

April 2015

Microsoft
REGISTERED
Refurbisher

The Next General
Meeting of CCCGC
will be **April 7, 2015**

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Charlotte Bytes

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Official Publication of the Charlotte County Computer Group Corp.
PROMOTING COMPUTER LITERACY AND EDUCATION IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY

VOL. XXVII
No. IV

The President's Platform by Ron Wallis, President CCCGC

It's hard to believe April is here already. It seems like we just celebrated Christmas a few weeks ago and already Spring has sprung and Easter is upon us.

Soon all you snowbirds will be heading north, weather permitting and we year-round residents will be cranking up the air conditioning. It's almost time for us to relax and enjoy our great summer weather. While we are taking it easy let's not forget that our computers are still working for us and need to be taken care of.

There are a lot of nasty viruses out there and just because it's summer and we are taking it easy, it doesn't mean we are not vulnerable. So keep your anti-malicious software programs updated and run regularly.

Now you can enjoy sitting by the pool reading ebooks, playing games or just surfing the net.

Happy Easter

Happy Passover

Ron

WELCOME

New Members

Michael Balas	Richard Drew	Mary Fleenor
Joan Geraghty	Jerry Kreissler	Mary Kreissler
Ella Radabaugh	Lynn Simonato	Maria Stoll
Richard Stoll	Nancy Wroe	Donna Cividanes
Roman Cividanes	Betty Pitcher	Elizabeth Pitcher
Rhonda Reyes		

The Executive Board and Members of CCCGC welcome each of you to the group. We're Here To Help. Membership Has Its Privileges.

If you have any questions, concerns or need computer help, please contact us at the office. We will endeavor to help you any way we can.

Program High-Lights

Program Highlights of Picasa presented by Scott Baty are featured on our website.

Lydia's files are not accessible as her hard drive crashed. Her backup also were corrupt.

Unfortunately we don't have any pictures, or information for March highlights.



April's Presentation

Ron Wallis will present Speech Recognition at this month's meeting. He will go through each of the options in the setup process. Don't miss this interesting subject.

Speech Recognition is only available for the following languages: English (United States and United Kingdom), French, German, Japanese, Mandarin (Chinese Simplified and Chinese Traditional), and Spanish.

Set up Speech Recognition

Using Speech Recognition

Controlling your PC with Speech Recognition

Dictation

Keyboard keys

Punctuation marks and special characters

Windows commands

Working with windows and apps

Tap or click anywhere on the screen



For more information go to www.cccgc.info

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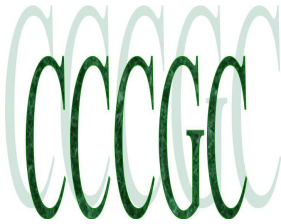
Please be sure to register online for classes

Classes & Events Calendar

April 2015

CCCGC Events Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans	3 	4
5 	6 <u>Libre Office</u> 2 to 4 PM John Palmer	7 <u>General Meeting</u> 7:15 PM Classes 5:00 PM 6:00 PM	8 <u>Maintenance</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis	9 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans	10	11
12	13 <u>Tablet Class</u> 2 to 4 PM Yvette Pilch	14	15	16 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans	17	18
19	20 <u>Libre Office</u> 2 to 4 PM John Palmer	21 <u>Windows 8.1</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis	22 <u>Maintenance</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis	23 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans	24	25
26	27 <u>Windows 8.1</u> 2 to 4 PM Yvette Pilch	28	29 <u>Reflect Backup</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis	30 <u>Board Meeting</u> 6:30 PM		
NOTICE All Non Meeting Night Classes will be held in Our CCCGC Office.					Notes: OFFICE HOURS: 10:00 AM-2:00 PM MONDAY -FRIDAY Please sign up for classes ONLINE: http://www.cccgc.info	



The Charlotte County Computer Group Corp.

Is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization as classified by the Internal Revenue Service.

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Officers and Board of Directors for 2015

President: Ron Wallis

Vice President: Dick Evans

Secretary: Ron Muschong

Treasurer:

Director: John Hegard

Director: Grover Mudd

Director: Lydia Rist

Director: Frank Messina

Director: Linda Corrick



We're on the Web
www.cccgc.net



Featured Article

Tax Scams to Avoid This Tax Season — The IRS' "Dirty Dozen"

Phone and email phishing schemes are among the "Dirty Dozen" tax scams the IRS is warning taxpayers to keep on their radar this tax season. The IRS has a special section on IRS.gov highlighting these 12 schemes.

Scams can lead to significant penalties and interest for taxpayers, as well as possible criminal prosecution. As a taxpayer, you are legally responsible for what is on your tax return even if it is prepared by someone else.

Make sure the preparer you hire is up to the task. For more information, see Choosing a Tax Professional.

Here are the IRS' "Dirty Dozen" scams:

Phone Scams: Aggressive calls by criminals impersonating IRS agents is a persistent problem. The IRS has seen a surge in phone scams recently as scam artists threaten police arrest, deportation, license revocation and other things. (IR-2015-6)

Phishing: Be leery of fake emails or websites looking to steal personal information. The IRS will not send you an email about a bill or refund out of the blue. Don't click on one claiming to be from the IRS. (IR-2015-6)

Identity Theft: Watch out for identity theft especially around tax time and be extremely vigilant to avoid becoming a victim. (IR-2015-7)

Return Preparer Fraud: While the vast majority of tax professionals provide honest high-quality service, dishonest preparers set up shop each filing season to perpetrate refund fraud, identity theft and other scams. (IR-2015-8)

Offshore Tax Avoidance: The recent string of successful enforcement actions against offshore tax cheats and the financial organizations that help them proves its unwise to hide money and income offshore. (IR-2015-09)

Inflated Refund Claims: Be wary of anyone who asks you to sign a blank return, promises a big refund, or charges a fee based on a percentage of the refund. (IR-2015-12)

Fake Charities: Double-check charities with names that are similar to nationally known organizations. (IR-2015-16)

Hiding Income with Fake Documents: Filing false 1099s or other fake documents is a scam that taxpayers should always avoid. (IR-2015-18)

Abusive Tax Shelters: When in doubt, seek an independent opinion regarding any complex product you are offered. (IR-2015-19)

Falsifying Income to Claim Credits: Don't be seduced by a scam artist's pitch to invent income to erroneously claim tax credits. Your best strategy is to file an accurate return as soon as possible. (IR-2015-20)

Excessive Claims for Fuel Tax Credits: The fuel tax credit is generally limited to off-highway business use, including use in farming. Consequently, the credit is not available to most taxpayers. Be careful of scam artists telling you otherwise! (IR-2015-21)

Frivolous Tax Arguments: Don't use frivolous arguments to paying your taxes. Promoters of frivolous schemes encourage taxpayers to make unreasonable and outlandish claims to avoid paying the taxes they owe. The penalty for filing a frivolous tax return is \$5,000. (IR-2015-23)

Conclusion on Page 5

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Tax Scams

Conclusion

How to Spot IRS Scams

Filing and paying our taxes is stressful enough but getting scammed by a fake IRS email or phone call at this time of year can transform 'humdrum' stress into full-blown anger and madness.

Don't despair. Help is just a few clicks away at the IRS website. For immediate relief and information, search the site using the words 'phone scams' and 'phishing.'

Here are a few recent scams:

The IRS-impersonation telephone scheme — in which callers may demand money or say the taxpayer has a refund due and try to trick them into sharing private information — continues. Callers typically know a lot about the taxpayer they call and usually alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is calling.

The callers use fake names and IRS identification badge numbers. If a taxpayer doesn't answer, they often leave an "urgent" callback request. However, there are ways to spot when a supposed IRS caller is a fake.

Another sophisticated phone scam tells taxpayers they owe money to the IRS and it must be paid promptly through a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer. If the victim refuses to cooperate, they are then threatened with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license.

A popular scam uses a website that mimics the IRS e-Services online registration page. The actual IRS e-Services page offers web-based products for tax preparers, not the general public.

The phony web page looks almost identical to the real one. The IRS gets many reports of fake websites like this. Criminals use these sites to lure people into providing personal and financial information that may be used to steal the victim's money or identity.

The address of the official IRS website is www.irs.gov. Don't be misled by sites claiming to be the IRS but ending in .com, .net, .org or other designations instead of .gov.



makeuseof

The Great K-Cup Backlash: What Every Tech Company Should Learn

Dann Albright On 21st February, 2015

Web Culture

When it comes to modern technological conveniences, there are a number of things that irritate people above all others: unhelpful error messages, dead batteries, and cumbersome digital rights management (DRM).

A company that puts DRM in place on their products is very clearly telling consumers that their freedoms will be sacrificed so that corporate execs can make more money — and consumers don't tend to react very well to this message.

Keurig is the most recent company to learn this lesson the hard way.

Keurig: Hero to Zero

Keurig had the misfortune of being in the news over the past few months for their attempt to add a form of DRM to their coffee makers. In previous versions of the Keurig machine, you put in a small plastic cup that contains coffee grounds, called a K-cup, into the machine. You press a button, wait a moment, and then you have a cup of coffee. It doesn't get easier (especially for caffeine addicts like me, who don't generally go for really high-quality coffee).

But with the introduction of the Keurig 2.0, a new step was added: before the machine brews your coffee, it scans the K-cup to make sure that a special code has been printed on it—if it doesn't see the code, it won't brew. And who's the only company who can put that code on the cup? Keurig.

keurig-2

Before the 2.0, there were a number of third-party companies who also made cups that were compatible with Keurig machines. They offered different kinds of coffee, and, most importantly, were cheaper. Brands like San Francisco Bay and Mother Parker's could be purchased and used in the Keurig machine without a problem.

That's all changed now. Because those third-party cups don't have the code, the machine won't brew with them. It displays an error message, and the user needs to put in a Keurig-produced or -licensed cup. Keurig says that it's so the machine can use the proper temperature for each coffee, but few seem convinced by that argument.

keurig-reviews



113 of 118 people found the following review helpful

★☆☆☆☆ **Don't buy this.**

By Michael J. C "MikeJC" on September 17, 2014

Item Package Quantity: 1

Terrible. Cannot use many of other brand k cups. Cannot use the use your own coffee adapter. None available for the cup or carafe size. The carafe: can't use water; doesn't not keep coffe warm, not insulated. The carafe size coffee k-cups ??? Very expensive. No value in this machine at all.

» Comment Was this review helpful to you? Report Abuse

274 of 296 people found the following review helpful

★☆☆☆☆ **Stay away from mandated K-cups!!!!!!!**

By KD on September 1, 2014

Item Package Quantity: 1

Huge disappointment. The first 2 reviews are dead on. Only specially stamped K-cups can be used for both single serving and carafe. Their own Keurig brand don't work. Ridiculous. There are so many wonderful roasts out in the world to try. Secondly the carafe isn't thermal; therefore your coffee will be cool when you sadly going to look for another brand of coffee machine.

» 10 comments Was this review helpful to you? Report Abuse

315 of 343 people found the following review helpful

★☆☆☆☆ **Say goodbye to Keurig K 2.0!**

By J. R. Bob Dobbs (formerly ZOMG Pink Ponies) on September 1, 2014

Item Package Quantity: 1

Keurig is trying to do to coffee pods what printer manufacturers do to printer ink cartridges with their upcoming Keurig K 2.0 brewer.

They developed a system where their new coffee makers will refuse to brew other coffee pods that don't pay Keurig for "licenses", with a system that produces message when you try to brew someone else's coffee pods.

Well, I think my first and last Keurig machine is on the kitchen counter now. Digital Restrictions Malware isn't cool, and I won't buy another coffee maker from them if they're going to behave.



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keurig-2 Conclusion

makeuseof

Unsurprisingly, people were not very happy. A quick look at the Amazon reviews for the Keurig 2.0 makes it pretty clear how people feel about the DRM: “no value in this machine at all,” “stay away from mandated K-cups,” “hate that you can ONLY use the K-packs,” and other similar comments dominate. Of 603 reviews, a full 233 of them give it only one star. Many people said they would have returned it if they hadn’t received it as a gift (if you were considering giving a Keurig, consider one of these great coffee-related gifts instead).

And it’s not just the Amazon reviews that are taking a hit — Keurig reported a 12% decrease in brewer sales last quarter. And while the vast majority of their profit comes from the cups, and not the brewers, a 12% hit is a big one. Keurig says that getting 2.0-compatible cups onto store shelves faster would’ve helped, but the consumer reaction is clear: “we hate DRM.”

Not the First

Of course, Keurig isn’t the first company to anger its customers with DRM. Amazon’s Kindle books have been the target of a lot of vitriol over the past few years, and people have gotten really good at removing the DRM from Kindle books. Still, if you aren’t aware that it’s an option, you’ll likely be stuck with Kindle DRM. Printer companies have been doing it for a long time, too — they make a ton of money when you buy their ink, so they make it hard to refill cartridges and try to keep third-party ink producers from making compatible cartridges (with some success).

printer-cartridges

And just about every streaming service, from Netflix to Spotify, has some sort of DRM in place, or they’d go out of business because everyone would download their media and cancel their subscription. Unfortunately, a lot of software DRM actually constitutes a threat to digital security.

Some companies, though, were so impressed by the backlash of their customers that they decided to cancel their DRM plans. Look at Xbox One, for example. When it was first announced, Microsoft stated that the console would have to connect to the Internet once every 24 hours, even if it was only used to play offline disc-based games, that publishers would have control over whether or not their games could be resold, and that restrictions would be put in place over who could give and loan games to other people.

Xbox users were, to put it mildly, outraged. Shortly after this announcement was made, Microsoft admitted its mistake and removed the DRM built into the Xbox One. Unfortunately, few companies have been as understanding and consumer-oriented as Microsoft when it comes to DRM.

A Lesson for Companies Considering DRM

If you’re familiar with the story of the Keurig DRM, you’ll know that a workaround was found very quickly. Not only is it incredibly easy, but it also makes the DRM guys at Keurig look pretty stupid. All you have to do is tape a used K-cup cover over the sensor so it reads the 2.0-compatible code no matter which cup is in the brewer. Which means you can use the Keurig 2.0 with any cup you want, as long as you’ve used one 2.0 cup and saved the lid.

Kindle DRM, though pervasive, is a bit of a joke. The DRM originally used for Blu-Ray discs was cracked quickly. A number of people claim to have broken iTunes and Netflix rights management. And **Keurig’s DRM has been countered with a single piece of tape.**

No matter how hard companies try to lock us down, there are always people out there who are faster, smarter, and more adaptable.

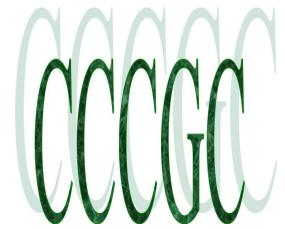
When consumers buy a product, they don’t want to be told how they should use it. They’re even less inclined to listen when they’re told that how they have to use it. Keurig learned this lesson the hard way, and they’ve taken a pretty significant financial hit because of it. Not only that, but they looked pretty foolish when the workaround spread around the Internet.

There’s an important lesson for tech companies here. We’re willing to give you our money, but not our freedom. If we buy a product, we expect to own it, not to lease, rent, or borrow it. We want to use things in any way we please—and we’ll find a way to make sure that we can. You can either set your company up as a hero and support our freedoms, or as a villain that we’ll continually battle against.

Seems like a pretty easy choice to me.

Image credits: digital printing press via Shutterstock.

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The story of why I switched from Google to Yahoo dotTech: <http://dottech.org>

Posted By Ashraf On December 10, 2014

I finally did it. I finally made the switch. I finally left Google for Yahoo. No, not Google's Gmail, Android, or Maps. Rather, Google Search. Unfortunately for Marissa Mayer & co at Yahoo, I did not do it willingly and I did not stay for long. (In fact, I have already switched back to Google.

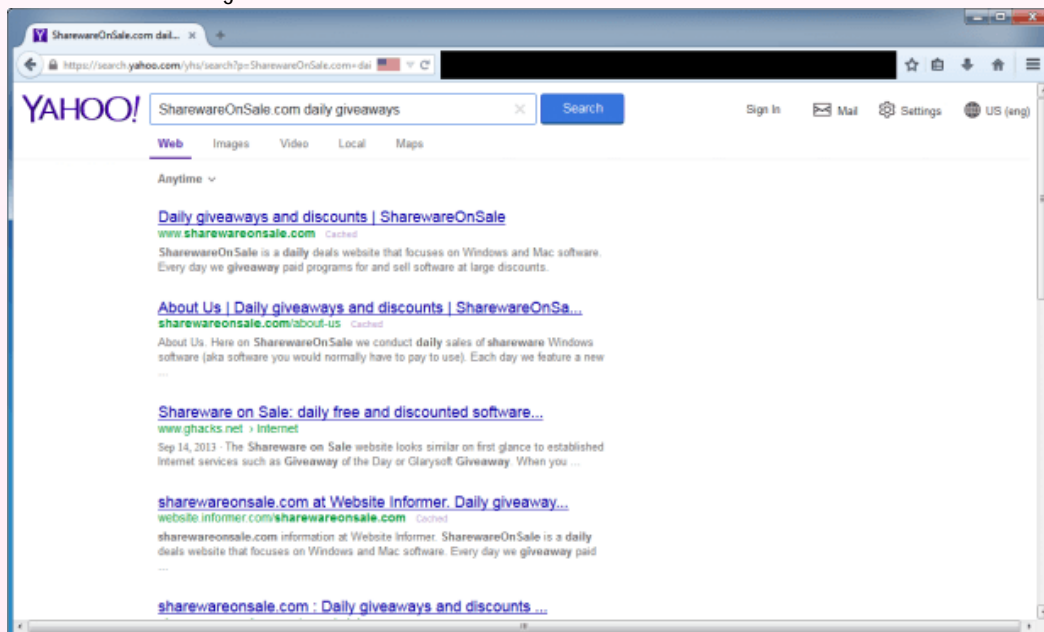
So why — rather, how — did I switch from Google to Yahoo? Because Firefox made me and Yahoo cleverly modeled their search engine (which is powered by Microsoft's Bing, by the way) to look very similar to Google. In fact, so similar that I didn't even notice the difference.

If you have been reading the news, you probably know Yahoo is now the default search engine in Firefox — starting from Firefox 34, which released on Dec 1. I read the news but brushed it off not realizing the change would affect me. After all, I've been using Google as the default search engine in Firefox since I was in my mother's womb. I, for some reason, figured Yahoo would be made the default search engine for all new downloads/installs of Firefox — not existing ones that upgrade to latest version of Firefox. I was wrong.

Here is what happened.

I was using my computer. As I like to do, I used Firefox's address bar to perform a very simple search query. I found what I was looking for and opened it in a new tab, as I usually do (yes, I'm a tab freak). When I was done browsing the website I had opened, I looked around in my tab bar for the familiar "g" icon to indicate which tab was the one which I had Google open in. I didn't find it at first glance. Confounded, I looked again. Still didn't find it. Thinking I may have closed it by accident, I gave it another shot. That is when I saw it: the purple Yahoo icon.

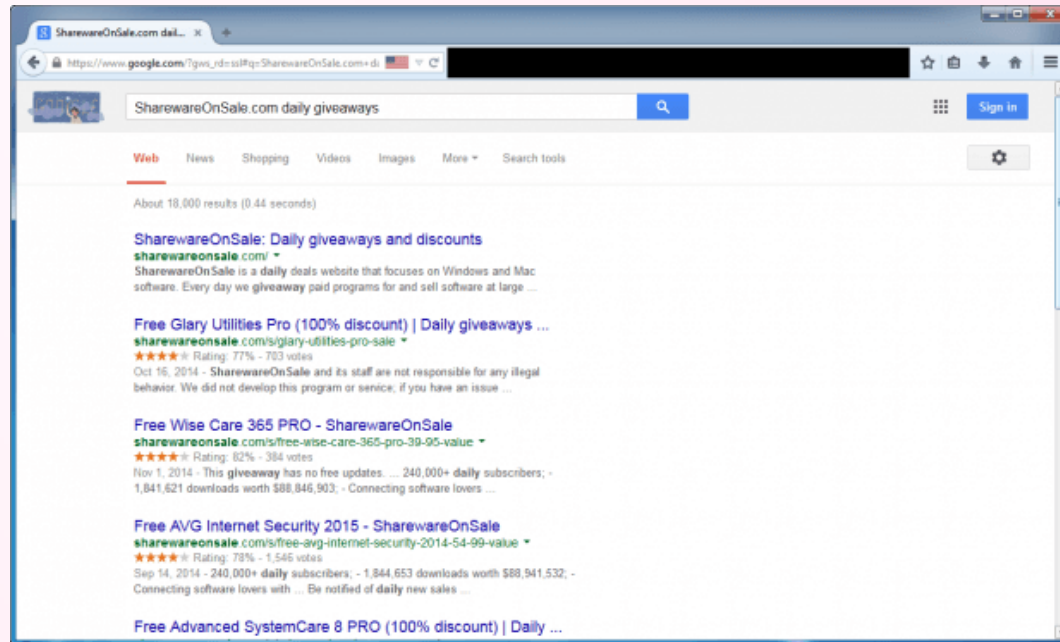
You see, what had happened is, Yahoo have designed their search engine to look very similar to Google's and I unknowingly used Yahoo instead of Google:



Conclusion on next page



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The story of why I switched from Google to Yahoo

Look at the two pages. Sure, they aren't exactly the same (such as the Yahoo logo at the top) but they are surely more similar than different. Or at least similar enough to fool people into not realizing they are no longer using Google Search — people who are used to being sent to Google from within Firefox, people who skip past the logo area and go straight to

the search results. Heck, it fooled me and I'm not the average Joe when it comes to tech.

It is actually a very clever move by Yahoo: it is literally forcing people to use Yahoo's search without them making the conscience decision to ditch Google, which is often the hurdle that keeps Google Search users still using Google — it is "good enough", so why switch? Yahoo's goal, of course, is that by the time people realize they are using Yahoo, they will have decided to stick with it going forward.

I'm actually surprised Google is mum about this. When a competitor makes their product look so similar to your product that your customers mistake the two... well, then, you need to do something. Maybe not necessarily legal action, but something. To top it off, it looks like regular Yahoo search — the one when you go to <http://yahoo.com> and search from there — is not designed like what is shown above. So I can only assume Yahoo has modified the design only for users who use it as the default search engine in Firefox... which goes back to my point of Yahoo trying to gain users by trickery (and it is working).

Bravo Marissa Mayer. You got me. And millions of other people, I reckon. Too bad it was a short stay.

P.S. If you are looking to switch back to Google search from Yahoo in Firefox as your default search engine, read our handy dandy guide] on how to do just that. **Or Continue reading page 12**

URL to article: <http://dottech.org/170708/the-story-of-why-i-switched-from-google-to-yahoo/>

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: https://dottech.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/firefox_logo-only_RGB.png

[2] switched back to Google: <http://dottech.org/170710/how-to-switch-back-to-google-from-yahoo-in-firefox-guide/>

[3] Image: https://dottech.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014-12-10_224839.png

[4] Image: https://dottech.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014-12-10_224910.png



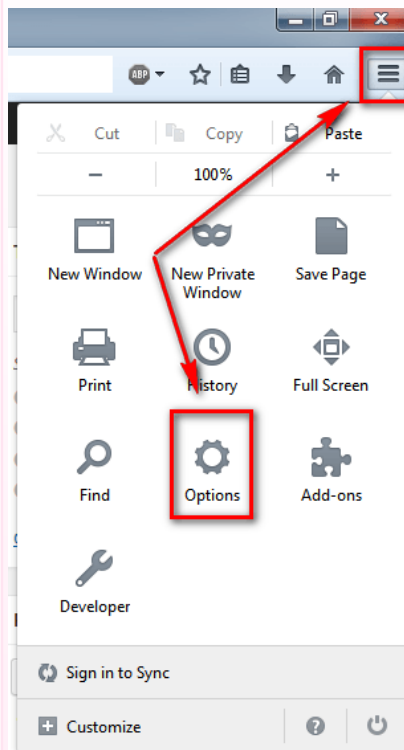
How to switch back to Google from Yahoo in Firefox

dotTech: <http://dottech.org>

Posted By Ashraf On December 10, 2014

One of the ways web browsers make money is by selling their default search engine spot (aka the search engine a web browser is configured to use out-of-the-box) to the highest bidder. For the longest time, that highest bidder was Google for Firefox — hence why if you searched via Firefox's address bar, search bar, or default homepage, you would use Google search (unless you changed it to something else). Recently, however, Yahoo bought the rights to be Firefox's default search engine. If you, like me, prefer to use Google over Yahoo, this article will show you how to switch back.

HOW TO SWITCH BACK TO GOOGLE FROM YAHOO IN FIREFOX (AKA HOW TO MAKE GOOGLE THE DEFAULT SEARCH ENGINE IN FIREFOX)



Switching back to Google from Yahoo in Firefox and making Google the default search engine in Firefox again is actually very easy; you need to do the following:

Open up Firefox Options. How to do this varies depending on which version of Firefox you have and if you made customizations or not. However, most people can open Firefox Options by clicking the button that has three lines and selecting Options:

Once the Options window is open, go to the Search tab, select Google from the Default Search Engine drop-down menu, and click OK:

Done! Now Google is again the default search engine for your Firefox.

CONCLUSION

I understand that Mozilla — the company behind Firefox — needs to have revenue to keep themselves going; so selling the default search engine to the highest bidder

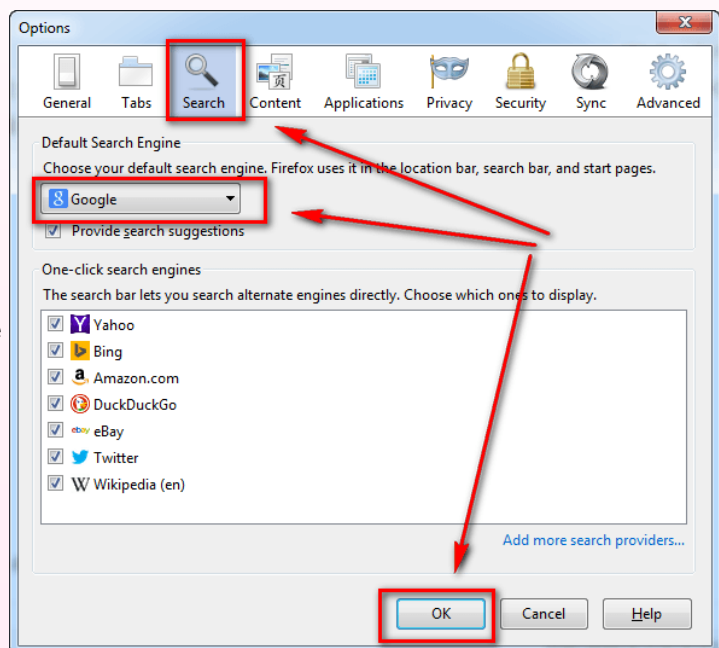
makes sense. However, that doesn't mean it isn't annoying and that doesn't mean we should bend over and use the default search engine Mozilla tells us to use. Enjoy!

URL to article: <http://dottech.org/170710/how-to-switch-back-to-google-from-yahoo-in-firefox-guide/>

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: http://dottech.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014-12-10_225446.png

[2] Image: http://dottech.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2014-12-10_225732.png





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the How-To Geek
Computer Help from your Friendly How-To Geek

4 Ways to View Your Laptop or Desktop's Screen on Your TV

Mirroring your laptop or desktop PC's display on your TV is actually pretty simple, assuming you know what you're doing. There are several ways to do this, both wired and wirelessly.

The wired methods are the most reliable, although they'll need an HDMI cable — and possibly an adapter for your computer. Wireless methods can work well, too — they just aren't perfect.

HDMI Cable, Possibly With an Adapter

RELATED ARTICLE

Why You Should Connect a PC to Your TV (Don't Worry; It's Easy!)

Connecting a PC to your TV is dead simple. All you'll usually need is an HDMI cable, and then you can... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/200557/why-you-should-connect-a-pc-to-your-tv-dont-worry-its-easy/>

A standard HDMI cable is still the best way to get a computer's screen on a TV. This is true whether that computer is a living room PC sitting under the TV, which only outputs to the TV, or if it's a laptop or desktop with its own build-in monitor mirroring the contents of the primary display to the TV as a secondary screen.

This is pretty simple. You probably already have an HDMI cable — if you don't have one, you can buy a cheap cable like this one and skip the unnecessary expensive cables. Plug one end into an HDMI port on the back of your TV and the other into the HDMI port on your laptop or desktop. Switch the TV to the necessary input and you're done! You can also use the display options on your laptop or desktop PC to configure how the TV works — whether it mirrors your main display or functions as a secondary desktop.

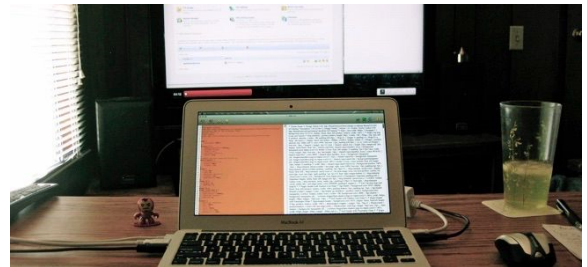
That's the theory. In practice, many modern laptops don't ship with a built-in HDMI port. Those ports are awfully large and don't work well with modern, super-thin laptops. You can still connect your laptop to a TV with an HDMI cable, though — you'll just need the necessary adapter for the port your laptop does include.

Beginner Geek: How to Connect a Laptop to a Television

Hooking up a desktop computer to a monitor is simple; you just plug it in and it works. Connecting a... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/179392/beginner-geek-how-to-connect-a-laptop-to-a-television/>

Many laptops — from Apple's MacBooks to Microsoft's Surface Pro convertibles — have a "Mini DisplayPort" port instead of an HDMI port. You'll need to purchase a Mini DisplayPort to HDMI adapter cable like this cheap one from Amazon to connect that laptop to a TV or other display's HDMI port. Be sure to check exactly what type of port your laptop has before purchasing such an adapter.

Older TVs (or older computers) may not have HDMI support and may require other cables like a DVI or VGA cable. Modern TVs and computers should support HDMI, and you should use that if possible.



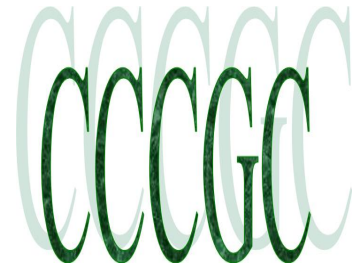
Continued on page 12

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4 Ways to View Your Laptop or Desktop's Screen on Your TV

Google's inexpensive Chromecast offers an easy way to get your computer's display onto your TV without any cables. While Chromecast is generally used to "cast" content from a specific app or web page to your TV, you can also cast a specific browser tab. Not only that, but there's an experimental feature in the Chromecast browser extension that lets you cast your computer's entire desktop to your Chromecast, viewing it on your TV.

Mirror Anything from Your Computer to Your TV Using Google Chromecast

Outputting your computer to your HDTV via HDMI works well. Unfortunately, your computer's location depends upon the length of your... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/199565/mirror-anything-from-your-computer-to-your-tv-using-google-chromecast/>

How well this works will depend on how powerful the computer is, your Wi-Fi, and other factors. It won't work as perfectly as an HDMI cable — which just works without any wireless interference issues — but it's probably the easiest way to do wireless mirroring from any nearby laptop or desktop computer.

AirPlay Mirroring

RELATED ARTICLE

Wireless Display Standards Explained: AirPlay, Miracast, WiDi, Chromecast, and DLNA

HDMI allows you to connect almost any device to a TV or another external display, but HDMI requires a wired... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/177145/wireless-display-standards-explained-airplay-miracast-widi-chromecast-and-dlna/>

Apple's homegrown solution requires an Apple TV box hooked up to your TV. After you've got the box hooked up, you can use Apple's AirPlay to wirelessly mirror the contents of a Mac, iPhone, or iPad's display to your TV.

Unlike other wireless display options, this requires you go all-in on a specific device ecosystem — Apple's. However, if you do have Apple devices along with an Apple TV, this solution will work quite well. Miracast, the open wireless display standard that's supposed to compete with Apple's AirPlay, doesn't work nearly as reliably in our experience.

Miracast Wireless Display

Miracast is supposed to be an open alternative to Apple's AirPlay, allowing you to "cast" an Android or Windows device's display wirelessly to a TV or set-top box. Support for casting is built into the latest versions of Android, Windows 8, and Windows Phone 8. Your TV may or may not include Miracast, although it's appearing on more streaming boxes like the Roku 3. We couldn't get Miracast working with the Roku 3, but you may have more luck. Here's how to start Miracasting.

Due to all the issues we've experienced, we recommend you try Miracast last. If you have hardware that supports Miracast, feel free to try — but don't go out of your way to buy Miracast-enabled hardware, as there's a good chance you'll be disappointed with all the problems you'll experience. Miracast clearly needs more time in the oven before it can hope to become the easy-to-use, interoperable standard it's supposed to be.

Conclusion on page 13

Charlotte Bytes



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Conclusion

4 Ways to View Your Laptop or Desktop's Screen on Your TV

What is Miracast and Why Should I Care?

Miracast is a wireless display standard designed for mirroring a smartphone, tablet, or PC's screen to a television without requiring... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/200796/what-is-miracast-and-why-should-i-care/>

How to Use Miracast Screen Mirroring from Windows or Android

Miracast is a wireless display standard included in Windows 8.1, Android 4.2, and newer versions of these operating systems. With a Miracast receiver... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/200897/how-to-use-miracast-screen-mirroring-from-windows-or-android/>

There are other ways to get stuff onto your TV, of course. If you're into PC gaming, you may want to try getting a living room box that can stream games from your gaming PC and display them on your TV. However, you'll still get better results with a long HDMI cable that connects that gaming PC directly to your TV. When it comes to getting the contents of your computer's display on your TV, the wired HDMI cable is still king.

Image Credit: @Daman on Flickr, rodtuk on Flickr, AurelianS on Flickr, Kai Hendry on Flickr



How to Prevent Identity Thieves from Opening Accounts in Your Name (Especially after the Anthem Hack)



The news that Anthem got hacked and 80 million people's identities were stolen wasn't very surprising — everybody is getting hacked these days. Last week, Turbo-Tax had to temporarily shut down nationwide because of identity theft fraud. So how can you protect yourself from criminals opening accounts in your name?

Disclaimer: We're not tax or financial advisors, so make sure to do your own research and maybe talk to a professional before taking any of the steps on this page.

This article was written from our own experiences dealing with identity theft this week.

The Anthem hack was one of the biggest hacks ever, with social security numbers, addresses, and a lot more personal information being stolen, but it's hardly the first — just last year, JP Morgan had 76 million customer records stolen and the Postal Service lost 800,000. And those were just the recent, high-profile hacks where personal information was lost, as opposed to Target, eBay, Sony, Home Depot, and other hacks where they mostly got emails and passwords. How many hacks haven't been reported yet, or worse, not even noticed?

At this point it's probably best to assume that criminals have access to enough personal information to open an account in your name, or that they will soon.

After all, you don't really need anything but a name and a social security number to open a credit card account. Luckily there's good news.



How to Deal with Your Personal Information Being Stolen

Most people don't realize this, but you can actually freeze your credit report so that nobody can access it. That means that credit card companies, banks, stores, apartments, and anybody else that usually requires it will be unable to pull your credit. Which means they can't open an account in your name.

Of course, this means that you also can't open an account while the credit report is frozen. Luckily the three credit bureaus will allow you to temporarily (or permanently) unfreeze your credit report so you can apply for something. And then you can re-freeze it again afterward if you'd like.

The only catch to this is that depending on your state, freezing your accounts isn't always free unless you have proof that your identity was stolen and a case report — it's going to cost you anywhere from free up to \$10 for each of the three credit bureaus. And you're going to have to do the process separately for each one.

It's important to keep in mind that almost every time you try to open a new account of any type — cell phone, car insurance, apartment, credit card, store card, or anything like that, your credit report will be accessed. Luckily it only takes a five minute phone call to lift the freeze, or a simple online form, and you can specify when the freeze should go back into effect. Since most creditors only use one credit bureau, you don't need to lift the freeze on all three every time, just ask them which one they use, and lift the freeze on that one.

Should you Freeze Your Credit Reports?

That depends. If you have some reason that your credit report gets pulled on a regular basis, such as for your job, this might not work for you. If you open up accounts all the time, this will probably cause a bit of a problem for you — although our general financial advice would be that you don't open new credit every week.

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If everybody's credit report was frozen by default except for when they needed to use it, there would be no such thing as identity theft. Think about that.

The Difference between a Security Freeze and Credit Monitoring

The credit agencies really, really, really want you to pay for credit monitoring, because it's a recurring \$10 or \$20 monthly charge forever. They each offer their own "lock" feature, but only to paying customers, and you really need to pay for all three of them if you want it to work very well. Of course, that's the solution they push in all their marketing, because that's how they pay the bills.

But credit monitoring only alerts you after somebody opens an account in your name. What's the point in that? Sure, you can try and fight it, but by the time that happens, the damage is already done. And if you have to pay for credit monitoring for all three agencies all the time, you're going to just go broke.

A security freeze, on the other hand, is going to prevent anybody from opening an account without having access to all your information and your secret PIN number (a 10 digit code for two of the agencies, and a 6 digit code for the third).

If you do have to pay for a security freeze, it's a one-time fee as opposed to a monthly fee (forever) for monitoring. To "thaw" your frozen credit report might be free depending on the state or the agency, or might cost up to \$10. If you are a victim of identity theft, you can get it all for free, but you'll need to figure out the process to officially file a report and get a case number.

When you read all of the help pages from the credit agencies, they are going to recommend that you use their other services, and make a big deal that doing a security freeze on your account is going to make it difficult to get credit. But that's a bit of an exaggeration — you can very easily and temporarily lift a freeze should you decide to apply for something, you'll just need to do it ahead of time. How's that a big deal?

Bottom line, a maximum \$30 one time to freeze your credit on all three bureaus is cheaper than paying \$20 a month for monitoring for the rest of your life.



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For each of the three credit bureaus, there's a whole process you'll need to go through — first, you'll need to go to each of their web pages separately, put in all your personal information, if you need to pay the \$10 fee, you'll have to enter your credit card number, and then you'll have to verify that you are who you say you are based on questions from your credit report.

We'd really recommend that you have a copy of your credit report handy, because some of those questions can be tricky.

Alternatively, you can just call each of them separately and do the process over the phone, or you can even mail the required forms and information to each of them. They'll need things like a copy of all your information, a utility bill in your name, and some other information — you'll need to check with each one to see what they require.

NOTE: Make absolutely certain that when you click through these links that you are on the right site. Check the address bar to make sure it shows HTTPS. Otherwise go directly to each of their sites and find the security freeze option, usually hidden at the bottom of the page.

Equifax: Go to <https://www.freeze.equifax.com> and fill out the form or call them with the number on the page. They also have a help page with more information.

Experian: Go to <https://www.experian.com/freeze/> and fill out the form. They also have a help page with more information about other options for how to do the freeze.

Transunion: Go to <https://freeze.transunion.com> and fill out the form. They also have a help page with more information (we'd recommend reading that first).

At some point during the process you'll either be presented with the option to choose a PIN number, or their system will automatically generate one for you. **WRITE THIS NUMBER DOWN.** Put it into a safe place where you will never lose it. If you want to thaw your credit report in the future, you are going to need this PIN.

If you do not save your PIN number, you're going to have to go through a tedious process of calling the credit bureau and requesting a new one, which could take a week to get to your house via snail mail.

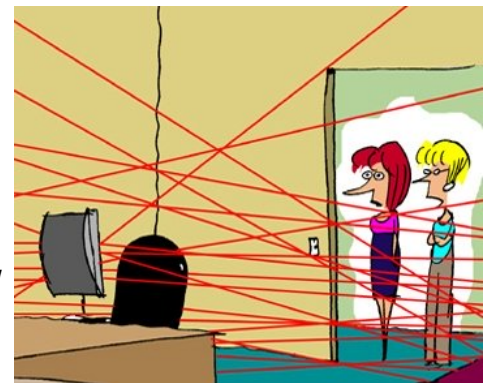
Alternative: Place a Fraud Alert

If you don't want to freeze your credit entirely, you can also place a free fraud alert on your account. This works for 90 days, and then the process to continue it is a little confusing unless you have a police report. Here are the links for Equifax, Experian, and Transunion. If you do a fraud alert on one credit bureau, it will automatically apply to all three of them.

Personally, we went with the credit freeze. But it's up to you.

One Last Note

When scammers steal your identity, they will often file a fraudulent tax return in your name, having your tax return deposited into their account instead of yours. This is a real problem — in 2012, scammers managed to collect 4 Billion dollars this way. Make sure to file your tax return as soon as possible to avoid this happening to you.



"He protects his computer with a laser security system. He fails to understand that attacks come from within the computer."