Spring Cleaning - Digital Decluttering - Part 2 – 06/24/2023
This is one of a series of articles provided by the Oakmont Technology Learning Center on the use of technology by seniors.
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The May 27th technology article Part 1 on digital decluttering shared that there are negative psychological effects of information overload. Part 1 covered simplifying and decluttering digital files, photos, and e-mail. Now Part 2 takes spring cleaning and decluttering to the next level and looks deeper into the following topics.

Desktops home screens. Keep most-used apps in your computer taskbar/dock/shelf or phone or tablet home page. Keep less-used apps on secondary screen(s). Do you need a bunch of shortcuts on your computer screen? If not, clean them up. Do you have a bunch of files in "downloads" for one-time use that can be deleted?

Apps and Notifications. Remove or disable any unused apps/bloatware that might come with your computer or device. Disable non-essential apps for startup and check if unnecessary apps are running in the background. Look in app settings to see which notifications you want enabled/disabled to keep from being inundated.

Subscriptions. Unsubscribe from sites you no longer read. Get off unwanted e-mail lists by unsubscribing.

Online accounts. How many of us have logins on a <u>lot</u> of retail web sites? Time to delete those you don't use anymore. Many sites ask if you want to sign on with Google or Facebook. Here's what Norton Lifelock says about that: "Yes, it's technically safe to sign in with Google or Facebook. But it's a good idea to consider the privacy and security risks of social sign-in before you decide to use it."

Social media. Think about privacy - look through your apps settings. Turn off non-essential notifications. Facebook "cloning" of accounts usually occurs because your "friends" list is not set to "private"; then someone can create a fake account and phish your friends. Check your friends list on Facebook: are there people you should "hide" (the annoying or political posts) or "unfriend" (just aren't important to you any more)? Nextdoor notifications have a number of settings that can be fine-tuned. Another note about Nextdoor: if you are posting "Oakmont only" information or complaints, don't post to tens of thousands of North Bay Nextdoor users, which is the default! Select "Oakmont Only" for posting.

Browsers. Whether you use Chrome, Safari, Edge, Firefox, or some of the newer browsers (Vivaldi and Brave, for two), clean up your "cookies" and "history" on a regular basis. When accepting cookies, don't just automatically click "accept cookies"; customize them to only necessary cookies, not marketing and other cookies. When starting your browser up, how many tabs do you want open on startup? More tabs=more computing resources used. Do you still need all the browser extensions and bookmarks that you have? If not, clean them up.

Consider taking on OTLC class this fall to better understand your computer or device settings. For an electronic copy of this article as well as Part 1, go to oakmont-learning.org under "Tech Articles".