

TechTalk

A newsletter for friends and members of *LeisureWorldTECH*



David Merritt explains the advantages of Chromebook to a Friday afternoon class

Chromebook Classes Continue

Last fall, representatives from Montgomery County visited Leisure World twice to distribute hundreds of free Chromebooks to our residents of our community.

By the time the last of the popular notebook-style computers had found a home, the Leisure World Tech board had decided to offer training classes to help recipients learn to use their new tools.

“Our mission is to help people understand and use digital devices that will make their lives easier, and in many cases, more fun,” said David Merritt, president of the Leisure World Tech board. “The donation of hundreds of Chromebooks to our community was an

opportunity for us to provide support to the residents who received the devices as well as to those who already had one.”

The classes, which began last October, continue to be held on two Friday afternoons per month. Every session has filled the Technology Resource Center to capacity with about 20 people at each presentation.

“We are going to keep offering them because demand has been so strong,” Merritt said. “At present, we are committed to holding classes through March and we will continue as long as people need help.”

Registration for these courses is handled by the Lifestyle offices in Clubhouses 1 and 2.

In This Issue

New & Noteworthy . . . Page 2
Monitor's Corner. . . . Page 3
Keep Track of Stuff . . . Page 3
Artificial Intelligence . Page 4

About Us

Leisure World Tech is a 501(c)(3) organization responsible for managing the Technology Resource Center in Clubhouse 2.

TechTalk

is published by Leisure World Tech, Inc.
David Merritt, President
Marcia Fletcher, Editor



New & Noteworthy

by David Merritt
President, Leisure World Tech

A heartfelt *Thank You* to everyone who attended the event celebrating our monitors on Saturday, January 18. It was a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other and to talk about plans for the Technology Resource Center. For those of you who were not at that meeting, here is a summary of current activities and future improvements envisioned for our center.

Chromebooks: Seven classes have been completed, with five more scheduled between now and the end of March 2025. These will continue as long as needed.

Training by Zoom: A variety of topics are currently under way; invites are sent by email to those who have provided email addresses to the center.

Partnerships: Collaborations with Leisure World organizations such as the Camera Club, Center for Lifelong Learning, the Lions Club and more are in place or planned. The first will be a session on smart phone photography on Saturday, March 8.

We are also collaborating with Phoenix Computers (a non-profit (501C3 organization) to allow residents to donate used technology equipment for recycling or repair and distribution to eligible individuals. The center no longer accepts used digital items. See www.leisureworldtech.org for more details.

Proposed Center Updates: Plans are in the works to update the Center's layout and functional space. We are currently evaluating new furniture (monitor desks and workstations) and printers. Plans call for designated areas to be established in the center for Chromebook, PC and Mac computers, Artificial Intelligence education, a learning center and more.

Operational Teams: We have set up operational teams to help address current and future needs in the center. These teams will focus on specific objectives to improve our ability to serve the Leisure World Community. Volunteers have been assigned to work on these projects, but we will need more help to achieve our goals. Please see the attached spreadsheet for a more detailed description of this initiative and let us know if you can help us improve our services and our physical space.

Meet the Board

The current board is established as follows:

President	David Merritt
Vice President	Marcia Fletcher
Treasurer	Mike Thompson
Secretary	Dottie Kingsley
Members at large	
Jerry Berman	Charles Gaumont
Sharon Otto	

Coming Up

Chromebook Basics

February 14 & 28, March 14 & 28
3:00-5:00 pm, Technology Resource Center. Presented by David Merritt

Smart Phone Photography

Zoom presentation
1:00 pm, Saturday, March 8,
Technology Resource Center
Presented by Blair Blankenship, president,
Rossmoor Camera Club

IT Help Clinics

The Technology Resource Center is offering free weekly clinics to answer questions and solve problems related to portable digital devices.

Visitors may bring devices to the clinic for evaluation on the following days:

Apple products: Tuesday, 11 am-1 pm
Wednesday & Friday, 3-5 pm

Chromebook, Windows or Android
Wednesday, 1-3 pm

The Monitors' Corner

Monitors got an update on plans for improvements to the Technology Resource Center during a social event held in their honor on January 18.

Leisure World Tech President Dave Merritt thanked the group for their service and discussed a number of improvements designed to make their jobs easier.

Among those are a revised and reformatted Monitor's Guide, which is available on the monitor's desk. The guide is being updated on a regular basis.

Please review the revised manual and share your feedback, including what might be missing or unclear, and send your input to lwtrc.webmaster@gmail.com. We are developing a digital version of the manual that will soon be available to all volunteers.

Also under development is a communication platform that will allow monitors to report issues, make suggestions and communicate with other volunteers. You will find the

Kudos to Our Hard-Working Monitors

Three monitors were recognized for their exceptional dedication to service in the Technology Center over the past year. These monitors signed up for the most sessions in 2024: first place, Liz Stanford; second place, Ellen Perlow; third place, Chess Yellott.

All three monitors received a gift certificate for Panera Bread as a token of appreciation for their dedication to our center.

Monitor's Exchange on our website, www.leisureworldtech.org.

When you volunteer to serve for a time slot with *Signup*, please remember to sign in when you arrive for your shift and click the box that says you are serving as a *Monitor* on the sign-in screen.

Many thanks to your all for your valuable service.

Keeping Track of Your Smart Stuff

One of the many frustrations of aging is forgetfulness, especially losing track of everyday things like keys, smart phones and wallets. Fortunately, technology has come to the rescue with some handy ways to find misplaced digital items as well as other stuff that has a way of disappearing between cushions and behind furniture.



Find My Icon

No doubt you have a smart phone. And, you probably have at least one other digital device — a notebook or laptop; perhaps a smart watch. If so, you can use the one in your hand to find a missing item.

Apple products are particularly well integrated with one another. And if you lose an iWatch, your iPhone, or other Apple gadgets can locate it for you. Android devices have similar features.

Here's how it works. Apple smart products come equipped with an application called *Find My*. If you misplace your iWatch for example, you have only to open *Find My* on any of your other gadgets.

You will first see a list of all the your Apple devices

along with a note saying where each one is. If your iWatch is in your pocket, the app will say "with you." If the device is somewhere else, the app will produce a map to show where it is. If it's hiding under a pillow, just click the "Play a Sound" button and the lost device will beep to lead you to it.

If you're concerned that your iPhone is seriously lost or stolen, you can tell *Find My* to erase its data.

The *Find My* application is also available through Google and you can follow the same process to locate missing Android devices.

In 2021, Apple introduced the AirTag, a small, button-shaped sensor designed to keep track of non-digital items such as keys, wallets and especially luggage. After you set it up, the *Find My* app on an iPhone or other device will show you the location of AirTags on a map.

Today, other versions of AirTag are widely available and compatible with Android and other devices. Many of the non-Apple variety are called AirTiles and are the size and shape of a credit card that fits conveniently in a wallet. Air tags and tiles can also be used to locate digital stuff.

Give it a try next time your phone goes missing.

What the Heck is AI and Why Should Seniors Care?

by Jim Leong

In a recent issue of TechTalk, Artificial Intelligence, or AI, was proposed by Leisure World Tech president, David Merritt, as an area of technology that might benefit our senior community.

And while many of us hear our grandchildren talking about it, sometimes we don't really know what to think about AI, or if we should think about it at all.

So what is AI? And why should seniors worry about such futuristic stuff?

For starters, perhaps we should say what AI computers/machines are not. They are not sentient. That is, they cannot feel, perceive or show awareness. And, of course, they cannot actually think. AI devices and systems are merely tools that process information rapidly and efficiently.

And AI is already part of our daily lives. Did you know that AI systems have been used for several decades to do boring and tedious chores such as reading our handwritten ZIP codes and checks?

Today, AI tools are accessible to all of us through widely available applications such as ChatGPT. They can save time spent on myriad everyday chores ranging from helping high school graduates pick a college to check-lists for pet sitters, planning vacations and translating your favorite poem to Ancient Greek.

What's New

Some more recent advances in AI systems are anything but mundane. Today, scientists are using an AI tool called artificial neural network, or ANN, which mimics the brain's neural networks. This work has generated great excitement in scientific research circles.

That excitement was evident in October when the 2024 Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to two scientists who used mathematical tools from physics to develop powerful ANNs for solving extremely complex problems.



James Leong

And the very next day, the Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to three scientists who used ANN tools to achieve significant breakthroughs in protein structure research.

Proteins are the building blocks of life, and their intricate folds dictate which molecules will interact with a given protein (think of a lock and key interaction). These breakthroughs have had far-reaching benefits.

Two of the Nobel chemists developed a research tool called AlphaFold, which predicts the three-dimensional structure of almost all 200 million known proteins. AlphaFold can do in minutes what once took years.

The third Nobel chemist developed a computer program for creating new proteins from scratch.

The Bottom Line

AI has often been portrayed as something mysterious that exists primarily in the realm of science fiction. But in 2025, it is very much a fact of life that has been playing a modest role in processing information.

That's all changing now. The prize-winning work described above, for example, is being used to improve detection of breast cancer, for motion correction of MRI scans and to explore novel flu vaccines and geometrically shaped proteins that may one day be used to produce tiny medical sensors.

Stay tuned. You'll be hearing a lot more about AI in the coming year.

James Leong, PhD physics, served as chair of the Leisure World Science and Technology Committee during its first five years (2016-2021), following a 45 year career as an intelligence analyst and manager in the federal government.



Pictured above

A bacterial enzyme that causes antibiotic resistance. Protein Structures determined using AlphaFold., (©Terezia Kovalova/The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences)