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TC/PC Exists to
Facilitate and Encourage
the Cooperative Exchange of
PC Knowledge and
Information Across
All Levels of Experience

April 2023

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General Meeting Tuesday, April 11, 2023 7:00 PM

Using Canva for Graphic Design

Via Zoom Only

Many users who know their way around computer applications feel ill-equipped when it comes to graphic design. The Canva app, available for free, can be the answer for the person who needs a professional look for a newsletter, web page, advertisement, an Instagram post, intro to a youtube video, or any project requiring graphic design skills. Canva is easy to learn and use. It comes with a wide range of free-to-use templates for the overall design and stock photography as well. In this meeting we will take a look at an overview of Canva and some basic tutorials on YouTube that will give you the basics to get started using the app.

Note: All TC/PC Meetings and SIG Groups will be virtual until further notice. Visit tcpc.com for info.

Tech Topics with Jack Ungerleider via Zoom at 6pm before the General Meeting.

TC/PC is a Member of



The Digital Viking

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Visit www.tcpc.com for meeting details.

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Editor Sharon Walbran

Wi-Fi Hotspot and USB Tether

If you use a smartphone Wi-Fi hotspot to provide an internet connection to a single computer, the tether option may provide advantages.

By John Krout, Presenter and Newsletter Contributor Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society

www.patacs.org

Introduction

Many environments do not provide either reliable Wi-Fi or high-speed Wi-Fi. In those environments, some find that the only way to provide internet access for a computer is to enable a smartphone to provide a Wi-Fi hotspot.

From the viewpoint of the computer user, that hotspot is just like any Wi-Fi service. The hotspot shows up in the computer's list of available Wi-Fi services. Connection to the hotspot usually requires a password; you can find that password on the smartphone's screen.

Any Wi-Fi hotspot does face issues affecting its performance.

First, the Wi-Fi hotspot drains the smartphone battery at an increased rate, more rapidly than when the smartphone hotspot is disabled.

Second, the smartphone's Wi-Fi hotspot offers no competition for a Wi-Fi router. A router typically has two or more antennae and supplies much greater Wi-Fi signal power than a smartphone Wi-Fi hotspot.

Since a smartphone's Wi-Fi signal is weaker than a router's signal, the distance between the smartphone hotspot and the computer is critical. Put the phone as close as possible to the computer. Move the smartphone a bit farther away, and the speed of the Wi-Fi connection available to the computer declines.

Third, due to the weak Wi-Fi signal from a smartphone, the Wi-Fi signal strength and, therefore, the internet speeds may vary because of intermittent nearby interference beyond anyone's control.

In short, tether options overcome those three issues.

If your smartphone already enables you to create a Wi-Fi Hotspot, then your smartphone likely provides one or more options to use a tether.

Bluetooth tether

Both recent iPhones and recent Android phones also include Bluetooth tethering capability. However, since Bluetooth involves no cable, the capability is better described as a Bluetooth hotspot.

Again, like Wi-Fi hotspots, your carrier contract may or may not allow your use of Bluetooth tethering. Also, like Wi-Fi hotspots, Bluetooth has disadvantages. For example, Bluetooth usage accelerates smartphone battery drainage. Also, Bluetooth range for useful internet data rates is quite limited and degrades over distance.

USB Tether advantages

USB tether simply means that the smartphone provides internet service to the computer through a USB cable. The Windows 10 and 11 operating systems automatically recognize that the USB tether

provides an internet connection.

The USB cable connection provides power from the computer to the smartphone, reducing battery drainage. In addition, USB cable communication requires less power than Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, reducing battery drainage.

How to enable an Android phone's USB Tether

First, attach the smartphone to a USB cable, then connect that USB cable to a USB-A socket on a computer. Most recent smartphones support USB3, so plug that cable into a USB3 socket on the computer.

After that, you use Settings on your smartphone to enable the USB Tether behavior.

Here I will show you how to enable USB Tethering behavior on my Samsung Galaxy S10 smartphone running Android 12. The main Settings app screen, shown in **illustration 1**, is the place to start. Then, on that screen, tap **Connections**, which is circled in the illustration.

In **illustration 2**, you can see the Connections screen. On that screen, tap **Mobile Hotspot and Tethering** is circled in the illustration.

In **Illustration 3**, you can see the Mobile Hotspot and Tethering screen. As shown, the USB Tethering switch is disabled. However, if a USB cable connects your smartphone and the computer, that USB Tethering switch will be enabled, like the Mobile Hotspot switch in the illustration.

After connecting the USB cable to the smartphone and the computer, tap the enabled USB Tethering switch to turn it on.

When you do so, the computer should recognize the available internet connection via the connected USB cable within a few seconds.

How to enable an iPhone's USB Tether

On my iPhone X, the equivalent Settings screen sequence to turn on a hotspot are **Settings**—**Cellular**—**Personal Hotspot**. Unfortunately, my iPhone is not currently on a carrier contract. Therefore, Cellular is ghosted (disabled) in Settings, so I cannot enable and test an iPhone personal hotspot.

The iPhone user's manual ebook on my iPhone does not document a USB tether capability. However, USB tether documentation on this iPhone support web page seems to indicate that a USB tether connecting an iPhone running iOS 15 to a computer can be accomplished without turning on any Settings switch:

support.apple.com/en-us/HT204023

Ethernet tether

You might think: my smartphone cannot connect to an Ethernet cable! On the contrary, perhaps it can, but you must spend some money to make it happen.

As you can see in illustration 3, my Samsung Galaxy S10 phone supports an Ethernet tether. To use that Ethernet tether, a smartphone must support On-The-Go (OTG) capability. The existence of that Settings Ethernet Tether switch may indicate that OTG is, in fact, supported. I happen to know

by testing my S10 phone that the phone does support OTG. To use OTG with Ethernet, you must obtain a 3-way OTG adapter and a USB-to-Ethernet adapter. With the OTG connected to the phone to power, the USB side of the USB to Ethernet adapter, and an Ethernet cable connected to the Ethernet adapter and to a computer, the Ethernet Tether switch will be enabled.

Most of us already have the USB cable for a USB tether, so the USB Tether method is essentially more straightforward and cost-free than Ethernet Tether. Therefore, I suspect that the USB Tether method will be preferable for all readers of this article.

Final Notes

A smartphone hotspot or tether will **never be any faster than the available speed provided by the nearest cell tower**. The very nature of cell towers means that factors beyond the control of any one person will cause the download and upload speed to vary. I have measured the 4G download speed from the cell tower about two blocks away from my suburban home a few times. The speed has been as high as 12 megabits per second and as low as 1.8 megabits per second.

Carrier companies claim that 5G will improve the speeds, but there are still caveats: 5G runs at a rate greater than 4G only if you are close to a 5G-compatible cell tower. Also, for maximum speed, the cell tower must not be overloaded. Unfortunately, that condition is beyond the control of anyone other than the carrier company. Nevertheless, carrier companies are marketing 5G hotspots to businesses to use as an alternative to wired Internet connections. If that marketing succeeds, then 5G-compatible cell tower overloading may become the new 5G normal in cell towers serving residential and commercial customers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout has been writing about the creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s and now writes about the creative uses of smartphones, tablets, and digital cameras. He is a retired software engineer who spent his career collecting requirements, developing designs, coding in C and C++, and writing documentation for systems large and small used by Federal government agencies. He lives in Arlington, VA, and is a member of the APCUG Speaker's Bureau.



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Interesting Internet Finds July, August, and September 2022 by Steve Costello scostello AT sefcug.com

While going through more than 300 RSS feeds, I often encounter things I think might interest other user group members. The following are some items I found interesting during July, August and September 2022.

Google One Explained: Is It Worth Subscribing To?

https://helpdeskgeek.com/reviews/google-one-explained-is-it-worth-subscribing-to/
If your 15GB Google Storage is not enough, check out this post that explains just what Google One is, how it works, and its advantages and disadvantages. (Note: I have already been using different options, so I decided this was not worth it.)

Does Your Internet Provider Know That You're Using A VPN?

https://www.reviewgeek.com/122229/does-your-internet-provider-know-that-youre-using-a-vpn/

If you use a VPN to obscure your identity, this is a good post to read.

How To Find Out Which Kindle Model You Have

https://www.online-tech-tips.com/computer-tips/how-to-find-out-which-kindle-model-you-have/

If there is a problem with your Kindle or you need an accessory for it, you will need to know which model you have. Check out this post to learn how.

Tor Browser's Connection Assist Takes The Frustration Out Of Censorship Circumvention https://www.ghacks.net/2022/07/16/tor-browsers-connection-assist-takes-the-frustration-out-of-censorship-circumvention/

If you use the Tor browser you should read this post.

Wordpress Users Need To Watch Out For Fake Copyright Infringement Warnings https://www.techlicious.com/blog/wordpress-users-need-to-watch-out-for-fake-copyright-infringement-warnings/

Are you a Wordpress user? If so, you need to read this post so you know how to protect yourself.

How To Spot Fake Amazon Reviews

https://www.dailybits.com/how-to-spot-fake-amazon-reviews/

I get a lot of stuff from Amazon, and I am always looking for ways to spot fake reviews. Sometimes the fake reviews are to make us buy certain items or sometimes not to get them.

Deleting Your Way To Better Security

https://firewallsdontstopdragons.com/deleting-your-way-to-better-security/

I found this article to apply to both the PC and smartphones. It makes a lot of sense to me that the less software you have the fewer problems you will have.

What You Need To Know About The Gmail Redesign

https://www.techlicious.com/tip/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-gmail-redesign/

I have not had any problems with the redesign, but I know there are a lot of Gmail users in the user groups so I thought this post could help anyone having problems.

Wi-Fi Doesn't Have Valid IP Configuration: How To Fix

https://www.groovypost.com/howto/wi-fi-doesnt-have-valid-ip-configuration-how-to-fix/

I found this post about a month too late for me. I was on vacation and had the error on two of three devices trying to access the resort wi-fi. If you travel, I suggest keeping a copy of this post available somewhere to help you fix the problem.

Windows 11 Has A Secret Start Menu — This Is How You Can Access

https://trendblog.net/windows-11-has-a-secret-start-menu-this-is-how-you-can-access/

I now have a Windows 11 PC, as my primary desktop completely died so I had to get a new one. My worst problem, so far, has been getting used to the new start menu. This post has been helpful to me, check it out if you end up going to Windows 11 yourself.

What Do VPNs Mean By Simultaneous Connections?

https://www.howtogeek.com/825787/what-do-vpns-mean-by-simultaneous-connections/

A lot of commercial VPNs restrict the number of simultaneous connections. Check out this post to find out what that means, and how it will affect you.

Do Calls Go Straight To Voicemail On Your Phone? Try These 11 Fixes

https://helpdeskgeek.com/help-desk/do-calls-go-straight-to-voicemail-on-your-phone-try-these-11-fixes/

I have occasionally had this problem myself, and have had others tell me they do too. Now, with this post, I have a few suggestions for how to fix the problem when it reoccurs.

What To Do If You Forget Your Android Phone's PIN, Pattern, Or Password

https://www.howtogeek.com/226942/what-to-do-if-you-forget-your-android-phone%e2%80% 99s-pin-pattern-or-password/

It used to be easy to reset things if you forgot this information. Recently it has been becoming much harder. If you have an Android phone, you need to read this post.

Gmail: Send A Group Email

https://cynmackley.com/2022/09/12/gmail-send-a-group-email/

I know a lot of user group members use Gmail. But, I also know not everyone knows how to send a group email with Gmail. If you don't know how to do this, read this post to learn how.

Streaming DVR Face-Off: YouTube TV, Hulu + Live TV, & The Rest

https://www.techhive.com/article/1072359/streaming-dvr-face-off-youtube-tv-hulu-live-tv-the-rest.html

If you are thinking of cord-cutting and are worried about having a DVR, this is a must-read post for you. There are even options given for antenna-only situations.

How To Create A USB Image To Back Up Your Data

https://www.maketecheasier.com/create-usb-image-data-backup/

This is a little bit more advanced than what I usually post. I use this process frequently enough that it has become a habit.

How To Make Android Faster: 11 Things That Work (And 3 That Don't) https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/android-faster-works/

I have Android phones and tablets, so this post got my attention. I am always looking for ways to make these devices work faster. I have used most of the tips at one time or another, and I no longer use the 3 that don't work even before reading this.

What Is Smishing?

https://askleo.com/what-is-smishing/

I am sure you have heard of phishing, but do you know what smishing is? Check out this post to learn about it, what to watch for, and what to do about it.



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April 2023

Personal Computer Databases An Overview

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

Introduction

I've spent much of my career in software development, working with various database programs, including a stint at Ashton-Tate / Borland as Director of the dBase development team. For this month's Tech Notes discussion, we'll do an overview of what database technology is available for regular personal computer users. Interestingly, some of the best database programs are free. The tradeoff is that you have to invest some time learning how to use them.

The basic idea of a database is that it's a way to save and organize information so that specific pieces can be quickly retrieved on demand for either display or computational analysis. The most common way this is done is to impose some tabular structure (rows and columns) on the data so that a standardized set of retrieval interfaces can be used. Such databases are referred to as "relational" databases.

A relational database is comprised of one or more data **tables**.

- Each table contains one or more **rows** of data.
- Each row includes one or more columns.
- Individual columns have a column name, a size, and a data type such as text, integer, float, date, or Boolean.
- One column is commonly designated the **primary key** and contains a unique value that can be used to identify and refer to that row in the table.

It's possible to link data from one column of a set of rows in a table to the "key" column of a row in another table, creating a relationship between the "master" row in one table and a set of "detail" rows in another. For example: think of the bill for a meal at a restaurant (a row in the Chits table) with the individual itemized entrees, sides, and beverages as details (one or more rows in the Chit_Items table).

To support data retrieval and other operations (e.g., Add, Update, Delete), relational databases use a special language: **Structured Query Language** (SQL for short, often pronounced "sequel"). Many database programs also have a visual front end that makes it easy to design SQL queries that will retrieve specific subsets of the data.

Spreadsheets

The most straightforward database programs are traditional spreadsheet tools like **MS Excel** or the free **LibreOffice Calc**. These have a natural rows and columns structure. It's easy to sort the rows based on values in various columns. You can set filters on multiple columns to display only a subset of the data. A search can also look for specific values in a column or anywhere in the sheet. You can also include computational columns and rows that aren't part of the actual data but "sum up," count, average, or perhaps show minimum and maximum values.

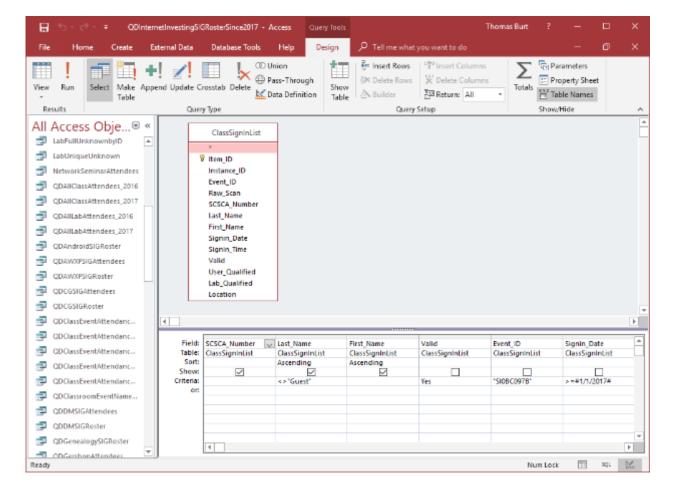
Spreadsheets are great for contact lists, asset tracking, inventories, and catalogs. However, they don't easily support relationships between records in different tables, and there's no SQL support.

"Flat File" Database Programs

Commercial database programs like **MS Access**, Word Perfect **Paradox** (formerly a Borland product), and **Apple FileMaker** are more full-featured database tools with true relational support and SQL support. These tools can build relatively sophisticated applications with complex relational data structures, input forms, result viewers, and printable reports. However, these commercial tools aren't free and take some serious time to learn.

These commercial tools support multiple concurrent users via "file server" locking technology on a local area network. Each user runs their copy of the database "engine" to do reads, inserts, updates, and deletes, which can lead to access contention. Performance can become an issue if more than a few concurrent users access the database file(s).

The screenshot following shows an example of the MS Access visual query designer setting up a query to retrieve a list of club members who attended at least one session of the Internet Investing SIG since January 2017.



MS Access Visual Query Designer

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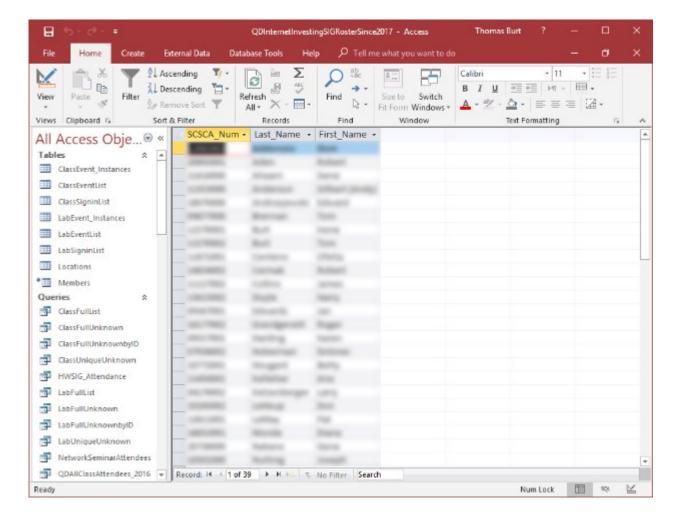
Once the query has been set up, you can click the View button in the ribbon to see the results as a data table. Note that various selection criteria are defined so that we only get the set of rows we're interested in.

The equivalent Structured Query Language (SQL) statement would look like this:

SELECT DISTINCT SCSCA_Number, Last_Name, First_Name FROM ClassSignInList

WHERE ((Last_Name<>"Guest") AND (Valid=Yes) AND (Event_ID="SI0BC097B") AND (Signin_Date>=#1/1/2017#)) ORDER BY Last_Name, First_Name;

The SELECT DISTINCT tells the database engine only to return each unique attendee once, no matter how many times that person attended the SIG. Here's a display of the results of running the SELECT query. I've intentionally blurred the results.



MS Access Results Display Members who attended a session of the Investing SIG since 1-1-2017

I use MS Access and its databases (along with the VB.Net programming system) for the Computer Club's membership roster and the event sign-in systems, which has worked very well in those contexts.

A good **free alternative** to commercial programs is **LibreOffice Base**. It also has a nice visual front end. However, the native database engine in Base is fairly limited, so it's best to use Base as a visual front-end to a more sophisticated database engine/server, such as MySQL or PostgreSQL (see below).

Full-Featured FREE Relational Database Servers

I've recently looked at a few free full-featured database server products running on Windows. Of these, Microsoft's **SQL Server Express**, **Oracle's MySQL**, and the open-source **PostgreSQL** all combine high-end server functionality and performance with the ultimate low price (FREE). You can run these on the same PC as your end-user applications, or you can run them on another PC acting as a network database server.

At this point, I'm most familiar with Oracle's **MySQL**, which runs on Windows, Linux, and macOS. I've built an experimental version of the club's sign-in system that uses MySQL databases instead of MS Access. As a true database server engine, its performance on a network is much better than that of MS Access. MySQL is often used as the database engine to support websites. It can scale to retrieve thousands of records per second. Despite this, MySQL was very quick to download and install on my Windows desktop at home. MySQL is accompanied by the **MySQL Workbench** visual front-end, which isn't quite as nice as MS Access but does a decent job. You can get MySQL at: https://www.mysql.com.

SQL Server Express is a free download from www.Microsoft.com. It is a "light" version of Microsoft's very high-end SQL Server and only runs on Windows. SQL Server Express is high-performance and has an excellent visual front-end for designing and managing databases.

PostgreSQL is a free download from www.PostgreSQL.org. It runs on Windows, Linux, macOS, and Unix. In addition, it has a very rich browser-based visual front-end, **pgAdmin**, for designing and managing databases.

Summary

Depending on your needs and skills, a simple MS Excel or LibreOffice Calc spreadsheet may be the perfect solution for managing your various data collections. Spreadsheets are also easy to back up and share with others.

For more sophisticated users, the flat file database tools may be the way to go – especially if you're running a small business or supporting a non-profit or charity.

The full-featured database server products may be overkill for a home user, but it's hard to beat the price. To use them, you will need to learn their features, including a working knowledge of the Structured Query Language.



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Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Most SIGs will meet at Edina Executive Plaza, Conference Room #102, 5200 Willson Road, Edina, MN
Confirm with a SIG group if they meet elsewhere.
For more info contact the SIG Leader(s) listed here.

w Work phone h Home phone c Cell phone * Meets at an alternate location

Get SIG announcements! Link from www.tcpc.com

Board of Directors*

All members are welcome! Check www.tcpc.com for location. Selected Saturday mornings

Linux on Saturday

This is for the Linux newbie and those trying to come over from Microsoft to a different operating system.

Second Saturday @ 9 AM-Noon Note: No Meetings June-August

Jack Ungerleider

612/418-3494 c jack@jacku.com

Tech Topics

Technical presentation/discussion on various technical topics from the following areas:

- Web/Internet
- Mobile Devices and Apps
- Playing with Programming
- DIY (3D Printing, R-Pi, other hobby electronics, etc.)

Second Tuesday @ 6:00-7:00 PM Every month Right before the general meeting.

Jack Ungerleider

612/418-3494 c jack@jacku.com

Microsoft Access

All levels. Presentations by expert developers within the group and by MS reps.

Third Saturday 9:00 AM—Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmey 952/934-8492 skuhlmey@hotmail.com

Microsoft Office

Addresses the use, integration, and nuances of the Microsoft Office applications.

Combined with Systems on Saturday
Third Saturday of the Month
9:00 AM—Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmey 952/934-8492 skuhlmey@hotmail.com

Directions to Accord, 1515 Energy Park Drive for General Meetings:

From I-94 in St. Paul, take the Snelling Avenue exit, then go north on Snelling Avenue about one mile to Energy Park Drive. Take Energy Park Drive and take the first left into the driveway to 1515 Energy Park Drive.

From I-694 or Hwy 36 in St. Paul, take the Snelling Avenue exit, then go south on Snelling Avenue past Como Avenue to Energy Park Drive. Take Energy Park Drive and take the first left into the driveway to 1515 Energy Park Drive.

Directions to Edina Executive Plaza for Systems on Saturday, Access, Word and Picture Perfect SIGs: Take Highway 100 to the 50th Street/Vernon exit. [If you have come from the north, cross back over Highway 100 to the east side.] Take the first right and go past Perkins [The golf course will be on your left.] and continue on the east frontage road (Willson Road) to the next building—5200. There is ample parking in the building's lot.

Conference Room #102 is on 1st floor.

Help yourself by helping others!

Join the team & share your knowledge with others.

Contact TC/PC at www.tcpc.com

Meetings start at 7:00 PM (9:00 AM on Saturday) unless otherwise noted. *Virtual Meetings during Covid pandemic.

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2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Linux on Sat- urday SIG 9am—Noon
9	10	11 7pm General Mtg Using Canva for Graphic Design 6pm Tech Topics	12	13	14	MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
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7	8	9 7pm General Mtg TBA 6pm Tech Topics	10	11	12	Linux on Sat- urday SIG 9am—Noon
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Would you like to receive this delivered directly to your email or business each month?

As a member of TC/PC, the Twin Cities Personal Computer Group, one of the benefits is reading this monthly publication at www.tcpc.com..

As a member of TC/PC, you may attend any or all of the monthly Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings and be eligible for software drawings. The small membership fee also includes access to real-live people with answers via our helplines, discounts, and various other perks.

Does membership in this group sound like a good way to increase your computer knowledge?

It's easy to do! Simply fill in the form below and mail it to the address shown. (If you use the form in this issue, you will receive an extra month for joining now.)



4/23 I'm signing up for:4 Here's the info for my TC/PC Membership: O Individual/Family Membership (\$18) O Business Membership (\$100) If an existing member your # Make checks payable to: Company name **Twin Cities PC User Group** 341 County Rd C2 W Roseville, MN 55113 State Zip http://www.tcpc.com OHome OBusiness OChange address: OPerm. OTemp. 'til _____ O Check # O Bill me O New member O Renewal O Prior member Home phone_____ Work phone____ I'm interested in: O Training classes O Volunteering Online address(es) O Special Interest Groups: New User, Access, etc. Where did you hear about TC/PC? _____ List here: O I DO NOT want any of my information disclosed. O I DO NOT want to receive any mailings Administrative Use Only Rec'd

April 11, 2023 7:00 pm General Meeting

Using Canva for Graphic Design

Via Zoom Only



FIRST CLASS MAIL