

The Digital

Viking

(membership includes
monthly subscription)



Twin Cities

PC USER GROUP

NEWSLETTER

Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota USA • Vol. 43 No.10 • June 2023

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

June 2023

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**General Meeting
Tuesday, June 13, 2023
7:00 PM**

Annual Meeting & Board Elections

Via Zoom Only

It's time again for our annual meeting. As members of this organization, this is your opportunity to:

- Make suggestions for upcoming meeting topics, especially, topics that have not been covered before;
- Volunteer to contact speakers for meetings
- Volunteer your time to serve in leadership positions and on the Board
- Volunteer to write some articles for this newsletter, and
- Suggest ways to increase membership.

Let's have a good turnout for this meeting and a lively discussion of how to make the next year the best ever for TC/PC. 🖨

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



24-Hour Information • www.tcpc.com

Application form inside back cover

The Digital Viking

The Digital Viking is the official monthly publication of the Twin Cities PC User Group, a 501(c)(3) organization and an all-volunteer organization dedicated to users of IBM-compatible computers. Subscriptions are included in membership. We welcome articles and reviews from members. The Digital Viking is a copyrighted publication and reproduction of any material is expressly prohibited without permission. Exception: other User Groups may use material if unaltered and credited.

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Full page (7½ x 9½)	\$100.00
Two-thirds page (7½ x 6)	80.00
Half page (7½ x 4¾)	65.00
One-third page (7½ x 3)	50.00
Quarter page (3½ x 4¾)	40.00
Member Bus. Card (2 x 3½)	10.00

Multiple insertion discounts available.

Contact Sharon Walbran at: SQWalbran@yahoo.com

Deadline for ad placement is the 1st of the month prior to publication. All rates are per issue and for digital or camera-ready ads. Typesetting and other services are extra and must be requested in advance of submission deadlines.

Payment must accompany order unless other arrangements are made in advance. Please make checks payable to: **Twin Cities PC User Group**

TC/PC 2022-2023 Board of Directors

Meets once or twice per year. All members welcome to attend.

Visit www.tcpc.com for meeting details.

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Curtiss Trout	ctrout@troutreach.com
Sharon Trout	strout@troutreach.com
Jack Ungerleider	jack@jacku.com
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TC/PC Member Benefits

Product previews
and demonstrations

Special Interest Groups
Monthly Newsletter

Discounts on products
and services

Contests and prizes

Business Member Benefits

All of the above PLUS:

FREE ½ page ad on
payment of each renewal

20% discount on all ads
Placed in the *Digital
Viking* Newsletter

Up to 5 newsletters mailed to
your site
(only a nominal cost for each
additional 5 mailed)

Newsletter Staff Editor Sharon Walbran

Ventoy

By Dick Maybach, Brookdale Computer User Group

www.bcug.com

n2nd (at) att.net

Some years ago, Linux live CD-ROMs appeared. When these were mounted on a PC, it would boot directly from them and not require access to the hard disk. Later we saw live DVDs and then live USB memory sticks and SD cards. A limitation was that each distribution used an entire storage device. Ventoy, <https://www.ventoy.net/en/index.html>, which is available for Windows and Linux, removes this restriction. In this article, I'll cover what Ventoy does, how to set it up, and how you can use it.

Figure 1 shows the screen you see after booting from a Ventoy memory stick that contains three Linux distributions, the general-purpose Knoppix, the repair tool PartedMagic, and the high-security Tails Linux. You then select the one you want to run.



Figure 1. Ventoy Boot Menu.

Begin by downloading a program to format storage devices from the Ventoy website. It's in the form of an archive; just unpack it and go to the resulting directory. Once there, mount the memory device, and run the program Ventoy2Disk.exe (in Windows) or VentoyGUI.x86_64 (in Linux) to see the screen in Figure 2. (There are alternate versions for special situations; visit the Ventoy website.) Next, you select a device and then choose either Install (to create a new Ventoy device) or Update (to update an existing one). However, you will have more versatility if, before you click Install, you select the Option button at the top left of Figure 2, then select Partition Configuration, then Preserve some space at the end of the disk, and finally enter the amount. (For a 32-Gbyte medium, I choose 1

Gbyte; see below for the reason. You, of course, may prefer a different configuration.)

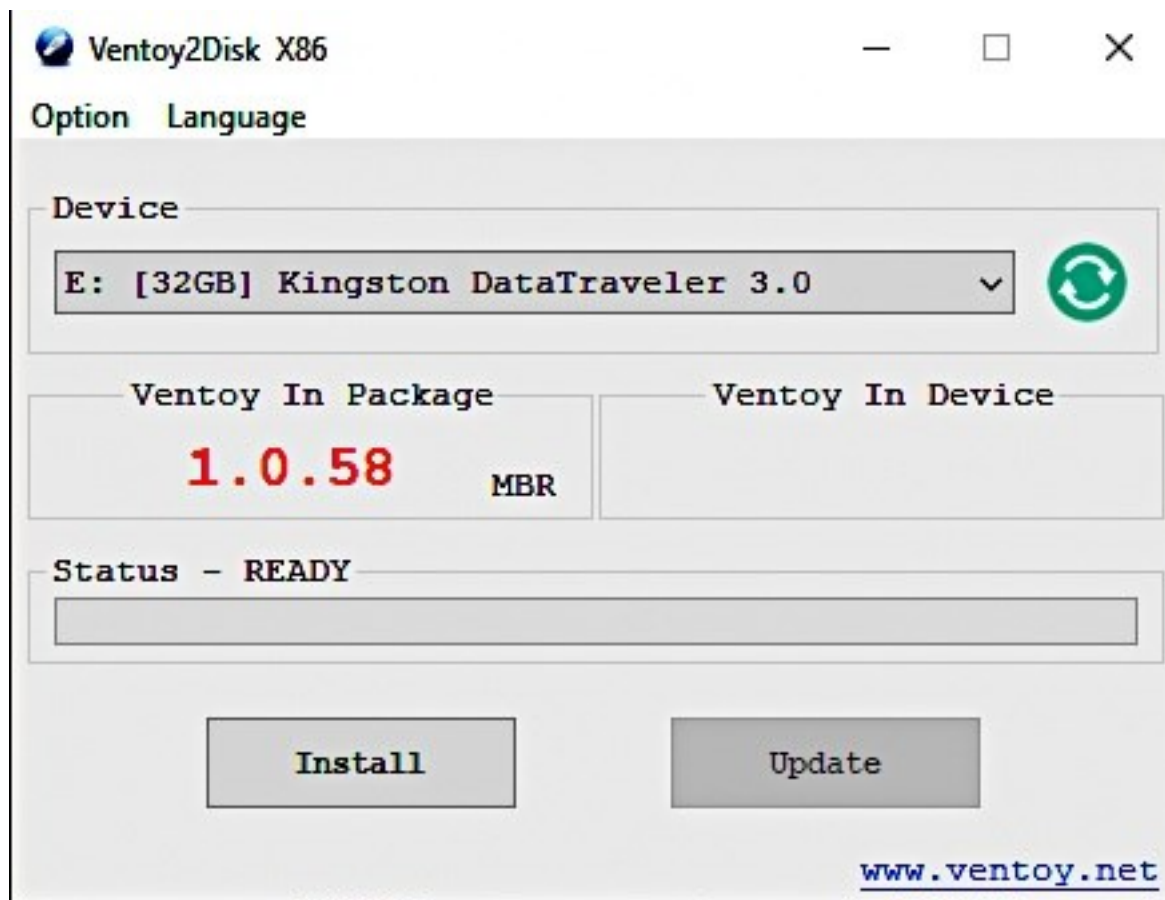


Figure 2. Ventoy2Disk Window.

You're not entirely done. The device now has two partitions, a large empty one with an exFAT format (labeled "Ventoy") and a small one with a fat16 format (labeled "VTOYEFI") that contains the Ventoy boot program. There is also (if you took the advice above) unformatted space at the end. Reformat the Ventoy partition to NTFS and format the space at the end to NTFS with the label "Persist" (more about this later). You'll copy the live ISO files into the Ventoy partition. Since both Windows and Linux can access NTFS, the device will be usable on both. The result is Figure 3, and the memory stick or SD card is ready to use.

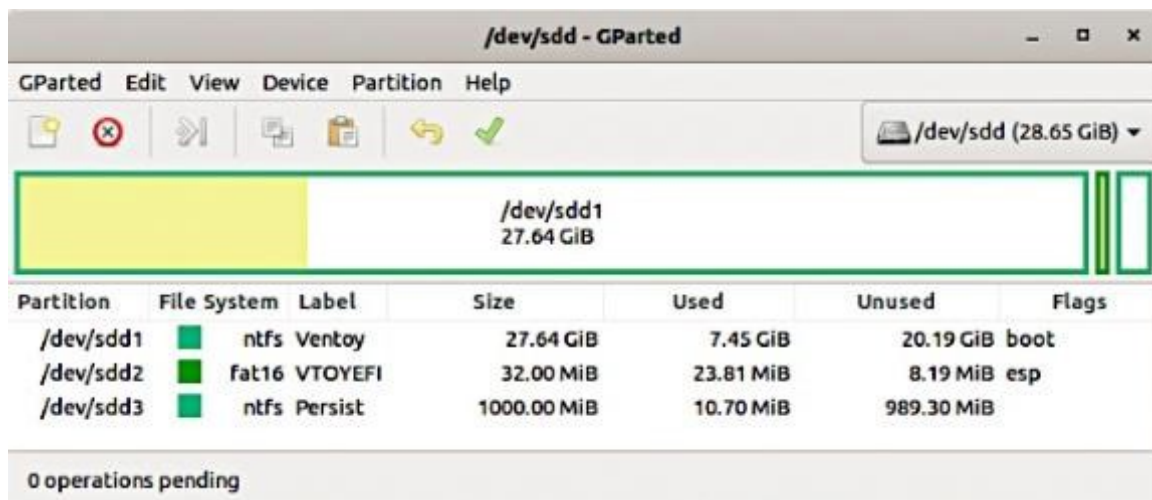


Figure 3. USB Memory Stick After Ventoy Is Installed.

When you mount the device as a memory stick (that is, you don't boot from it), you'll see either two or three partitions. (Linux hides the middle one; Windows shows it.) As you can see, a 32-Gbyte stick with the three Linux distributions of Figure 1 has over 20 Gbytes available for transferring files. Figure 4 shows the files in the Ventoy partition that resulted in Figure 1. I created the Scratch directory to separate files transferred from the ISO images.

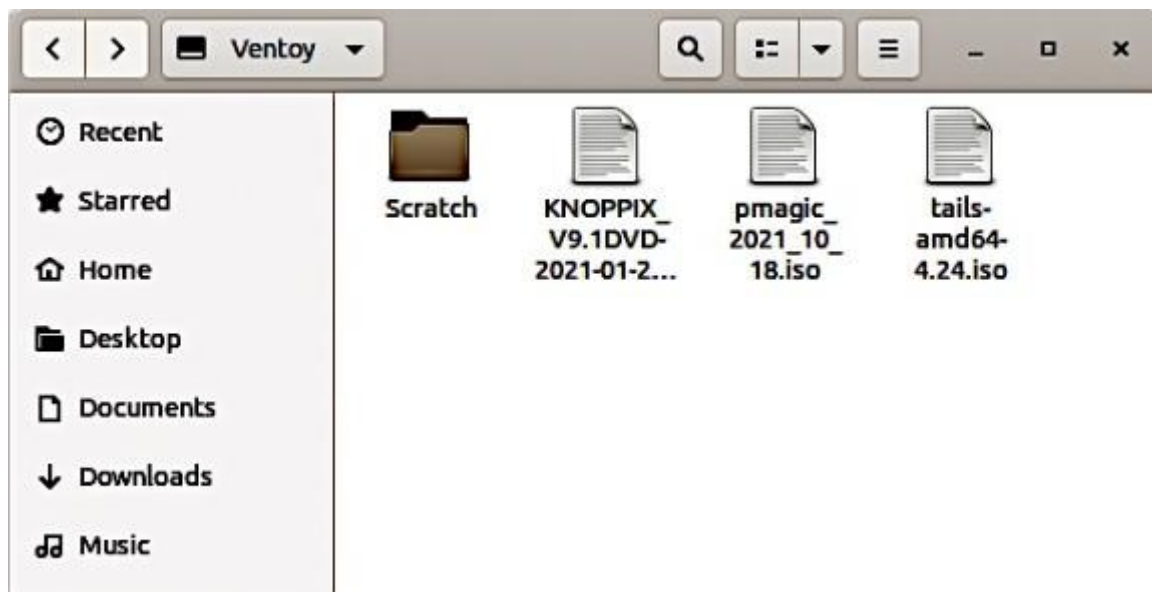


Figure 4. Files on a Ventoy USB Stick.

When you boot from the stick, neither the Ventoy partition nor VTOYEFI is available, but the live distributions can use partition three. This is because software booted from a live medium normally has only RAM for storage and forgets everything when it's shut down. However, if you create a third partition mentioned above, you can copy data that will persist after a shut-down, hence a label. This partition appears as a separate drive on the file manager when running a live distribution. It is also accessible when the medium is mounted on a PC, so you can transfer data to and from it.

Old PCs (those booting using a BIOS) will boot from a USB memory stick without complaining. However, if yours has a UEFI, you will probably have to change some BIOS settings. See <https://www.digitalcitizen.life/boot-your-windows-10-pc-usb-flash-drive/> or my article UEFI Configuration for

Booting Live Media in the March 2020 BCUG Bytes, available at <http://www.bcug.com/>.

How might you use the result? I carry a 32-GBYTE USB memory stick in my key case for transferring files. I've installed Ventoy on it with the three operating systems shown in Figure 1:

Knoppix, <http://knoppix.net/> – a general-purpose Linux distribution optimized for use on live USBs, PartedMagic, <https://partedmagic.com/> – a PC repair tool, and

Tails Linux, <https://tails.boum.org/> – an enhanced-security Linux distribution.

Knoppix lets me use my preferred OS, Linux, on almost any PC, regardless of whether the software on its hard disk is damaged or infected with malware. PartedMagic will help me repair a PC. And Tails will let me safely communicate with my bank or credit card company from anywhere. None makes any changes to data on the PC's hard disk unless I specifically do that. Figures 5, 6, and 7 show the home pages of these quite different distributions.

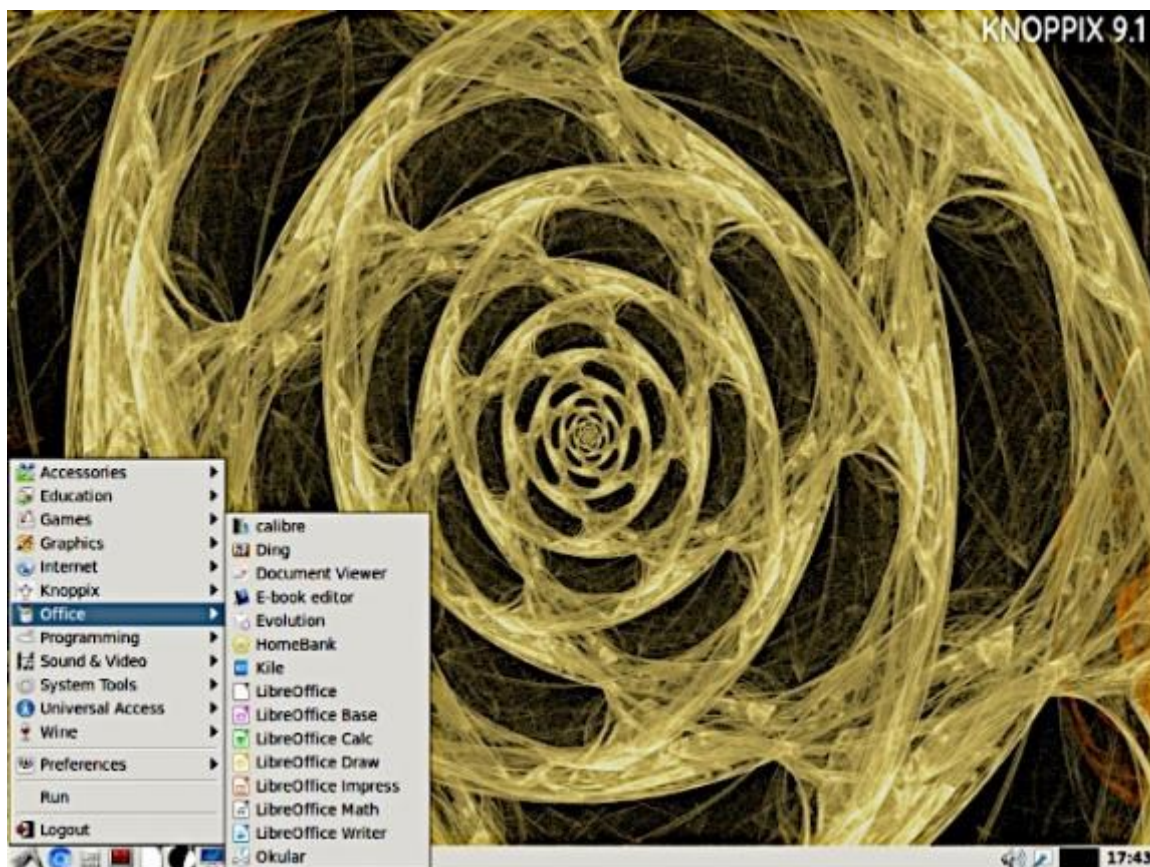


Figure 5. Knoppix Home Screen, Showing Its Office Application Menu.

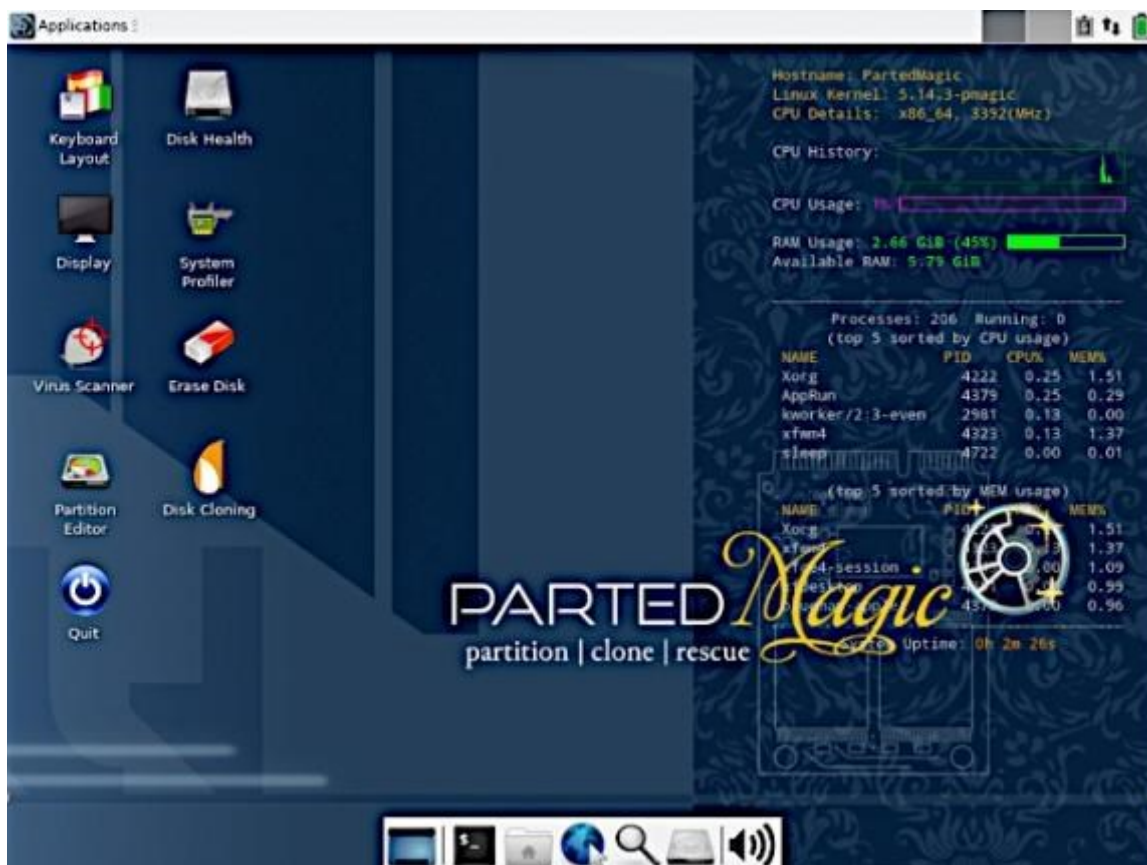


Figure 6. PartedMagic Home Screen.

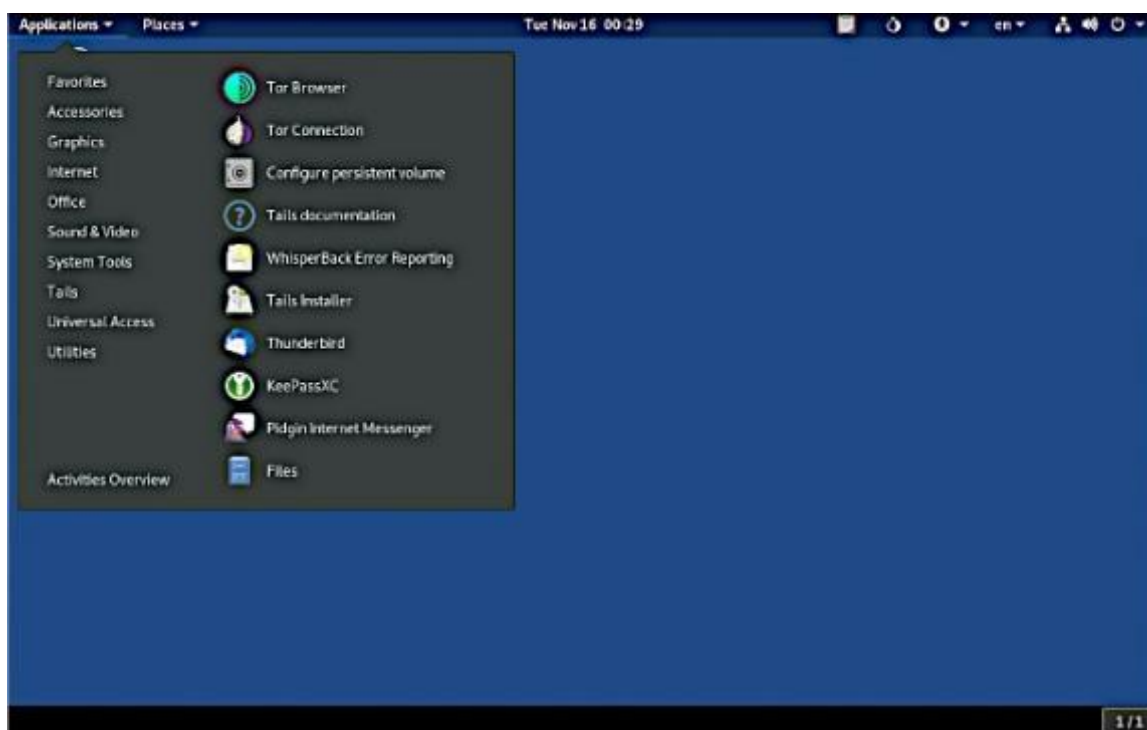


Figure 7. Tails Home Page, Showing Its Favorites Menu.

All three distributions (Knoppix, PartedMagic, and Tails) have the program KeePassXC, <https://>

keepassxc.org/, which I use to store sensitive data, such as user names, passwords, and PINs, in an encrypted database. I keep this in the Persist partition, which makes the data available if I need it and keeps it secure. I also exported my contact list to a spreadsheet stored in Persist. All three distributions include LibreOffice, <https://www.libreoffice.org/>, which can access this spreadsheet. Finally, all three have the encryption program GNU Privacy Guard, <https://gnupg.org/>, so I can safely store sensitive data on the medium. As you can see in Figure 8, the same key case also has a real Swiss Army Knife; as a result, I'm prepared for anything from disk crashes to wilderness survival.



Figure 8. Keycase with Ventoy USB.

I have another Ventoy stick with a dozen or so PC repair tools, and since it has over 16 Gbytes free in its Ventoy partition, I could add more. Although I often use PartedMagic for PC rescue, it doesn't do everything. Having all my tools on one stick means I have only one to take with me for troubleshooting a PC.

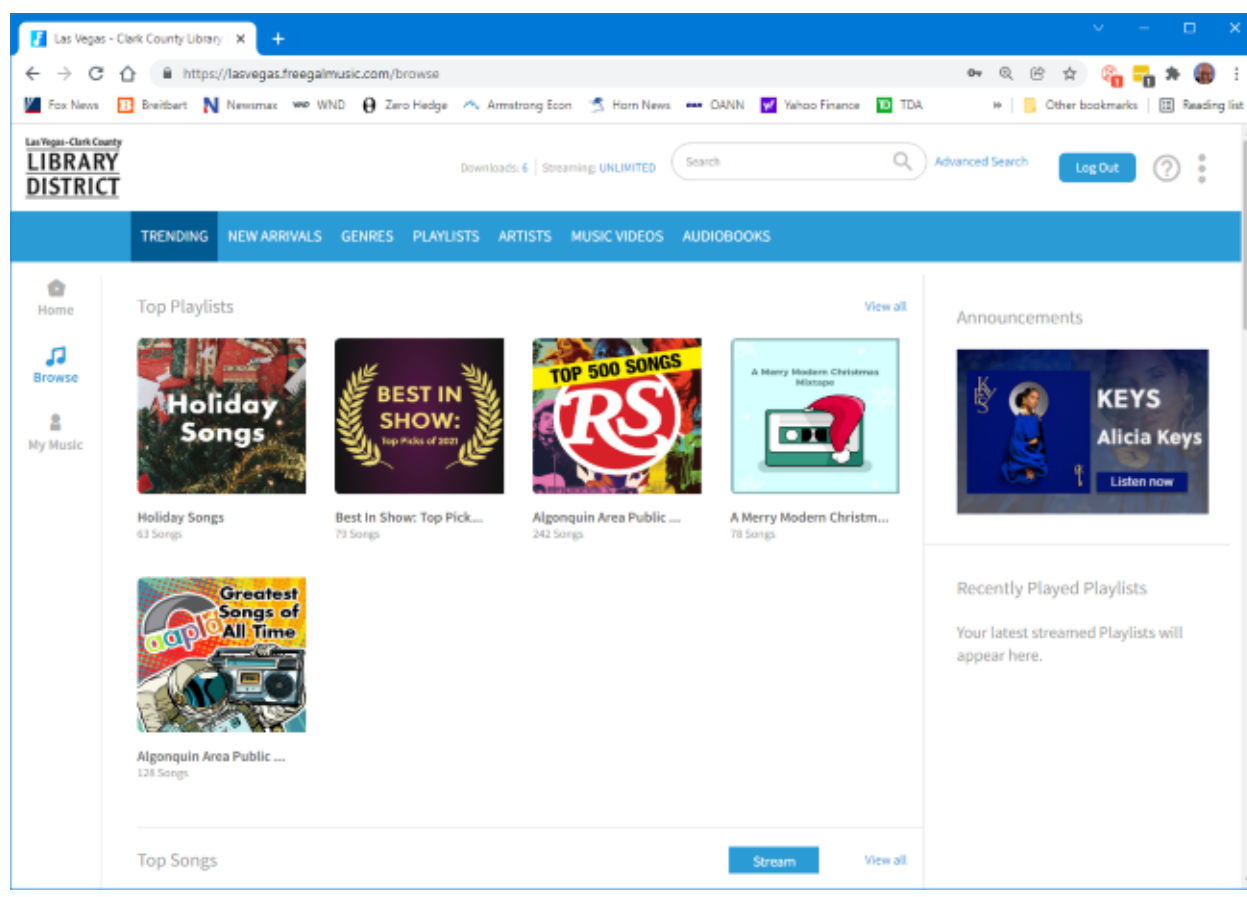
Ventoy also makes it easy to experiment with various Linux distributions. You need only download the ISO file and copy it to a Ventoy stick to try a new one. When you are through, reboot to return to the menu of Figure 1, where you can select another. Of course, there are limitations with this approach; you can't install additional software on the distributions, and a memory stick is slower than a hard disk. Neither is particularly important when you're just trying out a distribution to see if it's compatible with your PC or if you like its interface. Of course, running it on a virtual machine or as a dual boot is far more preferable if you regularly use a distribution. 🖥️

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Free Music with Freegal

By Tom Burt, Vice-President
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
<https://www.scscclb.com>
tomburt89134 (at) cox.net

One of my occasional Computer Club seminars touches on the many electronic resources available for free via the Las Vegas / Clark County library website. (One of those resources I briefly review is a service called Freegal (short for Free and legal). This article gives you an overview of Freegal, which has an extensive collection of music tracks and albums you can play. They also allow you to download up to 6 tracks per week for free. You might want to check to see if Freegal is available at your library.



Reaching Freegal

You can reach Freegal from the Las Vegas / Clark County Library District website: <https://lvccld.org/>. Once there, click the **Online Resources** tab and then click **Music**. On the page that displays, click **Freegal**. A more direct way is to click the following hyperlink: <https://lasvegas.freegalmusic.com/home>.

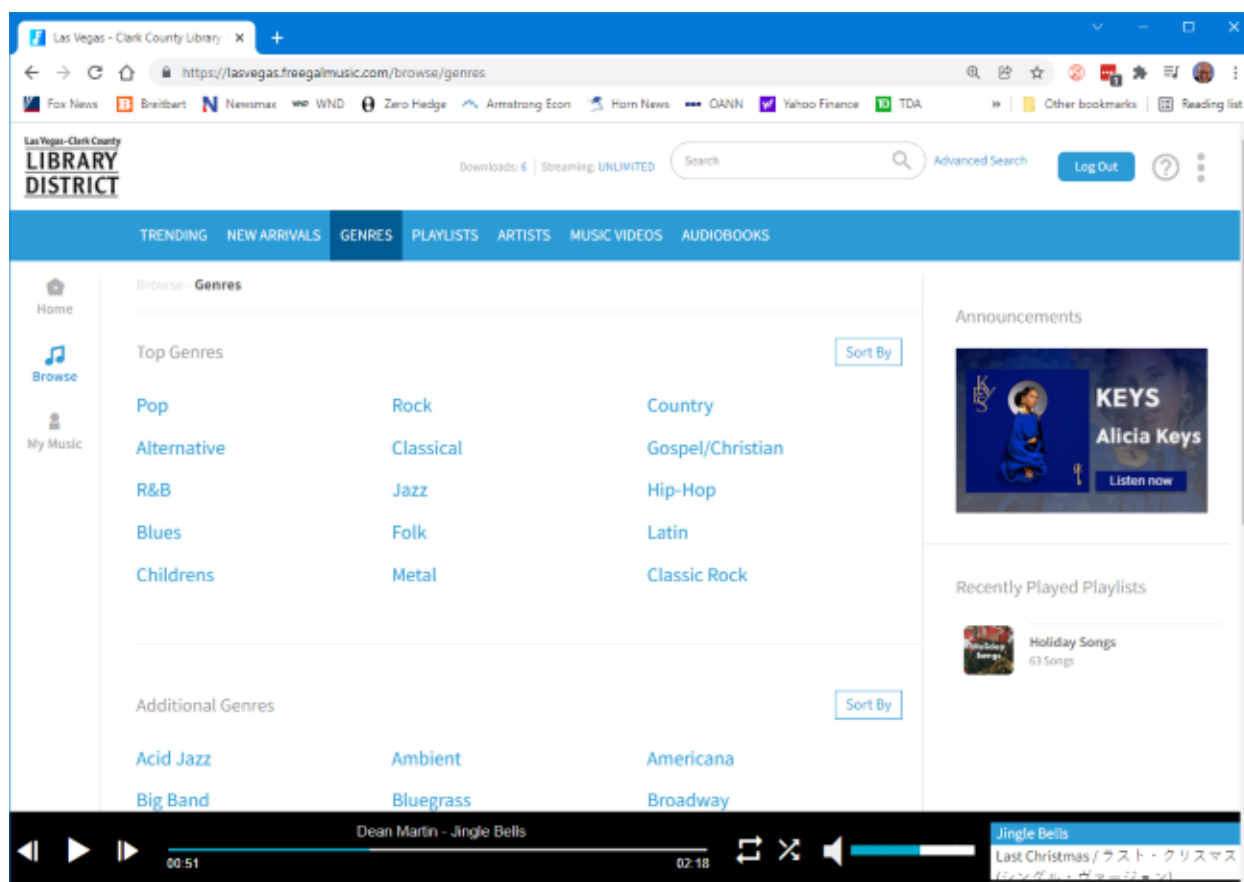
You can browse the Freegal website without logging in, but you must log in with your library card number and pin to download any music tracks.

Navigating Freegal

Freegal claims it has 13 million songs and 40,000 music videos. Logged-in users may download six tracks a week for free and may stream music from the website for up to 3 hours per day. However, finding the material you're looking for can be daunting.

The **Home** page displays featured playlists, songs, albums, music videos, and audiobooks. You can play any of these. Playlists and albums are collections of songs displayed in a list, so you can play or download specific tracks.

On the **Browse** page (see screenshot above), along the top are tabs for **Trending**, **New Arrivals**, **Genres**, **Playlists**, **Artists**, **Music Videos**, and **Audio Books**.

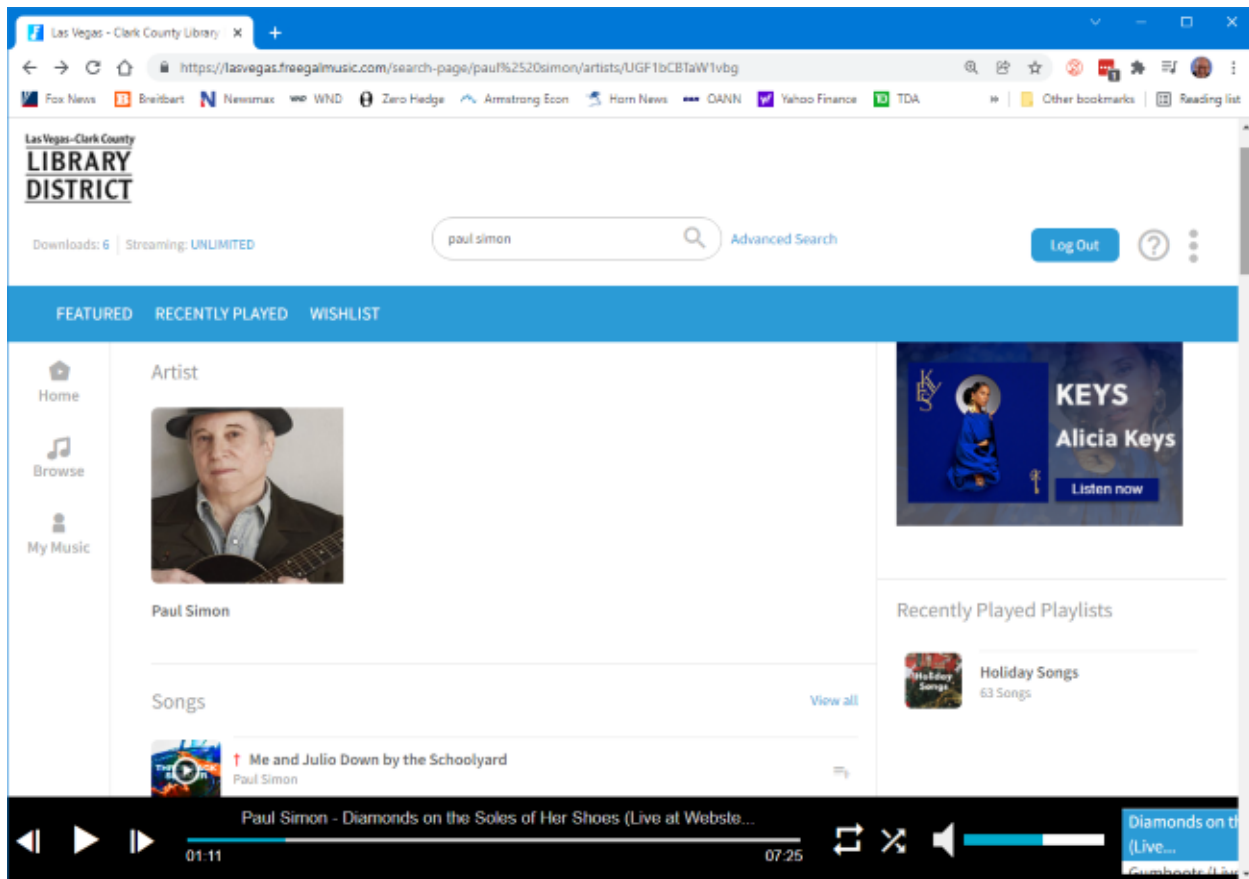


As an illustration, the Genres tab of the Browse page takes you to a listing of musical genres. You can click any genre to home in on the type of music you're interested in.

Searching

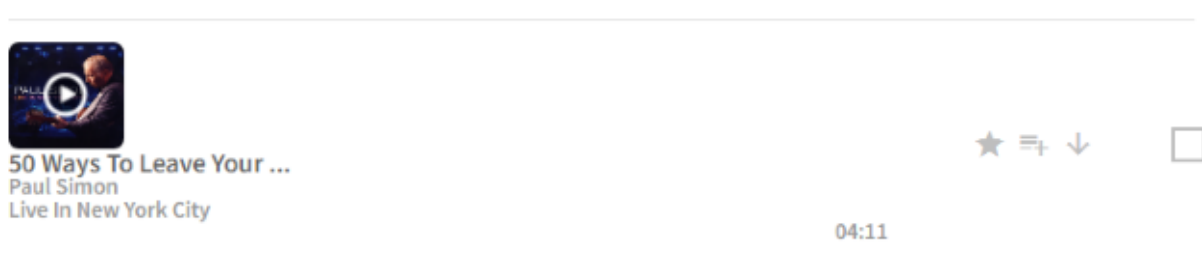
If you are looking for a specific artist or song, you can use the search box at the top of the window. The search is quite intelligent. For example, I entered "Paul Simon" into the Search box and displayed a page of offerings, including some single tracks, a few albums, and music videos. Next, I chose an album called "Live in New York City" and then had a listing of all the tracks from that

album, ready to play or download.



You can search for any artist, album name, or song title.

Downloading a Track



Click the down arrow when you've found a track you want to download and are logged in. The downloader will display a "save file/folder chooser" dialog. Select a folder to download the track into, click Save, and the file will then download. The file name combines the artist, album, track name, location, and date. In this case, it was:
PaulSimon_LiveInNewYorkCity_50WaysToLeaveYourLover-LiveAtWebsterHallNewYorkCityJune2011_3.mp3.

You can edit this name in the save file dialog or later use File Explorer after the download is done. The file format is .mp3, and the sample rate is 256 kilobits.

Caveats

Many first-tier artists don't allow all their work to be posted on Freegal. So all you can do is try the search and see what shows up.

A lot of the content is covered, by lesser artists, of original songs by first-tier performers. Some of this is quite good, and a lot is fairly mediocre. Beware also of "remixes." These are cases where someone has taken an original song or album and digitally manipulated the background music. These are usually not as appealing as the original artist's recording.

Final Thoughts

Freegal can be a great place to find oldies in high-quality mp3 format. I use it mainly for that. Much of my personal music collection was "ripped" from LP albums or audio tapes at 128 Kilobit sample rates. The digital recordings have pops and hisses and weak treble. If I can find those tracks on Freegal, I download them to replace my original low-quality recordings.

You can get some pleasant surprises. For example, I enjoyed a lot of Peter, Paul, and Mary, the Limelites, and the Kingston Trio – all folk groups back in college.

At six songs per week, if you're organized and committed, you can collect 312 songs per year. After a while, that starts to add up. And you can't beat the price. 🖥️

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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 develop-
ers within the group and by MS reps.

Third Saturday 9:00 AM—Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmeier 952/934-8492
skuhlmeier@hotmail.com

Microsoft Office

Addresses the use, integration, and nuanc-
es 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 Kuhlmeier 952/934-8492
skuhlmeier@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.

June

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Linux on Saturday SIG 9am—Noon
11	12	13 7pm General Mtg Annual Meeting & Election 6pm Tech Topics	14	15	16	17 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Linux on Saturday SIG 9am—Noon
9	10	11 7pm General Mtg ChatGPT and AI 6pm Tech Topics	12	13	14	15 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

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You have just read an issue of The Digital Viking.

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.)



6/23

Here's the info for my TC/PC Membership:

Full name _____

Company name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ Home ☐ Business ☐ Change address: ☐ Perm. ☐ Temp. 'til _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____

Online address(es) _____

Where did you hear about TC/PC? _____

☐ I DO NOT want any of my information disclosed.

☐ I DO NOT want to receive any mailings

I'm signing up for:4

☐ Individual/Family Membership (\$18)

☐ Business Membership (\$100)

If an existing member your # _____

Make checks payable to:

**Twin Cities PC User Group
341 County Rd C2 W
Roseville, MN 55113**

<http://www.tcpc.com>

☐ Check # _____ ☐ Bill me

☐ New member ☐ Renewal ☐ Prior member

I'm interested in:

☐ Training classes ☐ Volunteering

☐ Special Interest Groups: New User, Access, etc.

List here:

Administrative Use Only Rec'd _____ Chk# _____

**June 13, 2023
7:00 pm
General Meeting**

Annual Meeting & Board Elections

Via Zoom Only



341 County Rd C2 W
Roseville, MN 55113

FIRST CLASS MAIL