Computer Bytes – Video/Audio Communications – April 2020
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Hello Friends & Associates!

It's been a while. We're all dealing with this crazy upside-down world right now so I won't expound because everyone is inundated – I'll simply say stay safe!

Let's talk this time about something you can use during this challenging time AND in the future. It can also be fun! Many are now working from home and even if you're not, you can still use your computer for communications. Of course, email is readily available, but the fun avenue can be video or audio communications. There are a number of products you can use to do this; Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc. I won't go into details on those this time other than to share that in most cases, when you open the tools referenced above, if you have a camera and microphone installed, the programs will recognize them and use them accordingly.

First you will need a camera and a microphone. Most all laptops have those built in these days. For a PC, we recommend a camera/mic combination – they're easier to set up and will do the job. Search "Logitech" for options – they have solid products addressing this area. As with all things, the higher the cost, the better the device. I'm going to base my guidance on the premise you're running Windows 10. While we are proficient in assisting with the Apple OS, the bulk of our clients use the Microsoft operating system so that's our focus. Keep in mind Apple processes are different.

First, let's get it all prepped and working. To find the Camera app, select **Start** > **Camera**. If properly connected, you should see yourself on your screen – smile - you've just verified your camera is working! Now let's verify your microphone. Right-click the volume icon on the taskbar (lower right of screen) and select **Sounds**. In the **Recording** tab, select the microphone or recording device you'd like to set up. Select **Configure**. Select **Set up microphone**, and follow the steps of the **Microphone Setup Wizard**. To test a microphone that has already been installed, Right-click the volume icon on the taskbar and select **Sounds**. In the **Recording** tab, look for green bars rising as you speak into your recording device. If the bars are moving, your device is connected and working properly. These are the basics. IF they don't work, of course extended troubleshooting will be required.

You can also choose which apps use the camera. To block all apps from the camera: Select **Start** > **Settings** > **Privacy** > **Camera.** Turn off **Allow apps to access your camera**. To turn on the camera for some apps, and turn off for others – this is where you can choose if you run tools mentioned in the opening paragragraph. Again, in most cases, when you open those tools if you have a camera and mic installed, the programs will recognize them and use them accordingly.

TURN OFF CAMERA. This is a concern for some so here's a helpful tip for that activity. In the search box on the taskbar, type **Device Manager**, then select **Device Manager**. Choose **Camera**. Right-click the camera you want to turn off. Select **Disable device**. REMEMBER – you would reverse this process and Enable when you want to use again.

Along with video and audio communications, you can also take photos or videos with basic Windows tools. Select **Start > Camera > Photo** or **Video** (icons on the right side) and take a picture or make a video. To see your new photo or video, or ones you've taken before, select **Start** > **Photos** and then choose the **Collection** you want to see. To change camera options for your camera, like the framing grid or photo quality, select **Start** > **Camera > Settings. Have fun!**

NOTE: Our sharing of information within articles includes suggestions and tips. USE AND/OR APPLY AT YOUR OWN RISK. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our offices for professional service/guidance.

Until next time, don't forget your backups! For more information, contact Harv Oliver, HANDS-ON Consultations, (805) 524-5278, www.hocsupport.com