

NEWSLETTER

March 2014



National Geographic Pictures

National Geographic magazine released a new series of wonderful images that had previously been unpublished. Some of the pictures date back over 100 years and are very interesting. You can see them at: <http://natgeofound.tumblr.com/>

Brush or Cross Hairs

If you use Photoshop or Elements, at one time or another, your brush will show cross-hairs instead of the outline of a circle. Likely, you will go into your preferences area and see a choice called cursors. After you realize you did not have the cross-hairs option on, you'll scratch your head, or maybe start pulling your hair out in frustration. Don't beat yourself up when you learn the solution. It is too easy – **CAP LOCKS KEY IS ON**. Turn it off and boom...you are back in business. When I tell people this, they often feel dumb. But I promise you it happens to everyone once (unless they learn from a post like this first).

You Suck At Photoshop

I have seen many instructional videos on the web about Photoshop but this has to be the strangest one yet. I am not really sure who started this but the origin appears to be a comedy channel that produce lots of short videos on many subjects. The ones on Photoshop are funny in a strange way but some are quite informative. Go and take a look [here](#) but don't complain if it is too far out for you!

Interesting Fact (Not)

Every sixty seconds **72 hours of videos are uploaded to YouTube** and of those 72 hours, most of the videos are about cats, Harlem Shake dance moves, and inane things that no one is interested in. **WHO WATCHES IT ALL????**

Record Panorama

In 2012 a panorama of London (UK) was stitched together from over 48,000 frames shot from above the city using 4 cameras. The result is an amazing view of the city with tremendous detail when you zoom in. You can spend hours looking at this. Check it out [here](#).

Password Manager

I have used "Last Pass" as my password manager for quite some time now and I am very happy with it. It is free (always a big consideration with me!), reliable and easy to use (another biggie as I get older!). However several of my friends (well one of them and he is more of a distant relative) brought a new program to my attention which he swears by. Now he is quite knowledgeable about computers (he works for Adobe) and usually has good recommendations. I have to say I have looked at the program and it appears very slick and easy to use.

I quote below from a review he sent me:

PasswordBox doesn't just save your passwords. It saves the passwords you create by using a 10,000 piece encryption key. Its security measures would take literally hundreds of years to decrypt!

Do your passwords need some beefing up? PasswordBox can suggest new passwords for you and use secure cookies to keep you signed in to your accounts.

PasswordBox also has a unique feature that allows you to bequeath your account information to a family member or friend in the event of your death. It may sound morbid, but at my age it is something to think about. PasswordBox securely sends an email to your designated next-of-kin, where they can accept your request to be a beneficiary. The beneficiary would have to send a death certificate to PasswordBox to be verified before your information was released, so if there is a life-altering event, PasswordBox will still maintain your security.

And if you run into any trouble or want to learn more about PasswordBox, there are several helpful videos about every aspect of PasswordBox. You can be a pro at password encryption and feel completely secure that your information is safe in the hands of PasswordBox.

To add PasswordBox to your browser, click the green Install button on the homepage. It will ask to add PasswordBox to your browser. Allow the add-on and sign up for your free PasswordBox account. You will be asked to provide a Master Password. This password is NOT stored. If you forget this password, there is literally no way to send it to you or remind you, so pick a secure password that you know you can remember. Once you create an account, PasswordBox will have you sign in to your first account. As you sign in to your online accounts, PasswordBox will securely store and encrypt your login information, even if you change a password. For more details and to see a video go [here](#).

Smart Shopping

I subscribe to “Maximum PC” a rather hi-tech magazine with numerous articles which are far beyond my skill set but I do enjoy reading many of the items. Every year the March edition is named “The Cheapskates Guide” and contains many tips about saving money on computer upgrades. It also contains a smart shopping guide to finding bargains on line. Some sites you might be interested in:

SlickDeals: Regarded as the best general resource for bargains not just computer related. In addition there are forums discussing good deals (and sometimes not so good) plus lots of choices. Take a look at www.slickdeals.net

DealNews: Similar to SlickDeals but without the forums. www.dealnews.com

Keyboard Shortcuts

Google recently did a survey on keyboard shortcuts to find out which 5 the average computer user found most useful. Well forgetting about complete computer nerds (who found the three finger salute, Ctrl+Alt+Delete, to bring up the Task Manager the most useful) mere mortals voted for the following:

1. CTRL+S to save changes
2. CTRL+Z to undo the last action
3. CTRL+Y to redo the last action
4. CTRL+A to select all the highlighted items

Tied for 5th were CTRL+C for copying the highlighted items and then CTRL+V for pasting them into a new location. I have to agree with these, I use them frequently. However do remember in Windows 7 and 8 there are a lot of shortcuts utilizing the “Windows key” which are very useful and the top ten are listed [here](#).

Computer Upgrades

Have you upgraded your Windows XP computer yet? If not, you should get cracking. On April 8, 2014, Microsoft is ending support for XP, which means no more updates. If hackers find a major flaw - not an uncommon occurrence - it won't ever be fixed.

True, security software will help to a point - and Microsoft might be providing updates to its own XP security products until 2015. But even at its best XP's security isn't up to the challenge of defending against today's threats.

In other words: It's time to update. I know the thought of doing this is a pain to many people especially the task of getting familiar with a new operating system such as Windows 8. However this system is faster and easy to install and the upgrade to Windows 8.1 will help even more. I upgraded my laptop to version 8 and subsequently 8.1 and I'm very happy with it. If you are absolutely against version 8 because of the "strange" interface you can still buy models with Windows 7 from Dell and HP and a couple of other vendors and that interface is very similar to Windows XP. Just remember that your new machine with Windows 7 is already outdated and will eventually require replacement before a similar machine with Windows 8.

If any of you want to upgrade but still have some doubts or questions give me a call and I'll do my best to help.

AdwCleaner 3.0

There are a lot of free software programs for protecting your computer from malicious viruses and malware (I use and recommend AVG 2014) but CCleaner 4.09 will help you get rid of anything that has already slipped through., CCleaner can be set up to find unnecessary files and unused applications and, with a nod from you, delete them. This frees up space on your PC, cleans up your Registry, and lessens the load on your system. It can be downloaded for free [here](#).

However I have had complaints from some people that CCleaner requires the user to have a skill set above their abilities and consequently they are a little concerned about using it. If that is your concern then I would try AdwCleaner 3.0. AdwCleaner 3.0 does much the same as Ccleaner, but it's a much simpler application. Set it to search your PC for unused files, PUP's (potentially unwanted programs) rogue installs and unwanted toolbars and it will cut through the clutter like a digital knife, deleting junk data and optimizing your PC system. One comforting feature is that AdwCleaner required a reboot to finish the job, which is usually a good sign, because a reboot is often required to thoroughly purge persistent PUPs, not to mention adware, toolbars, and other unwanted yet hard-to-eradicate software.

Read more on Cnet AdwCleaner - Free download and software reviews – by clicking [here](#).

Final Thought

Just something that crossed my mind today....

