The Mouse Pad

Happy New Year 2024

A Note From the Editor: Happy New Year, 2024 from the Computer Tech Club - We want to help you stay up to date with technology. Our meeting is January 10, via Zoom at 3 pm. Members will receive the zoom link on the previous Sunday or Monday. If you want to attend, contact us for the link.

The "Mouse Pad" online news is available to anyone by request. It is tech news related, some fun trivia/word game and other news, as received from any subscriber. It is totally FREE and you can request your email copy sending a request to the Editor at dbinder2004@comcast.net. This is a great opportunity to receive FREE tech advice; especially in life these days. Technology affects almost every person and this news….issues will be helpful with your tech knowledge. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already embedded in our lives and it will just continue to increase. NOW, is the time to learn all you can. To sign-up to receive this tech news in your email - just send a request email to Diane (Di) Binder, dbinder2004@comcast.net. *Enjoy the articles we selected this month.*

Trivia: Let's get going with trivia. Which essential smartphone function started its journey in the hospital operating room? Was it the …
A.) Camera, B.) Touchscreen, C.) Voice assistant or D.) Vibrating alerts? Answer's at the end!

This copy is without a lot of color, so if you want to print it and read. For your convenience. Happy New Year!. Blessings!

How to Redeem an Amazon Gift Card, source…MUO website

Step 1: Find the Amazon Gift Card Claim Code - **Step 2**: Redeem the Amazon Gift Card. Do you have a physical or digital Amazon gift card? To use the card, you will have to redeem it in your Amazon account. You can perform the redemption process on both your desktop and mobile devices. We'll show you how.

How Gift Card Redemption Works - When you redeem a gift card, Amazon adds the full value of your card to your account. You can then use these funds to buy eligible items on the site. You can't buy other Amazon gift cards with your gift card money, though you are allowed to purchase some third-party gift cards for other stores. You won't be able to transfer the gift card funds to other Amazon accounts, and these funds can't be exchanged for cash, either. However, there are third-party markets for gift cards if you're serious about not shopping on Amazon.

- **Ways to Redeem an Amazon Gift Card** - There are two ways to redeem a gift card in your Amazon account. The first way is to add your gift card's balance to your account, then use that balance to buy items. If you are not ready to buy anything right away, you can keep the gift card funds in your account.

- The second way is to add the items you want to buy to your Amazon cart, reach the checkout page, and redeem your gift card on that page. If your item total is higher than the gift card amount, the remaining amount will be charged to your default payment method. Also, note that both physical and digital gift cards are redeemed the same way; there are no differences. (Additional info - continue)...

Step 1: Find the Amazon Gift Card Claim Code: To redeem an Amazon gift card, you will need your gift card's claim code. This code is clearly visible on your physical or digital gift card. You will enter this code on the Amazon website or the Amazon mobile app to add the card's value to your account. A claim code usually looks something like this: ABCD-1234-MAAP-8998.

Step 2: Redeem the Amazon Gift Card: Once you find the claim code, use either the Amazon website or the Amazon mobile app to redeem the card. You only have to use one of these two methods. Redeem on Desktop - If you use a Windows, Mac, Linux, or Chromebook computer, open a web browser on and launch the Amazon site. Sign in to your account and hover your cursor over the "Account & Lists" menu. This will display a submenu.

(For picture details in this article - please check out our website - here is the link to that page (Home page - Column 2, Scroll Down). https://www.computerclubrhcc.com/. (end)

The Mouse Pad

Today's featured tech tip…Improve your typing skills with this great tool - Whether you use a computer all day or just for an hour or two at home in the evenings to catch up on social media, it really helps to have at least a few basic typing skills. While you don't need to be an expert 70 words-per-minute typist, knowing your way around a keyboard can definitely make your computer time more efficient & more enjoyable. There are many good online typing practice & testing sites online, & most of them allow you to access their tools at no cost.

One excellent example is Typing.com, a site that provides a graphically-oriented set of instructional aids that do a great job at helping you develop a wide range of typing skills, all the way from Beginner to Advanced.

Note: You don't have to create an account at Typing.com just to take the online lessons. Since the site is advertiser-supported you can just head straight to the "Lessons" section and get right to it. (source typing site).

Why Is My Printer Offline? How to Get It Back Online in Windows

Key Takeaways:

Check your printer cable connections, ensure your internet is stable, and switch your printer connection method (Wi-Fi to Ethernet or vice versa).

Power cycle the printer and computer by turning both off, unplugging the printer, waiting 30 seconds, then turning them back on.

Use the in-built Windows printer troubleshooter to detect and resolve the issue automatically.

Printers are sometimes troublesome, but one of the most annoying errors is when your printer says it's offline and refuses to print. We will show you how to get your printer back online if you see this error on Windows 10 or 11.

If your printer is showing as offline on Windows, use this troubleshooting guide to quickly resolve the issue.

(See the remaining details of this article on our website: Here is the link: https://www.computerclubrhcc.com/. Or, google RHCC Computer Club. Home page, right column, scroll down). (source…..MUO).

Additional subjects in this article, online: A note space for your printer info here:

- Check the Computer and Printer Connections

- Restart the Printer and Computer

- Run the Printer Troubleshooter

- Disable "Use Printer Offline" Mode

- Clear the Print Queue

- Set the Printer as Default

- Restart the Print Spooler Service

- Update the Printer Drivers

- Use the Printer Software

- Remove and Reinstall the Printer. (end)

The Mouse Pad

Stop Googling - Tech Numbers You Might Need

You unwrapped a new device and you're already having trouble. Before searching for help, know it's dangerous to Google tech company phone numbers. Scammers work the system to get spoofed websites and numbers as the top search results via ads. Instead of waiting for a response to an online form, try calling. (I included links in case you'd rather use a contact form or chat service.)

Amazon: 888-280-4331; Amazon website

Microsoft: 800-642-7676; Microsoft support

Apple: 800-275-2273; Apple support

Google: 650-253-0000; Google support

Meta: 650-543-4800 (Heads up: It's hard to get someone to answer); Facebook support, Instagram support

Roku: 816-272-8106; Roku support

Samsung: 800-726-7864; Samsung support

PayPal: 888-221-1161; PayPal support

Joke - An old CEO near retirement called IT for support. He asked, "How can I print this document?" IT said, "All you need to do is Control, plus P (pee); which is Ctrl + P." To which the CEO replied, "I haven't been able to do that for *years*!". (I heard you laugh!). (source...kkemnl).

Simplify Your Days

Another suggested website to check out: https://simplifydays.com/.

Get your free One Box cheat sheet.

- Simplify & Organize All of Life's Information for Greater Peace of Mind.

- We help individuals & families simplify.

- Modern life is complicated.

- Do you ever feel like life is throwing too much your way?

- Do you ever wonder what your loved ones will do with all of your information when you pass on?

- Do you ever feel overwhelmed with your to-do list?

- Do you ever waste time looking for things like passwords, photos, emails, or documents?

- IT'S TIME TO GO FROM COMPLICATED MESS TO ORGANIZED BLISS!

Sample of free on box cheat sheet

TIP: We have many articles to read and references; plus several videos on AI on our Home page of our website. This information is available for non-members. Our website is:

https://www.computerclubrhcc.com/. Home page, right column, scroll down.

10 Pro Tips for Naming and Organizing Files in Windows   *The Mouse Pad*

Do you struggle to quickly find a specific file on Windows? One of the reasons could be that you are not naming your files correctly.

It is essential to keep in mind specific rules before you begin naming files on Windows. To help you stay organized and prevent you from getting unpleasant surprises, we're providing a list of important tricks you should know to name files on the operating system.

1. Do Not Use Any Punctuation at the Start of a Filename

You can use a period and other supported characters like parentheses, dash, commas, and underscore at the beginning of a filename. However, just because they are supported does not mean you should use them.

You should always start your filename with the most important identifiers of the file, such as a date. Remember, when you sort your files by filename, Windows will arrange them in alphabetical/numerical order, so think about how you can take advantage of that when naming files.

2. Do Not Use Specific Punctuation Marks Anywhere in the Filename

While you can name a file the way you want, there are some limitations to what characters you can use. Windows operating system does not allow certain characters in filenames, which include:

< (less than)
> (greater than)
: (colon)
" (double quote)
/ (forward slash)
\ (backslash)
| (vertical bar or pipe)
? (question mark)
* (asterisk)

You can use spaces anywhere in the filename, but be mindful of the fact that some software does not recognize files with spaces. Instead of spaces, you can use underscores, dashes, and Camel case (e.g., FileName instead of File Name).

3. Keep Your Filenames Short and Snappy

Windows 10 and 11 support up to 260 characters in a filename, meaning you can stuff many details into a filename. However, you should not aim to reach that 260 characters limit. Ideally, a filename should not be longer than 35 characters.

With all that said, sometimes it might be worth it to keep the filename lengthy. And if you think you benefit more from a long filename than a shorter one, you should not hesitate but make sure it's unique and consistently structured.

4. Don't Use Specific, Reserved Words in Filenames

While naming files in Windows 11 and 10, you should keep in mind that you can not use certain reserved words in filenames:

ON
PRN
AUX
NUL
COM0 through COM9
LPT0 through LPT9

It is also worth noting that the above-reserved names followed by extensions are also not allowed to be used as filenames. For instance, you can not use NUL.txt as your filename.

5. Filenames on Windows Are Case-Insensitive

Windows 11 and 10 do not require a correct input of uppercase and lowercase in filenames, which means "Test" and "test" are the same. When you use the same name for a file in the exact location, your PC will notify you that there is already a file with the same name. Your PC will also ask you if you want to rename the file to "Test," followed by a number in the parenthesis.

It is important to note that you can use the same name in files without numbers in the parenthesis as long as they are not in the exact location. So if you want to use the same name in files, you have to keep them in separate locations.

6. Learn How to Rename Multiple Files at Once

If you think you were committing all sorts of mistakes while naming files on Windows and now want to fix your mistakes, you can easily batch rename files in Windows using File Explorer, Command Prompt, or PowerShell. You can also batch rename the file extensions if you think you made mistakes there.

7. You Can Use Emojis in Filenames to Spice Things up

One of the coolest ways you can name files on Windows is by choosing emojis instead of words. You can use whatever emojis you want in the name of your Windows files. You can also mix words and emoticons if that works best for you; there is no limitation on using emojis anywhere in the filename.

While emojis may not be hugely beneficial, they can make filenames more expressive if used properly.

8. Include Dates in Filenames to Make Them Descriptive

You can use dates in filenames on Windows. Some of the most common ways to write dates are in YYYY-MM-DD, YYYYMMDD, YYMMDD, and YYMM formats. However, you can not use YYYY/MM/DD because the forward slash character is not supported in a filename.

You can choose any format that suits you the best from the supported ones. But to ensure that you do not struggle with finding the exact filename, you should use the most significant date and time component first. If the year is your most important component, you should use that first.

9. Ensure Your Filenames Include Enough Context

Different people will likely have different opinions about what makes a suitable filename. But broadly speaking, a good filename is short but descriptive enough to help you quickly understand what is in it. If you have a PC for everyone in your family to use, You also need to name them in such a way that anyone else in your family can understand its content and context.

In other words, if you are keeping the files for everyone to see, you should choose something that tells about the content it has.

10. Search for the Exact File Using Search Syntax Commands

To be able to find the exact file on Windows quickly is not as simple as you think. If you type something in the File Explorer search box, it will show a laundry list of files containing what you just typed. Thus, it makes things difficult for you to find the exact file in File Explorer.

For example, if you are looking for a file called Windows.11 and want your PC to show you the exact file instead of a list of files with "windows" and "11" in them, you can type "name: Windows.11" in the File Explorer search box. This will only show you the exact file you are looking for.

Other than the "name" search syntax, some popular ones include "kind," "size," and "date." If you type "size: 54 KB" in the File Explorer search bar, it will show you a list of files that are precisely 54 KB in size. We've shown how to fix File Explorer search when it's not working if you run into any problems.

Get Better Filenames on Windows With These Tips

People often ignore the importance of getting filenames right on their PCs. But with the tips above, you can be a pro at naming files. It will take some time to get used to everything we just shared. And it is certainly worth remembering them because they can make you more productive and certainly help you create a more organized environment in File Explorer or any other third-party file management tool you may be using.
ource...MUO/via CC). (end)

The Mouse Pad

How to Detect Fake News Generated by AI

(source…howtogeek,12/23), AI-Artificial Intelligence.

Tools exist, but you've got to develop an eye for it too.

Whether it's fake images, deepfake videos, or ChatGPT, AI is upending the way we interact with the world — and our ability to determine truth. There's no foolproof method for detecting bad information, but there are a few tools you can use to figure out if what you're reading is real.

AI Can Detect Fake News — It Can Also Write It
Fake news is hard to fight. Inflammatory lies or misinformation that plays to people's emotions and biases spread much, much faster than the truth. And while some AI tools are being used to fight this, others can just as easily be used to create fake content for a disinformation campaign.

It's more than just fake articles; fake medical information, an AI photo, or a simulated voice clip can all get reported on as though it's real news if the reporter doesn't fact-check thoroughly enough.

How to Detect A Fake News Article
AI versus AI detection will likely be an ongoing arms race for the foreseeable future. As soon as one side improves, the other side innovates, upgrades, or changes tactics. But that doesn't mean you should give up on trying to decide what's real.

AI Tools
Something you use every day without thinking about it is already a sort of AI bullshit detector: your email spam filter. It uses AI text analysis to determine which emails are likely to be false due to their headlines, text, and/or contents of the message.

AI text detection programs can scan news articles in much the same way. It can flag articles that have headlines which don't match the article, come from known disinformation websites or sources, and include unverified information.

Some AI-powered fact-checking tools include:

The Factual: A newsletter, Chrome extension, and website that monitors and grades news articles.
Grover: An AI program that taught itself what fake news looks like by producing its own fake news stories. It's still in the prototype stage, but you can test it out with real news stories, or have it try and generate fake news copy. Its creators plan to use it to detect fake AI articles in the future and claim an efficacy rate of over 90%.

Tools like these can only do so much, so don't rely on them completely. Open AI, the company behind ChatGPT, had to shut down its own AI detection tool because it wasn't accurate enough.

Training Your Eye
It's getting more difficult, but humans can still detect articles written by an AI content generator if they know what to look for. You probably won't be 100% accurate, but you can at least train yourself to recognize misinformation.

Identify the source of an article that looks suspicious. Who posted it on social media? Was it an account you implicitly trust, or one that's totally new to your feed? Have you heard of the publication that put this article out? Who wrote it, and what's their background?

Look at the context of the article, or the person sharing it. Was a particularly inflammatory quote taken out of context and used to promote the article? Was that quote even in the article at all?

One of the most obvious signs of misinformation is emotional impact. If you see a headline that makes you immediately angry or sad, take a second and evaluate what that headline is actually saying. What is this article trying to do?

The creators of dis- and misinformation campaigns know very well that negative information spreads like wildfire, so it follows that they'd program AI to make the same type of content. Sharing content widens its reach and adds to its credibility, so think twice before retweeting that inflammatory article, even if you're pointing out how ridiculous it is.

Humans Will Probably Always Be in the Loop
To recognize mis and disinformation more effectively will take multiple groups of people working together with technology. Until platforms like Facebook have effective methods for blocking it, or we have laws that stop its creation in the first place, the best thing you can do is stay up to date on the latest methods of detecting fake articles, AI-generated images, and deep fakes. (end)

Happy New Year!

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid.
Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.
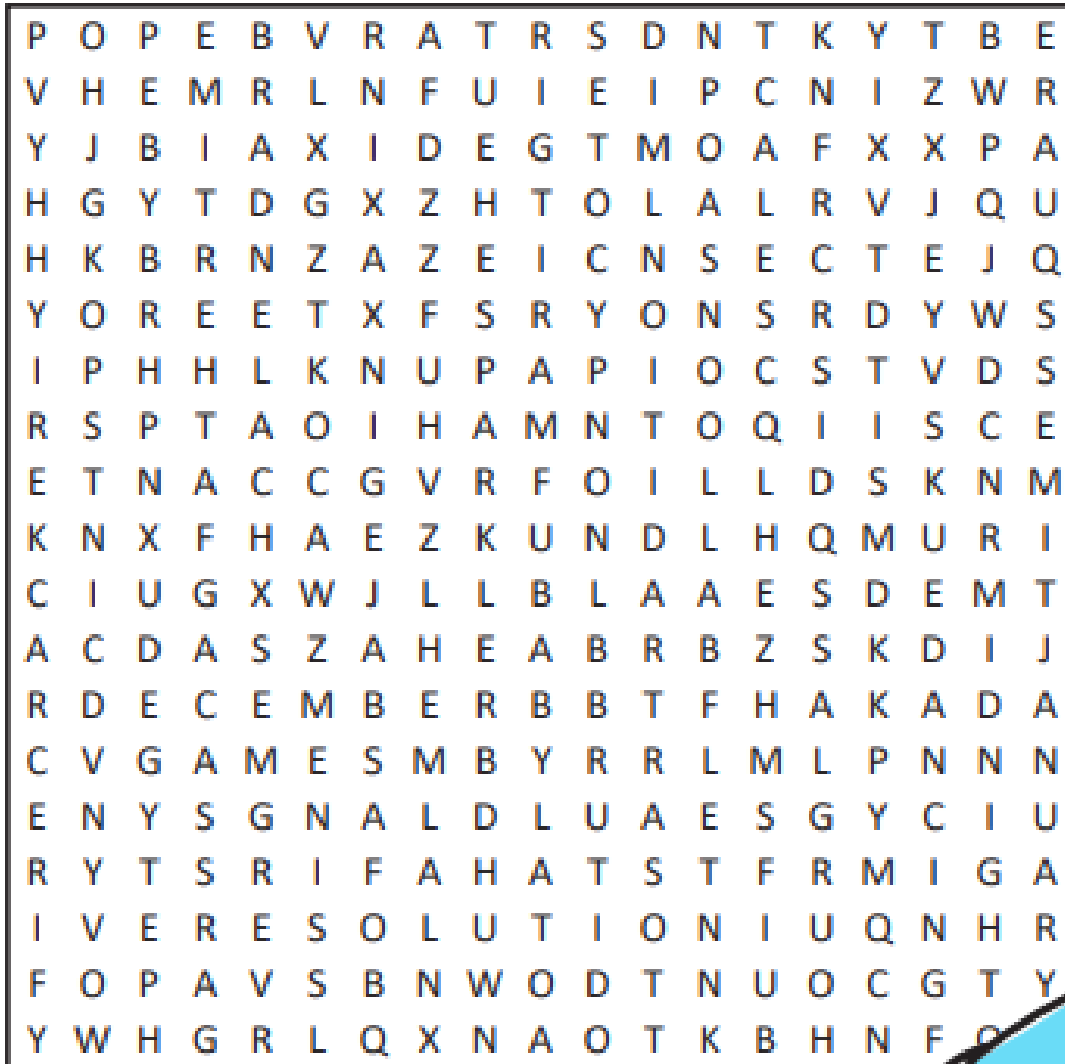
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P O P E B V R A T R S D N T K Y T B E
V H E M R L N F U I E I P C N I Z W R
Y J B I A X I D E G T M O A F X X P A
H G Y T D G X Z H T O L A L R V J Q U
H K B R N Z A Z E I C N S E C T E J Q
Y O R E E T X F S R Y O N S R D Y W S
I P H H L K N U P A P I O C S T V D S
R S P T A O I H A M N T O Q I I S C E
E T N A C C G V R F O I L L D S K N M
K N X F H A E Z K U N D L H Q M U R I
C I U G X W J L L B L A A E S D E M T
A C D A S Z A H E A B R B Z S K D I J
R D E C E M B E R B B T F H A K A D A
C V G A M E S M B Y R R L M P N N N
E N Y S G N A L D L U A E S G Y C I U
R Y T S R I F A H A T S T F R M I G A
I V E R E S O L U T I O N I U Q N H R
F O P A V S B N W O D T N U O C G T Y
Y W H G R L Q X N A O T K B H N F Q
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AULD LANG SYNE · EVE · MUSIC
BABY · FATHER TIME · NOISE MAKER
BALL · FIRECRACKER · PARTY
BALLOONS · FIRST · RESOLUTION
CALENDAR · GAMES · SPARKLER
CELEBRATION · HAPPY · STREAMER
CLOCK · HAT · TIMES SQUARE
CONFETTI · HOURGLASS · TRADITION
COUNTDOWN · JANUARY · VOW
DANCING · KISS · YEAR
DECEMBER · MIDNIGHT

Answers last page. DON'T LOOK !

Journaling Class - FREE to residents, Saturday, January 20, 10 am, Meeting Room A. Sign up with Diane (Di) Binder at email: dbinder2004@comcast.net.   Supply list will be emailed and class will have demos and samples to view. This is a great way to re-cycle.

Suggested Website to check out!   GYST - Get Your Shit Together - https://getyourshittogether.org/

- Will you be prepared if life knocks you sideways?
- Get your family protected with the critical 'What-if' answers like wills, power of attorney, healthcare directives, digital details and legal documents you need today and someday.
- For more than a decade, Chanel Reynolds has received international praise for helping millions learn where to start, what's important, and how to get it done.
- **I'm ready—where do I start?**
- If estate/end-of-life planning has you overwhelmed, procrastinating, or uncertain where to begin, we make it easy for you to get organized &protect yourself/your family. Just pick the starting point best for you.
- Find Advice, checklists & free templates to manage all your details & complete estate planning documents.

YOU can "Participate" in The Mouse Pad: Residents - Free

- Send in your tech questions to be answered in the next issue.

- Do you sell a needed item - send me your ad - Free - if space available.

- Do you offer help of any kind to residents - Send me your information.

- Do you provide a service to residents - Send me your information.

- Thank You's - Would you like to "Thank" someone? Send me your information.

Sign-up to receive these issues of the Mouse Pad in your email - Contact me email: dbinder2004@comcast.net.

UNTIL NEXT Month ...

Trivia answer: D.) Vibrating alerts. Back in the swingin' '60s, doctors needed to monitor patients' heartbeats and blood pressure without loud beeps and tangled wires. The fix? Tiny motors attached to medical gear vibrated gently to signal changes in vitals. Imagine that — a subtle buzz instead of a noisy alarm!

- Join the Computer Tech Club (Only $10 per household) and our website is: https://www.computerclubrhcc.com/

- And our FB is: Just search for Royal Highlands Tech Group and Hodge Podge Items - Send a request to join.

- Next Computer/Tech Club Meeting is: January 10, Zoom. The Presentation is on YouTube. Mark your calendar.

- Contact me at: dbinder2004@comcast.net.   D. Binder

The Mouse Pad

Another great service, if you didn't know - https://www.usps.com/manage/informed-delivery.htm.   Sign up and receive an email to see what mail you are receiving.

"You don't have to figure that watch out. This one just tells time."

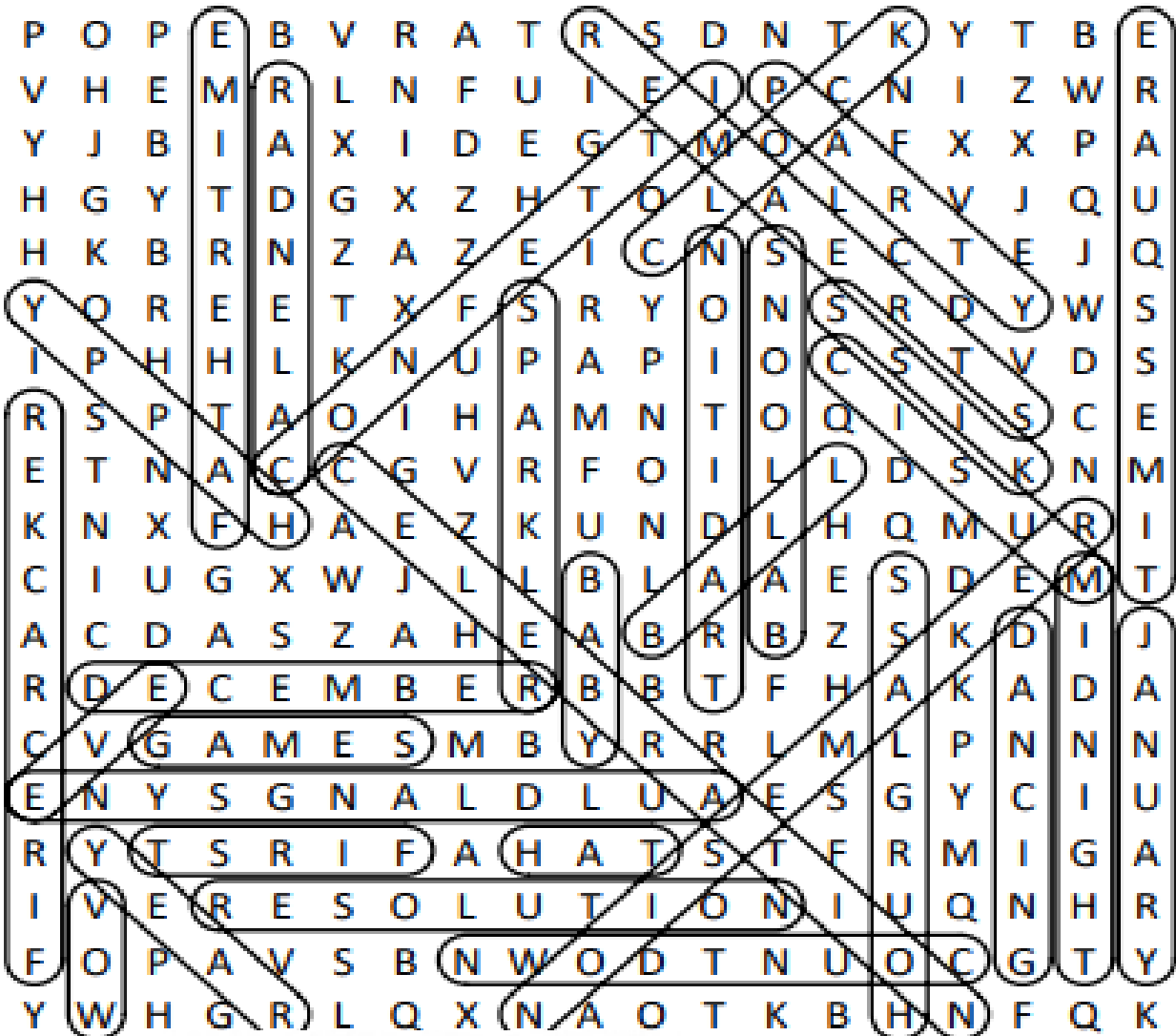Tech Joke - What is the biggest lie anyone can tell?

Answer: "I have read and agreed to all the terms and conditions."

How did you like my Mouse Pad News?

Happy New Year!
SOLUTION

Hey Techies

See You next Month

The Mouse Pad

Sign-up at our website on the contact page: https://www.computerclubrhcc.com/