

Beckett PC Solutions Newsletter, June 2026

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Moved into Santa Cruz PT home

The sale on the Tavira house was right down to the wire. Moved into the Santa Cruz home (really the town the house is in is called A dos Cunhados, “Kun-ya-dosh” which means Brothers-in-law), on April 21st. Still unpacking as I write this. Have the weather station and live camera pointing to the surf on my website. My office is perfect, an additional small room right next to the front door with a window facing the street. All three computers are set up and running with battery backup. We understand the storms here can be major, so backup is important. Much hardware to add to the house over the next few months, solar, heat pump, spiral staircase to the upper terrace. Just started working on the garden. Such a lovely place, we are so happy.

What is CoPilot (AI) by Microsoft and how do I use it?

I want to resend the information on CoPilot (AI) because I think it is a handy tool to work with for almost anything. If you are resistant to using any AI tool, I understand and suggest you might skip this section and move on.

Mostly if I have a question, I don't use Google search anymore, I get much more specific detail from CoPilot and no advertisements. I asked CoPilot “give me all the layman details about how copilot can be used by the average user” and this is what it returned:

Writing Made Easy

- **Emails & Messages:** Copilot helps you write clear, polite, and professional emails. Just tell it what you want to say, and it drafts it for you.

- Documents & Reports: Need to write a report, resume, or blog post? Copilot can generate full drafts, summarize long texts, or polish your writing.

Research & Learning

- Quick Answers: Ask Copilot anything—from “What’s the capital of Mongolia?” to “Explain quantum physics like I’m five.”
- Study Help: It can quiz you, explain concepts, and even help you write essays or study guides.

Creativity & Content

- Social Media Posts: Copilot can help you write catchy captions, tweets, or LinkedIn updates.
- Storytelling & Blogging: Stuck on a plot or need blog ideas? Copilot throws out creative prompts and helps you build on them.

Productivity Boost

- Summarize Meetings: Missed a meeting? Copilot can summarize transcripts or notes so you catch up fast.
- File Search: On Windows, it can find files on your device—just ask “Find my budget spreadsheet from last week.”

Language & Communication

- Translation: Copilot can translate text between languages and explain idioms or cultural phrases.
- Tone Adjustment: Want your message to sound more friendly, assertive, or formal? Copilot tweaks it for you.

Everyday Tasks

- To-Do Lists: Ask Copilot to help you plan your day or organize tasks.
- Shopping Help: It can track prices, suggest products, and help you write reviews.

If CoPilot doesn’t give you the specific answers you were looking for, you can do follow up questions to refine the search. Just ask anything. I encourage you to give it a try. I use it to find commands in Windows that have moved after an update or to answer questions my clients have about application use. Many times, my clients don’t know the words to use to ask the questions but the follow up questions should get you the answers you need.

Renewed computers donated

Please consider donating working computers, old or new to [Santa Cruz Welcoming Network](#). If not working then take them to Grey Bears. Contact me if you have questions.

Scams, Phishing, Ransomware and more

I guess I should not be surprised but I have received message from Xfinity about fees I owe, even though the accounts were closed. I logged on through my browser, to confirm, I had a zero balance. The messages looked real but it was not and I notified Comcast.

As I write this, I am seeing a new scam related to my Microsoft Exchange account. The hint that it was a scam is in the header of the message. My address appears in the To: and the From: and clearly not from Microsoft, though my service is provided by my GoDaddy. I have received about two or three messages each day so far saying my password will expire soon and they give a date and is updated with each message. Also, messages with invoices and DocuSign links.

Look before you click; that is my most important advice. Just receiving the email will not be an issue, but replying or clicking on a link in the email can be a world of trouble. Most importantly, if you don't have a connection with the company seemingly sending the message, it is likely just phishing. Beware, the logos and messages that seem like they are related to your accounts with that company should be suspect.

First see who sent the message. Many times, it will be from a personal email account like name@gmail.com, that would not be coming from a company. If you see name@companyname.ru this is from someone in Russia. If the from address looks like it might actually be related to the company name but you don't usually get messages from the company, open a browser and go to their web site, log on to your account and see if there are messages there for you. You can hover over the link in the email message and see what address will open if you were to click on the link. False messages will not have the company name in the web address but just as a rule, ***never use these links to go to a website.***

A surprising number of my clients do call the phone number and regret having done so. If you get a call and you did not contact them first, hang up or don't answer. Most of us now will not answer the phone unless they recognize the name on caller ID. City names are almost always a solicitation. This is a good use of voice mail. If I don't answer a call and they don't leave voice mail, assume it was not a legitimate phone call. If clients call and there is no name on my caller ID, I will add that name so it comes up the next time they call. If you have doubts about a message, please feel free to text or email me, I am happy to go over it with you. It is very easy for me to look at it if we have Zoho (my remote access service), installed but I can also talk you through it over the phone if we schedule a time to do this. If your bank calls, get a reference number, hang up, then use the number on your statement to call back (not a Google search). Use the reference number to find out why they are calling. I hope this helps you stay out of trouble, good luck!

2-step Verification

Many of my clients have now added 2-step verification to their accounts. Also, I am noticing the many organizations are now requiring 2-step verification. Be sure it is associated with a cell phone for text messages or an alternate email account to which you have regular access. Check all your accounts because I here that some clients don't know their old email address is the only one listed, when they need to change a password or access their account. Keep this information up to date.

With 2-step verification you will always know when someone is logging on to your account from another computer. The first few times you log in, you will need to verify the device you are using with a confirmation code triggered by 2-step verification. This is for your protection.

Many of my clients have had their accounts hijacked and the easiest way for them to do this is by logging in as you. Another way, which you cannot control is for them to get into your account by hacking the Comcast, Yahoo or other servers. Yes, it has happened. People on your contact list will call you to find out if you are OK because of the message they received from you. You need to call the provider and tell them about the problem. They will restore your account in most cases and get your contacts back. The faster you take action, the better your chances that no damage will be done.

Improvements to your computer experience

How to make things better? The easiest upgrade is a larger display. The cost is generally low with a large improvement in your computing experience. Many older displays are around 22 inches but new computers systems are now using 27 or 32 inch displays, some curved. With the upgrade is usually an improvement in resolution as well.

Keyboard acting strange? Is it wireless? Have you checked your batteries? Same with your mouse. If you have a wired keyboard and mouse but it is acting odd, there are two possible causes. First, it could just be a Windows update waiting for a restart. Second, try disconnecting and reconnecting or move the keyboard and/or mouse to a different USB port.

Do you use a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Source, battery backup power strip). Be aware that the batteries in these are lead/acid and typically only last for about three years. Just replace the battery unless you need new features on your UPS like more connections or longer power outage time (bigger battery). If you don't have one of these, consider it if you are in an area where the power is likely to go out. They are designed so the computer will stay on long enough to shut it down normally. This can protect your modem and computer parts from damage.

Antivirus

It turns out that Microsoft has made significant improvements to Windows Security (Defender) and it is now one of the top-rated antivirus applications. It is built into Windows, it just needs to be turned on. In most cases it is turned on automatically if you have no antivirus application installed. This is easy to check however, look at the icons on the lower left of your display in the taskbar, near the date and time display. There will be an icon with a shield (blue or white) and it will sometimes have a circle with some indicator in the circle showing the current status of Windows Security. A green check mark indicates that everything is OK but anything else means that your attention is needed. Click the icon to open the window and see what is needed. If you wish to start using Windows Security, just uninstall your current antivirus and turn on Windows Security. I have been uninstalling antivirus applications and setting up Windows Security remotely when I am doing remote work for clients.

You can also opt for the paid version of antivirus programs. I now recommend the top-rated Bitdefender, though it is not a program I have used. I am currently using Windows Security. You can also add a VPN which will give you much better security overall if you have concerns. I am using ExpressVPN which now is also helpful to show me either in the USA or Portugal depending on my computer needs.

In Closing

Much of my business is tuning up computers and helping with minor issues. Most of this work so far is done with my remote application but I have set up a few appointments to talk one-on-one.

If you need hardware work done on your computer, I am recommending Aptos Computers but feedback suggests they don't always give the best advice and will tend to suggest replacing computers instead of fixing them. Jesse Wilkins of Wilkins Consulting (831) 588-4319), is a trusted option but he does charge more. He doesn't always do the work himself but the people that work with him can also be trusted.

Remember, clean out those dead files using Disk Cleanup. Check your antivirus status and be sure Windows is up to date.

Thanks for reading. Please let me know if you have any questions. If you find this information helpful, please forward this email to friends and family.

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"Let me make it easy for you"

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