THE

GIGABYTE

GAZETTE

The Monthly Newsletter

of the

Sun City Summerlin
Computer Club

October, 2018

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President's Message

by Jeff Wilkinson

Computer Club and Friends:

I recently had occasion to use an App called Alfred, which is a security camera application that allows you to make use of old cell phones and tablets. There are two versions of this App, free and paid. I used the free version to construct and test a mini security system. After loading the App on my Android-based smart phone, I also installed it on an Android Moto G4 phone, an old LePan tablet, an Apple iPad Mini, and an Apple 5S cell phone. The setup was straight forward and worked well. I also opened the Alfred.camera/tv web page on my desktop PC to monitor the cameras during setup, since it's easier for me to set things up using a real keyboard! Not much to the setup really; you just activate the App and sign in with a Gmail account. I used a Gmail account that I no longer used for anything else in an attempt to thwart spam email. You are able to make each device either a camera or a monitor. I chose my Samsung smartphone as the monitor since I would have that with me on my trip. I positioned the devices strategically to monitor specific areas of the house, like entrances, and off we went.

I had let Sun City Security know I would be gone, as well as my emergency contact. We left Friday morning and Saturday morning my contact, John, called to tell me that the security check revealed a possible alarm sounding inside the house! John said he had walked around the house and didn't hear anything and didn't think he needed to go into the house. So, we ended our conversation, although I had an uneasy feeling. It bothered me, so I thought aha, the Alfred camera monitors also had microphones that I had enabled during setup, so I could log on and listen. When I listened, all was silent. I pondered a moment and decided to call my home phone, since our ring is more of a little song and could have been perceived as an alarm. Sure enough, I hear the phone ringing and decided that had to have been it, since there is no other sound.

So, back to lounging by the pool, when that evening I got an audible notification on my smartphone of "event recorded – find out what just happened". I opened the Alfred App and reviewed the 6 second video clip, triggered by motion and sound, repeatedly, until I realized it was the lamp in the monitored room being turned on by the timer I had set!

Amazing stuff, all for free, or you can upgrade for $3.99/month or $2.49/month, with a 12-month commitment. The upgraded service removes the ads, gives you HD viewing and recording on as many devices as you want, recording of 90 more seconds of video, a zoom function, and more cloud storage.

The device used as a camera has icons for turning motion detection on/off, a power saving mode icon to turn the screen off while monitoring, and an icon to choose front or rear camera. On the desktop monitoring screen, you have the following icons, snapshot, recording, rotate, flashlight, switch front/rear camera, low light filter, and full screen icon.

I found this app very useful even with all the ads. I've had as many as five devices acting as cameras at one time, and it worked just fine. If you have old cell phones or tablets' lying around, here is an easy way to setup a home security system!

Jeff Wilkinson, President
(702) 527-4056   pres.scscc@gmail.com

Issue Contributors

Tom Burt	Kathy Kirby
David Kretchmar	Pat Lemay
Jeff Wilkinson	

Submissions Welcome

We are always looking for new information to share with our club members. If you have computer or technical information you would like to share with members of the club, send your articles to **Tom Burt** at tomburt89134@cox.net. Thank you to everyone for your contributions.

SCSCC Board of Directors Actions

The Computer Club Board of Directors took the following actions on September 12, 2018

George Lobue made a motion that the minutes of the August 8, 2018 Board Meeting be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Howard Verne and unanimously approved by the Board.

Irene Burt made a motion that the minutes of the September 6, 2018 Business Meeting be approved as submitted. The motion was seconded by Chuck Wolff and unanimously approved by the Board.

Howard Verne made a motion that the meeting adjourn at 10:05 AM. Chuck Wolff seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the Board.

October 2018 Calendars

To view this month's classroom and lab calendars, click the following hyperlink:

http://www.scscc.club/Calendars/scscc_calendar_2018-10Oct.pdf

General Membership Meeting

Our next monthly General Meeting will be held at 2 PM on
Thursday, October 4, 2018 in Desert Vista Room 5.

Our guest speaker is Jeff Wilkinson who will do a review of the Amazon Echo Dot hands-free, voice-controlled speaker which connects to the Alexa voice service. He will demonstrate a few enabled skills of the Echo Dot to serve as an introduction to this device. Additional classes on how to connect and enable Echo and similar devices will follow in upcoming months at the Computer Club.

For Club information go to www.scscc.club, contact Jeff Wilkinson, President at (702) 527-4056 or email him at pres.scscc@gmail.com.

Business Meeting Notices.

2019 Officer and Board of Directors nominations will be presented at the November 1ST Business Meeting. Election of 2019 Officers and Board members will be held at the December 6th Business Meeting.

Welcome New Members

The following new members joined the Computer Club between August 26th and September 28th.

Peggy Darnell	David James
Diane Friegang	Marybeth Nissen Jr.
Jon Gusel	Paul Nissen Jr.
Teresa Gusel	Sandra Pearlman
Christine Hendrickson	James Spinks
Deborah Howze	

Special Interest Groups

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) provide a forum for general discussion on a specific computer related subject. Admission to all SIGs is on a first-come, first-seated basis and is subject to the maximum allowed by fire code regulations. All of the following meetings are held in the Classroom. <W> or <M> or <H> indicate whether a SIG would be of interest to a Windows, Macintosh or Hand-held Device (i-thing or Android) user.

Digital Photography – *Dark in October*
3rd Mondays, 1:00 p.m.
Stu Gershon (702-255-3309)

Picasa 3 is still a viable, reliable photo editor for beginners, but this year we will also take a look at Google Photos and other FREE editing programs. You're invited to bring your equipment (Laptops or Cameras) so that you can have that "hands on" experience! This SIG's target audience is beginner to intermediate digital photography users, but all members are welcome.

Hardware / Software Repair Lab <W/M >
Every Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Chuck Wolff (702-233-6634) and
Chuck Hagen (702-418-2614)

The Repair Lab provides **CLUB MEMBERS ONLY** with no cost assistance for those having upgrades and / or hardware and software problems with their computers. Bring in only your PC tower, your Mac or your laptop and your problems. Our TECH team will give you our best effort. *Be sure to mark your cables so you can re-connect when you get home*.

Genealogy Q&A <W>
4th Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon in the Lab
Karen Ristic (702-749-6489)

Genealogy is one of America's most popular and rewarding hobbies. With billions of records now available online, researching your family tree has never been easier–if you know where to look and which key words you'll need to use to create an accurate family tree from start to finish.

Internet Investing <W/M/H>
3rd Thursday, 9:00 a.m. in even months
Next meeting: October 18th
Tom Burt (702-341-7095)

The Internet Investing SIG provides a forum for members interested in using Internet resources for researching and managing investments to meet, discuss, and learn more about the topic. The SIG's target audience is members with intermediate computer skills and investment experience, but all members are welcome.

GMail <W/M>
1st Thursday, 10:00 a.m.
Pat Lemay (702-254-1499)
This SIG covers Gmail as well as other Google applications. All members are welcome. This is your place to learn about all things Google.

iPad/iPod/iPhone <H>
4th Wednesday, 9 a.m.
Zane Clark (702-562-3684)
This SIG will be your forum for learning about and discussing the Apple iPhone, iPod and iPad tablet devices. It's for Apple hand-held device owners of all experience levels.

Macintosh Users' Group
2nd Wednesday, 2 p.m.
Rose Mary D'Aloisio (702-255-2813)
This SIG is for Macintosh users of all experience levels. We will have Q&A, so bring your questions and/or problems.

Smartphone <H>
1st Monday at 1:00 pm
Stu Gershon
This SIG is a Q&A session to help Android and iPhone users to get the most from their phones and apps.

Windows 10 <W>
First and Third Saturdays at 9:30 am
Bill Wilkinson (702-233-4977)
Each session will be devoted to assisting new Windows 10 owners in becoming familiar and comfortable with Microsoft's newest operating system for desktop and laptop computers. Assistance will be given individually or in small groups as circumstances warrant. Bill's notes are available by clicking HERE.

Kaffee Klatches

Kaffee Klatches provide a forum for general discussion on all computer-related subjects. Admission to all Kaffee Klatches is on a first-come, first-seated basis and is subject to the maximum allowed by fire code regulations. All the following meetings are held in the Classroom. **<W> or <M> or <H> indicate whether a SIG would be of interest to a Windows, Macintosh or Hand-held Device (i-thing or Android) user.**

Windows 10 SIG / Q&A <W>
First and Third Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.
Bill Wilkinson (702-233-4977)

If you are a novice or near-beginner computer user, or if you just want some refresher information together with a refreshing cup of coffee, then jump-start or recharge your computing knowledge by attending these Win 10 KK sessions. At each session, attendees will explore from one to four topics of interest to beginners and near-beginners. The topics are always announced a couple of days in advance via e-mail to SCSCC members who have subscribed to the club's message board. Each topic is presented in a step-by-step manner and is supported by "how to" notes that can be easily and conveniently downloaded from the SCSCCBKK.org web page. Following each "up front" presentation of one or more topics (approximately 60 minutes in duration), an informal open-ended Question and Answer period takes place for those who wish to participate, listen, reflect, or inquire.

Kaffee Klatch <W/M/H>
Every Tuesday, 8:30 a.m.
Sandy Mintz (702-838-2525)

This KK is for all users, from beginning to advanced. The KK discussions are not restricted to any one subject, computer platform or computer-knowledge level but should be computer or technology related. We will try to answer your questions, help you keep your systems updated and provide some useful "tips and tricks." If you have a tip or information you would like to share, we encourage you to bring it in and share since the SCSCC is built on "neighbor helping neighbor." The fellowship is great, the coffee is good, and the education received from the KK attendees is priceless. Stop by on Tuesday morning and have a cup of coffee with us.

October 2018 Classes

Because there are a limited number of computer stations available for hands-on participation, pre-registration is necessary for most classes.

No hands-on (Lab) classes are scheduled in October.

October 2018 Seminars, Q&As and Workshops

For Computer Club seminars, there is no requirement for advanced registration unless explicitly stated. Seating is first-come, first-seated.

iPhone / iPad Q&A

Wednesday October 3rd & October 17th at 9 AM
Presenter: Zane Clark
Location: SCSCC Classroom

Bring your Apple iPhone or iPad to get one on one help with your questions about how to use the phone and popular iOS apps.

Android Q&A

Monday, October 8th at 1 PM

Presenter: Susan Heifetz
Location: SCSCC Classroom

Bring your Android phone and Susan will answer your questions about how to use the phone and popular Android apps.

iPhone Still Photography

Thursday October 11th from 9:30 – 11 AM
Presenter: Lee Birch
Location: SCSCC Classroom

Lee will continue his discussion of iPhone / iOS photography. This session is aimed at beginner to intermediate users of the iPhone who want to take their first photos, or to improve on their photographic skills. We'll cover iPhone photographic features, including fundamentals in posing and composition of still photos. We'll also dig out the iPhone's secret photography treasures. And we'll allot plenty of time for specific questions and help.

"Ask Chuck" Q & A

Thursday, October 11th at 1 PM
Presenter: Chuck Strickland
Location: SCSCC Classroom

Chuck will hold forth in the classroom, answering your technical questions. If you wish, you can e-mail your questions ahead of the session to: chuckstr89134@gmail.com.

Nevada Credit Freeze

Thursday, October 18th at 1 PM
Presenter: Pat LeMay
Location: Classroom

With all the security breaches recently, we all wonder what we can do to better protect ourselves from identity theft. It's a dangerous world out there on the Internet. Learn how to protect yourself.

This seminar describes how senior Nevada residents (age 65 and older) can notify the four major credit monitoring agencies (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion and Innovis) to place a Security Credit Freeze on their accounts for free. When you place a credit freeze on your credit report, you are telling the credit bureau not to release your credit report in situations where creditors are trying to open new credit

accounts in your name. You will also learn how stop pre-approved credit offers through the mail as well as how to stop or limit the junk mail you receive.

Windows 10 Has More Than Two Dozen Ways to Annoy You
This Presentation Will Show You How to Eliminate Them

Thursday, October 25th from 9:30 – 11:30 AM
Presenter: Bill Wilkinson
Location: SCSCC Classroom

From the get-go, Windows 10 starts as a very annoying operating system. The Start menu is full of useless apps that you will probably never use, advertisements are littered all over the place, and strange icons clutter the taskbar. We will show you "step-by-step" how to remove these and many other frustrations and by doing so speed up your computer.

Google Suite – Drive, Docs, Sheets, Slides

Saturday, October 27th, 2018 9:30AM – 11:30AM
Presenter: Gail Weiss
Location: SCSCC Classroom

You don't need MS Office applications, to create WORD documents, EXCEL spreadsheets or POWERPOINT Slides. As long as you can access the Internet with your Apple or Android device, you can use similar applications from the GOOGLE SUITE (formerly Google Apps). The Suite gives you DOCS (equivalent to WORD), SHEETS (equivalent to EXCEL) and SLIDES (equivalent to POWERPOINT). Your files will then be automatically saved to GOOGLE DRIVE. Come and explore these applications with me.

This class will be held in the classroom, so please bring your own laptops or mobile devices if you want to follow along. For more information about this class or if you have any questions or ideas for future classes, please email me at gmweiss5@gmail.com.

"Cutting the Cord" - 2018

Thursday, October 31st from 9:30 – 11:30 AM
Presenter: Tom Burt
Location: SCSCC Classroom

Due to recurring price hikes, many of our members have become disenchanted with Cox 's TV and Internet service. The array of alternatives can seem complex and confusing. This seminar will review and compare all the TV and Internet services available to Sun City Summerlin residents in 2018.

We'll summarize broadcast "over the air" digital TV technology and how to set up a HDTV antenna including some tips for getting the best reception.

We'll compare the commercial cable and satellite services' features and prices so you can be an informed shopper. For prospective cord cutters, we'll also include some discussion of the various Internet streaming TV services like Sling, DirecTV Now, Amazon's Prime TV, NetFlix, Hulu and YouTube. And we'll include a generous amount of time for questions and discussion.

The latest seminar notes will be available about **October 24th** at: http://www.scscc.club/smnr
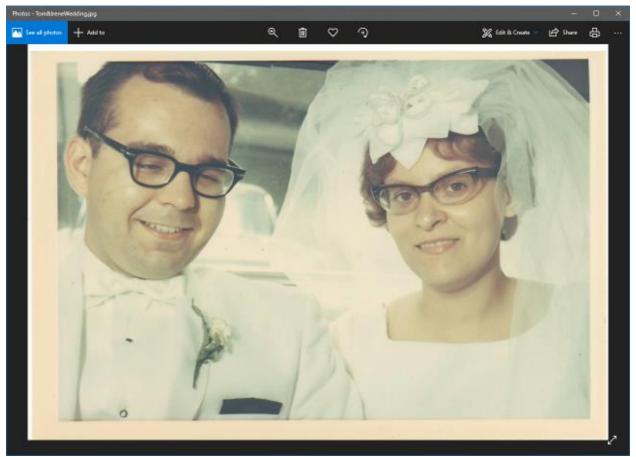
Tom's Tech-Notes

The Windows 10 "Photos" App
An Easy Tool for Editing Your Digital Photos

Tom Burt, SCSCC Vice President

Now and then I teach seminars on how to use the free image editing tools Paint.Net and GIMP. However, both of those are very powerful and can be quite complex for our Sun City seniors to learn and remember.

Recently, I was working on a photo for Mrs. Burt's family genealogy project and decided to see how well the **Windows 10 "Photos" App** (bundled free in Windows 10) would handle the routine photo edits I needed. These include cropping, resizing, rotating, adjusting brightness, contrast, color balance, red-eye, shadows and bright areas and sharpness. Especially important when working with scans of old, faded color prints is the ability to restore color.

I was pleasantly surprised at how well Windows Photos handled most of these editing tasks. Further, the user interface to do these edits was easy to understand and use. In the following, we'll walk through some of the key features of Photos and explore some of interesting editing features, using an old, faded wedding photo as our example.
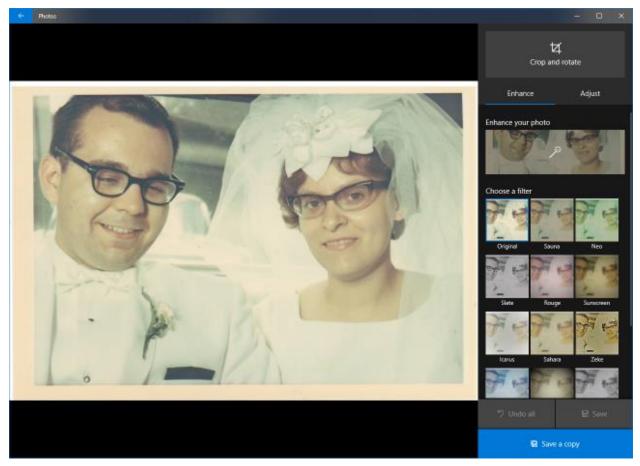

Scan of faded original wedding photo

The above screen shot shows the scanned original photo opened in the Photos app. Photos automatically rescales the displayed photo to fit within its current window size. If you're viewing photos within a file folder, you can use the left and right arrow keys or on-screen steppers to move forward and backward to see the other photos in the folder. You can also click the 3 dots (…) menu to bring up a menu of other actions, including viewing the folder's contents as a slide show.

Editing the Photo

Click the "Edit and Create" menu at the top right. Then, in the dropdown, click Edit. A pallet of tools will appear to the right of the image.
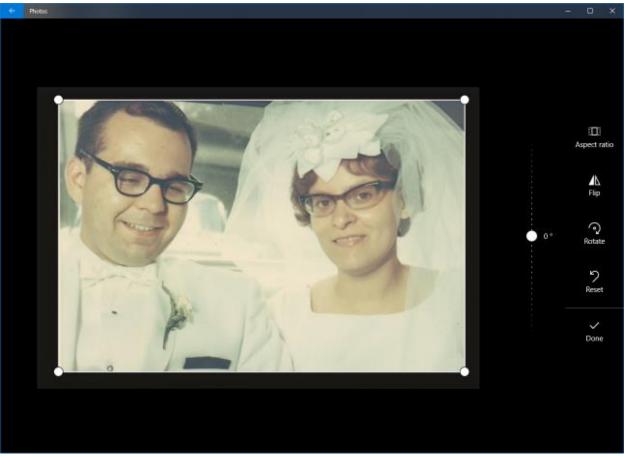

Original Wedding Photo Shown With Enhance Tools

The tools include "Crop and rotate" and, on the Enhance tab, "Enhance your photo" and a set of pre-defined filters you can experiment with. There's also an Adjust tab which we'll explore a bit further on.

We'll start with "Crop and rotate" to get rid of the border. Click "Crop and rotate" and a set of cropping borders is displayed around the photo. You can drag each border with your mouse to crop away unwanted parts of the image (see the screen shot below). You can also rotate the photo in steps of 1 degree. This is nice for correcting shots that were taken with the camera skewed.

When the photo is cropped and rotated to suit, click the "Done" button to return to the main editing screen. At that point, you may want to save your work into a new image file (click Save As) with a suffix (e.g. Burt-A.jpg). This makes it easy to revert back if you don't like some edit you make later in the process.
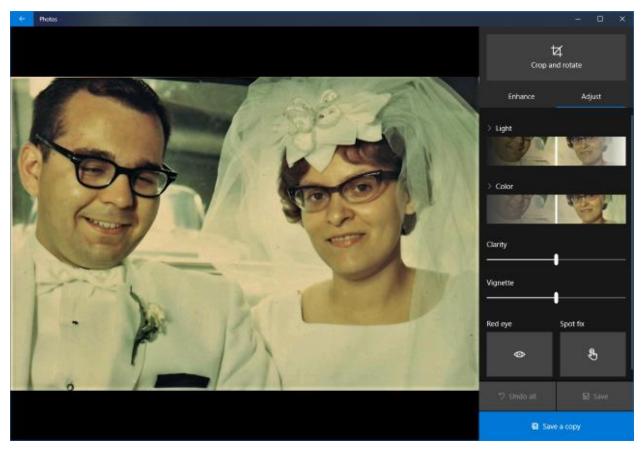
Crop and rotate editing screen

Next, we'll click the "Enhance your photo" button. This invokes an automatic enhancer that revives color, adjusts brightness and contrast. I've found it usually does a good job. The results are shown in the next screen shot. Colors are more vivid and the contrast and brightness are in better balance.

The screen shot below also shows the "Adjust" tools: Light, Color, Clarity, Vignette, Red Eye and Spot Fix.

The Light tool opens up a set of slider tools for Contrast, Exposure, Highlights and Shadows. The Color tool opens up a pair of slider tools for Tint and Warmth. The Clarity tool is a slider that blurs or sharpens the image. The vignette tool can darken or lighten the periphery of the image. The "Red eye" tool lets you designate a spot on the picture where red-eye should be removed.

The "Spot fix" tool lets you remove spots and blemishes. Click it to display a small circle. Use the mouse to move the circle over the spot to be fixed and then click. The Spot fix then does an intelligent blend of the surrounding pixels to hide the spot. You may want to zoom in on the image when using the spot fixer (use the – and + buttons that fade into view when the mouse is over the image). This is so the area to be fixed includes just the spot. Otherwise the image make look blotchy.

I used *all* of the Adjust controls to further enhance the photo. The final results are shown in the screen shot below. In total, I spent about 5 minutes cropping, enhancing and adjusting the original photo to achieve the final result. Mrs. Burt was very pleased with the final result.

Enhanced and adjusted Wedding Photo
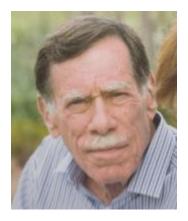
Video Slideshows

In addition to its photo editing features, Windows 10 Photos can create a video slideshow of a set of photos. Click the Edit and Create button and then choose "Create a video with music". A story board window will open. You can drag and drop to add photos to the story board and sequence them. You can specify how long each is to be displayed, various animation effects and more. You can add background music or a voice-over. When everything has been set up, you can export the video to a .mp4 file in small, medium or large format.

Albums and Collections

Windows 10 Photos can scan and index photos in folders on your PC's hard drive. It can also create Albums to which specific photos can be linked. This makes it easy to locate photos and add information about them.

Conclusion

Windows 10 Photos is a very capable photo editor that has a variety of other nice features. As such, it's a nice addition to my tool box. It's also very easy to learn and use. It makes quick work of all the usual photo edits you need for your digital darkroom.

Kretchmar's Korner

By David Kretchmar, Computer Hardware Technician

My Trip into Virtual Reality

Recently the price of virtual reality (VR) equipment has descended at least part way out of the stratosphere. So, I thought, "Why not?" which was a much easier question for me to answer to answer than "Why?" I told my wife I wanted it to help entertain our grandkids. She did not really buy my rationalization, but still gave her approval for my new toy.

What is "Virtual Reality"?

Virtual Reality can be defined by what it is trying to achieve: total immersion. Virtual Reality is an experience far beyond the much more familiar 3D, which has been around seemingly forever and has always been pretty much an entertainment gimmick. With VR, you are seemingly transported to another reality by virtue of electronically created visuals, sounds, and even some tactile feedback. Your static (without moving your head) field of vision in VR is 110 degrees, similar to your vision in the real world.

But, when you turn your head and body the magic really kicks in; you can view 360 degrees of your VR world, left, right, up, and down. And everything seems somewhat realistic – so real you can actually interact with that VR, depending on what the creator of that VR experience has programmed. Some VR titles put the viewer right in the middle of the action. In the best VR experiences, you

can interact with various objects and individuals. Sometimes you can pick up and use an object such as a ball or gun. Your VR experience is often dependent on how you choose to interact with the presented VR environment.

What equipment is required?

The Oculus Rift set I bought consists of a headset that fits over the top of your face, 2 sensors that pinpoint your exact position, and left and right hand controllers that provide virtual hands to use in your VR world. The Oculus headsets also provide built-in 3D sound.

At the *heart* of a VR system is a mid-grade PC with a fairly beefy graphics card.

There are also VR headsets that are powered by an attached smartphone. These are much less expensive but provide a much lower quality experience.

There are currently 2 premiere makers of VR equipment, Oculus and HTC Vive. Samsung also has VR products, but it is not currently considered a leader in VR technology. It is similar to the environment some 40 years ago with the Sony Betamax vs. VHS. HTC Vive is a stand-alone company while Oculus was acquired several years ago by Facebook. Vive equipment is a more expensive than Oculus', and has a slightly better picture quality, but Oculus now seems to have better virtual "hands "to interact with its virtual world. Eventually one or 2 technologies, by Oculus, HTC Vive, Samsung, or some other company such as Amazon, Google will likely prevail.

How realistic is VR?

A user could never mistake a current VR world for the "real" world. The resolution of the Oculus VR device is 2160 x 1200 (1080 pixels by 1200 pixels of resolution for each eye), and a 90 Hz refresh rate, less than a good HD television. Also there is a noticeable "screen door" effect; it seems like you are viewing the VR world through a screen. But just like looking through a real screen you quickly learn to ignore the screen and see only what is beyond.

What is the future of VR?

VR is in its infancy, which is both exciting and concerning. In the future VR will appear much more life-like and the interaction will be more realistic. It is easy to imagine a surgeon operating on a person anywhere in the world using VR technology. It is also easy to imagine the characters in a VR world, powered by Artificial Intelligence, providing a lonely person with "human contact" or a reasonable facsimile thereof.

VR use in marketing and education has great potential. As with any new medium, pornography distributors are also apparently becoming early adapters of VR.

Last month 2 of our grandkids, age 6 and 9, visited. It is no exaggeration to say they were fascinated by their VR experience, and I have retained the title of "World's coolest grandpa". I have the coffee cup to prove it.

October Lab Monitor Schedule

Open Lab sessions are held twice per week: 9 am to noon on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

OCTOBER	Monitor Schedule
Jeff Southwell	WEDNESDAY
Bonnie Lum	October 3, 2018
Gail Weiss	SATURDAY
Linda McMullin	October 6, 2018
Jim Edwards	WEDNESDAY
Jan Edwards	October 10, 2018
Jim Enlow	SATURDAY
Ann Warhaftig	October 13, 2018
Blanche York	WEDNESDAY
	October 17, 2018
Mary Hedin	SATURDAY
John Zuzich	October 20, 2018
Jim Enlow	WEDNESDAY
	October 24, 2018
Ray Ristic	SATURDAY
Karen Ristic	October 27, 2018
Linda McMullin	WEDNESDAY
	October 31, 2018