

Each week, the Princeton Public Library publishes one or more tech tips in our column in the Princeton Times-Republic newspaper. Tech tips are hints that make your life better-- not just for using a computer, but for recycling, saving money, staying safe, and keeping fit. Here's a list of all of our tech tips from the last two years!

Health Tips

Shopping & Budget Tips

Online Safety & Freedom Tips

Computer Shortcut Tips

Just for Fun Tips

Education & Career Tips

Maintenance Tips

Library & Reading Tips

Miscellaneous Tips (the best tips!)

Tech Tips: HEALTH

The "winter blues" is a real, scientifically proven phenomena. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) makes you feel tired, depressed, sluggish, dull, and less likely to socialize. SAD is triggered by a lack of sunlight in these long winter months, which disrupts the body's internal clock and decreases your levels of serotonin. Here are some things that can help:

- get outside for an hour every day and absorb some sunshine (bundle up!)
- buy an indoor sun lamp, which replicates the effects of real sunlight
- take vitamin D
- talk to your doctor about melatonin supplements to help regulate your sleep cycle
- talk to your doctor about antidepressant medications

If someone isn't breathing, don't be afraid to try CPR. The Good Samaritan Law protects well-intentioned rescuers against lawsuits. If you're worried about mouth to mouth contact, don't do it. Experts now say that in most cases, breathing into a person's mouth is not nearly as necessary as we thought-- they main thing is to do chest compressions. Studies show that there is some air exchange happening with these. If you can do a rescue breath after every 30 compressions, great-- but the main thing is to keep pumping. The speed of compressions should be fast, about 100-120 compressions per minute. You don't *have* to count, just stay in time with the song "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees!

Everyone is concerned about their health these days. But is your doctor giving you the right information? Here's how you can feel confident about your provider. Go online to docinfo.org to check on your doctor's credentials and licensure. Next, see how much money your doctor has received from pharmaceutical or medical-device companies at projects.propublica.org/docdollars. You can also check openpayments.cms.gov, which shows financial relationships between the health care industry and providers. These relationships may involve payments to providers for things such as research, meals, travel, gifts, or speaking fees.

Do you wear glasses? Do you find that they fog up when you wear a mask or come in from the cold? There are lots of ways to stop this:

- tape a tissue in the top of your mask to catch the moisture before it rises into your glasses
- use any kind of soap, shaving cream, or shampoo to wash your glasses, then let them air dry or very gently dry them with a soft cloth; the soap will leave an invisible film that prevents fog
- buy a human-safe anti-fog dip for your glasses, just like the kind scuba divers use for their masks (don't use anti-fog chemicals for your car windshield!)

Feeling empty? Do you have little interest in life right now? Have you been having lots of negative thoughts? You can talk to someone for free, any time of the day or night, at the Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255. If talking is hard, there are texting and typing options! If you'd prefer, contact the free Crisis Text Line by texting Hello to 741741. You can also reach out via WhatsApp or message the Crisis Text Line on Facebook for help. These free services have volunteer counselors supervised by a licensed, trained mental health professionals.

Are you resolved get in shape? Musclewiki.com lets you select a muscle group you want to tone up, and then shows you exactly how to do it. Fitnessblender.com has free full-length workout videos of all different kinds, from kickboxing to stretching to strength training. Doyogawithme.com offers a huge library of free yoga videos of all different levels. Looking for something faster? The free apps 8fit, Freeletics, and Seven offer mini customizable workouts and fitness tracking, with extra paid options that cost very little.

Tech Tips: SHOPPING & BUDGET

If you're shopping, here's an easy way to find items proudly made in America: www.madeinamerica.co.

Unfortunately, not everything can be made in America. However, like any good consumer, you might want to know exactly where products come from. You wouldn't want to buy from companies that use slave labor! Check out importyeti.com to see exactly where brands and big box stores get their stuff from.

If you're shopping online at Amazon.com, use smile.amazon.com instead. This nifty feature will give a percentage of the cost of your purchases to a charity of your choice, at no cost to you. The Princeton Friends of the Library is an option, but so are many local organizations.

If you're shopping online, use a credit card, not a debit card. Your debit card is directly linked to your bank account, putting your savings, as well as the rest of your financial information, at risk. In addition, credit cards usually offer more protection and less liability-- they will reverse the charges faster than a bank will.

Currently, America is 29 trillion dollars in debt-- that's about \$89,000 for every single person in the United States, including kids. Keep track of the national debt at <https://www.pgpf.org/national-debt-clock>. What does that mean for us? It's time to protect yourself against inflation and a long-term economic slowdown. If you have a little cash to spare, spend it now on essential things you know you'll need in the next year or two, (like shoes, canning supplies, car repairs, dental work, etc). If you're an investor, look into Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities, gold, and money market mutual funds. Think about planting a garden this spring. Don't plan on an expensive vacation. These precautions may not be necessary, but they won't hurt, either. In short, hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.

If you're trying to be a smart, ethical consumer, it helps to know who owns what companies. A surprising number of brands are owned by a handful of companies. For instance, you might not know that Amazon owns Audible, Goodreads, Shopbop, Twitch, Whole Foods, Kindle, Ring Doorbells, about half of the servers that host all websites on the internet, and much more. Google owns Android, which means it owns 85% of the smartphone market. It also owns Fitbit, Blogger, Youtube, and AdSense (which controls many internet ads).

Most foods we buy are owned by just ten companies, and the vast majority of beauty products in America are owned by only seven companies. When it comes to mainstream media, it's even worse. Just five companies own nearly everything you watch and read. For example, TimeWarner alone owns all of the following: Time Magazine, Sports Illustrated magazine, Entertainment Weekly magazine, DC Comics, Warner Bros. Pictures Group (which includes Warner Bros. Pictures, New Line Cinema, the Warner Animation Group, Castle Rock

Entertainment, and DC Films), and a slew of TV channels including HBO, TBS, TNT, TCM, TrueTV, NBC, Cartoon Network, and CNN.

How do you find out who owns what? Here are two websites that are great starting places: internationalbusinessguide.org/corporations will show you a simplified format of which companies own which brands.

behindthebrands.org, itself run by corporate giant Oxfam, tells you which companies own which brands and rates brands from 1-10 based on how they treat farmers, workers, animals, and the environment.

What do you do once you've found out that some of your favorite brands are owned by some not-so-good companies?

Why, shop local of course!

Tech Tips: ONLINE SAFETY & FREEDOM

Social media has a nasty habit of sucking away your time and stealing your data. But what if you just can't quit Facebook? Use [Facebook Container](#), a Firefox add-on that keeps Facebook's tracking strictly inside its own tab and disables its trackers on external pages. You can also turn on encryption in Facebook messenger to protect your private messages.

Many websites prey upon unwary consumers by offering "free tax forms" and other services. Be careful-- don't fall for deceptive advertising or outright scams. TurboTax, Taxslayer, and other sites do offer a few legitimate, free services, but they are hard to find, and whether you qualify depends on your level of income, whether you have insurance, and how complicated your taxes are. It's better to go straight to the source: IRS Free File. Go here: <https://apps.irs.gov/app/freeFile>.

Here's a good article on how "free" tax services can trick you:

<https://www.propublica.org/article/turbotax-just-tricked-you-into-paying-to-file-your-taxes>.

Confused? Here's a clue: the addresses of all government websites include ".gov." So if you go to irs.com you'll end up at a private website that wants to take your money! Go to irs.gov instead. Forms for Wisconsin are available at revenue.wi.gov.

Looking for social media platforms that don't censor your content and steal your data?

Check out the following:

Twitter Alternatives: Parler, Gab, Telegram, GETTR

Youtube Alternative: Rumble, Bitchute, Odessa, Dailymotion, Vimeo, DLive

Reddit Alternatives: Imgur, Ranker, Voat, 4Chan, StumbleUpon

Facebook alternatives: Minds, Locals, Nextdoor, Raftr, Vero, WTSocial, Mastodon, Diaspora, Ello, MeWe, TruthSocial, EyeEm

Just about everyone uses Google, and we all know that our data is tracked. But it might surprise you how much Google knows about you personally. Google probably knows your name, birthday, gender, favorite foods, search history, everywhere you've been (as long as you've had your cell phone with you), and it may even have recordings of your voice. You can download all of the info Google has collected about you by going to takeout.google.com/settings/takeout. These files are very large, so downloading all of this may take a day or two, but it is interesting to see. Want to limit what Google can find and share about you? Use the Privacy Checkup tool at myaccount.google.com. You can also visit the Activity page at myaccount.google.com/activitycontrols and toggle everything off, so that Google stops checking in on your location, device information, web & voice activity, etc.

YouTube, the internet's largest video library, has been censoring more and more videos. Free-speech-friendly alternative video websites include the following: Odysee, BitChute, Rumble, GabTV, Brighteon, BitTube, DTube, 3Speak, and AltCensored.

Amazon is quietly extending its reach into every corner of our lives. Amazon Sidewalk now allows devices such as Echo speakers and Ring doorbells and camera devices to connect to the internet even when they're out of Wi-Fi range. This feature can potentially help people track pets, find lost cell phones, and turn on devices like motion sensor lights even when the internet isn't available. However, this level of connection is ripe for abuse. Although the company promises that no one can hack your devices, no network is totally secure-- and Amazon itself will be watching. Your devices will automatically have the new Sidewalk capabilities unless you opt out. To do that:

1. Open the Alexa app, tap **More > Settings > Account Settings > Amazon Sidewalk**.
2. If you want to turn off Sidewalk support completely, toggle off the **Amazon Sidewalk** setting, and you're done.
3. Another option is to allow Sidewalk but disable **Community Finding**, a feature that lets the owners of Sidewalk-enabled trackers to pinpoint their lost devices or pets.

ICOP, or Internet Covert Operations Program, is a recently uncovered secret program that tracks and collects Americans' social media posts, including those about planned protests. The program's employees are technically paid by the law enforcement arm of the U.S. Postal Service, but nobody yet seems to know who started it. Sounds crazy, but it's true! **Now** is a **great time** to scrub your social media.

Did you know that Facebook tracks your other online activity? You can tell them to stop. On the desktop version of Facebook, click on the drop-down arrow in the top right of the screen. Then select "Settings" and "Your Facebook Information." There you'll find an option to view your "Off-Facebook Activity." There are lots of interesting things here, including a useful "Clear History," but the one really you want is hidden. Look for the header "What You Can Do" and then click the tiny "More Options." Then click on "Manage Future Activity." You'll get a pop-up with more verbiage-- just click on "Manage Future Activity" again. You'll see "Future Off-Facebook Activity" with a blue slider button. Click the button. You'll get a final warning, but then you're done.

If you're getting rid of old devices, like laptops or tablets, don't forget to wipe all of your data off of them! Just deleting your files isn't enough-- they are easily recovered by identity thieves. Bring your device to a professional, or check here: techcollect.com.au/delete-your-data/

When dealing with technology, always read the fine print-- you may be signing up for something you don't want. Last week, some customers in Texas had their thermostats remotely controlled by power companies, leaving them sweating. It turns out they had enrolled in a sweepstakes, which gave a program called EnergyHub permission to adjust participants' smart thermostats remotely during times of peak energy demand. Sometimes, however, there IS no fine print-- Big Tech just takes over. The state of

Massachusetts recently launched a contact tracing app for COVID-19 called MassNotifyApp. Contact tracing is the process of identifying persons who may have come into contact with an infected person, and tracking where they went and with whom. The app was automatically installed on Android smartphones without the users' knowledge or consent. Android phones (the most common smartphones) are made by Google. The app was co-created by Google and Apple. The app was even installed on childrens' devices with parental-lock. The stealth installation was done so that no new icon appeared on the phones, meaning that users could not open the program themselves. Some people who managed to uninstall the program despite this, reported that the program re-installed itself immediately. The app developers claim that the app doesn't work unless you enable it, but some phone owners say that they did not do so, and got notifications anyway.

Anything you do online is likely to be tracked, saved for years, and turned over to any authority that asks for the information. Recently, we learned that in at least four cases in the last four years, the FBI got Google, Microsoft/Bing, and Yahoo to turn over data on large numbers of Americans who searched for a particular word or used their smartphones in a certain area. These "keyword" and "geofence" warrants are not only a major invasion of privacy, they have the potential to be powerful tools of oppression. To avoid "big brother," use a VPN (Virtual Private Network) to access the internet, use privacy-focused search engines like Duck Duck Go, and turn off tracking on your devices. Start moving your documents and pictures offline-- anything in Google Drive or on Facebook might someday be used against you. Here's how to easily transfer all of your pictures off of Facebook at once:

- Log in to Facebook.com or open the Facebook mobile app.
- Click the **downward arrow** in the top-right corner (web) or the **three-line menu** at the bottom of the screen (mobile).
- Select **Settings & Privacy**.
- Click **Settings**.
- Scroll down to the **Your Facebook Information** section.
- Click **Transfer a Copy of Your Photos or Videos**. You may need to re-enter your password.
- Click the arrow next to **Choose Destination** and select an external hard drive or Dropbox or whatever you want from the dropdown menu.
- Choose whether you want to export your photos or your videos and click **Next**.
- Click **Confirm Transfer**.

Tech Tips: COMPUTER SHORTCUTS

If you're reading an article on your computer, there are dozens of shortcuts that can save you time and hassle. Highlight a single word or a phrase by clicking and dragging your mouse, then let go. Then hold down these keys at the same time:

CTRL and C = Copy the text you highlighted. CTRL and V = Paste the text (into a document or email). CTRL and P = Print.

CTRL and Z = Undo (don't you wish life had this button?)

CTRL and T opens a new tab in your internet browser.

CTRL and Shift and T = re-opens the last internet table you closed.

If you are using Google Chrome, you can use CTRL and + or – to “zoom,” making your screen bigger or smaller.

CTRL and F allows you to search the entire text for a word or phrase of your choosing.

Not a PC user? Apple users can usually substitute the Control key keyboard shortcuts with the command key or control key.

Filling out an online form? It's a pain to click on every box you have to fill in. The "Tab" key will move you down to the next one without having to take your fingers off the keyboard!

In Microsoft Excel, Alt+Enter will add a new line without leaving a cell.

Using Microsoft Word or Publisher? CTRL + N will open a new document for you.

Tech Tips: JUST FOR FUN

Play classic PC and even video games on classicreload.com for free. This website features over 6000 DOS and early Windows games, including the original Oregon Trail, Wolfenstein 3D, Doom, Sid Meier's Civilization, and many more.

Looking to try some new music? Check out everynoise.com, where you can sample the vast spectrum of music-- everything from kawaii future bass to lagu madura and Moroccan pop.

If you're not feeling very confident about yourself, it may help to visit Museum of Failure at collection.museumoffailure.com. This online museum is a collection of failed products and services from around the world.

If you want a vacation, but can't leave the house, take an online safari with webcams! These video feeds are broadcast live from around the world, and don't cost a cent to watch. Monterey Bay Aquarium has some great ones, including penguins, a coral reef, otters, an underwater "kelp forest" and jellyfish. Go to montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams and choose one to watch.

Youtube offers a vast array of webcam options, from kittens to grizzly bears. Go to youtube.com/c/ExploreLiveNatureCams.

The Smithsonian National Zoo has pandas, lions, elephants and naked mole rats! Go to nationalzoo.si.edu/webcams.

Do you like museums better than zoos? Take a tour of the Smithsonian Natural History Museum at naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour.

Why not brighten up your life by visiting a world-famous museum? The Met (as in New York) has uploaded hundreds of thousands of famous works of art to its online gallery. The high-resolution images are stunning! Go to metmuseum.org/art/collection

Tech Tips: EDUCATION & CAREER

Need to brush up on your tech skills? Our library system offers free, self-paced computer courses at winnefox.org/tech-skills-center. (Winnefox is the name of our library system.) This excellent resource is great for learners at all levels, starting with a basic tutorial on using a mouse, and going as far as overviews of the Linux and Ubuntu operating systems. Google Digital Garage, Google Digital Unlocked, and Google Cloud Courses also offer free online tech courses, some of which come with certificates of completion. Plus, learn to code the fun way! Codingame.com/start will help you learn programming skills while you make a real game.

Are you researching historical events, genealogy, or past news stories? You'll find our newspaper archive useful. At princetonpublib.org, move your mouse over "Services," then click Resources/Research. NewspaperARCHIVE has Wisconsin newspaper titles dating back as far as the 1800s.

Whether you're a job-seeker, lifelong learner, or someone in need of CE credits, you'll want to check out these free or nearly-free online courses:

Harvard University, UC Berkeley, Stanford, MIT, and other ivy-league schools offer free courses in everything from Python programming to drawing. Here's a list with links: digitaldefynd.com/best-free-certification-course-training-online/.

Through its Emergency Management Institute, FEMA offers free, self-paced courses. Many give you 1 college credit. Go to training.fema.gov/is/ for current classes, or training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx for a complete list.

Promoted by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the NCTSN Learning Center offers free courses on many subjects related to psychology and trauma: learn.nctsn.org. In a related vein, the QPR Institute offers suicide-prevention courses for anyone working in public service. These courses do cost \$60-\$140, but are worth 2-6 college credits each. qprinstitute.com/professional-training.

Google offers many free courses for those in technical fields. Analytics, IT Support, Android Development, and Google Cloud Platform Fundamentals are just a few. Check out learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage/courses. Note: there may be fees if you want official certification.

urbandictionary.com offers definitions of modern slang, but be careful- it can get pretty raunchy.

If your dream is to work from your warm and cozy home, check out remotists.com. This website lists tens of thousands of newly listed remote jobs in the USA and across the globe. You can also check out csueastbay.edu/ocpd/ and scroll down to click on "Remote Job Opportunities: Find a Job."

Want to learn a specific skill? Kahn academy (khanacademy.org) and our own Gale Courses (princetonpublib.org) offer free classes on many subjects that start at regular intervals.

Do you love maps? Do you love history? You'll love the Wisconsin Public Land Survey's online resources. The website shows field notes and plat maps of surveys between taken between 1832 and 1866 by the federal General Land Office. These documents are not only a valuable resource understanding Wisconsin's landscape history, they are often works of art. Check them out at <https://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/SurveyNotes/>

Tech Tips: MAINTENANCE

When it's 30 degrees outside, 1 pound of plain salt will melt 46 pounds of ice. However, the colder it gets, the less effective salt will be in melting snow and ice from your sidewalks and driveway. When the temperature drops below 15 degrees, ice melt will do a better job than plain salt. But what kind of ice melt should you get? There are lots of different options.

- Ethylene glycol-based ice melts are the worst. These contain the same sweet-tasting chemicals as toxic antifreeze, which can kill pets and wildlife. Producing Ethylene glycol isn't good for the environment either.
- "Pet safe" ice melt is available, but don't be fooled-- it isn't 100% safe. Propylene glycol based ice melts won't do anything to humans or dogs, but might harm red blood cells in cats, and are very dangerous to ruminants like sheep, goats, and cows if ingested.
- Calcium chloride and magnesium chloride are pretty safe. These chemicals sound scary, but small quantities are actually a part of our everyday diet. This ice melt is fast, effective, and better for lawns and plants than plain salt too. Just don't overdo it!

Both plain salt and ice melt can cause irritation, even chemical burns, to paws. If your pet walks on city streets and sidewalks a lot, try pet booties. At minimum, do a quick paw rinse when you get home

Your computer is like a car-- it needs to be maintained in order to keep running. This is especially true if you are on the internet a lot. Make sure you have downloaded all necessary updates. Download the free version of C-Cleaner and use it to run a monthly clean-up scan for viruses and cached information. Delete old programs, photos, and files you no longer use. A car can run for a long time without an oil change, and a computer can run a long time without maintenance-- but eventually both will seize up!

Don't let your pipes freeze! Open the cabinet doors and let the warm air circulate under the sink. Run a trickle of water through them-- the water bill won't be as bad as the plumber's if the pipes burst.

Don't forget to clean out your air conditioner filter before you put it away for the winter, and change your furnace filter for a new, clean one before heating season. Doing these things will make your system last longer, and keep your home less dusty. You might also notice fewer allergy symptoms.

Are you cleaning up your computer files? (You should!) Don't spend hours manually searching and deleting-- automate the process! You can use the duplicate file finder at auslogics.com, a duplicate picture finder at visipics.info, and a great file transfer utility for Windows at www.codesector.com/teracopy. Also check out SpaceSniffer or TreeSize Free for a free disk space analyzer with cleanup tools.

Did you know that your smartphone will charge faster if you put it in airplane mode? This is because in this mode, the phone is not using energy trying to connect to signal towers or gps signals. Your phone will also charge faster in a cooler environment, because your phone's fan won't have to work as hard. (Yes, your phone has a tiny fan to cool its tiny computer brain.) In fact, heat in general is bad for the battery. Don't leave your phone in direct sunlight, or under your pillow.

It's great to sanitize your tech devices every once in a while. However, never spray cleaner directly onto your phone, computer keyboard, or other electronic devices. Instead, spray cleaner onto a cloth or paper towel and then wipe down your device. This prevents liquid from being forced inside and doing damage.

When you leave electrical appliances plugged in, *even when they are turned off*, they still use some electricity. That's right, your radio, television, coffee maker, computer, hairdryer, phone charger, toaster, blender, microwave, and other devices are sucking power even though you're not using them. Research by Alan Meier of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory shows that standby power, or "vampire energy," accounts for about 10% of all residential electricity use. By unplugging these devices when you're not using them, you could save yourself \$100-\$200 or more every year, as well help the environment by reducing your carbon footprint. To make unplugging easier, use power strips. Many devices can be plugged into one power strip, and then you only have to pull that one plug. Power strips are also desirable because modern power strips have surge protectors which will prevent your devices from frying during a lightning strike. Read more about "vampire energy" at standby.lbl.gov/.

Keep your house cooler by doing the following:

Close the curtains. Natural light really heats up a room.

Your air conditioner will work better if you keep the filters clean, and it's out of the sun-- put a roof over it or plant shrubs that will give it shade.

Heat rises. Get rid of rising heat by opening a window in the top floor of your house, or install an attic fan/vent.

If you don't have air conditioning, open your windows at night to capture the evening coolness, and then close them in the morning before things heat up.

If you can't stay cool at home, come to the library! We have quiet sitting areas, a children's play area, a bubbler with water bottle filling, and great air conditioning.

Tech Tips: LIBRARY & READING

Remember, there are no late fees on children's books at the Princeton Library!

Taking care of business? We can help you scan, fax, photocopy, and email. We also have free WIFI, meeting rooms, and public computers.

We offer free downloadable eBooks and audiobooks on the Libby app! Not sure how to get started? Let us help you set up your device!

Your library card isn't just a Princeton library card. With it, you can check out items for free at any of the 30 libraries in the Winnefox System! Those libraries include Campbellsport, Fond Du Lac, Ripon, Berlin, Green Lake, Markeson, Kingston, Endeavor, Neshkoro, Neenah, Coloma, Painfield, Wautoma, and Oshkosh. For a full list, go to <https://www.winnefox.org/member-libraries>. If you don't want to make a trip, don't worry- we all share materials between libraries, and delivery is free! If you don't find what you want here in Princeton, we'll order it for you.

Looking for book recommendations? Pick up a free copy of Book Page here at the library. It's packed with reviews, recommendations, and lists of books to fit every mood and current event. For fiction, you can also try fantasticfiction.com and literature-map.com. Literature map lets you type in an author you like, and then a program will create a "map" of similar authors. You can also try Goodreads.com, an Amazon company, which has great user-created book lists to check out, with summaries, reviews, and "if you liked this, try ____" suggestions. Leafmarks.com is neat too- it lists book recommendations from high profile thinkers, scientists, celebrities, and authors. Did you know that Gandhi was a big Leo Tolstoy fan?

Try our free Libby app and download eBooks and audiobooks to your phone or tablet so you can read on the go!

In addition to books and audiobooks, you can download magazines for free! Use your library card to sign in to Overdrive or the Libby app.

You'll be able to download Taste of Home, Cook's Country, HGTV Magazine, Country Living, Better Homes & Gardens, Women's Health, Elle, The New Yorker, Newsweek, Reader's Digest, Popular Mechanics, PC World, Car & Driver and many more!

See the collection on Overdrive at this website:

<https://wplc.overdrive.com/collections/featured/4>

If you borrow a library DVD and it skips or doesn't play well, please let us know! We can send DVDs to be repaired by our library system at little cost to us. Telling us about the problem ASAP will help someone else avoid the frustration of a messed-up movie night, and you'd want them to do the same for you.

Have you heard about our Favorite Authors Club? This free service is a great way to get new best-sellers fast. You'll have a hold automatically placed for you when your favorite authors release a new book, audiobook, or large print book. To sign up, grab a form at the library, call us at 920-295-6777, or go to our website, princetonpublib.org. From there, hover your mouse over **Books, Movies and More** at the top of our web page, and click **Check Your Account**. Then log in with your library card number (all of the numbers in your barcode, with no spaces) and your PIN (the last four digits of your phone number). Click **My Account** and then **Favorite Author Club**. Check the boxes next to each author you want, then select a format (book, audiobook, or large print book). Click **Submit**. You're done! Now you'll automatically receive the newest books from the authors you chose.

If you're thinking about going on vacation, don't forget that we can help you with holds and due dates! We can:

- check things out for longer (if they're not new) so you have more time
- suspend your holds so that they don't come in while you're away
- renew things over the phone

Sign up for our free texting service to get instant updates on when your library materials are due. You can then renew them with a couple of taps. To sign up, just text the word `signup` to 920-212-4349. Then Reply to the messages from Shoutbomb with your library card number and PIN. Your PIN is usually the last four digits of your phone number.

Did you know that the Winnefox app allows you to see all of your family's library accounts in one place? Don't fret over who has what checked out on which library card- download the free Winnefox app to your smartphone or tablet! In order to set this up, you will need your library card (and the library cards of any family members you are connecting) and your PIN. Your PIN is the last four digits of your phone number. In the app, you can also renew items, order things, and check on what your kids are reading and watching.

Every 18 months, library cards expire. We don't do this to inconvenience you, but to make sure we're providing the best service. We need you to bring in a photo ID (to prevent identity theft and someone else using your card). If your card doesn't have your current address on it, we'll need something official with your name and address on it (a utility bill works great). At that time, we'll make sure we have all of your current contact info, so that we can inform you about books you ordered which have arrived, books coming due, and books overdue. Finally, we'll update you about free services you may want to opt-in for, like our text-to-renew program, and Favorite Author Club. It all takes less than ten minutes! Thanks for helping us help you.

Tech Tips: MISC

Would you like to know why American flags are sometimes flown at half staff? You can check halfstaff.org for up-to-the-minute state and federal flag orders. You can even get email reminders sent to you!

Tired of sales calls? Join the National Do Not Call Registry. Call 1-888-382-1222 from any phone you want on the list. It can take up to 31 days to go into effect, but after that it is illegal for telemarketers to call you. It won't stop criminal scammers, however, so stay on your guard.

Do you want to stay informed about crimes happening in your area? Might you be able to help spot a missing child? Are you willing to keep an eye out for at-risk veterans and seniors? Go to www.wisconsincrimealert.gov and sign up to get notifications from the Wisconsin Crime Alert Network. You can choose to receive emails, texts, or faxes informing you of local crimes, Amber Alerts, Silver Alerts, Green alerts, or all of the above. You can choose to receive alerts for one just your home county, or for the counties you choose, or for the entire state. This is a free service, and your contact information is never shared. In the past, ordinary citizens who received alerts were able to help authorities solve crimes and save lives.

Do you want to know who owns a piece of property? You don't need a plat map-- these records are online! Each county has a GIS (Geographic Information System) map online, where you can either move around the map and click on pieces of land, or search by address. This tool is good for more than seeing who owns land. Once you find the parcel you want, you can click on it to get more info, like it's assessed value, the last time it was sold, and yearly property taxes. The GIS map site for Green Lake County is gis.co.green-lake.wi.us/gisweb/GIS_View/.

Planning a road trip? The famous map company Rand McNally has a very cool, free program you can use called TripMaker. Go to tripmaker.randmcnally.com, enter your starting point, and then put in your desired destinations. The computer will then plot the most efficient driving route-- unless you tell it to avoid tolls and/or highways. You can then tell the program to show you attractions along the way, within a certain distance of your route and with certain attributes (kid friendly, historical, artsy, cultural, outdoors, etc). Once you've added all your stops, you'll be able to see the total mileage involved, as well as estimated travel time and gas costs. You can even save your trip for future reference, and send directions to your gps.

Are you really, really sick of looking up a recipe online, only to have to crawl through five ads, three dog pictures, a paragraph about the history of food, and a story about the author's grandma before you actually get the directions and ingredients? Try this website: www.justtherecipe.com. Copy and paste the url of any recipe on any website into this handy page, and it will remove all of the nonessential stuff.

Did you get any new tech toys recently? Don't throw away your old ones! Small electronics contain lithium-ion batteries that can cause fires if handled through regular trash or recycling systems. They're also not great for the planet. You can usually recycle old electronics for free-- find a nearby drop-off site or a mail-back program at wisconsindnr.shinyapps.io/EcycleCollectorSite/

Back in the day, books used to recommend heating canning jar lids in water before using them. Research has shown that the sealing compound on lids works equally well at room temperature. Skip the simmering lids and save time! Here's another tip: Don't store finished jars with rings/bands on them. These are only meant to keep the lids on jars during processing, and after you open them. Keeping the rings separate will give them a longer lifespan (and prevent you from being frustrated about opening a corroded or stuck jar). Finally, a jar that's contaminated with bacteria may pop its lid, warning you-- but not if there's a ring holding it down.

There are over 3,500 species of mosquito, and some days it seems like all of them live nearby! However, only female mosquitos drink blood, and only when they're getting ready to lay eggs (otherwise, mosquitos feed on plant nectar). Even that small percentage of 'squitos can feel like too many though-- especially for some people. Studies have shown that people with Type O blood attract the most mosquitoes, up to twice as many as people with Type A blood. Mosquitoes are also more attracted to people who emit more heat and carbon dioxide -- like pregnant women, joggers, and anyone burning off energy from a meal. Mosquitoes also see movement and dark colors better. What does that mean for you? When outside, you should disguise yourself in light colored clothing that covers your arms and legs. Use heavy scents (like citronella, mint, cinnamon, or garlic) to throw the tiny predators off your scent. Finally, you can use a fan to disperse heat and scent, as well as making flying conditions difficult.

Spring is baby season! Mother rabbits and deer spend most of their time away from their babies so as not to attract predators, and only feed their babies twice a day for very short periods, so it can seem like bunnies and fawns are "abandoned." They're not. If you find a baby, leave them alone, and chances are mom will come back for them!

Young birds learning to fly sometimes fall out of the nest while testing their wings. Their parents will feed them on the ground, but if they're very young, you can put them back in the nest. The idea that touching a baby animal will make its mother reject it is a myth.

If you truly believe you have found a wild animal in need of help, you can call the DNR at (715) 359-5508 or contact one of our local certified wildlife rehabilitation specialists:

Chris Brotz, Oshkosh: Opossums, rodents/rabbits, raccoons. 920-836-3734 or brotz@centurytel.net

Angell Wildlife Rehabilitation, Oshkosh: Opossums, insectivores, rodents/rabbits, bats, birds, reptiles, amphibians. 920-915-1084 or thausser38@gmail.com.

If you're a parent who's worried about what your kids are watching, try Dove.org. This website is a great tool to help you quickly and easily see what's good and bad about almost every movie out there, including all the blockbusters. Dove provides ratings for movies based on eight different measurements: faith, integrity, sexuality, language, violence, drugs, nudity, and "other" (disrespect for authority, lying, cheating, stealing, illegal activity, frightening scenes, and demonic or similar references). Dove also gives age ranges for movies. Obviously, you may not want to censor everything your family watches, but dove helps you be prepared to talk about certain topics before or after movie night. Knowledge is power!