

Hand Held Device Special Interest Group

The SIG for smartphones and tablets was held on Monday, January 23, the fourth Monday of the month.

We started the meeting by telling what phones, tablets and computers we had. A question and answer session on the iPhone followed on the these topics:

Several members want to borrow audio books. The app Overdrive was suggested which can be linked to the Erie Public Library. The user only needs a valid library card and ebooks as well as audio books are available. If you have library cards for other libraries, you can also borrow from their collections. While it is not borrowing, the website bookbub.com was suggested as a continuing source of low cost or no cost ebooks. The user registers with their email address and areas of interest. An email recommendations list is sent daily showing books that can then be sourced through Amazon or iBooks by selecting a corresponding button.

We also talked briefly about the Amazon reader app and discussed how your progress through a book is tracked no matter what device you next use to continue reading that book. Although the screen of an iPhone is small, you can adjust text size for readability. Your phone is then an emergency reader when stuck in a waiting room surrounded by 4 year old magazines.

One member reported that the RedLaser app for comparison shopping did not work. Apparently this is a common problem with the app and QR Reader was suggested as an alternative. We demonstrated the app and she was pleased with the results. Comparison shopping data is also produced in QR Reader.

We went over the role of iCloud in not only backing up your device but in sharing copies of items like photos quickly to all your devices as soon as the item is stored. We also mentioned that the iCloud helps you make the most of the space available on your Apple device by automatically storing high-resolution photos and videos in the iCloud and leaving behind lightweight versions that are perfectly sized for each device. However the user can specify that a full resolution version be stored on the device. Edit a photo on your iPad and both the edited version and the original are stored in iCloud.

In response to questions about photos, maps and messages, we revisited some of the changes to those applications in iOS 10. We first discussed them in September and October. Two of our members still had iOS 9 versions on their iPhones and would update them soon based on the extensive improvements to these apps. We cautioned that not all the changes were available on the iPhone 5 despite the fact that iOS 10 would run on that device.

Changes to Photos were the most extensive and we sampled a few including photo organization, facial recognition and memories. We highlighted a few neat additions to Maps including how to find where your car is parked. Then we discussed Messages including the difference between Apples iMessages (blue text bubble) and standard SMS/MMS (green text bubble) and the fancy features added to iMessages.

The next meeting of the HHD SIG will be at 7:00 PM on Monday, February 27, 2017.

John Fair