

THE COMPUTER CORNER

No. 252: VLC

Stan Kaplan, WB9RQR 715 N. Dries Street Saukville, WI 53080-1664
(262) 268-1949 wb9rqr@att.net

Did you miss the Computer Corner last month? (I did not submit an article for the Feb 2019 newsletter.) You missed it for two reasons. 1. There has been no feedback (positive or negative) for at least a year now, making me wonder if anyone likes the articles or even notices them. 2. In keeping with the lack of feedback, I have had no suggestions for articles until now, and that came from our newsletter editor (thanks, Tom). The message is, if you want me to keep going, or even if you don't, let me know. If you have a need that might be addressed in this article, for sure let me know. Although I do not know everything about computing, at least I know how to research a subject and produce a one-page knowledge byte that might help you.

The following is one of them in response to TOM's need. Tom says: *How about something on the app that runs videos embedded in a power point? I am having a problem with a power point that has an embedded video and it won't start.*

VLC should solve Tom's problems, and more. It is worthwhile installing it on any computer, even if you only occasionally view or listen to multimedia files. That "any computer" refers to Windows machines (XP, 7, 8, 10, Windows Mobile and Windows Phone), Macintosh, Android, IOS, Tizen, and probably others. In other words, it is a CROSS-PLATFORM media player and streaming media server. The cross-platform moniker refers to the fact that it will work across brands, and even styles (desktops, laptops, mobile platforms, and even phones). It will play DVDs, audio CDs, video CDs and so on). Authored by a non-profit organization (the VideoLAN Project), it was first released in 2001, and it continues to be updated by them. And, how about this? It is free to download and use. Furthermore, if you download and install it, you may never need to invoke it. It may well just begin to play some file that would not play before. In worst cases, you may need to invoke it when Power Point does not have the proper built-in tools (see Tom's example, above).

This is one of those examples where a dedicated group of programmers saw a need and filled it. That leads to the question of why it is not already part of the Windows programs in all their varieties? It should be, but Microsoft never came up with a comprehensive solution as part of its operating system. So, a group got together, wrote it, and made it free for all to use. Sweet!

Where to get it? Stay away from filehippo and other servers that want to tangle you up into buying something they or one of their customers sell. Go to my favorite and safe source: <https://www.majorgeeks.com/>. Scroll down the panes on the left side, past the **FILES** pane, past the **SPREAD THE WORD** pane and find the **SITE INFO** pane. In this pane, find **Top Freeware Picks** and select **Multimedia**. Find **VLC Media Player**, then download and install it.

Expect this: VLC will prompt you to update if you are using an old version. That will only happen now and then (maybe once a year, maybe twice). Worth the effort! Happy Computing!