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SIR Computer/Technology Newsletter - February 2018

1 message

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To: Bill Bromiley <bill.bromiley@gmail.com>

Wed, Jan 17, 2018 at 3:24 PM

SIR Computer/Technology Group member,

Here is your copy of the February 2018 SIR Computer/Technology Newsletter. Enjoy.

Cheers, Bill

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February 2018 SIR Computer/Technology Newsletter

This Newsletter is my summary of items about computers and technology that I select from various sources each month. Individual items may be of interest to you and/or could be the foundation of a subject that you would like to discuss further during your Computer/Technology Group meeting(s). In most cases the Newsletter provides a brief summary of each item and a link to the original source material so that the author is given full credit and, if you desire, you can drill a little deeper into the subject. Should you belong to more than one computer/technology group you may receive more than one copy of this Newsletter as it is distributed to each group's mailing list. I've been asked to make the text large so it is easier for we "young" SIR guys to read.

Please note: The links provided below were active when this was written. Some publishers inactivate links after publication for various reasons including reducing server requirements. Should you find a non-working link, you might search for the subject matter using Bing, Google, Yahoo or another appropriate search engine.

1. Ten of the Coolest Gadgets TIME Saw at the 2018 CES

Each new year begins with a new Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. There are thousands of regular attendees seeing hundreds of new electronic devices. TIME is a regular attendee who selects the coolest devices it sees and publishes a review of ten of those gadgets. TIME's list of ten is at the link.

http://time.com/5100244/best-ces-2018-consumer-electronics-show/?utm_source=time.com&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=the-brief&utm_content=2018011618pm&xid=newsletter-brief

2. A Look Back to 2017 - The Best Tech Gadgets of 2017

As each new year begins evaluations of developments in the just ended year are published. Lightning Gadget regularly produces such a list of technology gadgets. Their list for 2017 is available in the article at the link. Lightning Gadgets purchases items of interest, test and evaluates them and decides which to include in their list of the best. Here they are.

https://lightning-gadget.com/articles/gadgets/en/01g/?voluumdata=deprecated&eda=deprecated&cep=z2oE96y6UWU04PdFIjdFFrUVD7FVGfj1qZaTIQfr5FjFISLe95xDsAsBEt-fHcyKqJllwi1vaMWc1f9secNehQKppXeilsFnC2y76vbU9IPA8pZKN_yMCMwKII6RUWsRhIbr5h9TPglhaXEeQyJSCk2Rv9e7BRpbldegRzcQczFOd446fzJKy9uqBxjYzUzlk3s9qUs6S7Ik4E2N19mK-E1uld-f6bi-BEDd6oZSNJ6uyR2I1q2tbxgsfxt7lp6pWM2jGcffqDRkCagyCZkHRZsApngy

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3. Electric Cars Anchor The Consumer Electronics Show

An increasing number of technology executives and workers and auto executives and workers are saying that the annual Consumer Electronic Show (CES) is now the largest Auto Show in the nation instead of the leading show introducing consumer electronics. The press is full of articles and broadcast from the show that is underway in January. A short (3 min/29 seconds) National Public Radio (NPR) report, broadcast on January 11, 2018, discussed the rapidly growing industry and public interest in electric powered vehicles. That broadcast can be heard at the link below. Among other things you will learn that Mercedes Benz plans to have electric powered versions of every model by 2022. Volvo cars will be 100% electric powered by 2019, with no petroleum powered cars available. Ford plans production of an electric F-150 pickup truck and an electric Mustang. General Motors will have 10 electric models in 2020. Here is the link.

<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/11/577279673/established-automakers-announce-bold-moves-in-electrification>

4. Last Year New Cars Sold In Norway Were More Than 50% Electric Powered

In 2017 Norway became the first nation in the world to sell new cars with more than 50% of the vehicles powered by electricity alone or be electric hybrid drives instead of being powered by petroleum based fuels. Norway faces all the same issues, concerns and problems that we and other countries encounter as they move toward more and more vehicles powered by electricity. The article at the link provides more detail.

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/04/business/energy-environment/norway-electric-hybrid-cars.html?emc=edit_th_20180105&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=45350125&_r=1

5. What Needs to Happen Before Electric Cars Take Over the World

The number of all electric powered cars on the world's roads is rapidly increasing. "Faster than anyone expected, electric cars are becoming as economical and practical as cars with conventional engines." The price of rechargeable batteries are plummeting, electric car driving ranges are increasing while recharging times are shortening. Electric cars easily out perform conventionally powered cars while offering better handling and safer performance because of a lower center of gravity than conventionally powered cars. The New York Times article at the link dives into the accelerating market growth of electric cars. There are significant developments, technology changes, work methods and even social modifications that must occur as electric cars move toward dominating the auto market. Here are the some of the broad issues explored in the article at the link.

- The cost of building motors and components will have to continue to decrease.
- There must be a steady, affordable supply of the resources required to make batteries.
- More charging stations will need to be built, and they'll need to charge faster.
- Drivers will have to shed their attachment to the sound, smell and feel of gas-powered engines.
- The car industry will have to leave some of its old methods of production by the side of the road.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/18/business/electric-car-adoption.html?emc=edit_th_20171219&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=45350125&_r=2

6. Turning Off Programs That Start When You Start Your Computer

When you start your computer, be it an Apple Mac or a Windows machine, there always are a number of programs that automatically start-up. You may be lucky and have only programs and applications start that you want every time you start your computer. If that is the case then you need go no further with this Newsletter item. If however, there are programs opening that you do not need all the time, you should read the article at the link. It will teach you how to eliminate those unneeded programs from automatic start-up on your Mac or Windows computer.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/07/technology/personaltech/turning-off-programs.html?emc=edit_th_20171209&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=45350125&_r=4

7. Researchers Discover Two Major Flaws in the World's Computers

Computer security experts have discovered two major microprocessor security flaws in nearly every computer in the world. The two problems, named Meltdown and Spectre, could provide an opening for hacking to get the entire content of memory of computers, mobile devices, PC's and servers supporting cloud networks. Fixing Spectre will be very difficult as it may require the redesign of processors. Fixing Meltdown is a software patch but the fix may slow down processors by up to 30%. Software fixes are beginning to be released by some major software/processor producers. Watch for updates to your computers and mobile devices and install them when available. The article at the link provides a good deal of detail.

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/03/business/computer-flaws.html?emc=edit_th_20180104&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=45350125&_r=0

8. Microsoft Requires Antivirus Software Before Allowing Windows Updates

As a follow on to the Newsletter item above (#7), concerning the computer flaws Meltdown and Spectre, Microsoft has set a novel prerequisite before Microsoft will allow Windows emergency updates. Windows users are being warned that they must have up-to-date antivirus software running on their PC's before they can install Microsoft Windows Updates that are aimed at fending off attacks that take advantage of the Meltdown and Spectre flaws. If you use a windows computer check with Microsoft for details and make sure that you have Automatic Updates turned on.

9. IEEE Spectrum's Most Popular Stories of 2017

“In 2017, *IEEE Spectrum* published more than 1,000 feature and news stories about technology.” At the link is an article with links to the 10 most popular posts of the year. If you missed these items the first time around, you'll enjoy reading the ones of your choice here.

https://spectrum.ieee.org/tech-talk/computing/networks/ieee-spectrum-most-popular-stories-of-2017?utm_source=techalert&utm_campaign=techalert-01-04-18&utm_medium=email

10. How To Securely Erase an iPhone In Three Easy Steps

There are two reasons that can lead you to want to erase all the content of an iPhone. First, you are selling, trading-in, giving away or donating your iPhone. In this case it is important that you remove all of your personal data, files and applications to protect this information from others. Second, your iPhone is performing incorrectly and you decide to erase it and reconfigure the phone as if it was a completely new. The article at the link tells you how to prepare your phone, the data it contains and the connections it has followed by instructions on securely erasing the phone, thus returning it to like new condition.

https://www.techconnect.com/article/3242172/apple-ios/how-to-securely-erase-an-iphone.html?idg_eid=3f70579c718d8ac1a8e7c51e97432381&email_SHA1_lc=&cid=tcon_nlt_techconnect_daily_2017-12-21

11. Seatback Screens on Planes Are Starting to Disappear

Airline passenger in-flight entertainment systems included display screens on seat backs so that every passenger has a screen for their individual use. Such entertainment systems add both weight and bulk to the aircraft and cost, for purchase and installation, about \$10,000 per seat. These systems have proven to be very popular with passengers but that popularity has recently been waning. An increasing number of passengers are carrying their own Internet connected digital devices that have screens. These devices are laptop computers, tablet computers and large screen mobile phones. Airlines are increasingly providing passenger connectivity for their personal digital devices through the Internet. Some of these passengers are complaining that the airline provided seat back screens are interfering with their use of their personal devices. So, a number of airlines are removing such systems and ordering new aircraft without in-flight video entertainment systems. On your next flight there may no video screen on the back of the seat in front of you - bring your own. Details are in the article at the link.

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/01/business/airlines-travel-entertainment.html?emc=edit_th_20180102&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=45350125

12. Most Not Hungry For Smart Kitchen Devices

Internet of Things (IoT) “smart” devices are showing up across the market, in our homes, offices and cars. Devices for our kitchens seem to be among the favorites appearing on the market. You can find examples in “smart”, Internet connected toasters, refrigerators, ranges, ovens, microwave ovens, dish washers, counter top mixers, etc. If you want some of these devices in your kitchen you may be able to order what you want but then find out that it will be months, or longer, before you can have your smart device delivered. On the surface the market looks hot but the public is not rushing to own these devices and as a result the manufacturers are not rushing to build them. The San Francisco Chronicle article at the link, published on Christmas Day, provides details on this not so hot technology market for kitchen smart devices.

<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODN/SanFranciscoChronicle/shared/ShowArticle.aspx?doc=HSFC%2F2017%2F12%2F25&entity=>

[Ar00100&sk=C2483A71&mode=text](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/24/nyregion/traffic-apps-gps-neighborhoods.html?emc=edit_ta_20171224&nl=top-stories&nlid=45350125&ref=cta&_r=0)

13. Navigation App Alternate Routing Causes Traffic Gridlock

Millions of people are increasingly using navigation applications (apps) on their smartphones or built into their cars to provide guidance to driving destinations, traffic condition reports and suggested alternate routing. If traffic is very heavy, to the point of gridlock, most of these apps will propose one or more alternate routes and when one is selected provide turn by turn guidance on that alternate route. Unfortunately, with an increasing number of drivers having navigation apps in their vehicles the alternate routes, often residential streets, are also becoming heavily congested, particularly during rush hour traffic times. Some communities are striking back by using techniques to deny access to non-residents on streets recommended to commuters as alternate routes. Violators are being rerouted and/or issued traffic citations that include fines. What would you do if you had 1500 cars, bumper to bumper, every morning and evening, on your previously quiet residential street? More detail is in the article at the link.

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/24/nyregion/traffic-apps-gps-neighborhoods.html?emc=edit_ta_20171224&nl=top-stories&nlid=45350125&ref=cta&_r=0

14. How To Use Windows Speech Recognition

If you use a PC with the Microsoft Windows operating system you already have Windows Speech Recognition (WSR), one of the least-heralded features of Microsoft Windows. Microsoft has been offering speech recognition for Windows since it was included with Office XP in 2001. WSR became part of the operating system with Windows Vista in 2007 so it's already built into your Windows PC. All you have to do is acquire one small piece of hardware, load the software, and learn to use it. After that, inputting text can become almost effortless, potentially enhancing your productivity substantially. The ComputerWorld article at the link will teach you how to get up and running with WSR and how to use some more of the PC power already in your Windows PC.

FYI, accessing some ComputerWorld articles requires that readers enter their email address and register as a reader of their material. There is no

charge. The information is collected only to provide the user/reader information to ComputerWorld so that they can better focus items that they publish to their readers.

<https://www.computerworld.com/article/3242990/microsoft-windows/how-to-use-windows-speech-recognition.html?upd=1514315299407>

15. Duel-screen Clam Shell Mobile Devices Will Kill Tablets

If you carry mobile electronic devices you are carrying one to three devices consisting of a smartphone, a laptop computer and a tablet computer. A smartphone has a single screen that is used to display data and, when needed, a keyboard. A tablet is a similar monolithic device, like a smartphone with a single screen but physically larger. A laptop is hinged on one edge, called a clam shell opening, that has a screen on one side of the hinge and a keyboard on the other side. Recent technical developments, combined with underway efforts by a number of both major and startup companies, indicates that customers may soon be offered single devices that open like a clamshell but will have a screen on both sides of the hinge. Such devices will be the size of a current smartphone when closed and the size of a tablet when open and presenting a single screen image across the hinge as the individual screens will have no visible bezel framing the screens. When needed, one screen will be a keyboard with tactile feel and clicks, or each screen can display separate applications, or if the device is opened beyond 180 degrees, like a tent with the screens on the outside, the screens can be seen two people facing each other. The TechConnect article at the link describes how such clamshell devices can be used, the technology supporting their development and why they could replace one, two or all three of the mobile devices we carry today.

https://www.techconnect.com/article/3244472/smartphones/dual-screen-clamshell-devices-will-kill-the-tablet.html?idg_eid=3f70579c718d8ac1a8e7c51e97432381&email_SHA1_lc=&cid=tcon_nlt_techconnect_daily_2017-12-25

16. Driverless, Artificial Intelligence, Computer Controlled Cars Will Change Our Cities

In addition to electricity powering our cars the actual control of coming cars will be computers, running Artificial Intelligence (AI) software and driverless. These cars will have no steering wheel or pedals and all seating positions will be for passengers. If you live in an urban area there will be no need for you to own a car that sits parked waiting for you to go somewhere. If you want to go from “A” to “B” you will order, probably from your smartphone, a car to pick you up at A. It will arrive empty. You will tell the car to take you to B, which it will do and drop you off. No need to park as the car will be off to drive someone else. Without individuals needing to own their cars our cities will change as space today dedicated to cars will be returned to use by people, industry, manufacturing, entertainment and recreation. The CNN video at the link provides information about driverless cars and their coming impact on our cities.

<http://www.cnn.com/videos/tech/2018/01/12/our-driverless-future-city-of-tomorrow-go.cnn>

END