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

April 2025

General Meeting [4]
Tuesday, April 8, 2025

7:00 PM

Let's Get Organized!

Via Zoom Only

This month we'll take a look at different ways to organize files and folders on your PC. Organizational experts have come up with different approaches to cut the time it takes for you to find files, to use consistent naming conventions to recognize the file name you are looking for, and to make it easier to locate those same files well into the future. Bring your own suggestions on what works for you to achieve these same results.

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.

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

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YES, YOU DO NEED A DISPOSABLE EMAIL ADDRESS

By Bob Rankin
bob@askbobrankin.com

Here's Why You Need a Disposable Email Address.

Have you encountered a website that demanded your email address to make a purchase, create an account, play a game, or gain access to information? I'm sure you have, and in some cases, you've probably done so hesitantly, thinking that you might be subjecting your inbox to a flood of spam. Disposable email addresses can help you tell who the untrustworthy contacts are and protect you from unwanted "sharing" of your contacts.

A disposable email address is a temporary or anonymous email address that can forward messages to your permanent address. Ideally, any replies you send are relayed back through the disposable email address to the original sender, who never learns your permanent address. If unwanted emails suddenly start arriving through the disposable email address, you can stop it by deleting or filtering that address. You can have one disposable email address for every entity that requires an email address, if you like. Then if spam starts coming from a given disposable email address, you can be pretty sure who's responsible. It's possible that a spammer just randomly generated an email address that matched one of your disposable email addresses. Still, it's MUCH more likely that the entity to which you gave the disposable email address shared it willingly, by carelessness, or by theft. Data breaches are responsible for a lot of this. Having narrowed down the security leak to one entity, you can investigate and decide whether to give that entity another disposable email address or steer clear of it.

Make Your Own Disposable Email Address with Plus Addressing There are several ways to create disposable email addresses on your own. Some are free, and some are more work than others. My favorite is "plus addressing" with Gmail, which lets me make up a disposable email address on the spot for whoever wants it. Here is how plus addressing works, as well as some limitations of this technique. Let's say your email address is whatever@gmail.com. Add a "+" sign and any string of characters between "whatever" and the @ symbol, for example, whatever + ChaseBank@gmail.com.

Now, give that address to your online Chase Bank account. Repeat the process for Facebook, newsletter subscriptions, online stores, Craigslist transactions, or any websites with "squeeze pages" that make you supply an address to continue. Of course, give it to that hipster artisanal cheese seller at the farmer's market. All mail sent to your plus addresses will go to your whatever@gmail.com inbox. If you start getting unwanted emails at the plus address, just create a Gmail filter to send them to the Trash. For extra points, create a filter to funnel the mail from each plus address to its own Gmail folder. Just keep in mind that this trick works well for automated systems that send to you,but can be defeated by humans who are clever enough to remove the "plus" portion of the address. Also, when you reply to a message sent to one of your plus addresses, the From line will be your standard Gmail reply address, not the plus address. Not all websites will accept a Gmail address with a plus sign, but it usually works.

The Dot Option Gmail also allows you to insert "." characters in your email address, and effectively ignores them. So if your address is johnsmith@gmail.com, you can use john.smith@gmail.com or even j.o.h.n.s.m.i.t.h@gmail.com and the email sent to those dotted addresses will all go to the "johnsmith" inbox. The plus sign trick also works with Outlook.com (formerly Hotmail), but Yahoo uses minus signs, which makes the process a bit more difficult. See this page on Disposable

Addresses in Yahoo to learn how it works. Another option if you have your own domain and receive email there, is to create email aliases. That's outside the scope of this article, but your web host or domain registrar can provide details on whether that feature is offered, and how to set it up. Disposable Email Address Services Yes, it is a lot of work to set up and maintain disposable addresses for all the entities you communicate with via email. Fortunately, numerous disposable email address services handle most of the heavy lifting for you.

Here are some of the established and reputable disposable email address service providers: Sneakemail bills itself as "The Original Disposable Email Address Company" and offers to hide your address from spammers and others you'd rather not deal with. If someone wants your email address and you have qualms about providing it, log in to Sneakemail and create a new address. If mail is sent to your Sneakemail address, it will be forwarded to your real address. Sneakemail also creates an alias for the sender of your incoming messages, so if you reply, only your Sneakemail address will be exposed to the recipient. Sneakemail costs $3/month.

Trashmail receives emails and forwards them to your permanent address. When you set up a disposable email address on Trashmail, you can limit the number of emails that can be received or the number of days that may pass before the disposable email address expires. Your disposable email address can be a username of your choosing on trashmail.com, or 10 other domain names (trashmail.me, trashmail.at, etc.). An optional Chrome browser add-on makes the service more convenient. Basic service is free, but if you want more than 25 addresses, unlimited forwarding, or a permanent address, Trashmail Plus can be purchased for $21/year.

At Guerrilla Mail, you can choose a username and one of ten domain names for your free temporary email address. (My favorite is sharklasers.com) Messages are public and are held for one hour before they are deleted. One nice feature is that you can scramble your email address, to make it harder to guess. GuerrillaMail also lets you reply to incoming messages. There's also a free Guerrilla Mail app on the Google Play store for mobile phones. GuerrillaMail has processed over 17 billion messages! 10minutemail: Load up this site, and you immediately get a free random email address that vanishes after 10 minutes. You can get a 10-minute extension if you need it. Just refresh the page to see any incoming messages for your temporary address. View, delete, or reply

HOW LONG DO SD CARDS LAST?
By Sydney Butler
HowToGeek.com
https://www.howtogeek.com/887545/howlong-do-sd-cards-lastKey

Takeaway: An SD card built to the specification should last around ten years, but the actual lifespan depends on many factors. The card's quality, usage frequency, and environmental conditions can all significantly impact how long the card lasts. SD cards are everywhere, and you probably have photos, saved games, or other documents on them that exist nowhere else. So, how long do they last? Can you trust them to keep your data safe, or are you playing with fire?

Understanding SD Card Technology
To get a feeling for the lifespan of SD cards, it's essential to understand the technology behind them. SD cards use flash memory, a non-volatile memory type that retains data even when the power is off, making it ideal for portable storage devices. Flash memory operates through a matrix of memory cells that can be electrically programmed and erased. Each memory cell holds one or more data bits stored as electrical charges. Over time, these electric charges can become unstable, leading to data loss or corruption on the SD card, which limits how long you can keep SD cards in "cold" storage.

Factors That Affect the Lifespan of SD Cards Various factors can significantly impact your SD card's lifespan. These include:
 • Usage frequency, as regular use can cause the card to wear out faster. Environmental factors like heat, humidity, and exposure to other elements can also adversely affect the card's lifespan.
• SD card quality plays a crucial role in determining its longevity. Lower-quality cards may not last as long as higher quality ones due to subpar components used in their construction.
• The amount of data written on the card can influence its lifespan, with more data storage leading to quicker wear.

How long will an SD Card Last? So how long will an SD card that's not plugged in and left in storage retain its data before the charge that represents ones and zeroes leaks out and erases the information? That's not an easy question to answer. However, according to flash memory standards, the memory chips in devices like SD cards, SSDs, and USB flash drives have different retention standards at specific temperatures. For example, according to the JEDEC JESD47 specification, flash memory must retain data for at least ten years at a temperature of 55 degrees Celsius. If you lower the temperature, the expected lifespan goes up to some extent. Since SD cards aren't designed to be left in cold storage as a form of data backup, it's unclear exactly how long they'll retain their charge. For some types of flash memory, that time period can be quite short. Enterprise-class SSDs, for example, might only be rated to keep data when powered off for a few months! This is admittedly not a very satisfying or concrete answer, but anecdotally, you'll find plenty of people reporting that they've plugged in SD cards that have been in a drawer for years, and all the data seems fine. At the same time, the SD card you're actively using in a device might spontaneously lose all its data.

Given all of this, the most sensible thing to do is avoid using SD cards as any form of backup media. Any important information you have should never only exist on an SD card because so many variables can dramatically shorten how long it remains readable. It's a convenient format for mobile devices like cameras, but you absolutely should offload your photos, sound recordings, etc., as soon as you get back home. Of course, cloud backups of your photos or other data are essential for smartphones that still use SD cards.

How SD Card Endurance and Durability Measured SD card endurance is all about terabytes written

(TBW) — the total data volume that can be written to the card before it fails. Endurance varies based on the memory type and card quality, similar to SSDs and USB thumb drives, which also use flash memory. For example, SD cards with Single-Level Cell (SLC) memory have the highest endurance, reaching up to 100,000 TBW. Multi-Level Cell (MLC) memory cards have lower endurance, ranging from 3,000 to 30,000 TBW; triple-Level Cell (TLC) memory cards have the lowest endurance, from 300 to 1,500 TBW. Durability is another critical factor affecting SD card lifespan. While designed to withstand physical wear like bending and dropping, SD cards are not indestructible. Mishandling or extreme conditions can still cause damage. Not to mention that they are so easy to lose!

How to Extend the Life span of Your SD Card

There's no guaranteed method to extend an SD card's life span, but adhering to a few best practices can help prolong it. First, invest in a high-quality SD card from a reputable manufacturer. Although pricier initially, they're less likely to fail prematurely, preventing data loss headaches. Another effective way to prolong your SD card's lifespan is to avoid filling it to capacity

Leaving some free space on the card helps prevent rapid wear, distributing usage over an extended period. Safely eject the SD card from your device before removal to avoid data corruption. Store the card in a cool, dry location, away from direct sunlight and heat sources.

Signs of a Failing SD Card
Despite their impressive durability, SD cards can fail. If you observe any of the following signs, your SD card might be starting to fail:

- Data corruption is a significant red flag indicating potential SD card trouble. If files on your SD card become corrupted or inaccessible, it's a clear sign something is amiss.
- Slow performance is another sign of failure. If the card takes longer than usual to read or write data, investigate further, as this could be an early warning sign.
- Error messages when trying to read or write data to the SD card could indicate that it's beginning to fail.
- Visible physical damage, such as cracks or wear and tear on the card, could also signal that it is nearing its end.

If you notice these warning signs, consider replacing your SD card to avoid losing your valuable data. Having multiple independent backups of any important data is always a good idea.

If your SD card does seem to be failing and you can no longer read data from it, you can try using specialized data recovery software, some of which have SD-card-specific features. Failing that, you can also take it to a data recovery specialist. However, the data has to be truly valuable to justify the cost of professional data recovery, and there's no guarantee of success!

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The Best Free Online Video Editing Tools for PC
 By Isador Peterson
The Rochester Computer Society, Inc.
www.rcis.org

In the world of video editing, having access to the right tools can make all the difference. Whether you're a professional editor or just someone looking to enhance personal videos, the convenience, and power of online tools cannot be overstated. If you're searching for reliable, free, and easy-to-use video editing tools for your PC, you're in the right place.

This article explores some top online tools available on the market today, with a special focus on the free options offered by FreeVideoEditor.Online.

Why Choose Online Video Editing Tools? Before diving into specific tools, it's essential to understand why online video editors are becoming increasingly popular:
1. *Accessibility*: These tools are browser-based, meaning you can access them from any PC without the need for downloads or installations.
2. *Affordability*: Many online editors are free, eliminating the cost barriers associated
 with traditional desktop software.
3. *Ease of Use*: Most online tools are designed with simplicity in mind, offering user-friendly interfaces suitable for beginners and experts alike.
4. *No Hardware Limitations*: Since the processing is done on remote servers, even low-spec PCs can handle high-quality video editing.

Top Free Online Video Editing Tools for PC

1. Add Text to Video Tool
Adding text to your videos can enhance storytelling, provide context, or highlight essential information. The Add Text to Video tool allows you to easily insert titles, subtitles, or annotations directly into your clips. This tool is perfect for creating engaging content for social media, YouTube, or educational purposes.
Features:
- Multiple font options and styles
- Adjustable text size and color
- Easy-to-use interface.
- Supports various video formats
- Completely free to use

2. Video Trimmer
Sometimes, you only require a specific portion of a video. The Video Trimmer tool lets you cut out unwanted sections quickly and efficiently. It's perfect for shortening lengthy videos, removing unnecessary parts, or focusing on the most crucial moments.
Features:
Simple drag-and-drop trimming
Real-time preview of edits
Maintains original video quality
No watermarks or fees

3. Video Merger
If you're looking to combine multiple video clips into a single seamless video, the Video Merger tool

is your go-to option. This tool allows you to merge videos effortlessly, creating a cohesive final product.
Features:
- Supports various video formats
- Option to rearrange clips before merging
- Maintains high video quality
- Completely free without hidden costs

4. **Video Converter**
Sometimes, you need to change the format of your video to make it compatible with different devices or platforms. The Video Converter tool allows you to convert videos into a wide range of formats, ensuring they meet your specific needs.
Features:
- Supports all popular video formats
- Fast conversion speeds
- No quality loss during conversion
- 100% free with no limitations

Conclusion Whether you're a seasoned editor or just getting started, having the right tools is crucial.

The free online video editing tools offered by FreeVideoEditor.Online are perfect for anyone looking to edit videos on a PC without spending a dime. These tools are not only free, but also incredibly easy to use, making them accessible to everyone. From adding text to trimming videos, merging clips, and converting formats, these tools cover all your basic video editing needs. www.rcsi.org

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The Birth of Quantum Viability?
By David Kretchmar, Hardware Technician
www.scscc.club

I discussed the potential and problems relating to a new type of computer, the quantum computer in the October 2024 Gigabyte Gazette Kretchmar's Korner, https://www.scscc.club/Gigabyte/gg_2024-10Oct.pdf. Most data scientists agree the quantum computer has the potential to revolutionize many aspects of our world; quantum computing has the promise of being the most important technological advancement of the 21st century. But that will take many years, possibly even a decade or longer, or our world might end before quantum computing becomes a reality.

Most of us do not have the education or intelligence to even begin to understand how quantum computers function, but neither do any but a handful of our fellow humans. What we can do is to "Follow the Money" and see the money flows into entities that have the potential to ride the wave of the coming quantum revolution. What can this tell us about the brave new world of quantum computing?

Google shakes up the world
On December 9, 2024, Google's Hartmut Neven, Founder and Lead, Google Quantum AI,

First Willow Headlines spark GOOG Shares

announced a breakthrough in quantum computing by their latest quantum chip, Willow. Willow performed a standard benchmark computation in under five minutes that would have been impossible for today's fastest supercomputers. Neven stated that, "Willow moves us significantly along that path towards commercially relevant applications". Google has been developing the Willow chip over the past 10 years – this was no overnight success.

While Neven's claim has been met with a mix of excitement and skepticism in the scientific community, it underscores the revolutionary potential of quantum computing technology. Over the next two days Google stock jumped by $20, over 10%, to an all-time high.

Google is a $2.3 billion dollar corporation earning profits of 100 billion dollars a year. There is no way even a significant advancement in quantum computing is going to add anything to Google's bottom line, probably for at least the next decade. Quantum computing is currently nothing but a cash drain on Google and anyone else involved in quantum research, yet the market rewarded Google's announcement. Investors are not required to act rationally, but when we see that kind of activity in one of the most significant companies on earth, there must be something going on.

IBM is a leading player in the development of quantum computers, and this seems to play into IBM's concept of huge, centralized computers. Yet IBM's stock price has fallen a few percentage points since Google's announcement. This indicates that investors either think IBM is on the wrong track, or maybe just that IBM, even with decent technology, lacks the capacity to be a successful quantum player.

Pure quantum plays

Some much purer and more speculative quantum stock plays took even bigger jumps than

Google. IonQ, Inc. rose over 300% in December 2024. Rigetti Computing, Inc. was happily bumping along at less than $1 per share as late as October 2024. As I write this article the money flow into Rigetti mainly during December 2024 has pushed the share price to over $16. Rigetti trading volume has increased from a few million shares a day to over 200 million shares per day – out of the 280 million shares it has outstanding! Each of these quantum computing companies had their own positive announcements concerning corporate quantum activities and progress.

The universe of pure quantum stocks is tiny. Obviously just a bit of news can result in dramatic price swings. I mention IonQ and Rigetti specifically because these seem to be the quantum stocks followed most closely by analysts. I was unable to identify a mutual fund or ETF that could serve as a proxy for pure quantum plays. Defiance Quantum ETF (QTUM) is a well-known fund that sounds like it would be a good candidate, but no more than 15% of its assets are in pure quantum plays. Its two biggest holdings are IonQ and Rigetti.

Public interest in quantum computers

CBS's 60 Minutes television show featured a piece on the state of quantum computing that was rebroadcast on December 24, 2024. The original episode aired on July 28, 2024, and that episode was an update of a December 2023 piece. This was an unusually technical topic for mainstream TV audiences, but it introduced many quantum concepts and was interesting even for non geeky viewers. In that segment 60 Minutes visited Google's quantum lab in California and explored one of the first quantum computers working in the real world at Cleveland Clinic. Stories such as this have helped stimulate the general public's interest in quantum computers and possibly precipitated some of the cash that is now being poured into quantum stocks.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum computers

The value that real world quantum supercomputers will provide the world will only be realized by leveraging the power of AI to bridge the gap between quantum and conventional computers. The

power of AI can be increased exponentially when AI is combined with the power of quantum. This is clear to those working in quantum computing, and that realization is forcing greater corroboration between AI and quantum experts.

For the past 70 years AI has been around mostly as a concept. Only in the past several years has AI started to live up to its hype and promise and now is appearing increasingly in our world.

The manifestation of AI in the real world was preceded and accompanied by massive flows of money into AI companies and corporate entities (the Magnificent Seven) that have data   gathering capabilities. This has enabled them to accumulate vast amounts of data, the new gold. Nvidia, the biggest beneficiary of the world's

adoption of AI technology, is often mentioned as a company with the potential to connect quantum computing and AI.

Conclusions

Could the flow of money into quantum stocks be an indication that the world is on the verge of an even more sophisticated - and possibly more life-changing technology that will have its century in the sun?

Huge entities like Google have the capacity to support internal quantum development, but others will feel the need to acquire this capacity by buying smaller pure quantum plays. This might have contributed to the runup in the stock price of many of the pure quantum companies.

Will the success of companies like those comprising the "Magnificent 7" be echoed in the stocks in corporations with significant quantum computing exposure. The world's most successful corporations, like the "Magnificent 7", will require quantum computing technology to remain magnificent. We might be witnessing the birth of the quantum revolution at the end of 2024.

Or is the nascent bubble in quantum stocks a tiny blip in the long-term story of the market? Could the runup in these stocks be telling us that quantum is the next bubble, successor to investors frenzied buying of AI stocks or cryptocurrencies? Is quantum computing the "Next Big Thing?

I believe the quantum revolution is for real, but we can expect bursts of optimism and deluges of disappointment over the next few years.

April

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 7pm General Mtg Let's Get Organized! 6pm Tech Topics	9	10	11	12 Linux on Saturday SIG 9am—Noon
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

May

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Linux on Saturday SIG 9am—Noon
11	12	13 7pm General Mtg TBA 6pm Tech Topics	14	15	16	17 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
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As a member of TC/PC, the Twin Cities Personal Computer Group, one of the benefits
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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.
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4/25

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April 8, 2025

7:00 pm

General Meeting

Let's Get Organized!

Via Zoom Only

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