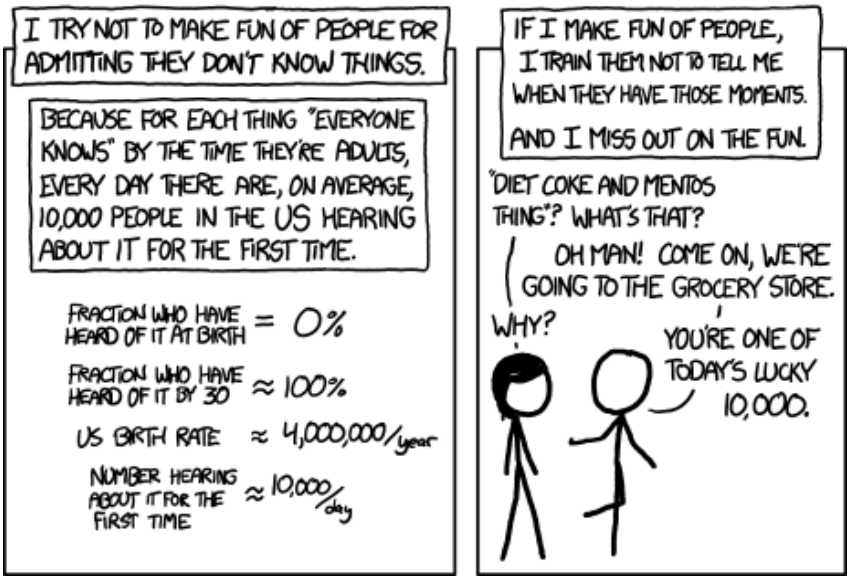
I am Jane's [tech issue]:

Answers for tech questions you think everyone knows already

Maxwell Memorial Library's Technology Class
Thursday, August 22, 2019

0. Introduction



Randall Munroe, xkcd*, "Ten Thousand." License: CC BY-NC 2.5*

We all have those questions that we're afraid to ask because "everybody else already knows the answers." Maxwell's August Tech Program is your chance to ask some of those questions about tech. I'll bring some pretty common questions as seeds, but this is your chance to bring your own questions and get them answered.

1. Some questions as seeds

1. Can I really trust the Interwebs for buying things? for sending or receiving money?

Short answer: Yes, but there are some details to look for.

Longer answer:

a. Only do business with reputable businesses and people

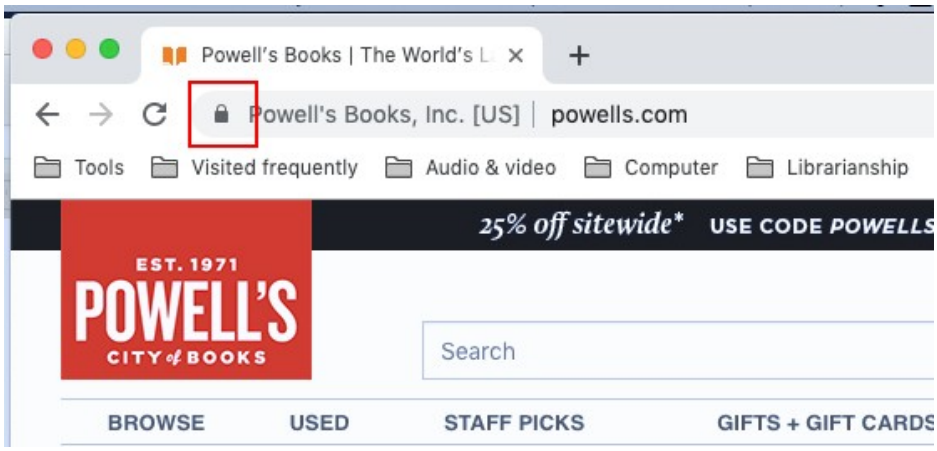
Some tools to help here are the various scores an ecommerce site lists for the vendors who

sell on the site (for instance, % POSITIVE on Amazon marketplace or % POSITIVE FEEDBACK on eBay).

To check the reputation of online businesses that sell through their own sites, you can use a search engine to search for something like “reviews of X” where X is the name of the business.

b. Make sure that your online connection uses encryption correctly

In short, before you actually make an online purchase, check to the left of the address (URL) box in your browser.



You should see a locked padlock in the area I’ve marked with a red square around it (Firefox helps out by coloring it green). If there is no padlock at all, the page does not encrypt data sent from it. If the padlock is there but it’s open, then the page has what’s called MIXED CONTENT, so even though encryption is present, you can’t be sure it’s being used for your data.

2. How do I access my library account info?

a. Go to OCPL’s catalog at https://catalog.onlib.org/polaris/

b. Touch/click *Log in* in the upper right corner

c. Enter both the barcode number from the back of your library card and your PIN

If you don’t remember your PIN, we can set it to whatever you’d like it to be, but for your protection we can only do that in person.

3. Can the library keep a record of what I check out?

Short answer: Yes, but you have to opt in in order to activate the service.

Longer answer:

First, I'll quote the warning text that pops up as you start the opt-in process:

> New York State law protects the confidentiality of library records. However, if you turn on Reading History or keep saved title lists, law enforcement personnel may access this information without your consent if they present a valid court order to the library. Do you wish to continue?

In order to opt in,

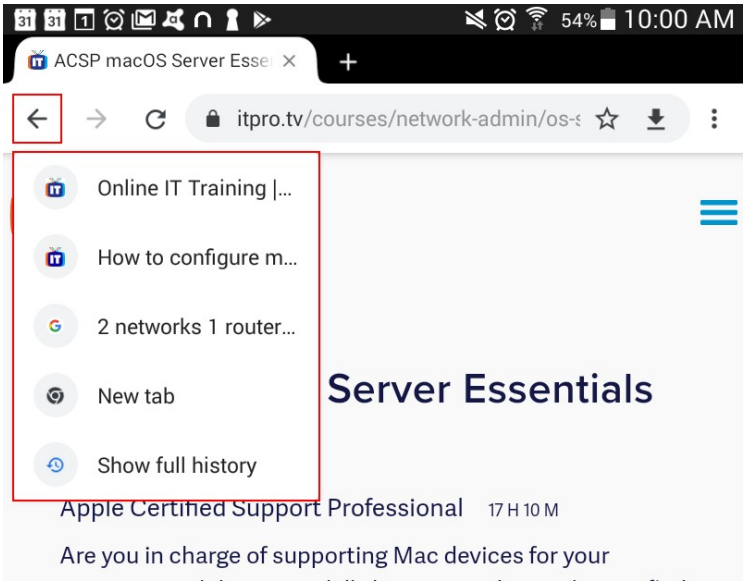
1. Log into your account as detailed above,
2. Touch/click ***My Account*** in the lefthand sidebar,
3. Touch/click ***My Record*** in the area that opens up,
4. In the main part of the page, touch/click ***Contact Information and Preferences***,
5. Scroll down to almost the bottom,
6. Touch/click ***Maintain reading list*** to check the box (or to uncheck it if you decide to reverse an earlier opting in). The warning I quoted earlier will pop up. If you wish to continue, touch/click ***OK***. Otherwise, touch/click ***Cancel***.
7. Touch/click the ***Submit Change*** button.

4. I moved/changed my phone number/changed my email/… Can I change the information online?

If you explored the process in the previous answer, you have gone through most of what is involved in answering this question. Just make the following substitution:

5. Scroll down to the sections with the information you wish to change,
6. Make your changes,
7. Touch/click the ***Submit Change*** button.

5. *How can I get back to a page I was on earlier?*



The tab at the top of the browser window always displays the title[1] of the page that it's currently showing. To see the titles of pages you've been to in this tab,[2] touch/click the ***back button*** (the arrow in the small red square) and continue to press down/hold the left button down until a dropdown menu like that in the red rectangle appears. You can then go to whichever earlier page you wanted to go back to.

The same process applies to the forward button if you go back too far or want to go back and forth between 2 pages, say.

To get back to any page you visited earlier, you want to use the History page in your browser. To get to the history page:

- In Chrome, go to the menu dots and choose ***History***. Then choose ***History*** from the top of the menu.
- In Firefox, go to the menu lines and choose ***Library***. Touch/click ***History*** and then choose ***Show All History*** at the bottom of the menu.

1 The word TITLE is somewhat ambiguous. From a human standpoint, *title* means the title given as the headline for the page (or something in that ballpark). From the web browser's viewpoint, though, it means a particular piece of text that's in the page's head section. Nothing appearing in the head gets displayed except for that title, and it only appears in the tab.

Ideally, the text for both meanings of the word *title* will be identical, but there is no guarantee of that. In talking about the titles shown as breadcrumbs from the ***back*** or ***forward*** button, it is that tab title I mean rather than the headline title.

2 This phrasing is a bit of an oversimplification. If you use the back button to go back to a previous page and then follow a link from that page, the sites you had been to after the first visit to that page no longer show up in the menus from the ***back*** and ***forward*** buttons. They are available on the browser's history page, though.

6. I get confused about which password to use when I sign into a Website. Do I use my gmail password since I'm signing in with my gmail address?

Short answer: No.

Longer answer:

First, to keep terminology simple, I'll use a couple generic terms. ***User name*** is going to be who you are as far as the website is concerned. What it gets called varies from site to site, but some examples are

- Account
- Barcode
- Email
- Email or Phone
- Email or username
- Login ID
- Phone, email, or username
- User ID

The other term I'll use is ***password***. Usually ***password*** is also the label that will get used by a site, but in the special case that the password can only use digits from 0 through 9, it is sometimes called a ***PIN***.

Now your user name is rarely (if ever) your actual name, but you want to think of it as the name that uniquely identifies you to the website you're accessing. Your password is then the key that unlocks your account.

I some ways it's like the system for accessing a safe deposit box:[3] You give the number of your box (analogous to your user name), they take you to that box, and you use your key (password) to open it.[4]

By thinking of your user name as a name, it becomes clear that the ideal situation might be to have only 1 user name that works everywhere. In any case, keeping the number

3 We take as read the security process where the bank makes sure you are who you say you are. The focus here is on physical access.

4 I'm also ignoring the key the bank uses in addition to the key you hold. Think of it and the walking you to the box as processes that the website performs behind-the-screen.

of different user names you have small is at least psychologically useful.[5]

On the other hand, you're used to the idea that each thing you have a key to will have a different key from the keys for anything else. While you might use the same key for each of the doors in your house, you wouldn't have the same key for your house and your car, say. Similarly, each account you have should have a different password, and the passwords should each be strong.

But all that is a different workshop :-)

7. Are there ways to get better/more precise results from Google/Bing/Yahoo?

- Bing Advanced Search Keywords: http://help.bing.microsoft.com/#apex/18/en-US/10001/-1
- Google Advanced Search: https://www.google.com/advanced_search
- Yahoo Advanced Web Search: https://search.yahoo.com/web/advanced

Advanced Search refers to the ability to go beyond typing a single string into a single box in order to search the web. Examples of the additional limits you can place on the search are domain name (useful for searching a particular website), language the pages are written in, how old the pages are, or whether you want to make sure that the pages found all contain a given phrase with phrasing exactly as you specify.

Google and Yahoo each have pages that let you fill in a form to conduct an advanced search. Bing also provides advanced search features, but you have to craft the search string using their keywords to organize your query.

8. How do I print an attachment from Yahoo mail?

Yahoo Mail doesn't play nice with printers. When you click the ***print*** icon for an attachment, the browser downloads the attachment instead of printing it directly. You then have to open your **Downloads** folder, open the attachment (you made a note of the name, right?), and print from the application it opens in.

Firefox allows you to simplify that process a bit. At the beginning of the download process, Firefox asks whether you want to download (see the previous paragraph) or open the attachment. If you choose ***Open***, then you save a few steps. You're still printing from the preferred app for the attachment rather than from the browser, but you don't have to figure out which document in the Downloads folder is which, and (if you're

5 Some security experts recommend using a different user name at every site, but this might be overkill.

on a public machine) you don't have to worry about disposing it when you're done.[6]

9. How do I print just a part of a Web page rather than the entire thing?

Chrome allows you to select a portion of a page and then print just that selection. Make your selection and then click the right button. One of the options wil be ***Print…***, which you can click to go into the print dialogue, but the material printed will be only your selection.

6 Note that the document actually is downloaded to the machine whether you choose ***Download*** or ***Open***. However, when you choose ***Open***, it's downloaded to a system folder that is unlikely to be accessed by any human ever, let alone before the system disposes of the document as expired.

However, this means that you should probably not work with extremely secret, Eyes Only email attachments from the NSA on public computers. Just sayin'.