 2007 click the Office button and then click Excel Options. In Excel 2010 display the File tab of the ribbon and click Options.)
2. At the left side of the dialog box, click Advanced.
3. Scroll through the list of options until you see the Display Options for This Worksheet section.

Excel Tips continue on page 10



The Excel Options dialog box.

4. Make sure the Show Page Breaks check box is selected.
5. Click on OK.

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**Internet Columnist:**..... Lloyd Johnson, lloydhj(at)aol.com  
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**Web Site Team:**..... Paul Howard and Chuck Roberts  
**Meeting Setup:**..... Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141, bill.walsh(at)cox.net  
**APCUG Liaison:**..... Gabe Goldberg, gabe@gabegold.com

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**Send article submission and reprint requests to the Editor: [cursor@wacug.org](mailto:cursor@wacug.org)**

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**WAC Membership/Renewal Application**

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Dues are collected on an Annual basis and includes:  
downloadable links for WAC's monthly newsletter,  
*The Cursor*, in PDF format

Individual/Corporate/Family Dues: \$25.00  
\$5 annual surcharge for delivery of the Cursor by  
1st Class mail

Remit payment in person at the WAC Membership  
table on meeting day, or by mail to:

**Washington Area Computer User Group**  
**30 Fendall Ave.**

**Alexandria, VA 22304-6300**

Make checks payable to WAC. Please do not send  
cash by mail. *Thank you for joining WAC!*

Complete if you name and address do not appear  
on the reverse side. Include E-mail Address

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Survey:** Help us to help you by completing this survey.  
List the computer systems you own / use (in order of preference)

Operating System(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Modem(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Printer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Other Hardware: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Software: \_\_\_\_\_

Connection: (circle one)   Dial-up   or   Broadband

**Circle Your Interests:**   Photo Printing   Investing   Games

Digital Photography   Internet Access   Education   Music

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Programming Language(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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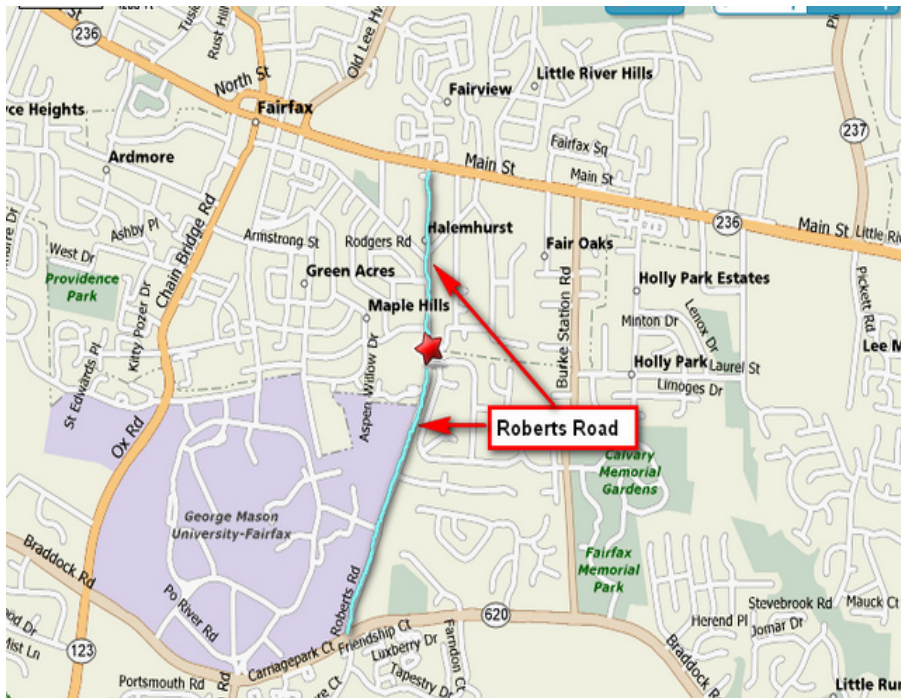
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# Can You Really Watch Free TV on Your PC?

by Ira Wilsker

## WEBSITES:

<http://toolbar.tv-fox.com>

<http://www.watch-live-online.tv> (Live TV)

<http://www.hulu.com>

**Y**ou may have seen ads on the internet or on TV that tell you that you can watch free TV on the internet, and that you do not need cable or satellite to watch thousands of TV channels. Some even go as far as to say that you should cancel your cable or satellite, and use the free services, rather than paying for expensive TV service. Several others advertise software or hardware devices (for a fee) that allow you to watch hundreds of TV channels online for free. There are even websites that allow you watch TV in your browser or on your desktop, either for free, or for a subscription fee. While these offers are generally real, they should not be confused with the selection of channels available on your local cable system or satellite service as they generally do not offer the major commercial channels, and rarely offer the major local channels. Some services, generally located overseas, offer illegally pirated feeds for a fee, and should always be avoided. Other services, such as the well respected Hulu (<http://www.hulu.com>) legitimately offer thousands of already broadcast and older TV shows and movies provided by the networks and movie studios that are either advertiser supported (for free), or without commercials (by subscription, sometimes for a fee).

One service that I frequently use is TV-Fox, or its sister product, LIVE TV. The selection of channels on LIVE TV is virtually identical to those on TV-Fox. Alternatively, for those who do not want to download a toolbar or plug-in, these same channels can be viewed directly online at <http://www.watch-live-online.tv>. It may be necessary to have Windows Media Player (or some similar compatible player) installed to view these stations. Most of the stations can either be viewed in a small window, or opened to full screen by double clicking on the video.

TV-Fox is a free plug-in for the Firefox browser (toolbar.tv-fox.com), and currently offers "2780 Live TV Channels sorted by country & category, the TV-FOX allows you to watch thousands of TV channels freely available on the internet." It is installed as a short toolbar, and includes a pair of directories that display the available channels. The first icon (purple) opens a directory containing a listing of about 100 countries; moving the mouse cursor over the country displays the currently available TV stations that stream online. If the selected station has a

circle icon with a right arrow (triangle), that indicates that the selected station is always online; if the icon is a small clock, that means that the station is only available for specific hours. The viewer should be aware of the time differences around the world, as what is prime time in the mid-east, for example, may be the early morning here. While I enjoy watching live foreign TV, I am not capable of understanding all of the languages, so I prefer the English language stations available in many of the countries listed. Under the listing for the United States is approximately 60 stations, all but a few being broadcast in English. These US based stations include such well known stations as Bloomberg Business, CBN, CNBC, Home Shopping Network (HSN), Fox News, MSNBC, NASA, NBC News, and several prominent local stations from a variety of cities.

The second icon (green) on the TV-Fox toolbar opens a directory based on genre'. Categories include sports, news, business, music, kids, lifestyle, government, religious, education, shopping and weather, as well as a listing of about 50 live web-cams from around the world. Personally, I am a news and information junkie, and spend significant time on the news listing, which has live news feeds from about three dozen news sources from about 20 different countries, many of which are in English. Sports fanatics may enjoy the sports selection, consisting of 28 stations from about a dozen countries. While I may not understand the announcer on many of these sports stations, the live or recorded sports events are often quite understandable to the viewer. Music fans would appreciate the almost 50 TV stations that stream music. While many of the music stations are from France, Italy, Poland, and India, the viewer will almost always find music of interest. I have found that many of the foreign music stations which play their native music are very intriguing and entertaining.

Investing and business is of universal interest, and TV-Fox offers 19 business channels, including Bloomberg-UK, Bloomberg-Asia, and Bloomberg-USA. Those stations, along with CNBC and NBR can provide business and economic information for the majority of investors and others interested in business.

Sometimes we need content to entertain our children, or the child in us adults. The kids section contains a dozen channels, three of which are American, two of which are cartoons. My favorite kids channel is the "Classical Cartoons" which shows old time cartoons, many of which are from the 30's and 40's, most of which today's children would not otherwise have an opportunity to view.

See *TV on Your PC* next page

There are 22 movie channels listed, of which eight are from the US, and include sci-fi, comedy classics, thrillers, and WSTV (White Springs TV, also known as “The Golden Age of Movies Channel”) which is a Florida and Oregon based network that streams old movies over satellite and on the air in about a dozen cities, as well as online. If I feel like watching a movie stream on my computer, I can usually find something of interest on one of these movie channels.

The two dozen religious TV channels that stream over the internet cover almost all of the world’s major religions, in a variety of languages. There are 27 educational channels available, many from major universities around the world, including Texas A&M’s KAMU-TV. Shoppers may like to see what the 22 shopping channels offer, including the six American shopping channels. Some of the products promoted on the foreign shopping channels are very interesting, despite the frequent language barrier; the foreign sales techniques are often very entertaining as well. The 14 weather channels, including nine American weather channels provide more weather information than most viewers can utilize.

Sometimes it is interesting just to see a live webcam from some notable location. The live webcams available on TV-Fox include such diverse places as Times Square (NYC), the Hogs Breath Saloon in Florida, France, Germany, Kathmandu (Nepal), Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and other US locations.

While not a complete substitute for local TV and the domestic cable and satellite services, there is enough free TV available online to entertain and inform almost everybody.



## Another “Free TV” Utility

by Ira Wilsker

### WEBSITE:

<http://zinc.tv>

One site that seems to pass security muster is zinc.tv. This free service, currently in beta (not yet a final release), combines feeds from several resources, including Hulu, ABC, NBC, Fox, ESPN, National Geographic, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, ABC Family, and many other sources. Zinc also offers free music videos from MTV and VH1. The user needs to understand that these so-called “channels” are typically not the live feeds as seen by cable or satellite subscribers, but are past, usually very recent, shows. While most of the content on Zinc TV is totally free, there are links to commercial content which includes such sources as Netflix, and Amazon’s streaming content.

The Zinc viewer can be downloaded (free) from zinc.tv, and will run on modern Windows or Mac computers, as well as a NetTop box, or using a wireless HDMI device. When I downloaded the 20.6mb file, it downloaded and installed without any problems. The Windows version requires Windows 7, Vista, or XP with service pack 2 (or later) installed, and a capable video card. Zinc TV will also run on a Mac with OS X 10.4.11 (Tiger) or later, with an Intel processor, and a compatible video card.

The Zinc player initially opens in full screen mode, and has very sharp and colorful graphics. At the top of the default window (which is customizable), the latest “Featured” shows are displayed. As I type this, the featured shows are Boston Med, Downfall, The Gates, Rookie Blue, and Scoundrels. Generally, the featured shows are the full episodes that recently appeared on TV, along with links to past episodes. This is a very good way to view again any favorite episodes, or episodes that were missed. Below the Featured shows are the categories of shows. Shows are sorted by genre, and include TV shows (29783 episodes), movies (519 full length and trailers), news (2437 shows), sports (1159 events), kids (35 channels), comedy (973 shows), web (21917 items from YouTube, Break.com, Yahoo! video, and more), technology (418 shows), Yahoo! Connected TV (5792 items), and Music (1340 channels and videos). The “Most Popular” TV shows available on Zinc TV are Glee, Dancing With The Stars, House, Lost, and Modern Family.

Below the “Categories” heading is the “Recently Added” which displays any newly added networks. Two of the most notable new networks available on Zinc TV are The

*Free TV continues next page*

WB and Spike. Many of the commercial entertainment sites that offer streaming video are accessible individually by going directly to the websites, or the user can use Zinc TV to access many of these sites from one link. Among the networks accessible and searchable with Zinc TV are CBS, ABC, Fox, Hulu, The WB, MTV, The CW, CNN, MSNBC, ESPN, Fox Sports, Fox News, PBS, Cartoon Network (CN), national geographic Kids, Nickelodeon, ABC News, Spike, Comedy Central, VNET, NASA, The Whitehouse (presidential broadcasts), HBO, NFL, NBA, TV Land, Univision, VH1, and many more.

Clicking on the TV network logo opens up the lineup of available shows. Clicking on CBS, for example, displays a directory of the full length episodes available. CBS currently has 4385 episodes available, including such popular shows as Survivor, 48 Hours Mystery, 60 Minutes, the CSI trilogy, Amazing Race, 90210, Star Trek, and Twin Peaks. The ABC link opens up to display over 400 episodes, including 20/20, All My Children, the Bachelorette, Boston Med, Desperate Housewives, Grey's Anatomy, Lost, ABC Primetime, One Life to Live, and many more. The other networks listed have similar directories of TV shows that can be viewed on demand.

One of my personal favorite categories is the news category. This category includes the latest evening news from ABC (ABC World News), NBC Nightly News, and CBS Evening News with Katie Couric. CNN has 947 present and past shows available, and MSNBC has 237 shows online. Popular news shows from PBS include the Jim Lehrer Hour (281 episodes), and Bill Moyers Journal with 330 episodes. Individual shows include Fox News' The O'reilly Factor, Glenn Beck, and Sean Hannity. The White House Channel, and Obama Weekly broadcast presidential speeches and other executive branch presentations.

Children can be well entertained by several Kids channels. Nickelodeon has 12 different popular full length kids' shows including Avatar, Danny Phantom, The Fairly Odd Parents, iCarly, and the widely popular Sponge Bob Square Pants. The Cartoon Network has full online episodes of 55 of its shows including Batman, and the Transformers. Newly added to Zinc TV is the JAROO kids' channel, which includes 261 full length children's movies and classic cartoons.

Sports fans will appreciate the wide assortment of sports channels available, including ESPN, NHL (Hockey), NBA (Basketball), Soccer, NASCAR, NFL Football, MLB (Baseball), a Fitness channel, and a Sports and Recreation channel. In aggregate, 1159 sports shows are available on Zinc TV. This should be enough to provide

any sports junkie his fix for quite a while!

Since Zinc TV will run on most computers, as well as on a variety of TV and home entertainment devices, and carries an enormous variety of content, it should satisfy many of the entertainment needs of today's society. While the shows, most notably the news and sports shows, are not live, many are very current, often from the same day. Zinc TV is a worthwhile utility to download and install; just don't blame me if you watch it too much!



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## Droid or iPhone

By Corrine Goeke, Computer Club of Green Valley,  
Arizona

September 2010 issue, Green Bytes  
cmgoeke(at)yahoo.com  
<http://gvcc.apcug.org/>

The iPhone has been the smart phone of choice for the past couple of years. There wasn't much competition. The Blackberry had the business market conquered. Then non-business users of the world had to settle for their plain-jane cell phones or the iPhone. The techies of the world were divided into two camps: those that loved Apple products and didn't care that Apple tightly controlled the hardware and software, and those that didn't like to be told what they could install (chances are a good majority of these people are also fans of open source software like Linux and Open Office).

Fans of open source software who want a smart phone can now rejoice! No longer do we have to stare enviously at iPhone owners. Google has introduced their Droid Operating System (OS) for phones (and soon to be on other devices)!

The Google Droid Operating System is very slick. It's designed to work on a phone with a touch screen. And whereas the iPhone is limited to AT&T, the Droid OS can work on a variety of phones with a variety of carriers. In my area of the country (New York state), Verizon is the carrier of choice. We have long felt the smart phone drought, but no more. Since the beginning of the year, Verizon is offering phones from Motorola (Droid, Droid X and Droid 2) and HTC (Droid Incredible) that run the Droid OS. Sprint has the HTC Evo.

Ok, so you can now have a variety of phones on a vari-

*Droid or iPhone continues next page*



ety of carriers. What's next? You have a variety of applications that can run on those phones! With an Apple iPhone, Apple decides what applications are allowed in their App Store. With the Droid Marketplace, anyone can write an app to put in the Marketplace app store. Sure, you get your good and your bad apps, but the Marketplace's peer review system allows the cream to rise to the top. And did I mention that many of these apps are free.

So, what can these apps do? Of course, we have the basics. E-mail (G-mail rules, but I also use it with my ISP's e-mail system). Your calendar (if you use Google calendar, you are in calendar heaven). A to-do list. But let me list what is running on my HTC Droid Incredible that is above and beyond.

- Mapping software that works off GPS outside and wireless inside
- Skype mobile, which enables my Green Valley, AZ-based parent to call my cell phone from her computer and therefore no long-distance charges (I plan on using this when my daughter studies abroad and needs to reach me when I am out and about)
- A weather app that shows the weather at your current location (it uses the GPS to know where you are)
- Google Latitude that allows selected friends to see on their smart phones or computers your current location
- A geocache application that works with geocaching.com (yes, you can leave your GPS at home)
- The Google Talk IM client permitting the office to reach me (a little too convenient if you ask me)
- A camera and video camera, both of which will push content up to Facebook
- Google Googles takes a picture of anything and tells what it is (I can take a picture of a barcode in a store, and via a Google search see if there is a better deal elsewhere)
- News apps (local and national)
- A map of the sky at night that rotates as I twirl around looking at the sky
- A built-in FM radio
- I Heart Radio, an application that lets me listen to my favorite radio station even if it's across the country

- Google Listen, a podcast RSS aggregator Video via <http://www.YouTube.com> and <http://www.tv.com>
- Last but not least, games!

That's quite a list. You will notice that a lot of the apps have the word Google in front of them. That shouldn't be surprising. Between the Google apps and the apps written by others, you hold the world in the palm of your hand.

Oh yes, the device will make phone calls, too!

Of course, such power comes with a price. You can't just buy the phone and get all this connectivity. A data plan typically costs \$30 a month above and beyond your normal cell phone fees. Plus the battery life on a smart phone could be better (all that power takes, well, power). But once you have dipped your toes into the smart phone water, you'll gladly dive into the deep end.



*Editor's Note* — Google's Linux-based OS is called *Android*, and not *Droid*