

February 2016



The Next General Meeting of CCCGC will be February 2, 2016



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Charlotte Bytes

Editor

A Yvette Pilch

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No. II

Inside this issue:

Computer Drawing	2
50/50 Winner	2
Door Prize Winners	2
New Members	3
Program Highlights	3
Officers & Board of Directors	4
Events Calendar	4
Tech Sites	4
Volunteer of the Month	5
How to Rename	6
How to Rename Cont.	7
Apps That Impact Battery Life	8
Apps Impact Battery Cont.	9
Apps Impact Battery Concl.	10
Clean Windows PC	11
Clean Windows PC Cont.	12
Clean Windows PC Cont.	13
Clean Windows PC Cont.	14
Printer Problems	15
Printer Problems Concl.	16
Windows & Android Work	17
Clean Windows PC Concl.	18
Windows & Android Work	19
Windows & Android Concl.	20

Lieda Boyko is the volunteer of the month for February. Lieda has been an active, loyal member and a volunteer for many years. She works in the office making sure that our forms and paperwork is up-to-date. She helps at the meetings to set up the tables for membership and tickets. Lieda is always ready to help out with anything that needs to be done. She will fill in at the office when another volunteer cannot be there. It is a pleasure to honor her this month.

It is good to see all the snowbirds back. We welcome you and hope you all have a great winter here.

It's a little chilly here for us permanent residents, but it's much better than up north.

Remember you only have until July 29th to get your free windows 10 upgrade. Don't pass it up. Windows 10 is a fine system.

Ron

Charlotte County Computer Group

2280 Aaron Street
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Phone: 941-585-0356
941-625-4175 x244
E-mail: office@cccgc.net



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COMPUTER DRAWING

At our Meeting, January **5th**, Lieda whose birthday is on a **5th** day, her anniversary is also on a **5th** day, bought ticket #**5** for only **\$5** and came away with a great laptop.

What is your lucky number?



50/50 WINNER

Susie Sterling was thrilled to find out she had the winning ticket. With a big smile on her face, she came up and collected the money and was willing to have her picture taken. Next month it could be you in the spotlight.



DOOR PRIZE WINNERS



Left To Right

ALLYN BASCOM

JEANNETTE BRUNELLE

CHUCK WRIGHT

ART LYONS

GEORGE KOPENEC

WELCOME

New Members

Nancy Bergman	Elwyn Cartwright	Bonnie Fowler
Gloria Dunford-Cartwright	Donald Gopsill	Joyce Leike
Clyde Leininger	James McCans	Linda Seidell
Daniel Wegner	Errol Wilcox	Eleanor Bergman
Ennis Bisbano	Mary C Burcham	Richard Burcham
Ed Engel	Judy Engel	Louise Habayeb
Margaret Lynch	Larry Nwlaon	Brenda Chapman
Gerald Clark	Maurice Desforge	Nancy Frisbie
Virginia Lewis	Judy Marcucilli	Ted Marcucilli
Eleanor Marr	Martha McGregor	Jacqueline McHugh
Josef Nagy	Ivet Perez	Kimberly Player

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.

Martin Balzer Susan Linnell Judy Longhi
Gerhard Peters Jane Peters Jack Stuber

Program High-Lights

Scott Baty entertained us for the evening. He spoke about Chromecast which takes over the screen and uses it or acts as a remote.

You can take your picture from the phone or other device and casts it through wifi to the computer screen.

It works great for programs like netflix. Plug into an HDMI port on your TV connect to a network on the computer and watch movies etc. It transmits through the internet but doesn't use your phone or device.

Smart phones and android devices are easy to cast....the icons are apps or shortcuts or links to programs. At the bottom of your screen there is a row of icons that doesn't change. You can drag icons around by long pressing on the icon (similar to dragging and dropping) for items you use all the time.

You can also remove icons you don't want to take up space on the screen, but that doesn't delete the program.

The tiles on windows 10 are basically used the same as android apps. They are merely shortcuts.

Google Drive can be accessed on the phone by touching the icon and it will open up the files that are in the cloud.

Chromecast is inexpensive at about \$35.00. Once you are signed in, you can use this app immediately.

Remember, there will be a link on our website as well as other important sites.

Lydia





Microsoft®
REGISTERED
Refurbisher



Page 4

Feb 2016

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www.cccgc.info

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Please be sure to
register online for
classes

February 2, Meeting

**For the latest Classes & Events Calendar
Please click on button below**

[Events Calendar](#)

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Charlotte County Computer Group

Information: (941) 585-0356

(941) 625-4175 x244

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2280 Aaron Street

Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Lieda Boyko Volunteer of the Month



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How to Rename Any Computer, Smartphone, or Tablet

It's a good idea to give each of the devices you use a meaningful name. This is especially important on Windows 10, as Microsoft has removed the computer name option from the first-time setup process. Windows 10 PCs will just receive random, meaningless names by default.

On a network, this "hostname" identifies the device on your router's status pages and when browsing shared files. Such names are also used in "find my device" interfaces and anywhere else the device needs to be identified.

Windows 10

Microsoft simplified the setup process in Windows 10. Windows will no longer ask you to enter a name for your PC when you set it up, which means that your Windows 10 PC probably has a meaningless, confusing name.

To provide a name, open the "Settings" app from the Start menu or Start screen, select the "System" category, and select "About" at the bottom of the list. Click or tap the "Rename PC" button and provide a new name for your PC. Your change will take effect after a reboot.

Windows 7, 8, and 8.1

Change Your Computer Name in Windows 7, 8, or 10

RELATED ARTICLE If you've ever bought a new computer with the operating system already installed, you might be annoyed by the default... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/windows-vista/change-your-computer-name-in-windows-vista/>

On previous versions of Windows — or even Windows 10 — you can open the Control Panel, click "System and Security", and click "System". Click the "Advanced system settings" link in the sidebar, click the "Computer Name" tab at the top of the System Properties window, and click the "Change" button to the right of "To rename this computer, click Change". Type a new name into the "Computer name" box and click "OK" to rename your computer.

iPhone and iPad

This option is available on the "About" screen on Apple's iOS, used on iPhones, iPads, and iPod Touches. To find it, open the "Settings" app from your home screen, tap the "General" category, and tap "About".

Tap the "Name" field at the top of the About screen and you'll be able to enter a new name.

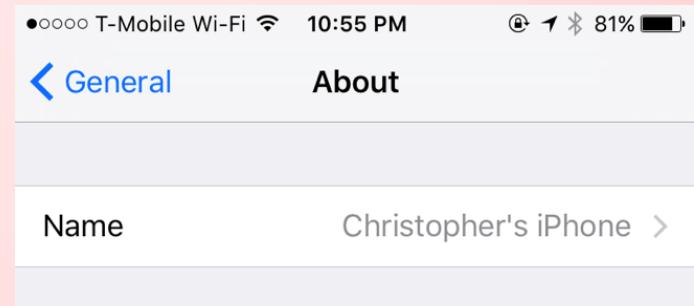
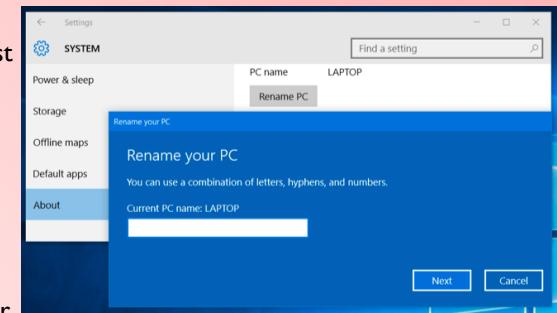
Android

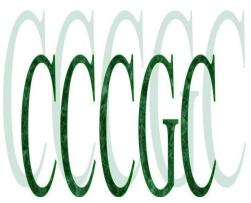
RELATED ARTICLE

What Exactly Is a MAC Address Used For?

Every piece of hardware on your local network has a MAC address in addition to the IP address assigned to... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/169540/what-exactly-is-a-mac-address-used-for/>

For whatever reason, Google doesn't offer this option on an Android device. If you're setting up a Wi-Fi hotspot from your Android phone or tablet, you can change the name of that Wi-Fi hotspot in the hotspot settings — but that's it.





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Page 7
Feb 2016

How to Rename Any Computer, Smartphone, or Tablet

Continued from page 6



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

There's no way to change the device's name so it's identified by that particular name on your network. The only way you can do this is to root your Android device and search for an app that can change the "hostname". You can still use the device's MAC address to uniquely identify it, at least.

You can rename your Android device in Google Play to make it more distinct when installing apps via Google Play and tracking your lost device, however. Head to play.google.com/settings, or visit the Google Play Store website, click the gear icon, and select "Settings" to access this page. Click the "Edit" button and enter a new name for your device.

Chromebooks

Like Android, Chrome OS is also made by Google. So it should be no surprise that Google hasn't provided a way to change your Chromebook's name, either. As with Android devices, you can use the MAC address to uniquely identify a Chromebook on your router's settings page, if you need to.

Chrome OS is just Linux underneath it all, however. If you put your Chromebook into developer mode — for example, you have to do this to install a Linux desktop alongside Chrome OS — you'll then have write access to the system configuration files and can change your Chromebook's name.

Linux

Different Linux distributions handle this in different ways. You can generally change your hostname just by running the "hostname" command as root, but it'll be reset when you restart your PC. Different Linux distributions define the hostname in different configuration files. For example, on Ubuntu and other Debian-based Linux distributions, you'll need to edit the /etc/hostname file.

If you're using another Linux distribution, perform a web search for something like "change hostname on [name of Linux distribution]".

Other devices will have hostnames, too. They may or may not provide a way to change their names, but you'll often find this option on an "About" screen or somewhere else in their settings if they do.

Image Credit: miniyo73 on Flickr

```
geek@I-wish-I-could-change-this: ~$ sudo hostname my-new-hostname
sudo: unable to resolve host I-wish-I-could-change-this
geek@I-wish-I-could-change-this: ~$ 
```



```
geek@my-new-hostname: ~$ 
```



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AVG report lists apps that have the most impact on smartphone performance, battery life and mobile data.



In their report titled “Android App Performance Trends,” online [security](#) company AVG identifies the Android apps people use on their smartphones and tablets that are the biggest hogs on data, storage, battery life, and overall performance. The report uses information collected from their own Android security and battery management apps in use on Android phones.

As smartphones become more and more powerful, apps are created that allow us to do more and more things with them. They keep us connected with friends and relatives. They entertain us, educated us and make us more productive, at home, in the office or on the go. The processing power smartphones put in the palm of our hands is actually rather astonishing when you compare them to what desktop computers were capable of only 25 years ago.

When it comes to installing apps, most people don’t seem too particular about what put on their phones, or the impact they will have on battery life and performance. For all I know, they think the App Fairy just left a great new app on the front porch of the Google Play store, and it’s completely free for the taking. Little do they know the app may be using their bandwidth and data allotment to constantly download or update banner ads to be displayed on-screen the next time they open the app. Or worse, even if they DON’T open the app.

Chances are, the app does come with a price, in the way of collecting your data and using your bandwidth to upload that data to their servers. While this is going on, you may be cursing your phone for sluggish performance and your cellular provider for lousy service. They get the blame, because real offender is operating behind your Home screen, where you can’t see what’s really going on.

Even the AVG app on your smartphone was using resources and mobile data to collect and upload information about your apps and the impact they have on your phone’s performance and battery. But, we wouldn’t have this report without it. So, we’ll forgive them... **this time.**

Even for more advanced users, it’s a difficult task to keep up with identifying and preventing apps from causing soaring data bills, sluggish or unresponsive devices, and batteries that drain faster than you can say, “Where’s my charger!”

The Rundown

The data in AVG’s report was collected in the US, UK and Australia during Q3 of 2015. The apps in question were ranked for averages on battery consumption, storage space used, and mobile data consumed, and impact on overall performance based on real usage.

Here is the rundown, in order of impact, of the ten biggest offenders in each of three categories, including apps that run at start up and apps the user runs after start up.

Overall Impact on Performance (run at start up)

1. Facebook (the app)
2. Google Play Services (not the Play Store app, itself)

BlackBerry Messenger (popular with former BlackBerry users)

Instagram (a Facebook property)





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AVG report lists apps that have the most impact on smartphone performance, battery life and mobile data.

Continued from page 8

Facebook Messenger

ChatON Voice & Video Chat (Samsung)

Facebook Pages Manager

The Weather Channel

Kakao Talk

WhatsApp Messenger

Most of these apps run as soon as your phone starts up. None of these apps are actually essential to the phone's operation. But, without Google Play Services, many of your Android phone's features would not work.

The greediest apps run by the user after start up include Snapchat, Amazon Shopping UK, Clean Master, Line, Netflix and Microsoft Outlook. If your phone feels sluggish and the battery life is weak, one of these apps could be a big part of the reason.

Mobile Data (run at start up)

Facebook (see a pattern here?)

Yahoo! Japan

Avast Antivirus & Security (they must be collecting user info too)

The Weather Channel

Instagram

iHeartRadio

Google Play Services (supports many Google features)

APUS Launcher

Groupon (I hope you're saving big bucks!)

WeatherBug



Setting these apps to not run at start up, if the option is available, could save a bucket load of data. Top data hogs run by the user after start up include Netflix, Snapchat, Tumblr, Clean Master, Samsung's WatchON video app, Spotify Music and Microsoft Outlook. Yes, Microsoft's notorious bloat factor now affects Android devices too. Tinder rounds out the top 10.

Battery Drain (run at start up)

Android Firmware Updater

Facebook

Beaming Service (Samsung)

BlackBerry Messenger (BBS) (still popular, and growing)

Security Policy Updater (Samsung)

WhatsApp

ChatON Voice & Video Chat (Samsung)

Weather & Clock Widget (Android)

Google Play Services

WeChat



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Conclusion from page 9

The reason Samsung-specific apps ranked so high on this list is because, as the report also noted, nine out of the 10 most in-use phones are Samsung models.

The biggest battery drainers run after start up included WatchON Video (Samsung), Snapchat, Amazon Shopping UK, MS Outlook, BBC News, Netflix, Line (call and messaging app), Clean Master, Walmart and Amazon Shopping (global).

The Rest of The Story

Rather than list the biggest storage hogs, suffice it to say that most were apps already listed in one or more categories discussed already. A casual stroll through the Apps list in your phone's Settings will reveal the biggest users of internal memory or storage space.

Excluded from this article are games. It almost goes without saying that many of the most popular Android games are going to use lots of storage and lots of processing power, of which the consequence is rapid battery drain.

Getting Control

The report from AVG was also kind enough to offer their suggestions for boosting battery life, freeing up storage space and reducing mobile data usage.

Limit notifications. Some regular notifications can be useful. But, not all of them. Unnecessary notifications eat up battery and can contribute to sluggish performance.

Reduce background features and the frequency of refresh intervals, location retrieval and in-app notifications.

Clear app caches occasionally, including the cached data in Settings > Storage > Cached Data. If you use a cleaner app, run it manually and make sure it only runs when you start it.

Turn off the Auto-play feature in Facebook so videos only load when you ask them to. Turn off other background data transfers.

Turn off Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and GPS when not in use. Each of these internal radio/receiver components use battery power and should be disabled when not in use. If you scroll to the rear of the Apps drawer, you may find the Power Bar app that you can place on your Home page and gives you quick access to enable/disable those features.

Turn down the screen brightness, or set to Auto. Auto will turn the brightness down when it detects low levels of ambient light. But, you may be comfortable with manually reducing screen brightness to save even more battery power.

*There's more information in the full report, including the top 50 Android apps in use.

So, what's the biggest performance drain and battery hog on your smartphone? And, what do you think is more important, a slim phone or a battery that lasts longer than a round of Spider Solitaire?



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Start 2016 right with a clean Windows PC

By Fred Langa

The old saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure was never so true as when applied to computing.

It's time for our annual PC checkup. Taking an hour or so now to run through the following steps could save you many hours or even days of troubleshooting down the road.

(Editor's note: In a sort of Windows Secrets tradition, we publish this story in the first issue of a new year — with some updates, of course. We have included a reference list of other PC-maintenance stories throughout this article.)

Undo a year's worth of wear and tear

Consider what your PC has been through in the past 12 months: Windows Update added dozens of patches to your operating system; you've likely installed some new third-party software, uninstalled other programs, and upgraded or patched apps and utilities; and you've probably altered, tuned, and tweaked various aspects of your system's user interface and software settings. And you've undoubtedly created and deleted myriad new emails, documents, photos, MP3s, videos, spreadsheets, and such. You might even have upgraded your Windows 7 system to the new Windows 10.

All during that time, your hard drive spun hundreds of millions of revolutions and the system fans rotated for hundreds of hours. Heat, dust, and chemical degradation did their inevitable damage, reducing the remaining physical life of your system's components. In short, just as we're a year older, our PCs are not the same machines they were a year ago.

To ensure your system runs smoothly for another year, now's a good time to perform some extra maintenance. It'll help prevent new errors from piling on old ones and keep your system fundamentally sound.

Preserve and protect system data — Take I

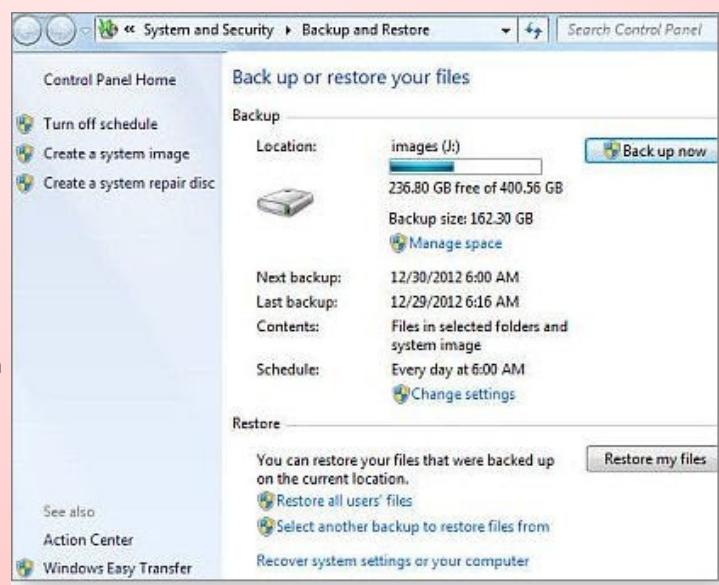
As with all significant changes to a PC, start any serious system maintenance with a full system backup — if anything goes awry, you can recover quickly.

(An up-to-date backup is good insurance against all manner of ills that might bring down a PC: power spikes, hard-drive crashes, malware infestations, cockpit error, and many other calamities.)

All current versions of Windows provide the means to make reliable backups, though each new generation of the OS has added enhancements to its archiving capabilities. Here's a quick list of resources:

Vista: Check out Microsoft's Vista backup/restore FAQ or the Vista "Back up your files" page. Many of the techniques cited in the May 12, 2011, Top Story, "Build a complete Windows 7 safety net," also apply to Vista.

Windows 7: The "Build a complete Windows 7 safety net" story walks you through the entire process of setting up and using Win7's built-in backup tools, providing near-total data safety. (See Figure 1.)



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Start 2016 right with a clean Windows PC

Continued from page 11

Figure 1. Take advantage of whatever backup options your Windows version provides. Win7's (shown) are especially robust.

Windows 8.1: Microsoft's most controversial OS tried to be all things new, so instead of backup, it calls its archiving system File History. Microsoft provides a Win8-specific how-to (including a video demonstration) on its "How to use File History" page.

Windows 10: Microsoft's newest OS improved upon the changes in Win8. It incorporates the best features of Win7's and Win8's backup and restore tools (see Figure 2). Win10's system is detailed in the Oct. 15, 2015, Top Story, "Best of breed: Win10's hybrid backup system."

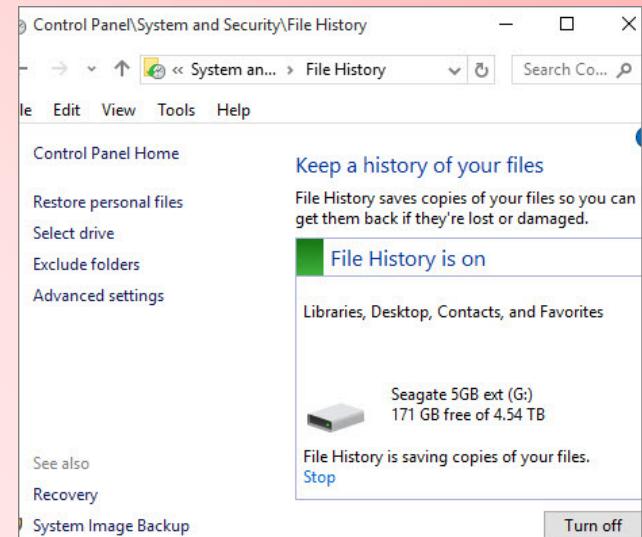
Figure 2. Like Windows 8, Win10's File History makes near-real-time incremental backups of selected user files.

Check the hard drive's physical/logical health

Traditional hard drives are possibly the hardest-working components in PCs. Their spinning platters can rack up hundreds of millions of rotations per year, and their read/write heads chatter back and forth millions of times, moving chunks of files in astronomical quantities.

It's a testament to hard-drive technology that they work as well, as long, and as reliably as they do. But as sure as death and taxes, all drives eventually wear out.

Take a few minutes to check your drive's physical health via the Self-Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting Technology (aka SMART) subsystem built into most current hard drives. Free software can help you do so; see the Sept. 6, 2012, LangList Plus item, "Using and under-



standing SMART hard-drive tools."

Although SMART tools monitor the physical health of drives, Windows' built-in tools check on the logical health of the files on the drive.

Every version of Windows from XP on has chkdsk (as in "check disk") for exactly that purpose. The basic version of chkdsk is a simple point-and-click operation. In Windows Explorer, right-click the drive that you want to check and select Properties. Click the Tools tab and then, under Error-checking, click the Check now button (shown in Figure 3).

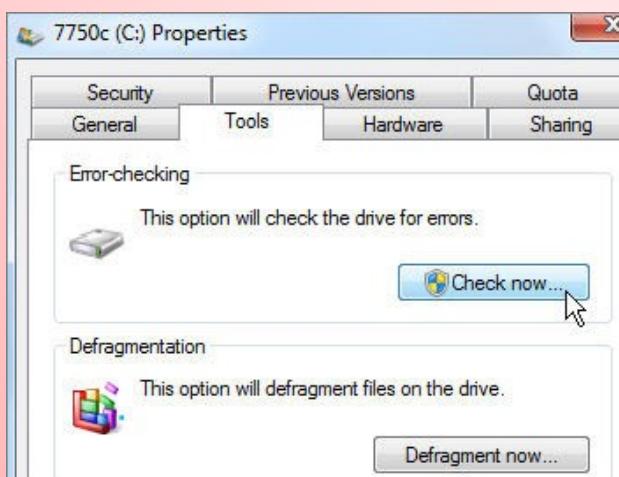
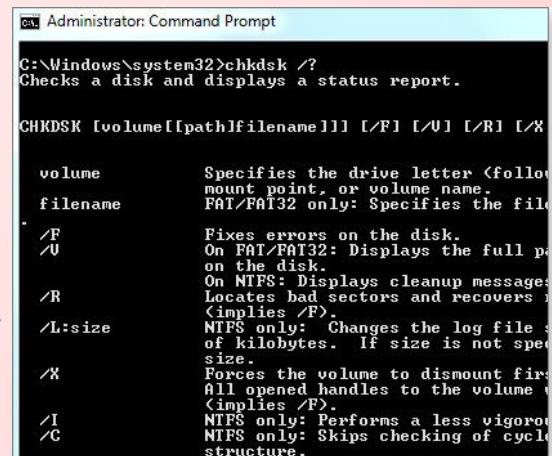


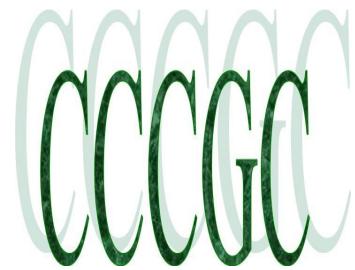
Figure 3. All versions of Windows allow for easy, basic, disk-error checking via Windows' drive properties dialog box.



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Start 2016 right with a clean Windows PC

Continued from page 12

Check now works for routine maintenance, but there's a much more powerful alternative — chkdsk.exe — that's accessed from a command line and that offers many more options for advanced users. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4. The command line-based chkdsk is more powerful than the one-click version in Properties.

Chkdsk's command-line options vary significantly from Windows to Windows, but chkdsk c: /f works in all versions for basic error correction of the C: drive. (Change the drive letter to check and correct other drives.)

To see the version-specific chkdsk commands available in your copy of Windows, open an administrator-level command window (right-click Command Prompt and select Run as administrator). Type chkdsk /? and press Enter. You'll see a complete list of all available chkdsk options.

Patch and update all software and the OS

Now that your hard drives are checked and (I presume) healthy, build on that foundation by making sure all software updates are installed — especially security-related patches! Start by opening Windows Update and clicking Check for updates; then review the list of patches Microsoft wants installed. (Not all Windows patches are necessary or problem-free. Susan Bradley's Patch Watch column routinely provides a list of potentially problematic updates.)

If you need help with Windows Update, Microsoft has more info for Vista/Win7 and Win8.1.

Windows 10 has, of course, changed the OS-updating game. Security updates are mandatory and automatically installed. Win10 Pro users have a bit more control over feature updates, but eventually all nonsecurity updates will be automatically installed, too. (For more on this topic, see the Dec. 24, 2015, Top Story, "Options for controlling updates in Windows 10.")

With Windows fully up to date, it's time to check your other software. Although most applications let you check for updates manually (via menu options such as Help, Help/About, or Help/Update), it's easier to use a general-purpose updating app or service such as those discussed in the July 26, 2012, Top Story, "Software that updates your other software."

While you're checking your software, look for programs you haven't used for a while. Removing applications that no longer serve any useful purpose can help make your system leaner and cleaner — and easier to troubleshoot if the need arises.

Do a thorough review of your PC's defenses

Passwords: As PCs have become more powerful, passwords that were once virtually uncrackable might now fall to various free, easily used, and surprisingly fast hacker tools. Verify that your most important passwords are still secure by testing them (or a variant of them) on any of the many good password-checking sites, such as:

How secure is my password?

Gibson Research Corporation's How big is your haystack?

Password Meter

If you need to upgrade your passwords, see "How to build better passwords," an article I wrote for another publication some time ago. (The information is still current.)

Firewall: Put your firewall through its paces to ensure that your PC is not visible or potentially accessible to Internet-based hackers. The following sites offer free, easy-to-use, firewall-testing tools and services.

HackerWatch Probe

Gibson Research Corporation's **ShieldsUP** (Figure 5 shows some of what you might see after running ShieldsUP.)

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Start 2016 right with a clean Windows PC

Continued from page 13

Figure 5. This partial output of ShieldsUP firewall tests shows the tested PC is invisible and inaccessible to Internet snoops and hackers.

Antivirus: Verify that your system is free of worms, viruses, Trojans, and other malware by running a full scan with a standalone security tool such as ESET's Online Scanner ([site](#)), Microsoft's Safety Scanner ([site](#)), or Trend Micro's HouseCall ([site](#)).

Wi-Fi Router: Many current Wi-Fi routers contain a flaw in their implementation of **Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS)**. Hackers might easily breach your Wi-Fi defenses, regardless of what encryption and password you use. To see whether your router is affected — and what to do if it is — check out the Dec. 13, 2012, [Top Story](#), "Routers using WPS are intrinsically unsafe," and the Dec. 20, 2012, follow-up [story](#), "Putting Wi-Fi router's security to the test."

Port	Service	Status	
0	<nil>	Stealth	There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER
21	FTP	Stealth	There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER
There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER that a port (or even any computer) exists at this IP address!			
23	Telnet	Stealth	There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER
25	SMTP	Stealth	There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER
79	Finger	Stealth	There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER
80	HTTP	Stealth	There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER
110	POP3	Stealth	There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER

Take out *all* the trash accumulated in Windows

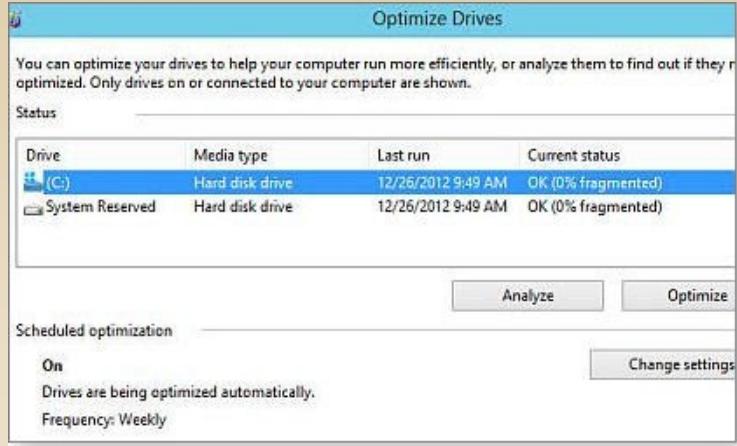
Windows is something of a pack rat (as are most PC users when it comes to their systems); it can accumulate truly astounding amounts of digital debris, including **temporary** files that sometimes become all too permanent.

Fortunately, there are many excellent disk-cleanup tools available. Windows' own **cleanmgr** is one — if you know how to access its hidden settings. They're documented in an April 4, 2002, [article](#), "Sageset unlocks CleanMgr's power." The how-to instructions in that ancient story still work perfectly in all current Windows versions.

Some third-party cleanup tools can do even more, as explained in the July 16, 2015, [Top Story](#), "Are system/Registry cleaners worthwhile?"

Defrag (or optimize) data on hard disks

A major hard-drive cleanup often results in **fragmentation** — files and pieces of files scattered across the hard drive that can waste drive space. Defragmenting can improve drive performance on all spinning-platter drives, but it's not needed (or wanted) on solid-state drives.



Microsoft has online instructions for using the Windows disk defragmenter tool in [Vista](#) and [Win7](#). Win8 takes a somewhat different approach: instead of a simple disk-defragmenter tool, Win8 and Win10 have **Optimize Drives** (see Figure 6), which includes automated SSD support.

Conclusion on page 18



How to Troubleshoot Printer Problems on a Windows PC



The paperless office isn't yet here for many of us, and printers are still a fact of life. If your printer isn't working quite right on a Windows PC, here are some simple troubleshooting tips that can fix it.

Obviously, the first steps are the most obvious. Verify your printer is plugged in, powered on, and connected to your computer (or the Wi-Fi network, if it's a Wi-Fi printer). These may seem obvious, but sometimes we forget to check the simple things before checking the more complex ones.

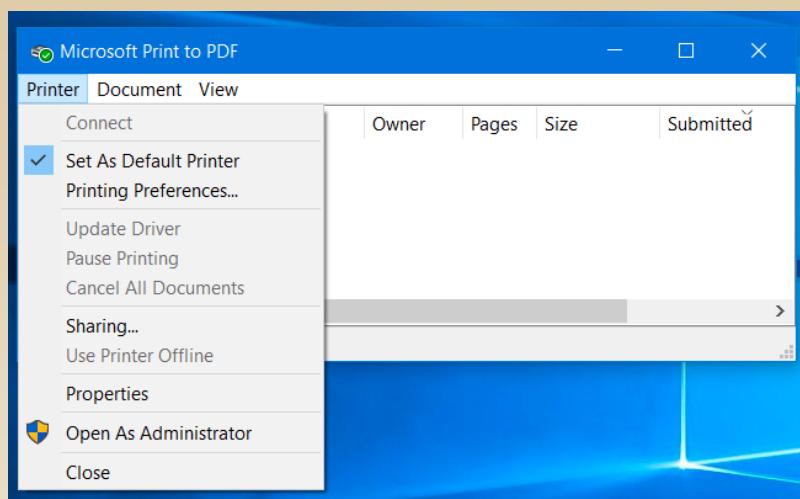
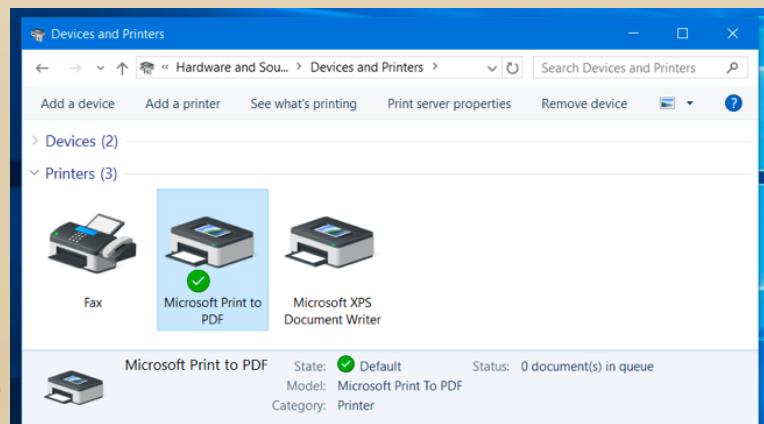
Check the Paper

First, ensure your printer is in proper working state. Verify that the printer has paper loaded if it isn't printing. Even if you've loaded paper, you may need to properly align the paper so the printer can use it. Check the inside of the printer to ensure there isn't a paper jam preventing the printer from working. If there is, you may need to manually remove the jammed paper and clear things up.

Check the Ink or Toner

Of course, you'll need enough ink (if it's an inkjet printer) or toner (if it's a laser printer) before you can print. Even if you're just printing in black-and-white, some inkjet printers may refuse to print at all until you refill their color ink.

To check your printer's ink levels on Windows, open the Devices and Printers window in Windows. You can do so by opening the Control Panel and clicking "View devices and printers" under Hardware and Sound. You may be able to select a printer by clicking it and view this information at the bottom of the window, or right-click a printer, select "Properties", and look for the ink or toner levels.



Many printers report that sort of information here, although not all do — it depends on the printer and its drivers. You may also be able to see this information on the printer itself, if it has a built-in status display.

Check the Print Queue Dialog

Problems with printing could also be caused by issues with Windows. To ensure nothing is going wrong, open the print queue dialog in Windows. You can open a printer's queue by right-clicking that printer in the Devices & Printers window and selecting "See what's printing". If you see an older document that can't print with an error, right-click the document here and remove it. If a printer job is paused, you can resume it from here.

You should also click the "Printer" menu here and verify that "Use printer offline" isn't enabled. If this option is checked, remove the checkmark to disable it.

Conclusion on page 16



How to Troubleshoot Printer Problems on a Windows PC

Conclusion from page 15

Install, Update, or Reinstall Your Printer Drivers

You may need to install, update, or reinstall the printer drivers if it isn't working properly. Printers should ideally "just work" and have their drivers automatically installed by Windows, but this doesn't always work. To do this, visit your printer manufacturer's website, download their driver package, and run the driver installer. It'll walk you through installing the printer drivers and detecting your printer.

Use the Printer's Diagnostics

You might need to use a diagnostic function that will clean the printer's heads or nozzles, or realign them. This option will be in a slightly different place in each printer, depending on the printer's software. On Windows, open the Devices and Printers window, right-click a printer, select "Properties", and examine the options here to see what options are available for your particular printer. These options are provided by your printer drivers, and you may find them somewhere else — for example, in a printer configuration utility located in your Start menu.

This can help fix problems with poor print quality, too.

Set Your Default Printer

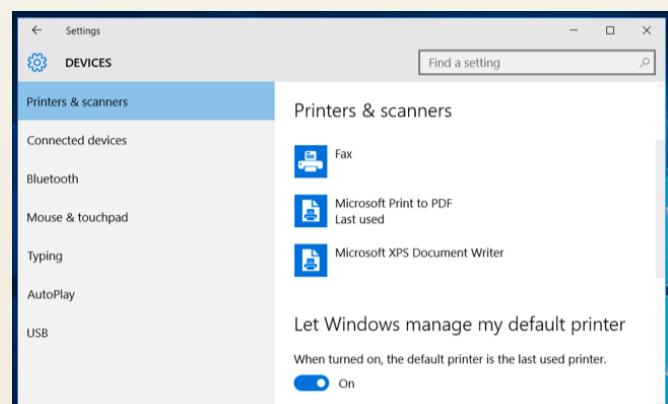
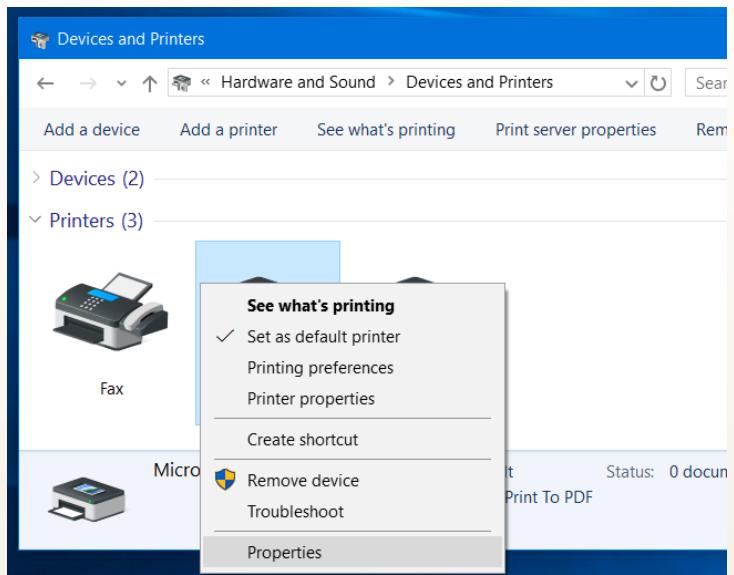
Windows 10's "November update" changed the way default printers work on Windows. By default, every time you print to a printer, Windows will automatically make it your default printer. This would be inconvenient if you wanted to leave one particular printer as your default one and occasionally print to another one.

To disable this, open the Settings app from the Start menu or Start screen, select "Devices", select "Printers & scanners", and disable the "Let Windows manage my default printer" option.

You can then select a default printer by clicking or tapping it in this window and clicking "Set as default". You can also right-click a printer in the Devices and Printers window and select "Set as Default Printer".

If your printer has a physical control panel with buttons on it, you may need to press the "OK" button one or more times if it's displaying a status message. Some printers may just not print until you press "OK" and verify you've seen a displayed status message. This control panel may also display more detailed error message that will point you in the right direction and give you something to search for if it isn't working properly.

Lots of things can go wrong with a printer, and some printers — especially older ones — may display confusing error messages. If your printer shows a particular error message and you're not sure what it means, you should try searching the web for that particular error message.



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Windows Secrets

Everything Microsoft forgot to mention.

Making Windows and Marshmallow Android Work Together

By Lincoln Spector

Windows and Android have always had an uneasy relationship. Those of us who use both Windows and Android on a regular basis often find that the two OSes don't always play well together.

In some ways, the newest phones have made the problem worse. Here's how to make your Android phone work with Windows.

In the Nov. 26 Top Story, "Why your next cell phone should be unlocked," I reported on my experience with the new Nexus 6P phone, which runs pure and unaltered Android 6 — aka Marshmallow. There are good reasons to purchase a phone that works with more than one cell service, but many of the newest phones have made Android-to-Windows connections even more problematic. The Nexus 6P is no exception, due mostly to its USB Type-C port and lack of support for some legacy formats. (Again, this is not unique to the Nexus 6P.)

This follow-up article will tell you how to turn a Marshmallow phone into a viable, mobile extension of a Windows PC. (I must confess that I can't type the words Marshmallow phone without imagining a white, puffy, gooey, sticky, and diabetes-inducing smartphone made of gelatin and sugar.)

Doing real work on your phone

Let's be clear: I'd never recommend trying to do major work (such as writing this article) on a smartphone. But sometimes you really need to process some words, crunch a few numbers, or edit a slide show, and the only tech tool you have is in your pocket.

In those cases, you need productivity apps on your phone, and those apps have to access the files you normally create and edit in Windows.

Marshmallow comes with a trio of productivity apps — Docs (word processing), Sheets (spreadsheet), and Slides (presentation) — along with a note-taking tool called Keep. These are all free, app-based versions of Google Docs, the company's online set of productivity tools. They're not particularly powerful, but that's typically the case with portable document-creation/-editing apps.

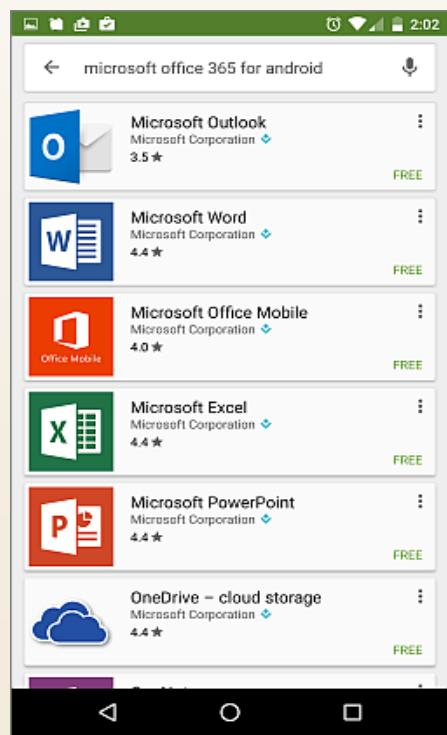
By default, Marshmallow puts all three in a home-screen folder called Create. You can add other apps to that folder, such as Microsoft tools.

For example, if you have an Office 365 subscription, you're already paying for the right to add mobile versions of Word, Excel, and so on to your phone. Look for them in the Google Play Store (Figure 1). Note, however, that you'll also find an app called Microsoft Office Mobile — it's pointless, it just tells you to download the others.

Figure 1. An Office 365 subscription includes free mobile Office applications.

Keep in mind that the mobile Office apps are not as powerful as the desktop versions. Android-based Word, for instance, lacks outlining and macros. But it still has styles, tables, and shapes, which makes it relatively powerful by mobile standards.

Also, Google's productivity tools handle only online documents; but Microsoft's apps let you open and edit files stored locally on the phone. The unfortunate exception is mobile OneNote, which can access only notebooks stored in OneDrive.





Start 2016 right with a clean Windows PC

Conclusion from page 14

Figure 6. Windows 8's version of hard-drive defragging tools.

The changes in Optimize Drive are explained in a Microsoft TechNet [discussion](#). A Win8 [support page](#) gives more how-to information; it applies to Windows 10, too.

There's additional cleaning information in the July 1, 2004, [article](#), "Right and wrong ways to de-dust a PC," and in a 2005 [article](#), "Getting the grunge out of your PC," that I wrote for another publication.

You're now ready for another year of computing

Congratulations! Your PC should now be good to go for the new year. Here's hoping 2015 is free from bugs, crashes, and other PC misfortunes.

For more stories on general PC maintenance, see:

"Keep a healthy PC: A routine-maintenance guide" – Jan. 16, 2014, [Top Story](#)

"Tools for finding PC-performance bottlenecks" – Feb. 12, 2015, [Top Story](#)

"Free first aid for a wide range of Windows ills" – June 11, 2015, [Top Story](#)

"How to safely test file and image backups" – April 16, 2015, [Top Story](#)

"Activate Windows' hidden, master admin account" – May 14, 2015, [Top Story](#)

"Learn to use the Windows 10 Recovery Drive" – Sept. 17, 2015, [Top Story](#)

"Prepping a Win7 PC for the Win10 upgrade" – July 2, 2015, LangaList Plus [column](#) (in the paid section of Windows Secrets)

"Huge WinSxS folder stymies PC cleanup" – July 23, 2015, LangaList Plus [column](#) (paid section)

"Email: Drop the junk; keep your contacts" – July 2, 2015, [Top Story](#)

For a general guide to personal online security, see:

"How to safely and securely use public Wi-Fi" – April 2, 2015, On Security [column](#) (paid section)

"Revisiting the WS Security Baseline: Part 1" – July 3, 2014, [Top Story](#)

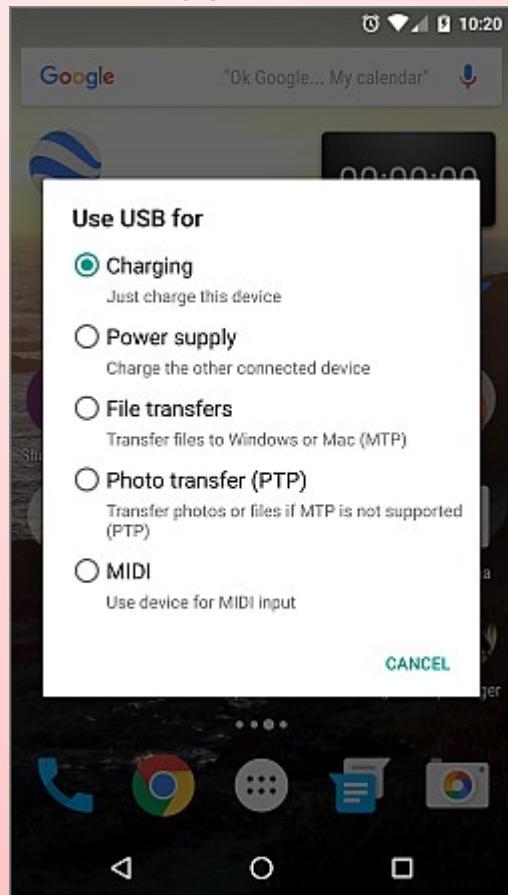
"The WS Security Baseline — New Year's edition" – Jan. 8, 2015, On Security [column](#) (paid section)

Charlotte Bytes



Making Windows and Marshmallow Work Together

Continued from page 17



However, before you can access any document stored on the phone, you need to get it there. Here's how.

File-transfer method 1: The USB connection

Aside from a headphone jack, the only port on my Nexus 6P is a USB Type-C port (more info), which provides lightning-fast charges, but is incompatible with almost everything.

To get around these incompatibilities, my Nexus came with a short, 13-inch USB-C-to-USB 2.0 adapter cable. (According to a blog post by Google technician Benson Leung, some adapter cables are defective and potentially dangerous. Mine works fine.)

The first time I used the cable to connect the phone and my Win7 laptop, the drivers installed immediately — and the connection defaulted to "Charging." Since then, it always defaults to the charging mode — and there's no way to change that stupid default. When I charge my phone, I'm not likely to use the laptop.

So every time I plug it in, I have to change the USB setting. On the phone, I swipe down the notification bar at the top of the screen and tap USB for charging. In the resulting dialog box, I select File transfers (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The default USB-connection option in Marshmallow is Charge. Select File transfers to move files between the phone and a PC.

That option turns your phone into an external drive (a feature that some Android phones block — but not mine), so you can use Windows' standard file-management tools to manage the contents of your phone.

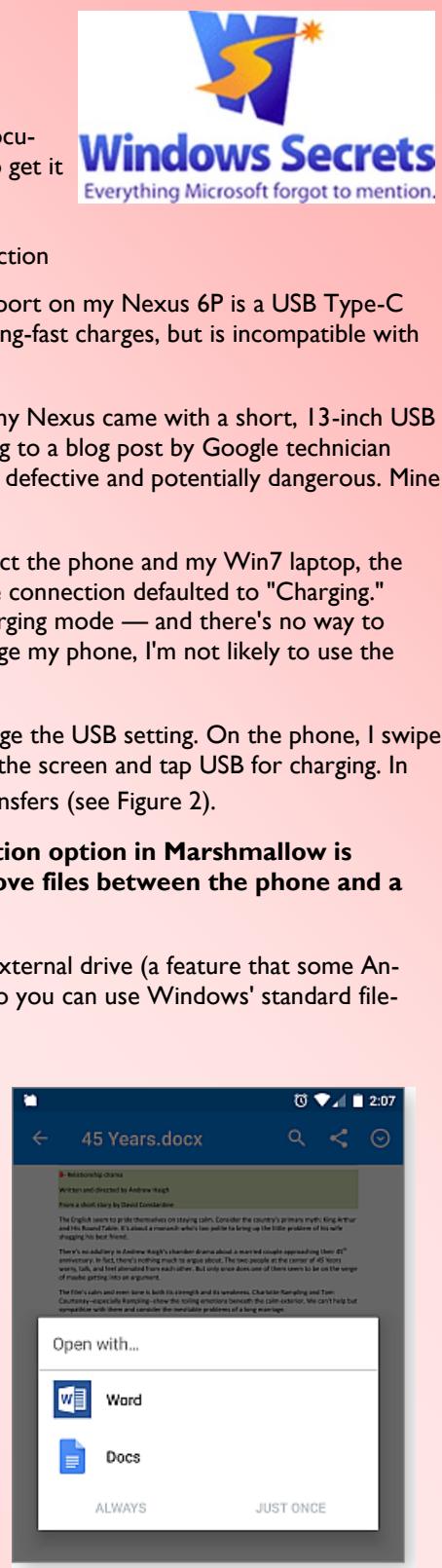
However, in one important sense, the phone doesn't act like a normal external drive. You won't find it in Window's Safely Remove ... feature; when you're done, you just unplug the phone. That might sound dangerous, but it's not been a problem for me.

File Transfer 2: Cloud syncing and storage

Connecting the phone to your PC every time you want to exchange a file is far from convenient. Fortunately, you don't have to.

Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, and similar services have Android-based apps. However, these mobile versions work somewhat differently from their desktop siblings. For example, cloud-stored files aren't synched to the phone as they are with Windows. Instead, you use the cloud-service app to access your files (or another app — I'll get to those below). Figure 3 shows file-open options in Dropbox.

Figure 3. Cloud-storage apps let you select how a file is opened.



Charlotte Bytes

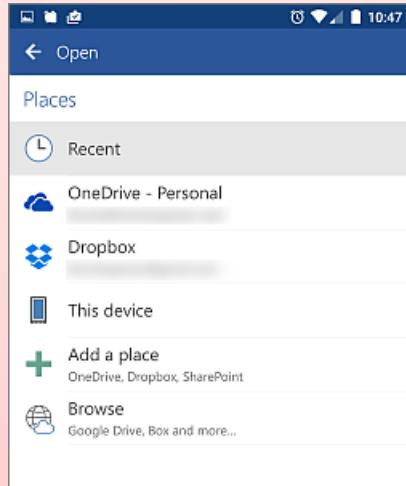
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Making Windows and Marshmallow Work Together

Conclusion from page 20

If you want to access a file stored in the cloud, you open the storage service's app and look for the file. What happens when you tap the file depends on what service you're using. If you tap, say, a .docx file in Google Drive, it opens in the Docs app; but in OneDrive, it comes up in Word. Tap the file in Dropbox, and it comes up in a viewer built into the app. A dialog box also pops up with options for loading the file into Docs, Word, and possibly some other apps.



That's one reason I stick with Dropbox. It doesn't have to play favorites.

If you use OneDrive or Dropbox (but not Google Drive), the .docx file can also be opened directly from the Word app (see Figure 4). When you save the file, the updated version automatically goes up to the cloud.

Figure 4. The mobile Word app lets you open a file stored locally or in the cloud.

Of course, opening a file that resides in the cloud isn't the same as copying a file — or a folder — to your phone. None of the cloud-service apps do a good job with basic file transfers or phone-based file management. Fortunately, there's an alternative: ES File Explorer (Google Play; see Figure 5).

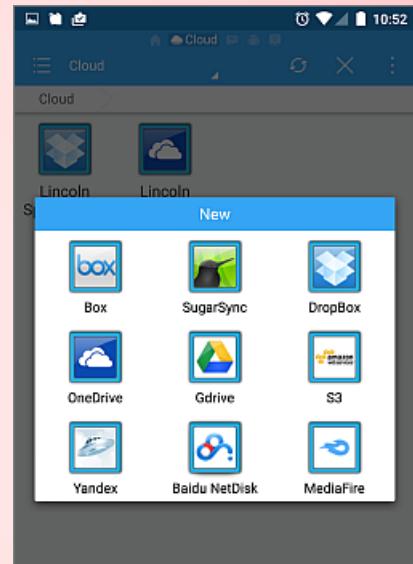


Figure 5. ES File Explorer adds file-management tools missing in Marshmallow and mobile productivity apps.

This free file manager works with Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, and other such services. It's not as easy and powerful as Windows Explorer — let alone File Explorer — but it does the job. Once you get the hang of it, you can easily copy or move files and folders between your phone and the cloud. You can read my more detailed discussion of ES File Explorer in an "Answer Line" article.

Working efficiently in two worlds: Obviously, writing a major report, preparing a presentation, or working out your company's budget isn't feasible on a smartphone. But the ability to grab these files from anywhere and give them a last-minute tweak can be a lifesaver ... or at least a career saver.