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THE METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS NEWSPAPER

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Protecting Your Online Privacy

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Many of you may have heard about the recent passage of a bill by Congress allowing Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to sell their customers' browsing histories to advertisers. This one bill has essentially killed our online privacy. Our browsing histories are, after all, a treasure trove of data which can reveal almost everything about us: which sites we visit, where we bank, our shopping habits, our health concerns, our sexual orientation, and even when we are home.

> ...a bill by Congress allowing Internet Service Providers (ISP's) to sell their customers' browsing histories to advertisers

Technology has made our life easier, certainly, but it has also left us far more vulnerable. A criminal from the other side of the world can easily hack our computers, mobiles and even our smart TVs. Everything we do online, whether on Facebook, Google, or indeed almost any website is recorded, packaged, and then sold to advertisers to target specific ads at us. One day, we start shopping for maternity wear, and the next every advertisement we see is directed towards new mothers. Even innocuous-seeming things, like Facebook's new personal assistant 'M,' have the propensity to expose our personal information, with its ability to read all of our Facebook Messenger conversations. It's high time for us to protect our online privacy, lest we expose our every moment, our every desire, our every purchase to outsiders. After all, our privacy needs to be private to ourselves and ourselves alone, and so this must become our most critical priority.

This article focuses on specific tools and applications that can help us prevent the leakage of our online privacy to outsiders. Messaging, browsing and emails will be the main focus.
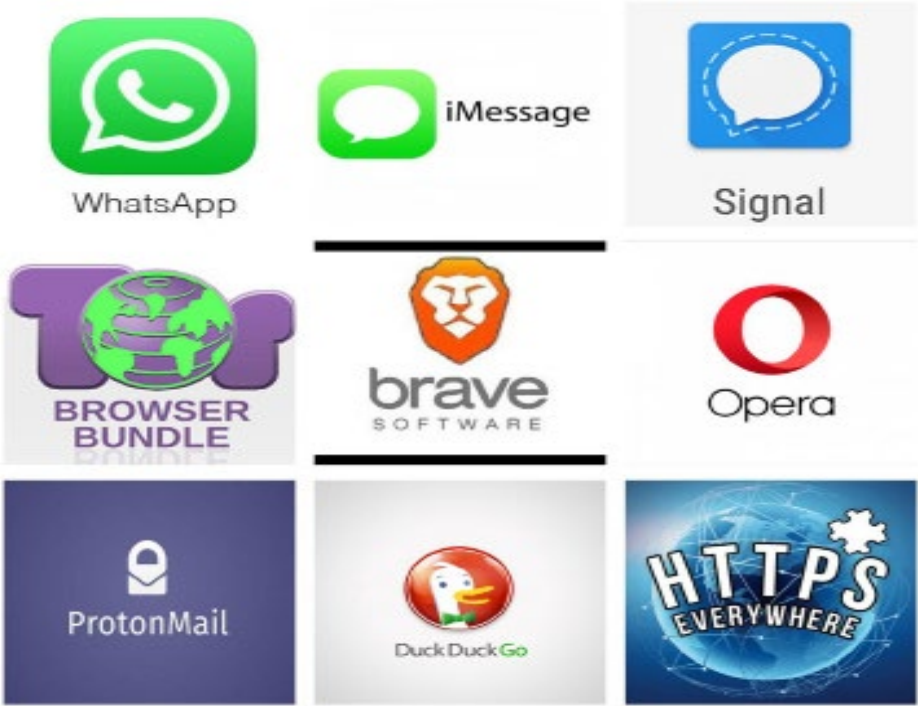
Are your current online habits safe? These are privacy and security solutions for you to try.
(Image by: Sandip Rai)

> ...can reveal almost everything about us: which sites we visit, where we bank, our shopping habits, our health concerns, our sexual orientation, and even when we are at home

Messaging

Texting has become the cornerstone of this generation. Yet most of the ways we send messages – from SMS to Facebook Messenger. – don't encrypt our messages and often store full copies on company servers, making them vulnerable to being hacked and exposed. But there are secure options.

WhatsApp is the best popular messaging platform for online anonymity, as it encrypts every message we send and receive. Apple's iMessage also provides encryption for texts, while the Signal Private Messenger offers even better encryption on both Android and iOS (it's available in the Google Play

store and the Apple App Store). The popularity of Signal is huge right now, as many politicians, journalists and activists use it to communicate, while WhatsApp uses the same underlying technology for its encryption. Notably, all of these options use end-to-end (E2E) encryption, which makes the encrypted data available only to the communicating users; WhatsApp never sees it, Signal never sees it, and even criminal hackers won't be able to break through the encryption.

> ...reads every email we share and then filters and categorizes them

Browsing

For complete online privacy when browsing, the new Brave browser is a fantastic option which blocks advertising and the tracking cookies used to track the pages we visit. Better, Brave integrates HTTPS Everywhere, which forces supporting websites to use the secure, encrypted HTTPS pipeline for transferring data.

Popular web browsers, like Chrome and Firefox, don't provide these features to users by default, but they are available as extensions; uBlock Origin is a great ad and tracking

Metro State Marches for Science

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"Science is the underpinning for everything. Whether people believe it or not, it exists and it needs support," said Elizabeth Hudman, Metropolitan State alum and retired staff member. That was the message she wanted to send through her participation in the Minnesota March for Science on Saturday, April 22. She joined with dozens of Metro State community members and thousands of marchers to promote the importance of science in society.

Chanting and carrying signs, marchers moved from the Cathedral of St. Paul to the Capitol, where they heard speakers including University of Minnesota climatologist Mark Seeley and Rep. Betty McCollum, D-MN. St. Paul police estimated 10,000 people participated.

Prior to the march, more than forty members of the Metro State community gathered at Boyd Park in the Cathedral Hill neighborhood. Natural sciences professors Mark Asplen and Kate Ries, and librarian Jennifer DeJonghe organized the event with the support of the Metro State Interfaculty Organization (IFO). The Wednesday before the march, they offered a poster-making party.

Message of the March

For Asplen, the March for Science was a family matter. With his infant son in a carrier on his chest, Asplen addressed the Metro State contingent before the march. "Marching for science as a professional totally makes sense, but today

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deadline for the June-
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Mann About Town

An Open Letter to Metropolitan State University,

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Hey guys, how is it going?

I've been sitting back and thinking on something that has been on my mind for quite some time. One that not only affects my personal life, but the lives of many of my family member over the course of multiple generations.

Are hot dogs sandwiches?

I mean, c'mon, right? Sandwiches are based around two pieces of bread and fillings. A hot dog is a cylindrical mystery-meat tube with a bread shell so processed and white, you'd mistake it for one of Mike Pence's children. If anything, a hot dog simply doesn't have the same respectability of a sandwich.

The complexity, the diversity, the palette of simple fillings forming into a medley of savory flavors that it has to have been passed down from generation to generation. You see, in my family, baseball is king. That's all fine and good, but there is one simple vanguard of entry: the hot dog, the Frankfurt, the bratwurst. Whatever you would like to call it, it's a staple of the game.

It's created tension in my family for decades. It makes me toss and turn, and ponder what my legacy shall mean to my kin on this hotly contentious subject. But, after all, it's not like sandwiches have hinge-based buns or anything.

Except for meatball sandwiches. And Subs. And any sandwich that uses hinged bread instead of bread slices...

Oh my god. My life is an illusion.

Well, that does make sense, I suppose. Why wouldn't hot dogs be a subset of sandwiches? What are we, "sandist"? *Insert Nod and Wink*

*Editor's Note: All apologies to the ACLU and everybody fighting the good fight.

But, that being said, can't we all get along? Can't the

down dogs lay down their arms—if they had any—to make peace with the bread slices that make deli meat taste the nicest? Er, I mean, best.

Besides, it's all carcinogens, baby. It's all terrible for you, depending how you look at it. If anything, getting offended over a freaking meat debate is kind of an arbitrary thing on which to argue. It's almost like people need to see eye to eye more often to recognize the legitimately ludicrous.

It's almost like people need to try to see each other's point of view. It's almost like thinking outside of our limited scope to expand our cultural horizon can actually benefit us on an individual and communal scale.

Better yet, it's almost like it's worth laughing at tiny differences that are actually, honestly, ridiculous; like how hot dogs versus sandwiches is a viable news article in an age where politics is hyperbolic and is a self-realizing parody. But, at least we have the sandwiches in common.

Thanks for reading, everybody. I hope next year is a little more settling.

Best wishes,

Brayden Mann.

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cookie blocker available for most browsers, and HTTPS Everywhere is also available as a browser extension.

The Tor Browser goes a step further, deleting almost all identifying information and routing connections through other browser users, making it impossible for anyone to identify the origin of your browsing traffic.

However, the Tor Browser is limited and often slow. A virtual private network (VPN) is an alternative – by using one, only the VPN provider will be able to see your internet traffic, not your ISP. Notably, the excellent Opera browser provides free VPN service for PCs and a free VPN app for iPhones and Android.

Email

Gmail is the most popular email client, but what it lacks is privacy. Gmail reads every email we share and then filters and categorizes them. If we want to send a sensitive email, Gmail will still index it. So, looking for a more privacy-conscious alternative, some scientists at CERN (a European organization for nuclear research) created an encrypted email offering called ProtonMail. This email client is essentially the ultimate private email option right now, featuring E2E-encrypted emails, anonymous emails, and auto-deleting and password-protected emails.

Online Searches

Googling is the thing we do if we have any query to be answered. But what most of us miss is that Google records every search we make. Our searches can then give them a complete picture of us: our interests, sexual orientations, our

likes and dislikes, and even our professions. We lose our online privacy by searching on Google. This is where the DuckDuckGo search engine comes in: DuckDuckGo provides almost all the features of Google without storing our searches. Because it doesn't store any search we make, it safeguards our online privacy. Other options include the Disconnect Search browser extension, which encrypts all of our searches even if we use Google, Bing or other search engines.

(Editor's text) For more on what websites know about you, check our this article from our April edition: http://themetropolitan.metrostate.edu/issue/2017/04/007/

On Campus

TC3 Brings Something "Usable" to Metro State

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On March 14, Metropolitan State's TC3 (Twin Cities, Technical Communication, Technical Community) student organization hosted a university event. In a Student Center classroom, faculty, students and alumni gathered to learn about an emerging career field—user experience. Many students heard about the exciting employment possibilities, but they did not know what this specialty entailed. To help people learn more about technical communication and related work activities, TC3 brought in special guests to share their experiences. On this night TC3 introduced the president of the Society for Technical Communication (Twin Cities Chapter), Barbara Beresford.

Besides serving an organizational leadership role, Beresford works on a group project to revamp the website for her chapter. According to her LinkedIn page, she also works as a senior technical writer for MorphoTrust USA. Beresford's company invents security solutions to keep citizens safe. These innovative technologies include digital IDs, facial recognition software, iris scanners, fingerprint identification systems and driver's license issuance devices. She creates software instructions and online tutorials for high-tech biometric security products.

Beresford is also a speaker for The Society of Technical Communication (www.stc.org). The STC is a professional association for technical communication practitioners and students. Their members have access to educational conferences, weekly webinars, online courses, newsletters and networking prospects to help them advance their careers. In 2014, Beresford spoke to members at a Society for Technical Communication Summit. At last month's TC3 event, she presented her "Minimalism—It's Really About the User!" You can view slides from Beresford's presentation at www.slideshare.net/BarbaraBeresford/minimalism-its-re-ally-about-the-user-34924489.

During her speech, Beresford gave the audience information on how she became a technical writer. Surprisingly, her early education includes a master's degree and Ph.D. coursework in theater. Eventually, she became involved with writing and editing work. As a writer, Beresford became interested in taking independent study courses and reading industry journals. From her experience with the STC, she became enthusiastic about minimalism.

As Beresford's self-education journey continued, she became inspired by well-known usability authors. One of these was psychologist John Carroll, who studied users as they used instructions to complete a task. Instead of using the instructions in a sequential manner, the readers wanted to use the information without having to do too much reading. As a result, the users frequently made mistakes and had difficulty completing the tasks. From her experience, Beresford also noticed a need for better user instructions—that is, something more usable. She contemplated how she could use what she learned to create better user experiences.

As a technical writer, Beresford strives to create instructions and tutorials using the minimalist design. She notes that minimalism is not simply removing excess instructions. Instead, it involves creating content that motivates users and helps them become more motivated to learn faster and remember what they learned. Influenced by her days as an actor where she tried "walking in the shoes of the character," Beresford visualizes the motivations and needs of her users. She knows the importance of observing the users as they use instructions and software to help her determine what adjustments to make.

The March 14 event held by TC3 gave students insights on a possible career choice. This program also contributed something "usable" that students could reference when moving forward with the task of

The Members of TC3: Denny Yang (Left), Glendon Hodges (Center), Syed Shah (Right)
Photo from TC3-Twin Cities, Technical Communication, Technical Community

Students engaged in professional development and networking.
Photo by Denny Yang

advancing their career. It was interesting to learn about Barbara's path to working in her field. Along the way, Barbara never stopped learning and connecting with others. She continued her personal growth with organizations such as the Society for Technical Communication. Her participation with this group gave her opportunities to increase her knowledge and expand her contacts.

Barbara's quest for improvement is a great example for students—especially those graduating this year. It is simply not enough to earn a degree. The workforce is becoming more competitive. Many people find it essential to evolve by reading informative books and enrolling in professional association activities. It is also important to network.

There are things you can do to augment your education and bring it to the next level.

To learn more about Metro State's TC3 organization, please visit https://orgsync.com/45771/chapter. This website will give you information on how to get involved with their organization and events. Contact them today to find leadership roles and ways for you to contribute.

To learn more about the Society for Technical Communication, please visit https://www.stc.org/. This association has many continuing education opportunities for you. Please visit their website today to discover membership benefits and their low rates for students.

I want to talk about marching as a dad," said Asplen. "Because I think really what this is about is the future," he said. "I want my son to live in a world where he's not afraid to question, to question facts, theories, new things."

Asplen carried a yellow poster board with a drawing of a bird and the words "This is what a dinosaur looks like." He urged marchers to communicate a science-positive, non-partisan message, because "science can be under attack regardless of political ideology. Anything from anti-vaccination to climate denial – it can come from all places."

Social science major Gail Miller brought family members, friends and her pit bull Juniper to the march. "I am new to the activist movement," said Miller. "It's just too important to not get involved. I've been doing more and more, and all kinds of events are on my radar now," she said. Miller attended the

The Metro State contingent to the Minnesota March for Science. Photo by Kathryn Ganfield

On Campus

Metro State's Center for Accessibility Resources: A Learning Aid

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One of Metropolitan State's goals is a rich and varied diversity. There is an example of this diverseness that, all too often, gets overlooked. That being students with a disability. Some students have obvious physical impairments. Others have mental challenges that may not be as noticeable, but are challenges nonetheless. Still others might have a combination of both.

Whatever challenge life has handed them, all these students want is a fair chance, an equal opportunity to get the most out of their educational experience. A big, and much needed, step toward fulfilling this was the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—more specifically, Section 504.

This legislation, in part, stated that no one can be subjected to discrimination for having a disability. This included a number of major life activities, including caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing . . . and learning. In other words, the day-to-day living that is everyone's right. Expanding on the Rehabilitation Act, the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applied standards to private sector businesses and also sought to eliminate barriers to disabled access in buildings, transportation and communication.

Section 504 was also the first national civil rights legislation that provided equal access for students with disabilities to higher education institutions. Long overdue, this required these institutions to make their programs accessible to qualified students with disabilities and to provide them with the needed accommodations for learning. At Metro State that need is filled by the Center for Accessibility Resources (CAR), providing a variety of tools and services for students with differing levels of need.

Regarding the changes that were brought about by the ADA and Rehabilitation Act, Director of the Center for Accessibility Resources Kristin Jorenby says, "It's changed things a lot and, at the same time, a lot of things haven't changed," to which she adds, "It's starting to change how people are perceived in a lot of ways. What hasn't changed is that society still subscribes to what we refer to as the 'medical model,' in that disability is a detriment that needs to be corrected or fixed rather than just a difference. So there is still that stigma."

Perhaps another proper perspective on seeing this is in the CAR section on Metro State's website. It states that one of the school's responsibilities is to "evaluate stu-dents and prospective students on their abilities and not their disabilities." By going to the "Current Students" page of the school website, then clicking on the "Student Services" tab, all of the CAR's information can be found in the blue left-hand column under "Center for Accessibility Resources." The CAR can also be contacted by phone at 651-793-1549 (Voice) and 651-772-7723 (TTY), or by email at accessibility.resources@metrostate.edu.

According to Jorenby, the ADA defines a disability as "an impairment that significantly impacts one or more major daily activities." The CAR works with people that have one or multiple impairments, both physical and mental. This includes veterans who might have physical injuries, brain injuries or post-traumatic stress disorder. The evaluations the CAR performs are specific to each student's needs. As Jorenby puts it, "I could have 10 people in the room who all have the same medical diagnosis but they're all impacted in different ways, so they all have their own individualized plan for accommodation."

Some students come to Metro State with ADA certification—or from another licensed professional—to receive accommodations for learning. But this is not a necessity to receive assistance, as the CAR will perform the needed evaluations and assessments for students to take advantage of their services. "Our services are not contingent on whether or not someone has been certified by Social Security or some other entity." Jorenby said, "A lot of our students are, but that's not a 'make it or break it' for us."

Some students are also wary of using the CAR's services, fearing that this will follow them once their schooling is done. Jorenby wants to assure students that the CAR's records are strictly confidential and are not part of other records, such as transcripts. "What you share with us is completely confidential and we keep all of it separate, and no one is ever going to see it unless you give us explicit permission to share that information with that individual." Jorenby said.

The CAR offers a number of "assistive technology" tools and "auxiliary aids." Some of the more common ones used are screen readers—a tool that converts computer text to audio—and digital recorders for such things as lectures. Another device is called Livescribe or Smartpen. This crazy cool tool records an audio version of the lecture while also taking pictures of whatever notes the user is writing.

Livescribe Echo smartpen and notebook, with "Assistive Technology Equipment Available" brochure
Photo by Scott Lindell

A newer tool available is called Sonocent, an audio note-taker that works much like a Smartpen. The difference being that students can use them with a smartphone, laptop or tablet. The software allows one to highlight as it records the lecture, and also has uploading capabilities if an instructor uses something like PowerPoint.

While this technology can open doors for some, for others who can't access or manipulate the technology, it becomes a barrier. As an example, the Sonocent tool—an audio recording—does no good for a deaf student. There are ways around this with Sonocent, but it's a complicated and time-consuming process. This is where a peer note-taker is invaluable, which is a classmate who volunteers their time to share their notes taken in class. In return they get 50 hours of community service.

One thing that the CAR does not accommodate for is language barriers. If someone that English is a second language happens to have a co-occurring disability along with it, then the CAR would accommodate strictly for that disability. "We make a very distinct separation, and we do not serve people solely on language barriers, because that is not a disability." Jorenby said, "We would refer them to other resources to help with the language barrier."

The one exception that Jorenby points out has to do with Metro State's deaf students. Even though the majority of the deaf community considers it a language barrier, deafness is considered a disability.

Whatever tools or services are utilized through the CAR, students are encouraged to act early to have them in place before their semester starts. Because some of these accommodations can take up to six weeks to be available. "Instructors are not obligated to provide that accommodation retroactively," Joren-by said.

Moreover, students entering higher-educational schools should also be aware that the burden (including financial) is now on them to acquire these accommodations. Whereas at the K-12 level these services might have been provided, part of the ADA and Rehabilitation Act requires the individual at the post-secondary level to be responsible for the needed accommodations. This is a new thing for some students, and for others their disability itself is something new.

The CAR has adjusted to this, offering to loan—through the library—certain tools so students can see if a particular aid works for them. If so, students can then purchase one. If not, then at least they didn't waste their money.

Another adjustment the CAR has made is their name. Previously called Disability Services, about a year ago the name was changed to the Center for Accessibility Resources, for various reasons. One being that national trends were steering away from the term "disability." Moreover, the CAR office did their own survey of Metro State staff, faculty and students. The results showed that many people did not identify with "disability." This helped Jorenby and her staff realize that part of the reason they didn't see as many students come in to use their services as they expected had to do with their name.

"If you don't identify with having a disability, why would you go to an office that says they're about disability," Jorenby said, seeing that CAR is much more than that. "It's really about universal design," she said, "We have it in our mission statement here at Metro State that we are going to be an accessible university, so we want to make sure that everybody has access to this wonderful learning place. It's all about creating that level playing field."

On Campus

Stocking the Library Stacks
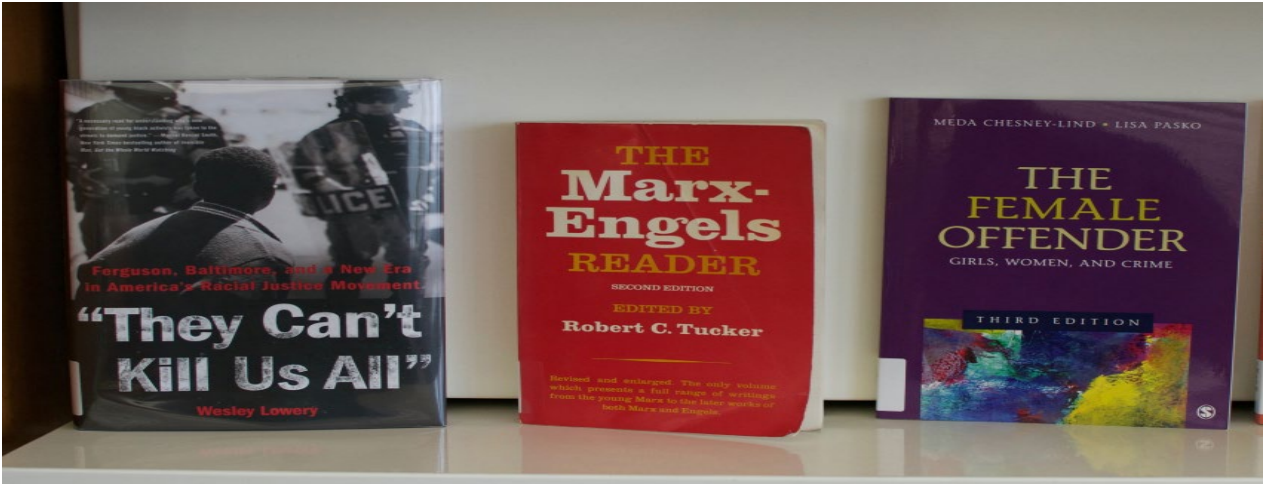
You never know what to expect on the "New Books" shelf. Photographs by Kathryn Ganfield

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New books with shiny covers and crisp pages sit on shelves near the Metropolitan State library's second floor circulation desk. Recent acquisitions include the children's picture book "Hungry Johnny" and the agricultural policy book "The Politics of Food Supply." How do these new materials get added to the library's collection?

Assistant Professor Becca Peters has the answer. She has served as Metro State's cataloging and acquisitions librarian since 2015.

"We're not like the public library system, where they try to anticipate people's needs and buy ahead. We work more on an 'as needed,' responsive basis," Peters said.

To develop the library's collection, Peters works with seven "liaison librarians." They are assigned to academic departments across the university to support faculty research and materials requests.

Many ideas for new materials come from the liaison librarians. "They're reading book reviews. They look at recommended and well-reviewed texts. The liaisons listen to faculty and take that all into account," Peters said.

Make a Request

If a faculty member or student can't find a needed item in the library catalog—or wants a newly-published book—they can submit a request through the "Suggest a Purchase" link on the library's homepage (http://libguides.metrostate. edu/purchase).

"We fulfill almost all materials requests, though cost is a thing, of course," Peters said. Recently she had to turn down a request for an out-of-print Russian language book that Amazon was selling for $2,000. "I had to say, 'I'm not buying that—sorry.' There are financial limitations, though that's the far end of the spectrum of requests," she said.

Compared to large university libraries with over a million items on their shelves, "our print collection is a little bit smaller, in the 40-50,000 range," Peters said. She noted that since its founding, Metro State has never sought to build a giant library collection. "The idea has always been to look outward to other libraries and use their resources," she said.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL) gives students and faculty broad access to materials from other academic, public and government libraries across Minnesota and the United States. Books and DVDs requested through ILL will arrive within 5-14 days for pickup at the St. Paul campus. Academic journal articles are sent to a university email account within 3-5 days.

Read On Screen

But the most popular materials at Metro State's library can't be found on the shelves—they're on students' screens. "Our emphasis here at Metro, because we're spread out over the four campus locations, tends to be more electronic books," Peters said, with the librarians realizing that "a lot of students are working adults who can't come [to the library]. We try to make it more accessible," she added.

Metro State offers three main electronic book collections: ProQuest Ebook Central, Project MUSE and Ebooks Minnesota. Students can search and view electronic books on computers, tablets or mobile phones—or download them for offline reading.

To help improve the library's eBook selection, students are encouraged to complete a brief survey at http://libguides.metrostate.edu/ebook-survey2017.

Much More Than Books

The library also offers streaming of academic films and videos via the services "Films on Demand" and "Kanopy Streaming." A StarID login is required. Notable titles include Ken Burns' "The Roosevelts, An Intimate History," and the Swedish film trilogy "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo." Between the two services, students can view over 50,000 documentaries and movies. The library also houses a DVD collection of more than 4,000 films. It includes recent releases like the feature film "Dear White People," and season 2 of the Netflix series "Orange is the New Black."

For Broadway fans, the library's 1,800-item audio recording holdings include the Varner Musical Theater collection. Available soundtracks include "The Color Purple: A New Musical" and "Irving Berlin's White Christmas."

Education majors (or parents) will want to explore the diverse curriculum collection. It includes lauded children's picture books like "Last Stop on Market Street" by Matt de la Peña (winner of the 2016 Newbery Medal), and young adult books like "Being Jazz: My Life as a Transgender Teen." A variety of teaching aids like puzzles, puppets and educational games are also available for checkout.

For Game Night (held in the library on the third Tuesday of each month) and for study breaks, students can check out an array of board games like "Scrabble," "Apples to Apples" and "Settlers of Catan."

See Something Special

Behind glass walls in room 205, the library maintains archives and special collections (ASC). The archives contain documents related to the founding and growth of the university, including the papers of Metro State's first three presidents. Access is by appointment only. A video tutorial on how to use the archives and a database of its contents can be found at http://metrostate.libraryhost.com/.

The writings of Metro State faculty also enhance the library's collection. "We purchase two copies whenever a faculty member publishes something—one copy for special collections and one as an e-book or for the circulating collection," Peters said. Recent additions include "Business Ethics and the Pragmatic Pursuit of the Good" by Francis Schweigert, interim dean of the College of Community Studies, and "Tell Me a Tattoo Story," a picture book by creative writing professor Alison McGhee.

Special collections materials also come from donations. "We do accept gifts," Peters said. "The liaison librarians in that subject area would look at them to see if it duplicates something we have, look at age of material, and ask if it supports programs we have?"

Foreseeing the Future

Now into its second decade in its current space, the library still has some empty shelves on the second floor for new print, audio and video materials. "We haven't had to 'weed' [remove items] from the main collection since the library opened in 2004. For the reference collection, we are always checking for age, relevancy, if some things are dated and just plain incorrect," Peters said.

The catalog of e-books will continue to grow as well. "Technology is something a lot of libraries think is important." she said. "It's a part of being a librarian, to know and use all the available tools."

Peters also noted the work of the library's social media committee to "be where students are," by having a strong presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. "We want there to be many ways to interact with the library," she said.

The web committee used Google analytics and user experience (UX) to guide the recent changes to the library website. As Peters put it, "We did a lot of work internally to see how students want to search, and the main things they're looking for. On our main home page, some of the changes we've made were a result of that."

Peters said the contents and services of the library will continue to be "responsive to what the university wants us and needs us to be. We are always looking for new things that we can incorporate money-wise and time-wise."

Student Health

Avoid the Burn of Summer

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The sun is coming and soon enough it will be hot enough outside to get some vitamin D. So, what does that mean? Well, there are a few kinds of folks out there: the ones that live on the beach, those athletes who run and bike for miles at a time, and pale exhausted students. It's okay if you, like most of the school, fall into the pale student category. With summer classes coming up and lots of activities, getting some time outside in the sun is important for students. However, as beautiful as the sun can be, its rays can be harmful to the skin.

In my life before being a student I was a skin care consultant and esthetician (long word for person who studies skin). The biggest concern from clients was always sun exposure. There is a strong link between Ultra Violet rays and skin cancer. The UVA rays sink deep into the dermis, causing all sorts of damage. Here is a fun fact: your skin at its thickest is 1.5 millimeters on your palms and soles of the feet, and thinnest on the eyelids at 0.05 mm. Just in case you need to know for bar trivia.

You may have also heard about Ultra Violet B (UVB) rays. When you get burned to a crisp outside, UVB rays are to blame, along with not ap-

Morguefile photo by takeasnap

plying sun screen. In addition, UVB rays can also cause aging under the epidermis (top layer of skin) and sink into the dermis. This can cause spots and lines to appear years down the road after your sunburn or tan.

Here's the deal, skin cancer is prevalent. According to the Office of Air and Radiation of Minnesota, an average of 1,054 Minnesota residents were diagnosed with melanoma (skin cancer) from 2003-2007. During that time, new cases of melanoma diagnoses rose more than 7 percent per year. Most people know of someone who has gotten a cancerous growth on the skin removed. If melanoma goes untreated, the cancer can spread. Starting proper use of sunscreen and avoiding sunburns early is one way of reducing your skin cancer risk.

Here are your options to limit sun exposure:

-Hit the books and stay inside. It totally sucks, but face it, summer classes are rough. The past six summers of my life have been spent in classrooms, and I've never gotten a burn while learning. I have however learned how to draw some pretty cool unicorns on surfboards.

-Apply sunscreen half-an-hour before sun exposure, and reapply every two hours. And know the term "water resistant" is not the same as "waterproof." Drying off after going swimming and reapplying is advised. If your jerk friend dunks you in the water after you apply sunscreen, curse at them and reapply.

-Look into buying sun-resistant clothing and some hats. For long bike rides or hikes, it's nice to have a breathable, sun-resistant shirt, in addition to covering up your head. But remember, if you're wearing a baseball cap your ears are still exposed and will burn to a crisp.

Be careful as you enjoy the beautiful summer, and remember, no one likes that jerk who knocks people into the pool. Don't be that guy. Also, apply—and reapply—that wonderful sunscreen this summer.

Photo by Adobe Stock

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Summer Helpful Hints

Apply sunscreen half-an-hour before sun exposure, and reapply every two hours

Wear sun-resistant clothing and hats

Seek shade by taking a Metro State summer course

Tech Corner

Protecting Electronics from Summer Storms

Morguefile photos by Ostephy

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It's summertime! Almost, anyway, and the severe weather is showing signs of an early start this year. So I thought it would be appropriate to answer one question I get asked every summer: how can I keep my electronics safe during a storm?

Well, Unplug 'Em

The simplest thing you can do to protect your electronics in a storm is to unplug them. (To be clear, this means unplugging them from the wall, not just turning off their power.)

That's it. Nothing fancy.

Invest in a Surge Protector

If you're too attached to your computer and other devices to unplug them during a storm, a surge protector is the next best thing. When looking to buy, there are three key numbers to focus on: the joules rating (or absorption rating), the clamping voltage, and the response time.

The joules rating is how much electricity the surge protector is able to absorb. This isn't renewable. That means once the surge protector activates its absorption functionality, it permanently loses the ability to absorb some electricity. As a consequence, a big number is good. Both so that the surge protector will last longer, and so that when an especially large surge occurs (such as from nearby lightning), the protector will be able to absorb the entirety of the hit. It also means that if you believe your house has been exposed to an especially large surge, such as from a lightning strike, you should replace your surge protectors.

So what number should you target? In practice, a typical surge, even from storms, will rarely exceed 1,000 joules. But to ensure that a surge protector has a long life, and can even withstand particularly bad surges, I would target something around 3,000 joules if you intend for it to be used on sensitive electronics like a computer or television.

The clamping voltage, meanwhile, indicates at what voltage the surge protector will kick in. 330V is the baseline voltage of your outlets, and there are three common standards for clamping voltage: 330V (essentially, anything over the baseline whatsoever), 400V, and 500V. A smaller clamping voltage will result in the surge protector kicking in more proactively, offering better protection to sensitive devices but at the cost of faster wear to the surge protector (as mentioned, whenever the surge protector kicks in, it slowly loses its ability to prevent further surges). In general, a lower number is good, but in some cases a higher number can help compensate for a low joules rating. In any case, avoid anything higher than 400V, if possible.

Finally, the response time is how long it takes for the surge protector to detect a surge (as defined by the clamping voltage) and then start preventing the surge from reaching your components. It should typically be very low, generally less than 1 nanosecond.

For recommendations into good, affordable surge protectors, I recommend The Wirecutter's article, "The Best Surge Protector." However, my personal recommendation is to check out Monoprice's line of affordable, highly-rated surge protectors; product ID 9203 is a good option, offering a joules rating of 4,230, a clamping voltage of 330V, and a response time under 1ns.

Invest in an Uninterruptible Power Supply

An uninterruptible power supply, or UPS, is a luxury item compared to a simple surge protector. They are common in offices and industries where power failures mean losing important work. At home, on the other hand, a power outage simply isn't that big of a problem for most people.

Once upon a time, computer software was far less resilient to power failures. Files weren't autosaved and synced to the internet, and in some cases an unexpected shutdown could result in filesystem corruption. That meant losing far more than just what you were working on.

Today, this is no longer the case, but staying connected to the internet is instead increasingly important. So, while a UPS that allows you to watch TV or play games for an extended period of time will be prohibitively expensive for most, one that allows you to browse the Internet and stay connected to emergency services can be quite affordable. After all, the most central device in many of our homes is the internet router, and these require very little power to keep going.

In general, when it comes to UPS, there are two important specs to look at: the maximum output in a single moment, and the battery capacity.

Maximum output is fairly simple: it's how many watts the supply is capable of providing at full charge. Typically, it's best to only attempt to draw half of this supply, so if you want to connect 200 watts of devices, a 400 watt power supply is your best bet. Unfortunately, the wattage of your devices can be hard to find. A typical laptop is usually on the order of 100 watts while charging, while a full gaming desktop PC can easily use over 500 watts. Most routers will be under 25 watts.

Battery capacity, meanwhile, is typically measured in watt-hours. A device that uses an average of 50 watts in an hour is said to use 50 watt-hours, and will run (ideally) for 60 minutes on a battery with 50 watt-hours of storage. Power delivery is imperfect, however, and once a UPS battery runs low it will not be able to keep delivering high wattages. As a result, even if a power supply is listed for 50 watt-hours, it will probably only keep a 50 watt device running for about a half hour. Additional measurements may indicate exactly for how long a UPS has been shown to run at different wattage loads. Be advised that battery capacity often isn't listed on Amazon product pages, for whatever reason. It should be listed on the product specifications on a manufacturer's website.

(Note: both measurements—maximum output and battery capacity—may be listed in terms of volt-amps instead of watts. The two aren't directly equivalent, but you can estimate watts by dividing volt-amps by two. For instance, 100 volt-amp-hours can be estimated as 50 watt-hours.)

One limitation to a UPS, however, is that you can't connect them to surge protectors (or vice-versa). As a consequence, any devices connected to a UPS will be relying on the UPS's own surge protection capabilities, which are generally more limited than those of a dedicated surge protector. Plus, as mentioned, surge protectors wear out. Eventually, the built-in surge protection of a UPS will provide no protection at all.

But what this means is that you should be looking at using a UPS for things like internet routers, which both benefit from having power in a power outage and are cheaper to replace in the event of a surge. Phones, tablets, and laptops—most of which have batteries that allow them to run for several hours—can then be used to access the internet during a power outage.

If you want suggestions, I would again look at a Wirecutter article, this time "The Best Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)."

Keep Things Cool and Dry in the Summer Heat

Finally, while not quite storm-related, it is always worth mentioning that electronics hate heat. Typically, they simply "throttle" themselves, slowing down to avoid getting too hot. But damage can still occur, which is why if you're investing in a surge protector and a UPS, consider also looking into getting a small-space air-conditioner to place in areas with a lot of electronics. Alternatively, if you have central air, you can move all of your electronics to the corner of the room with the air-conditioning vent. Both will help keep your electronics running well in the summer heat.
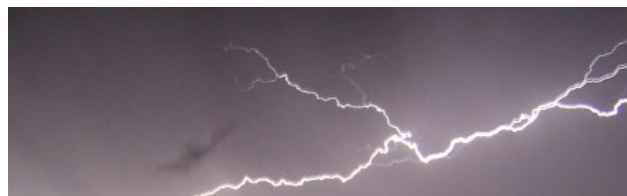
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In the Community

The Importance of Community Co-Ops

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Urban communities throughout the country struggle to provide the quantity, affordability and distance practically of local grocery stores to their residents. The sparse quantity of stores makes it difficult for locals to get their hands on fresh, nutrient balanced food. Where there are stores, the price of the items sold there are more expensive and are processed items such as chips, soda and junk food. Then distance becomes a challenge when public or paid transportation is the only way to get to stores that offer health and affordable groceries.

This is known today as a food desert, this happens when there aren't enough stores suppling health conscious foods that are nutritious. Instead what is available is processed foods that contain high amounts sodium and sugar form local corner stores. Which, in turn, is contributed to malnutrition, childhood obesity and health problems in elderly. One way to combat food deserts is the installation of Cooperatives (co-op). This business was one that did not start in the united states and continues to be a staple worldwide.

The increase of co-ops is rapidly growing tangent to the severe need of underserved communities. The need is not only in the United States, but around the world and have been around for over a hundred years. Their business model is quite different from a corporate establishment. Instead, co-ops are owned and governed by the members that use the products and services of the business. The financial goal of a co-op is not to accumulate profit for investors but to attain the goals of their members, any surplus revenue is then distributed back into the company or returned to its members.

Not all co-ops are run precisely the same either, it merely depends on the values of the company and the wishes of its members. Most adhere to the same basic principles, for example open membership, member participation, education and training, and community concern. Therefore, all members of the co-op are allowed one vote when it comes to the matters pertaining the company.

The community of East St. Paul worked with the Gateway Initiate to provide the needs for their economic development in their area. Locals interested in the project became more aware, worked together and educated themselves in the process. They then reached out to the co-op, Mississippi Market (MM), and the plan for expansion started.

MM sits on what was polluted grounds and a vacant lot brings health conscious foods to a deserving community. They are conscious of the community's financial situation and holds budget shopping classes and have created a membership for low-income shoppers that includes 10% discount. To MM, it is more than just about selling food but believe they are a representation of change. Having the MM apart of the East St. Paul's community has meant more job opportunities and a way for the residents to become more than a customer, but a participant who has a voice within the community.

Added sales to the store improves the financial circulation back into the community and there for MM can buy more from local producers. An increase of members gives the added benefit of a more collective voice for the community. Currently there is a high level of deflation in the food market and local store are losing business. MM isn't worried about bouncing back from this financial hard time but they want to advocate to buy local. In doing so more money back into the community's circulation and many hard workers will stay employed. They advocate to support your community and not the big box superstores. With that goal in mind, they strive to create economically strong and sustained nutritional independence.

march to support investments in science and education. "I'm worried about the cuts to everything from the EPA to Head Start. This is the only way we have to communicate to authority that we're not in agreement with what they're doing. This is the best way I know how to be heard," Miller said.

Alumni Activists

First College alum Larry Yank arrived to Boyd Park on bicycle. He heard about the march from his son Josh, a graduate of Metro State's Master of Science in Technical Communication program. Yank graduated in 1999 with an individualized major in natural history and ecology education, which led to his work as liaison to American Indian families in St. Paul schools. He hoped a huge turnout at the march could get the administration's attention. "Presence is ultimately important," said Yank. "We need a large groundswell of people coming out. We need to be out en masse to really have an effect."

Alum and staff retiree Elizabeth Hudman heard about Metro State's participation in the march from her former colleagues in the library. "I was planning to march anyway but it's sure nice to go with people you know and make a bigger voice," she said. She's been an activist since the 1960s, and takes a long view on the impact marchers can make. "This is energizing the grassroots, and that's important. I don't think it will make an immediate change. But I think it's about getting people stirred up and active," Hudman said.

The March Goes On

Professor Asplen said efforts to promote science in the community and on campus will continue. "This is isn't a one-day march," he said. "We are coming together as a community of scientists and everyone who's passionate about science. We agree we want the current and future admin-

From left to right: Naomi Miller, Jamie Tyrell, Gail Miller and Juniper the pit bull show their posters. Photo by Kathryn Ganfield

istrations to adopt data-sound, data-supported practices."

Asplen pointed to the brand new science education center, its energy-saving solar panels, and a new 2-course science GELS requirement as evidence of Metro State's commitment. "Science is on the rise at Metro State," he said. "We just hired two new chemists as full-time faculty. I'm very optimistic for the growth of natural sciences."

The department is focused on serving science majors and non-majors alike, he said. They offer a broad array of courses in biology, chemistry, environmental science, geology and physics. Discussing climate change data and dispelling misconceptions in the classroom is vital, he said. "The goal of the sciences at Metro State is to help inform citizens. To get students engaged in science, in data, in data-driven decisions, in curiosity— which is a fundamental part of the scientific method—and to understand what science is and what it is not," Asplen said.