

# Technology For Epicureans

**Post by “Cassius” of August 15, 2024 at 4:05 PM**

Perhaps as a theme for a "First Monday" session, or perhaps just as an independent "special event," let's see if there is any interest in a "Technology For Epicureans" Zoom meeting.

At the moment I am thinking mainly of a discussion of research and writing tools that we use in the study of Epicurus, but that's something to discuss. Either in the same session or later sessions we could discuss other aspects of how we use technology productively in our lives.

I am thinking many of us share similar interests in "privacy," in using "open source" and/or "free" software that keeps us as independent as possible from spying and potential censorship, and similar considerations.

And not a lecture by me or by anyone else but a "sharing" session where we talk about what tools and methods we find productive.

So let's talk about whether this is a good idea. I suspect at the very least [TauPhi](#) and [Cleveland Okie](#) will agree that it is.

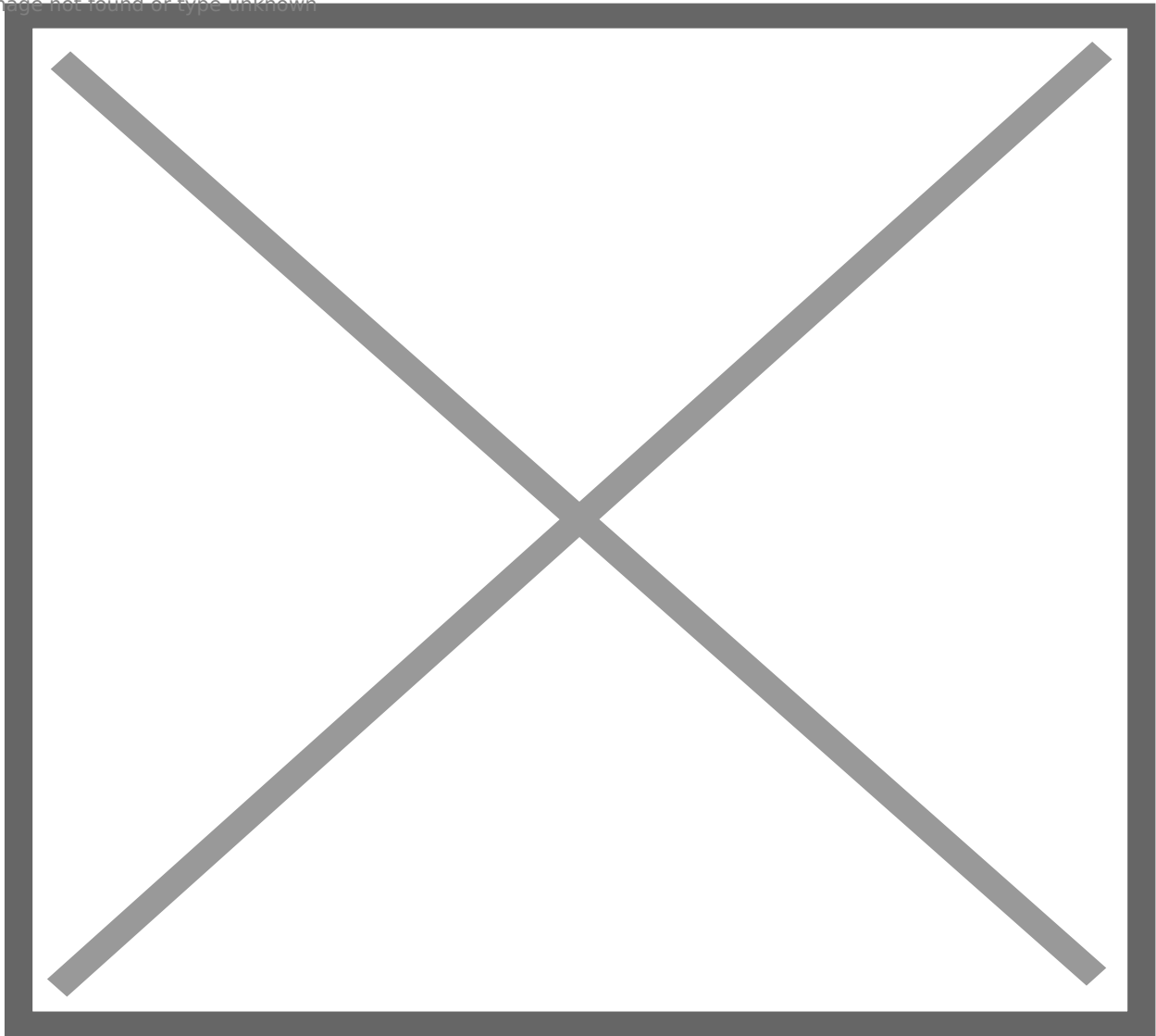
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**Post by “Cleveland Okie” of August 16, 2024 at 11:02 PM**

I would certainly be interested in talking about technology, social media, etc. Please include me if you decide to go ahead with a meeting.

Have you heard of Nostr? It's a new social media platform that is supposed to be impossible to censor:

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### [Can Nostr make Twitter's dreams come true?](#)

Twitter's founder says Nostr is "100 percent what we wanted"—an open, ownerless network.  
reason.com

Nostr seems interesting to me and I have been trying to set up an account there, although to be honest it's relatively hard. I do worry I spend too much time on social media as it is: I am on Facebook, I am on X.com (three accounts), I have a Blue Sky account I don't use very often and I also am on Mastodon.

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**Post by "Julia" of August 17, 2024 at 3:00 PM**

One thing that strikes me as important regarding the entire realm of privacy, free software, technological resilience/censorship, open hardware, 3D printing files, Creative Commons, ..., is how easy it is to get lost in rabbit holes: Trying to use exclusively free-libre products, having absolute security is neither productive nor fun, and listening to all the cautionary voices telling me of their genuine concerns isn't fun, either. Things can turn bad, the world's a dangerous place; I got the memo! To rephrase that:

### **How to bring about and hold onto the joy in computing, technology, in tinkering, and so forth?**

This is to say: To me, what matters most is less the specific tools, projects or products which are currently great; what I care about is how to keep my attitude of exploration, of wonder, my positive constructive mindset; which techniques and media outlets are supportive of that (which don't declare the end of the world twice a day)?

I would be very happy to receive key links / hints from a Zoom session like that! 😊

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### **Tangent about "social" media**

#### [Quote from Cleveland Okie](#)

I do worry I spend too much time on social media

For me, no type of "social" media has produced net pleasure other than:

- (Group) Chatting/texting/messaging with people I have a connection with, *as long as* it only supplements phone calls and personal interaction. (Having entire connections via text, or saying everything in writing prior to a phone call and then having nothing left to say (speak-out-loud) is...not fun.)
- Forums like this one: people coming together around a shared topic, *and also* moderation maintains a proper tone and conduct.
- LinkedIn, which to me is just a phonebook, yellow pages and job ads rolled into one

There are some platforms which combine forums with chatting, but I would not consider Reddit/Discord/Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/... to be examples of that.

I use Youtube to view tutorials/courses/documentaries, but *all* "social" features are disabled (no comment section, no recommended videos, nothing at all. Just the actual video and the show notes / video description box the author wrote below.) I listen to some podcasts, but carefully select which ones. This makes my Youtube/podcast experience more like traditional broadcast, less like "social" media.

My explanation for why I prefer it like this: (Group) chats mimic organic, unorganised human behaviour; we talk to friends and we talk among friends. This is something humans have evolved to do, and our social antennae tell us what is and isn't proper conduct. Forums are like clubs/associations, and those in turn are somewhat like a tribe. Even though we might not find every member agreeable, we share a common goal and the moderators/tribal chiefs make sure things stay civil.

Facebook groups lack structure and thus cannot function like forums, which mimic the fact that in tribes/clubs/associations people can have shared projects/discussions which they return to, even after quite some time passed (because they'll remember having discussed this/started doing something together that isn't finished yet). Without subforums, threads and a functional search box, it turns into no more than a pile. Reddit is about popularity/attention, which turns the style of interaction from an association/club/tribe into the style of a village-or-larger.

Twitter/Instagram are entirely about attention-grabbing, which is in itself an unnatural style of interaction. Even though I have strong opinions about the question of how inciting or scandalous, how real or fake, how free or censored the speech there is; either way, it is a moot point: neither being exposed to nor forced into such attention-centred behaviour makes me happy.

The problem I face is mostly:

- How can I continue to keep Youtube and Youtube Music as dumb content catalogues instead of "social" networks? How to adapt to "recommendations" and comment columns once the inevitable happens and my filters/modifications stop working?
- How to continue living like it's 2005 in a world that moved on? This is not about being stuck in the past, it is about wanting platforms/tools which allow for interaction-styles which are natural, which mimic what humans have always do: Talk 1-1, talk among friends, and collaborate among bounded groups of like-minded.

(Additionally, "social" media is deliberately designed to exploit human's innate psychology; by staying away from it, I keep myself out of harms way in terms of addiction/compulsion. I also make sure I continue to own my mental real-estate; with curated books/podcasts, I stay in charge of what enters my thoughts.)

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## **Post by “Cassius” of August 17, 2024 at 3:29 PM**

Great input Julia thank you! And definitely we will focus on what is actually productive other than rabbit holes chasing privacy behind the point of productivity.

## Post by “TauPhi” of August 17, 2024 at 7:54 PM

I'm always happy to exchange knowledge with others so count me in.

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

At the moment I am thinking mainly of a discussion of research and writing tools that we use in the study of Epicurus, but that's something to discuss.

This can be useful not only for Epicureans but for everyone who uses computers in their research. Great topic for a start.

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## Post by “Cassius” of August 18, 2024 at 5:13 PM

Ok we won't plan to devote the 20th to this, but we can start gathering ideas such as in Julia's post so that we have a productive session when we do get it together.

Let's talk about software categories to cover:

- 1) Cleveland has suggested censor-resistant social media platforms.
- 2) I think another obvious category is "research management" software. For example I can talk about the software I use to store and organize my Epicurean research, which probably fits into the "knowledge management" category and includes programs such as Obsidian and Logseq and "wiki" management.
- 3) Probably could talk about where we are in terms of AI usage, such as using ChatGPT to clean up or summarize large chunks of text.
- 4) We definitely make major use of Graphics programs for memes and graphics for posts, so we can talk about what people use for that.
- 5) If anyone is interested we can talk about how those of us who are probably most into "privacy" and "resistance to censorship" use Linux as an alternative to windows, but that may well be to "in the weeds" for general interest. I am thinking "application" software that we use regularly would be of greatest interest and use.
- 6) Along with graphics design programs goes Video and Audio editing (which we need to be doing more of.)
- 7) Perhaps also website design, and



Ebook (epub) or PDF generation for longer-form works.

Other suggestions for categories?