January 2021

Tips from Systems Security
By Michael Gunther

Be on the lookout for COVID vaccine and stimulus check scams!

Hackers are never at a loss to leverage the latest news to their advantage. They know that everyone is eagerly awaiting more information on the availability of the COVID vaccine and when they will receive the latest stimulus check. This presents the hackers an opportunity to send out scam emails with instructions on how to receive your vaccine or stimulus check by providing some of your personal information or sending you to a website that automatically installs malware on your computer, or any number of scam attempts. Keep your guard up and be diligent about examining the emails and communiques you receive. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Who is the communique from? If it's an email, closely examine the sender's email address and domain. If you receive a phone call, ask the caller to identify themselves and ask for callback information that you can use to call them back if you get disconnected. Be suspicious if they are resistant.

2. What is being asked of you? Are you being asked to provide information or perform some task that seems unusual to you? This could be an indication of fraud.

3. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. You've heard that age-old saying and it is more true today than ever before.

Stay on your guard in these strange times, and if you should run into anything strange and you're not sure if you're being scammed, contact Michael Gunther at michael.gunther@canyons.edu and I'll help you assess the situation.

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New Year New Tech (Habits)

By Justin Smith

Your phone's alarm woke you up this morning, your electric toothbrush saved you precious minutes in your morning routine, your shower is smart enough not to BURN you, and your coffee started brewing itself before you even entered the kitchen. YOU, my friend, are living in the 21st century like a BOSS!

Here are a couple tech tips to help you ring in the new year. And, before I forget, thanks, Gen, for the inspiration to write this article!

1. **Alarm Check:** The latest "alarm" on your mobile phone has an option to account for "sleep time." If you set your preferred amount of sleep, and what time you need to wake up in the AM, your phone will not only WAKE you, but it will remind you that it's time for bed! If you haven't already begun to leverage this feature, check it out!

2. **Coffee Check:** Now I have to preface this one with a warning. *Too much acidity in the AM can be a bad thing… or so I've read.* BUT! If you like coffee as much as I do, you'll invest in a coffee maker that not only brews coffee for you, but grinds the beans right before it brews them! Again, shaving precious minutes off of your morning routine! Cuisinart makes an all-in-one model.

3. **Clear Your Cache:** No. Don't go emptying your bank account. I'm talking browsers. Internet browsers on your computer. Internet browsers on your laptops. Even browsers on your TV. Clear them. If you don't know how, Google it for your specific device that you access the Internet on. Your goal here is to remove the cookies, photos, and old data that's just "static" on your devices. If you do this enough, you'll likely stop seeing random ads for everything you've been reading about on the Internet too. Here's an article to get you started.

4. **Auto-Light(o):** You can blame Mauricio and Pete for this one. Philips Hue Lighting solutions are a deep rabbit hole. :) One I gladly get lost in. IF you get past the hardware investment wall, you enter a world of automation that's very "next level." Want your porch light to turn on at a specific time every night? It does that. Want to adjust the light color in the room to your team's colors? Yep, does that. Want to turn the lights on using Siri or Alexa? Uhhu, that too.
Want your driveway lights to come on as you drive up to your house? …yes.

5. **Know when to disconnect:** Now, I know this is a deeply personal option, but I figured I'd simply tell you it exists, and leave it at that. ZOOM has a "Do not Disturb" setting, where you can set what time of day your device will actually produce a pop-up notification. This way, the app doesn't bother you when you're not on the clock.

I can talk about this these life-hacks for days. Email me if you'd like more information! Or drop by our Digital HelpDesk and ask one of our technicians. I'm sure they'd love to see you!

January IT Birthdays

Joe Lanthier - Jan 31

If you see them on their special day, please wish them a Happy Birthday!

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Upcoming Technology Events

Date	Event	Time	Location
Check Back Next Month!			

The Laptop I Didn't Know I Had

By Shawn Irwin

For a while I've been deciding whether or not I want to buy a laptop or a tablet for when I take my adventures on the road. While a tablet would be a nice portable option – important since I travel mostly by motorcycle or bicycle – a laptop would give me the most options when working – and playing – remotely. Also, the tablet would just be a bigger version of my phone which I already own. Still, even a laptop can take up valuable space when packing for a motorcycle trip, and is almost foolish to try and pack for a bicycle tour. As I pondered my decision, I wondered, just how much can my phone do for me?

My phone is a Galaxy S9+. It was Samsung's flagship phone a couple of years ago and is still a powerful device today. But all I ever did with it – other than falling down the YouTube rabbit hole WAAY past my be time was paying my bills, texting, and taking photos so I didn't have to write down notes. That is until a couple of months ago, when I rediscovered Samsung DeX.

Years ago, Samsung began work on a desktop version of the Android operating system that ran on their Galaxy phones. Their idea was to enable support for an external display to be connected to their phones and, instead of simply mirroring the phone's screen, create a desktop environment that you could navigate with a mouse and keyboard. Their phones were already as powerful as entry level laptops, they just needed a bigger screen. I tried it out back when I had my Galaxy S4 (2014?) and it was… a bit of a mess. I could see what they were trying to do, but it just wasn't useful enough to replace a laptop.

Last spring, when the thought of working remotely hit me that I could really work from *anywhere* with an Internet connection, I wondered, "Hey, I have a pretty powerful phone, is that DeX idea still a thing?"

Check out these YouTube videos to see how far DeX has come:
Getting started: https://youtu.be/i8RGMF2m3fA
Go wireless to a TV: https://youtu.be/HBGFmPszAO8
Some helpful tips: https://youtu.be/k4dte18U-fM

Today, from my Galaxy S9+, a 17-inch portable display, and a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse, I am able to:

- Join and host Zoom calls using the camera and mic from the phone. I can even share content like
- PowerPoint presentations using Zoom for Android and PowerPoint for Android.
- Access my COC email, calendar, and OneDrive using Microsoft Outlook and OneDrive for Android.
- Fill out timesheets and overtime forms and submit them for signatures using Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Sign for Android.
- Create and edit simple videos using Adobe Rush for Android.
- And if I absolutely NEED a Windows desktop, I can remote into my laptop at work using FortiClient VPN and Microsoft Remote Desktop Client for Android. At that point I have access to any Windows program that is installed on it.

And, since I'm using my phone, I have the option of using WiFi or my unlimited data plan, which means that I can – theoretically – work from anywhere that I have a data connection. Perhaps one of these days, I'll try working from a picnic bench at my local park, trailside at my favorite biking destination, or take a long motorcycle ride up to the mountains and find a nice spot lakeside. Just don't tell my boss!

Steam Video Game Awards
By Jack Garbett

With the conclusion of 2020, many of us used our time stuck at home (after work) to play video games. Steam (one of the major distributors of PC games) held a 2020 video game awards. There are many categories, but let us look at what games were chosen for the top awards.

Game of the year & outstanding story-rich game – Red Dead Redemption 2. This game is an open-world cowboy game. Many people (myself included) spent many hours riding horses, getting into shootouts, robbing trains and treasure hunting. With a good story and a huge world to play in, it was a well-deserved win.

VR game of the year – Here is a category that is relatively new and exciting. This year's winner: Half Life Alyx. This game is immersive, detailed, and scary. It shows us where VR is heading and how good it already can be. If you have a VR system, play this game.

Better with friends – Fall Guys. This silly game sent waves throughout the Internet and everyone was talking about it. An arena multiplayer game, it is you against the clock on an obstacle course. Finish the obstacle course before the other players, and you move on. If you know the show "Wipeout," then you will get the idea of this game.

Best soundtrack – Doom Eternal. This one surprised me, but the game music was composed by Mick Gordon, who has done the previous Doom games. The soundtrack featured the "heavy metal choir" with more than five vocalists from heavy metal bands. The soundtrack is on Spotify! Or play the game to get the full metal vibe while killing demons!

See the rest of the Steam Award Winners!

HAPPY New Year

Protecting the health of students and employees remains our top priority, so during remote operations, Computer Support directs anyone seeking support to utilize one of the three communications methods listed below.
Note hours of support during this time are Monday-Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm

Send us an email:
helpdesk@canyons.edu

Call & leave a message:
(661) 362-3953

Connect with us via Zoom:
https://intranet.canyons.edu/departments/it/

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