



June in Tampa

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

Vol. 20 No. 6 June 2007

## Meeting

### Linux on a Virtual PC

William LaMartin

Wednesday, June 13, 2007  
6:30 PM  
Art Pepin Hospitality Room  
Pepin Distributing Co.  
4121 N 50th St  
Tampa, Florida

**Meeting Preview:** William LaMartin will demonstrate running Ubuntu Linux in Microsoft Virtual PC, along with Open Office, the MySQL database and the Apache web server. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG.



## Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group  
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Merle Nicholson has rescued me from having to write much this month. But I do have a bit to say and, I believe, just enough room to write it.

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**Rescued laptop** I use my laptop only for travel and presentations, much preferring to work with a desktop computer whenever possible. The laptop is a three year old Gateway with a 1.7 GHz Centrino processor, one GB of RAM and a 120 GB hard drive. Three months back it had only 512 MB of RAM and a 60 GB hard drive.

I increased the RAM because, as you might recall from my programming presentation for the group in January, when I

*(Comments.....Continued on page 5)*

**July Meeting: To be announced**

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**Minutes of the June Meeting**

*By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group*  
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The meeting started at 6:30 pm, with Bob LaFave conducting the Windows SIG portion. Bob asked, "What do you do when you don't want to keep loading a program you have on CD?" You download Microsoft's free Virtual CD-ROM Control Panel for Windows XP. You can then use a program like Nero to make an image of the program onto your hard drive. This allows you to copy the entire contents of a CD-ROM to your hard disk and run the programs or access the files without the need for the original CD. One thing though, it only works on ISO images. Bob demonstrated how this can be accomplished.

Bob went on to tell us about TechRepublic (<http://techrepublic.com/>) as a source of information and eEye Digital Security. He recommends AVG as the best anti virus protection; however, BitDefender for \$29 per year is also good.

At 7:05pm, President John Witmer began the business segment of our meeting, telling us that next month William LaMartin will be our speaker to tell us of his success installing Linux on a virtual PC. We are looking for members to make presentations during the summer months.

Jim Purcell is trying to reestablish meetings of the Digital Imaging SIG. He asked for a show of hands of those who are interested. Several indicated they would attend. Where and when to meet is another issue for the group. Possibly the SIG could meet before or after the regular monthly meeting at Pepin. Jim indicated that he would conduct an email survey of the members as to what they want to do.

At this point, John turned attention to our speaker for the evening, Mr. Andrew "Drew" Smith, President of the Florida Genealogical Society. Mr. Smith is also the Information Literacy Librarian, Tampa Library at the University of South Florida, and was at our meeting to tell us about genealogical research online.

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## First-Time Vista — Part III

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group  
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Vista failed a major hardware replacement, and XP adapted pretty well.

To help you follow this, I'll summarize from the last articles. I have what I call my "Wood PC" that has an open rack to place as many as six hard drives to experiment with and test software on. So far, I have one system each for Windows XP Professional, Windows Vista Business Upgrade, Windows Small Business Server 2003 and Ubuntu. I've now made a major hardware replacement, and Vista didn't survive.

The machine was a very nice AMD 2200+ processor and 1GB of memory with an on-board S3 graphics adapter. The processor is no longer made, and the motherboard was a bit difficult to get. Steve Singer at RDI came through for me on that one, so the motherboard is pretty new. All the systems but Vista worked very well. To be fair, except for a Vista 1.0 Experience Rating on graphics, Vista ran satisfactorily. But not having anything but a generic video driver, all the Vista graphic effects were missing. And it was apparent that the video was slowing down my interaction with the computer. My most apparent solution was to buy a new video card.

But then I had a chance to combine some parts I have and sell them, so I put the AMD 2200+, motherboard and memory in a nice old case I have and out the door it went, and with the proceeds I ordered the newest ASUS nVidia motherboard, memory and an inexpensive AMD AM2 X2 3800+ processor. To say that it's inexpensive doesn't mean that it's not powerful; it has two cores running at 2.0GHz, more than most new notebooks.

**VISTA:** When you make a hardware change as drastic as this, changing a motherboard with a different chipset, and especially a new chipset manufacturer, you expect an existing operating system to fail, and both XP and Vista did fail to boot. Drawing on my XP experience, though, I expected to repair the Vista OS, maybe with some difficulties. I wasn't prepared for what I did find.

In cases like this, the standard procedure is to first try Safe Mode. No chance there, but not surprising. So it's boot time from the Vista Business Upgrade OS CD. Like XP,

you can try installing new, and then when it discovers that there's already an OS on the hard drive, it gives you a chance to repair the existing OS. I selected that, and sat down to watch. I should have timed it but didn't. It ran a long time, and it finally told me that the OS couldn't be repaired. Now that's a surprise. On XP, you could always repair. That repair sometimes replaced so many OS files that the system was put back to Service Pack 1, but it would be successful, and once completed you can expect that all your applications will operate as before, and all your data would be intact. Vista failed, and it knew it failed enough to tell me so. So, not being too trustful, I booted from the hard drive again, and it rebooted itself, and rebooted itself.

Here's what's surprising. The repair facility should have the capability to repair an OS all the way back to the point that it would have been, as if it were a first time installation. Does this mean that it'll fail if I do an original install? The motherboard is advertised as "Vista Premium Ready" and the graphics card – a Gigabyte X1650 (it is an ATI Radeon X1650 license) – disclaims the Vista-specific drivers, but that's common to most (maybe all) Vista video drivers.

So the obvious next step is to do an original install over the existing OS. I have not too much to lose: some customization, a Windows Office 2007 installation, anti-virus, spyware and DVD-writing software. I'll have to do those all over unless I abandon the idea of having Vista, and, after all, this is why I sold the old one and bought the parts in the first place—to have Vista. What a mess.

So I went ahead to do an install, and it took me just a couple of minutes to discover that Vista Upgrade will not install over a broken Vista OS. The Upgrade runs from a previous version of Windows. It does not recognize that there's a broken copy of Vista already on the hard drive. It refuses to install. It still angers me right now as I'm writing this. Man, what a mess.

What I need now is a running XP system to run my Vista Upgrade from, and, well, I have to do that anyway because on the same machine I have XP Pro, Windows Small Business Server and Ubuntu. So it's time to fix XP Pro. This runs smoothly but takes a very long time. Again, I was forced to do a system repair. In this case, it replaced all my system files back to the state of the XP Pro CD. On startup it asked to validate the operating system license. I accom-

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*(Vista.....Continued from page 3)*

plished that over the phone to Microsoft without talking to a person. Thanks, MS; this is a first for me; I used the touch key pad on the phone to key in the 6,379 numbers you wanted. I'm curious; why doesn't one number, say, less than 50 million, work as well?

After successfully starting the system, it's at a level of Service Pack 1. I installed Service Pack 2, then I installed 75 updates from the Microsoft Update site. Then I have motherboard chipset, sound, LAN, network and graphics cards updates to do. This is an all-day job in itself. In this case all my other programs worked fine: Office 2007, Nero, Windows Defender. The only non-survivor was AVG Free Anti-Virus. It couldn't find its license number, and I didn't write it down.

Now I'm really able to start – whoops, first I have to clone the drive to the Vista drive. To allay any sharp-eyed lawyers out there, I have XP licenses out the gazoo, don't worry. I'm paranoidly cautious about licensing. Now I can boot into XP and run the Vista DVD. To try to save some work here, maybe I'll actually do a Vista upgrade from XP. This is something I have not done before. This will preserve some of the programs already installed.

The first choices are to either upgrade the XP system or to install a new system. The first choice attempts to preserve any programs and data from the XP system, and the second option puts the old Windows files in a new directory but keeps other root directories in the root. I picked the first one, although it took a long time (and it does warn you that it takes a long time) – hours – I don't know - I finally dozed off for a while and then went to bed. After completing the next day – it was waiting for an answer as to the type of network I have – it was ready, and I'd say working well except for just a few things: It didn't have any animated windows as I expected, it has a Vista Experience rating of 1.0, it blue-screens for a second while shutting down, AVG Anti-Virus couldn't find its license again, and it warned me that two programs, PowerToys Tweak UI and Windows Messenger, did not work on Vista.

I installed all the updates—five, I think, then I downloaded and installed new ATI video drivers. This fixed the blue screen on shutdown, but the Vista Experience rating screen warned me that I should rescan for a new rating and it's now 4.5 out of 5, and, when that happened, the Vista graphics started working on their own. Hooray. This was the reason for buying new hardware and spending three

long days of working on software.

I installed more new drivers from ASUS, then I uninstalled some junk that shouldn't be there, like the original S3 video software and PowerToys, and replaced AVG and Windows Defender with a trial version of MS OneCare. Office 2007 survived the transition, as did some custom software that I wrote and some that William LaMartin wrote. I have a ways to go to see if Nero still works and to try to see if I'll ever get used to the new Windows Explorer. We'll see on that one.

Now then what else? Did you guess? I have to quickly make a full system backup. This is to restore to where I am now in case of a full failure. Because remember – **The Vista Upgrade DVD WILL NOT INSTALL over a broken Vista Operating System.** ♦

*(Minutes.....Continued from page 2)*

Drew started by saying that the PC has transformed how we do genealogy. With a public library card number, or through a home subscription with data providers, you can have access to many genealogy research sites on the Internet. You can access all types of records, create a website, use bulletin boards to inquire about ancestors, exchange information through chat rooms, or even create your family tree or write a book online.

Mr. Smith distributed a handout showing many online research sites. They included Family Tree Maker, Legacy Family Tree, Roots Magic (which he recommended) and The Master Genealogist. You can reach many of these research sites at your public library without charge to see what is available and then subscribe for direct access from home for more convenient research.

With a current library card and using a library computer, you can also access Heritage Quest, America's Genealogical Bank, many newspapers and Ancestry Library Edition. You may also want to check out the Social Security Death Index, World Connect or Find a Grave. If your ancestors immigrated before 1924, the Ellis Island records are available online at a charge. You can also access naturalization papers. Drew also told us about a weekly pod cast that he and George G. Morgan produce. Check it out at <http://www.genealogyguys.com>.

*(Minutes.....Continued on page 5)*

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There are also genealogical mailing lists and message board sites that you can register on and hope for “hits” from other researchers. Ask some leading questions and then be ready to exchange information.

Drew said that while online research capabilities have hurt genealogical societies, there are still reasons to join one. They have interesting speakers to tell of their experiences and to give helpful advice, and there is the camaraderie. You will hear interesting and helpful things at the meetings to help you in your research.

Mr. Smith answered a number of questions the attendees had on genealogical research. We thank you, Drew, for an interesting evening.

The meeting adjourned at about 8:30 pm. ◆

## Internet Picture of the Month



### Joint Appearance Steve Jobs and Bill Gates

From the Macworld site. The page <http://www.macworld.com/news/2007/05/30/jobsgates/index.php> describes the session moderated by Walt Mossberg and sponsored by the Wall Street Journal at the D: All Things Digital conference, which featured Steve and Bill taking a walk down memory lane.

When you become as rich as Steve is, you, too, can wear dirty sneakers, scruffy jeans and less than a recent shave to such an event.

*(Comments.....Continued from page 1)*

had Visual Studio, Photoshop, PowerPoint and possibly some other programs going at the same time, things would occasionally get quite slow. The extra memory solved that problem, and it cost around \$100 to replace two 256 MB memory modules with two 512 MB memory modules.

As to the hard drive replacement, that was an absolute necessity since I started occasionally getting read errors for the old hard drive when I would boot the computer. When that would occur, you couldn't get the computer to work for several hours. After the several hours, it would boot and run fine.

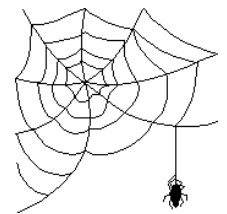
When I consulted Merle on the problem, he was sur-

*(Comments.....Continued on page 7)*

## June's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)  
The Genealogy Guys Podcast  
WorldCat— Library Search  
FHP Traffic incidents by region

<http://www.tpcug.org/>  
<http://genealogyguys.com/>  
<http://www.worldcat.org/>  
<http://www.fhp.state.fl.us/traffic/>



Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

## More Crapware Part II

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group  
[merle@merlenicholson.com](mailto:merle@merlenicholson.com)

An old friend came to me with a non-functioning Dell desktop that's not far out of warranty. It wouldn't boot at all, and I was able to fix it for her.

Somehow, some of the file system became corrupted. It just wouldn't boot. It did have a white-on-black text message that a system file was missing that, frankly, I didn't believe. But first I needed her operating system CD. Remember dude, it's a Dell, dude. She had no CD. She was aware that she should have one, but she was also very aware that it didn't come with the machine. She thought she could get it from the Dell website. Nope.

First thing was to run a diagnostic on the hard drive. These come free from the drive manufacturer's websites and run from a floppy. The result was that there was no physical damage to the hard drive. Interestingly, the machine had a floppy drive (remember this for later) but was built without keyboard and mouse ports. The machine came with USB keyboard and mouse instead, using two of the four available USB ports. Why would Dell make a machine with a floppy? Now it's time to boot and repair the file system.

I was hopeful that one of my own personal copies of XP Professional OS CD's would boot the machine. All I want to do is repair the existing OS using the repair facility that is built into the CD. So I booted on one of mine after correcting the boot order in the BIOS. So after a few minutes, the OS installation repair said that there was no operating system to be found, and, indeed, there was no hard drive. Well, Duh, Merle. The machine has a Serial ATA hard drive (the little red cable instead of the wide, grey cable), and like some – not all – computers with SATA, it needs a RAID driver despite the fact that it does not use RAID. RAID is a method of combining multiple hard drives to operate as one drive for either speed or data redundancy. AND Windows XP requires that the RAID driver be loaded from a floppy drive mounted as the A: drive with the SATA/RAID files on it.

Ok, here we are with no OS CD and obviously no floppy, but at least there's a drive. So investigations on Dell's website say that I can make a recovery CD by running a program located in Start, Dell Utilities. Ok, but I can't do that until I get the computer to run. No mention of a floppy.

At least the website is organized so that I can select the model number and find all the downloadable drivers, and, yes, there is a RAID driver zip file. So I downloaded that and made a floppy, and, yes, I repaired the OS using my CD and the floppy. Near the beginning of the boot on the CD, you have a chance to press F6 to load any SCSI drivers, and, despite the fact that this is not SCSI, do it anyway. It continues, and later on it asks for the floppy containing the drivers.

The OS repair took a very quick look at the files and obviously decided not to replace all the files, and in just a short minute required a reboot of the machine, and yes, we have a repaired system.

First thing in, I did the (allowed one-time) creation of the recovery CD. Then I ran CHKDSK that cleaned up some file errors, and we're good to go, except that this machine is the slowest powerful machine I've seen. It's a 3 GHz Pentium D, and a MB of memory. It should be very fast, but it takes forever to boot and it's pretty much sluggish all the time. So a quick look at the software, and, no big surprise, it's a Dell. It's loaded with crapware. And to top that off, it's also a Verizon/Yahoo machine. That more than doubles the crapware.

Ok – Dell crapware first. There are several programs running – starting at bootup – that Dell put there to “enhance the Dell experience” that do nothing except to make it easier for the unwitting user to contact Dell, or get some online help from Dell. Then there are two AOL programs running. The owner doesn't use AOL and doesn't want to (she has Yahoo!). Dell has sold out some of your computer. Then Verizon did the same thing by selling their customers' time and part of the computer to Yahoo!. Verizon gives the customer a CD with their DSL modem to install. And the customer really thinks that they must have a “provider”, MSN, AOL or Yahoo, for the DSL to work, and it doesn't cost any more.

It cost my customer two hours of work to clean this computer up. Get this – she actually thought she had to sign on to Yahoo just to get her mail. She wasn't using Yahoo mail, she was using Verizon mail! She was thoroughly discouraged in using her computer, and I fully understand what she was going through. If you're going to buy a Dell (HP, Compaq, Gateway, Sony) meant for the consumer market, add a hundred fifty bucks or so to the price; you're going to spend it getting the crapware cleaned off.

A message to new Verizon users: When you get the modem, throw the CD away. You don't need it, and worse, it'll con-

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## Special Interest Groups

### Microsoft Access SIG

This SIG meets the **first Tuesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at [lamartin@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:lamartin@tampabay.rr.com), or Merle Nicholson at [merle@merlenicholson.com](mailto:merle@merlenicholson.com).

### Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

### Visual Basic for Applications SIG

This SIG meets the **third Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 PM. The meeting location varies. For information contact William LaMartin at [lamartin@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:lamartin@tampabay.rr.com).

### Windows SIG

This SIG occupies the first 30 minutes of our monthly, regular meeting and is devoted to a general Windows and computing discussion. Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

*(Crapware.....Continued from page 6)*

taminate the computer. Is there a market for a CD crusher?

So here's Merle's **Crapware Rant #1**. It's first about MSN, Google, Yahoo! and AOL. Remember, now, even AOL is no longer a service provider. AOL cannot run a DSL cable to your house. AOL is now providing free "connections" to broadband customers.

These companies are not even Search engines or content providers. What are they? **They're Advertising Providers**. That's how they make their money. They're in business to direct advertising to you. That's what they get paid for doing. Why do you think they're aggressively pushing toolbars to you? To easily push targeted advertising directly to your computer.

Ok, maybe they have a right to exist. It certainly isn't illegal, and if the computer manufacturers and broadband providers didn't sell you out to the crapware providers, there wouldn't be a problem in the first place. They actually are paid by the crapware providers. Why are they selling out? To be as competitive as they can. The crapware provider is offsetting some of their cost.

**Crapware Rant #2** This is about RealPlayer. Not that they don't have a right to exist, but RealPlayer has evolved into the same as other crapware; they're in business to push advertising to your computer. They – and QuickTime – put themselves on your task tray when installed. RealPlayer has changed now so that a "message center" pops up much like an instant messenger with "messages" that are just advertising. Now I don't know about you, but what I want to do is play video presentations from a website. My spouse loves Jack Horkheimer's astronomy website. He used to have a 10-minute TV program on PBS. He presents current astronomy events in an informative and entertaining manner. But they've changed

the website so that it plays only through RealPlayer. Even if you use msconfig and block the startup item, all you have to do is use the website again, and it re-installs as a startup item without your even knowing about it. The same happens with QuickTime (qttask.exe). Shame – and double shame on the websites that use them. ◆

*(Comments.....Continued from page 5)*

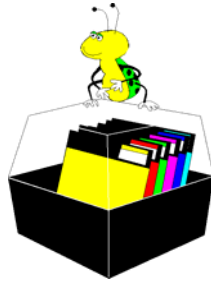
prised to hear that I had no backup for the laptop's drive. I never considered needing one since there was no data or program on the laptop that was not also on my desktop. But then I thought about the problem of having to replace the hard drive and then having to reinstall all the programs on it, and I had an epiphany. I went to Gene Barlow's site, <http://ugr.com/>, and purchased for \$29 (the user group price) Acronis True Image 10.0 Home to use to create an image of my laptop's hard drive to an external USB drive. Bob LaFave has mentioned this program in the Windows SIG, and Merle has written about it in the newsletter.

I installed the program on the laptop and had it create an image of the hard drive on the external USB drive. The process took about 50 minutes for the 53 GB of data on my 60 GB drive. The resulting compressed image was 37 GB. During the process, Acronis twice stopped to warn of sector read errors that had to be ignored.

At Newegg, I found a 120 GB Toshiba laptop drive

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*(Comments.....Continued from page 7)*

for around \$70, ordered it and had it the next day (for an extra \$8). I don't have room here for much detail, but suffice to say that all that was needed was a small Philips head screwdriver and some care to get the drive installed.

I then booted the laptop from the bootable CD that I had Acronis make earlier—and found that it couldn't see my external USB drive. No problem, though. Just install Acronis on the desktop computer, connect the new laptop drive to the desktop via a special adapter, connect the external USB drive to the desktop and have Acronis transfer the image from the USB drive to the laptop drive. That took a bit less than 50 minutes. Finally, I put the new drive back in the laptop and booted the laptop. And the laptop has been working fine and much faster (thanks to the new, larger hard drive) than before.

To avoid having a similar problem with the desktop drive, I later made an image of its drive to a different USB external drive. ◆

