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The Digital Viking



Twin Cities

PC USER GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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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 2026

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General Meeting


Tuesday, April 14, 2026

7:00 PM

Passkeys

Webinar Presenter: Al Williams

Via Zoom Only

As defined by Google, “A passkey is a secure, passwordless authentication method that allows users to log into apps and websites using device-level credentials—such as fingerprint, facial recognition, or a PIN—instead of a memorized password..” In this month’s webinar from Al Williams of the Willow Valley Computer Club, Al goes in depth into passkeys, their advantages and disadvantages, his experiences, and why we should use them...or not. . 

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
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Application form inside back cover

The Digital Viking

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Contact Sharon Walbran at: SQWalbran@yahoo.com

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

Visit www.tpc.com for meeting details.

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Why I hate Microsoft

By: David Kretchmar, Hardware Technician

Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

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Microsoft is the world's dominant computer operating system (OS), holding 70%–80% of the market as of April 2026. Windows is far ahead of Apple's iOS.



Desktop Linux, though used by only about 5% of individuals, is gaining popularity quickly. Across all devices, Windows has about 30% usage, while Android leads at 36%. The rise in desktop Linux use is in large part due to dissatisfaction with Microsoft and somewhat with Apple.

I've been using Microsoft Windows since the late 1980s, back when it was just a bothersome overlay on top of DOS. It was not until Windows 95 that Windows began evolving into an actual operating system. I have no intention of switching from Windows.

Monopolistic Practices and Technical Mistakes

Over the years, Microsoft has frequently come under fire for its monopolistic practices. Microsoft has been the target in numerous litigations over the history of the company, including cases involving the United States DOJ, the European Union, and numerous competitors. These actions, combined with a series of technical missteps, have contributed to the evolution of Windows into an operating system that is bloated and a resource hog. This increase in complexity and resource consumption has made the system less user-friendly and more difficult to navigate.



Today Microsoft often appears more interested in promoting its own ecosystem, such as Edge, Copilot, and other subscription-based services, than in providing a smooth, high-quality user experience. This shift in focus has further fueled frustration among long-time users who value simplicity, performance, and user autonomy. Here are some of

the things Microsoft has done that have frustrated users the most. It's time for all of us to get over Microsoft's operating system mistakes and frustrations from ancient times (in the computer world) and move on more recent irritants.

Windows 8 (Don't Get Me Started)

IN 2012 Microsoft replaced its extremely popular Windows 7 operating system With Windows 8. Windows 7 was straight forward and easy to use but it became a nightmare from a security standpoint – Windows 7 became very vulnerable to virus and other malware attacks. With Windows 8 Microsoft introduced a tablet-like interface for computers, hoping to catch the wave of the increasing use of smartphones and tablets. Windows 8 did bring performance improvements, painfully needed

However, starting with Windows 10, Microsoft became increasingly aggressive with privacy violations when they added telemetry into the OS. Telemetry was just silent data collecting at first, but then they made it painstakingly difficult to set up a computer without entering or establishing a Microsoft account. You had and still have to physically or manually disconnect from the internet or fiddle with the the Out-of-Box Experience (OOBE) screen or the command prompt to even be able to create a local account!

S Mode

S Mode is a feature of both Windows 10 and 11. It is a specialized, security-focused configuration that only allows installation of applications obtained from the Microsoft Store. It requires Microsoft Edge for browsing (since no browser other than Edge even exists in the Microsoft store). It is intended to provide faster startup times, improved battery life, and, most importantly, enhanced security against malware.

Most users first encounter S Mode when they attempt to install a third-party (non-Edge) browser such as Google Chrome or Firefox on a new computer. Many less-expensive, and lightweight new Windows computers tend to ship with S Mode enabled. Users can switch out of S mode by getting an application from the Microsoft Store, but it is a one-way process. Once you switch out of S Mode, you cannot go back to S Mode.



If S Mode is truly crucial for security, Microsoft would allow users to revert after installing non-Store software, but they do not. Some might argue S Mode simply encourages using Microsoft products and the Edge browser.

You can still access the many valuable features of Google through Microsoft's Edge browser (or any browser) by simply navigating to Google.com, but you'll have to endure Google's constant suggestions to download and install Google Chrome. It is hard to understand why Microsoft deems Google Chrome insecure, since Edge itself utilizes the Google Chromium engine, as do Firefox and Safari. Some might argue Microsoft is using "security" as a pretext to pursue precious browser advertising revenue.

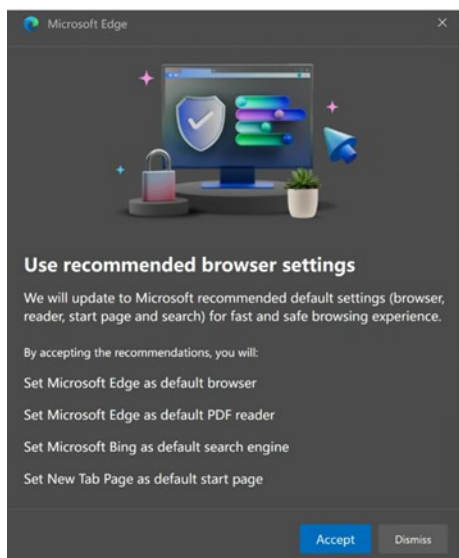
Windows 11 Forced Obsolescence

Windows 11 makes many computers over six years old obsolete by requiring TPM 2.0 (Trusted Platform Module) security and UEFI Secure Boot. TPM 2.0 is a hardware-based security chip integrated into newer CPUs (8th gen Intel/2nd gen Ryzen+) or implemented by a chip soldered onto the motherboard. TPM 2.0 features a secure storage for cryptographic keys, passwords, and certificates, and is designed to protect against unauthorized access, tampering, and malware. It enhances security using BitLocker and Secure Boot. This disqualifies millions of perfectly functional devices from official support for Windows 10 and precludes them from upgrading to Windows 11. Windows 10 does remain supported until October 2026, but then Windows users will have to buy a new device or install a secure operating system (Linux) on their device.

Microsoft Edge

The main problem many users have with Microsoft's native browser, Edge, is its extremely

aggressive promotion by Microsoft. Microsoft apparently thinks it's OK to attempt to override users' stated preference for other browsers, such as Google Chrome or Firefox.



How dare they hide this under the deceitful innocuous- appearing window designed to ignore and change the previously stated preference stated desires. The window presented for the switch is often much less informative than then one shown on the left, but "Accept" is often the default choice.

Edge sometimes has a feeling of slowness due to too many built-in features, ads, and of course the built in Copilot AI, whether you want it or not. Users frequently complain about intrusive nagging prompts to switch, telemetry concerns, and a "bloated" interface compared to its early, faster versions.

Conclusion

Windows used to be the best operating system on the market, which has, along with aggressive marketing, allowed them to dominate the personal computer market. It used to have a simple, clean interface that didn't get into your way, while being a powerful productivity and gaming tool. Things were just easy to get done on Windows; Web browsing, fast document editing, software development, graphic design, modeling, and gaming were just a click away.

I did not used to feel like everything I did was being watched and recorded on my "permanent record" for posterity. I wish I could still feel that while working or playing in Windows.

Maybe one day there will be a better alternative. Apple is a little better, but I'm not going to be paying the "Apple Tax" by continuously dropping ridiculous amounts of money on their products (except for my iPhone). *Images are from Google Chrome*



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Windows - the Ultimate “Pack-Rat”

(Windows doesn't just keep old files — it keeps entire generations of them)

By Ken Pyzik, Contributing Writer

Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

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Are you a real junk collector or a real clean freak? Everyone's tolerance for keeping stuff is different. Some like to hold onto things because, when they were young, they did not have a lot. They keep things “just in case” they could ever be used again. Turns out, they never do “use it again”.

Windows has been around for about 40 years. Back in its heyday, it was a clean, lean O/S machine. Today, Windows is like many people who lived through tough times: it hangs onto much excess baggage that it doesn't really need. But it doesn't do this because it wants to; it does it because it **has** to. Ancient bank and government systems still rely on very old processes that would break if Windows finally cleaned up all its old architecture. So, Windows limps along with decades of legacy components that normal people don't use anymore and really don't need.

The result: **Windows today typically consumes 60–100 GB for system components**, much of which exists solely for backward compatibility, update rollbacks, and servicing layers.

Let's look at some concrete examples.

System Restore

System Restore, back in the day, was the gold standard for recovering your system after a bad update. Created in the 1990s, it did an excellent job of restoring your system to where it should be. Today, no company relies on it. Most people back up to the cloud, and because System Restore does **not** do full backups (it only stores incremental snapshots), if you lose one link in the chain, the restore point becomes useless.

What does this mean? By default, **System Restore often consumes 3–10% of the system drive unless you manually reduce its size**. Many users unknowingly give it 10–50 GB of space they never use. On a 1 TB drive, that's easily 20 GB reserved, even if you never touch it. Even Microsoft recommends that you no longer rely on System Restore because it is outdated and unreliable in a cloud-backup world. But System Restore lives on, and Microsoft cannot remove it, so it sits there and quietly wastes space.

Windows Component Store

Next, there is the Windows component store, WinSxS. Most people don't know about this guy. It is the container in Windows that contains all your system components and drivers. It stores **multiple versions** of components for servicing and rollback “just in case” one breaks. Over time, this can grow to **10–15 GB or more**. Take a look at your system drive today. I guarantee its space usage is pretty big. Its real size could be substantially less if Windows didn't have to preserve so much legacy baggage.

Windows Update

Next, there is Windows Update. Windows Update is a great way to keep your computer up to date. It does an excellent job making sure you have the latest and greatest fixes, security patches, and

improvements. But here's the part most people never see: when Windows updates itself, it **keeps copies of the things it replaces** — system files, drivers, components, manifests, and rollback data. These are all stored “just in case” something goes wrong and it needs to undo the update. That's a great safety feature, but it is terrible for your disk space.

Even worse, once everything is running smoothly, Windows often fails to **go back and clean up** the old components. Sometimes it forgets. Sometimes it waits. Sometimes it just leaves them behind indefinitely. The result? **Tens of gigabytes** of wasted space sitting in **Windows.old** (created after major feature updates); **SoftwareDistribution\Download** (temporary update files that never got deleted); **Component-based servicing rollback folders** (these are hidden inside WinSxS — mentioned above).

It's not unusual for Windows Update leftovers to consume **10–20 GB** of space, all of it old, stale, and completely useless once the update is stable.

Windows Temp Folders

And Windows doesn't stop there. Here is another place where Windows quietly hoards junk: the **Windows Temp folders**. Most people think of temp files as tiny, harmless leftovers — the digital equivalent of crumbs on the kitchen counter. But Windows uses its temp directories for everything: installers, updates, logs, caches, diagnostic traces, crash dumps, and leftover fragments from programs that didn't clean up after themselves.

In theory, these files are supposed to be temporary. In reality, Windows often forgets about them. Installers crash, updates fail, apps misbehave, and suddenly you've got gigabytes of “temporary” files that have become permanent residents. It's not unusual to open the Temp folder and find **1–3 GB** of junk sitting there — in some cases, much more.

And the worst part? Even if you clean it all out, Windows can (or will) happily recreate the entire mess again within a few days. Temp files are the one kind of junk Windows produces endlessly, and almost never cleans up on its own.

Windows Logs

There is still one other place where Windows quietly piles up junk: the **Windows Error Reporting and diagnostic logs**. Windows logs everything — every crash, every hang, every update failure, every compatibility scan. It almost never throws anything away. These logs are meant for developers and Microsoft engineers, not everyday users, yet they sit on your drive for years like forgotten receipts stuffed in a shoebox.

If you've ever had a program freeze or misbehave (and who hasn't?), Windows probably created a crash dump or diagnostic trace for it. These files can be tiny, or they can be hundreds of megabytes each. Over time, it's easy for these logs to quietly grow into **1–5 GB** of wasted space. And unless you go looking for them, you'll never even know they're there in the first place. Just like everything else in Windows, they're kept “just in case,” but that “case” never comes. They simply accumulate — another layer of digital clutter that Windows forgets to clean up.

Hidden Recovery Partitions

Finally, there is one other, but if your system is newer than 3 years old, you probably don't need to worry about it. But if your system has been upgraded from Windows 10 to Windows 11, you definitely need to see this one. It's the “hidden recovery partitions”. Most people don't even know

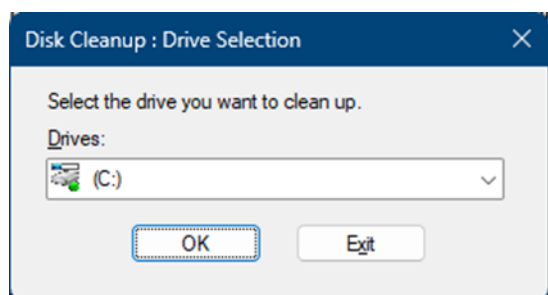
these exist. Whenever Windows performs a major upgrade, it often creates a brand-new recovery partition and almost never removes the old one. Over the years, you can end up with multiple recovery partitions quietly eating 5–15 GB of space. You never see them, you never use them, and Windows never cleans them up. Today, some computers come pre-loaded with a recovery partition that is 10-15 gig.

Summation

When you add all of this up: System Restore, WinSxS, Windows Update leftovers, temp files, diagnostic logs, and hidden recovery partitions, you start to see the real picture. Windows isn't bloated because it's sloppy. It's bloated because it's terrified to throw anything away. Every component, every backup, every log, every duplicate file exists for one reason: someone, somewhere, might still need it. Windows has become the ultimate digital pack rat, keeping decades of "just in case" baggage so nothing ever breaks, even if it means wasting tens of gigabytes of your storage in the process.

So, the next time your system drive fills up, and you start thinking it's time for a new one, maybe it's not. Maybe it's simply time to "take out the garbage" and stop letting Windows be a pack rat.

Editor's Note:



You can use the Windows Disk Cleanup Tool to help remove some of the clutter mentioned above. Click the Search window or icon in the Taskbar and type Disk Cleanup. Click in the results to run the tool. A popup will appear. Select your system drive (usually C:).

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Quick Tip 72: Recycle Bin in File Explorer

By Chris Taylor, President

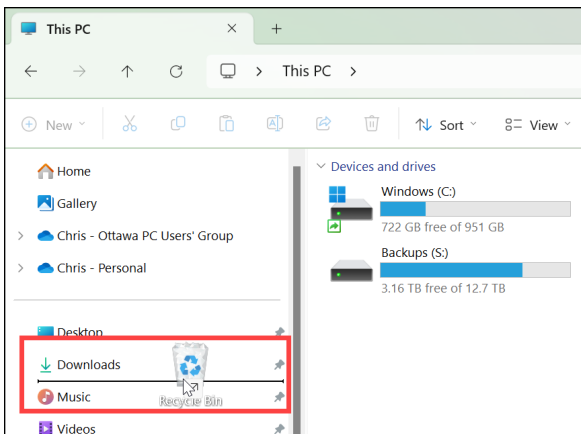
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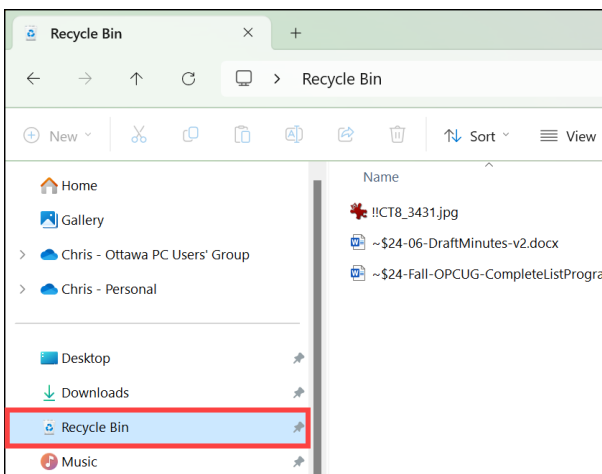
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When you want to recover deleted files in Windows, it is surprisingly difficult to get to the *Recycle Bin*. You can go to the desktop, which can mean minimizing open windows, and double-click the *Recycle Bin* icon on the desktop. You can press Win+R to bring up the *Run* dialogue box and type in **explorer.exe shell:RecycleBinFolder** (yes, really) and press Enter. You can also open File Explorer, click in the address bar, type in **Recycle Bin**, and press Enter.

An easier way is to pin the *Recycle Bin* to the *Quick Access* panel in File Explorer. Minimize all open windows so you can see your desktop. Open File Explorer and place it so you can see the *Recycle Bin* icon on the desktop. Click on the *Recycle Bin* icon on the desktop and drag it to the *Quick Access* panel in File Explorer. When you see the horizontal line appear, drop it there.



The *Recycle Bin* will appear in your *Quick Access* list and you can access it any time by clicking the icon.



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Be careful when dragging and dropping the *Recycle Bin* from the desktop. Make sure a horizontal line appears *between* two existing entries in *Quick Access*. Don't drop it directly on a folder or a shortcut to the *Recycle Bin* will be created within that folder. 🖥️

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

April

May

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Canceled Linux on Saturday SIG 9:00-Noon
12	13	14 7pm General Mtg TBA 6pm Tech Topics	15	16	17	18 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9:00-Noon
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 Linux on Saturday SIG 9:00-Noon
10	11	12 7pm General Mtg TBA 6pm Tech Topics	13	14	15	16 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9:00-Noon
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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31						



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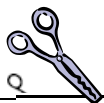
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Does membership in this group sound like a good way to increase your computer knowledge?

It's easy to do! Simply fill in the form below and mail it to the address shown.
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April 14, 2026

**7:00 pm
General Meeting**

Passkeys

Presenter: Al Williams

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