



July in Tampa

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

Vol. 20 No. 7 July 2007

## Meeting

### Examples in Digital Imaging

**Jim Purcell**

Wednesday, July 11, 2007  
6:30 PM  
Art Pepin Hospitality Room  
Pepin Distributing Co.  
4121 N 50th St  
Tampa, Florida

**Meeting Preview:** Jim Purcell is to present various aspects of digital imaging—for example, scanning negatives and using Photoshop Elements to modify images. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG led by Bob LaFave.



## Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group  
[lamartin@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:lamartin@tampabay.rr.com)

Again, there is not much room for comments since our contributors have come through again, and I thank them for that.

As a follow up to my presentation on Linux on a Virtual PC last month, I would like to add that I began wondering, what next? And the answer was: “Can I find a program that runs in Linux and allows me to write programs that run in Linux under a graphical environment?” Somewhat to my surprise, the answer was, “Yes.”

The program is named `monodevelop` and can be found at <http://www.monodevelop.com>. What is nice is that it allows me to write the programs using the C# programming language

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**August Meeting: To be announced**

**\*\* OFFICERS \*\***

<b>President:</b> John Witmer (president@tpcug.org)	949-8007
<b>Vice President :</b> Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org)	988-6480
<b>Treasurer:</b> Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)	234-9343
<b>Secretary:</b> Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)	234-9343
<b>Member at Large:</b> Jim Purcell (Edward_J_P@MSN.com)	985-1676

**APPOINTED ( Volunteers)**

<b>Editor:</b> William LaMartin (lamartin@tampabay.rr.com)	251-3817
<b>Librarian:</b> Larry Anders (Larry@AndersNet.com)	989-9119
<b>Programs:</b> Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)	234-9343

**Home Page** <http://www.tpcug.org>

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 821 S. Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33606-2904; 813-251-3817; lamartin@tampabay.rr.com.

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**Minutes of the June Meeting**

*By John Witmer, President, substituting for  
Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group  
[dmullis@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)*

Bob LaFave opened the meeting with the usual Windows SIG. Bob spoke to the importance of backing up your system regularly, including backing up your data and Outlook Express files. To that end, he presented information on a program he uses that is in the \$20 price range for file backup and creating a startup disc. This program is called "DriveClone," from a company named Farstone (<http://www.farstone.com>). You can find details of the program on the company's website.

As to backing up your Outlook Express files, Bob told us about a free program he uses for this purpose. This program is "Outlook Express Freebie Backup", and it can be downloaded from <http://www.oehelp.com/oebackup>. Upon checking this website, I noticed a message that said this particular program was undergoing revisions and was not available; however, the site has another program that accomplishes the same purpose, and that is "Outlook Express Quick Backup", also free to download and use.

After discussing several additional items with the audience, Bob turned the meeting over to the group's president, John Witmer. John had Jim Purcell give the group a preview of what he was planning on presenting at the July meeting, which all pertained to digital-imaging-related items that would also serve as a basis for future programs at the Digital Imaging SIG that Jim wants to reinstate. John also received checks from four members who were renewing memberships with the group.

John then turned the meeting over to William LaMartin for his presentation on Ubuntu Linux on a Virtual PC. In order to do this presentation, William first created an environment to run the program, using Microsoft Virtual PC 2007. William demonstrated the steps required to install and utilize this virtual pc application, after which he discussed how he came to the decision of selecting the Ubuntu 6.06.1 version of Linux.

He chose Ubuntu over several Linux flavors because, when he tried the installation of the different Linux distributions on  
*(Minutes.....Continued on page 7)*



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## Are CD's and DVD's A Reliable Place To Store Your Data?

By Jim Purcell, Tampa PC Users Group  
[Edward\\_J\\_P@MSN.com](mailto:Edward_J_P@MSN.com)

In January of 2006, I attended a digital photography seminar conducted by staff members of the National Geographic Traveler magazine. They had recently published the first issue of their magazine in which every picture was taken with a digital camera. They instructed all of their photographers submitting pictures to use only digital cameras even if it meant buying a camera. They said that even a "point and shoot" was acceptable if they didn't already own a digital camera. It was interesting to hear of all of the procedural changes that were forced upon them as a result of going completely digital. One of the problems was settling on the most practical way to store and transmit all of their pictures. In addition to backing up on portable hard drives, they used a large number of CD's. They mentioned that people were becoming more concerned about the shelf life of CD's and indicated that MAM-A Inc. produced high quality CD's. I didn't pursue it at the time because I had my desktop with a large hard drive and my laptop had duplicates of my pictures and important files on its hard drive. Then a couple of things happened that brought data storage and in particular the storage of digital photos to the forefront. First, William LaMartin almost lost all of the data on his laptop (twice). He had his data and photo files backed-up on other devices, but the point is no matter how much you know about computers or how good your equipment is, you can very quickly find yourself staring at a blank screen. Next, two of my daughters and my granddaughter are taking a Photoshop course in St. Petersburg. Their instructor, who is a professional photographer, told them that he tried to retrieve some photos that he had recorded on a CD only five years earlier and he was unable to recover a single photo. He emphasized the importance of getting quality CD's and also recommended MAM-A Inc.

After hearing MAM-A Inc. mentioned again, I decided to check their web site. Their organization is described there as follows:

"MAM-A Inc. was founded in March 1996 for the production and sales of recordable compact discs. Its 50,000 sq. ft. plant is located in Colorado Springs, Colorado where the CD-R media is manufactured in a state-of-the-art clean room environment. The MAM GOLD discs use Mitsui Chemical's patented dye and have a characteristic gold color. This combination of dye and pure gold provide superior longevity, high-speed writing and quality recording up to 52X. MAM-A has earned a reputation in North America for producing the highest quality (professional grade) recordable media available.

MAM manufactures CD-R media in 650 MB and 700 MB capacities, with reflective surfaces of silver or gold. DVD-R media is manufactured in 4.7 GB capacities. MAM operates two manufacturing facilities worldwide for the production of CD-R and DVD-R media. Facilities are located in Colorado, USA, and in Alsace France".

All of the media that we are discussing in this article is recordable media (CD-R's and DVD-R's). When we get to the discussion of DVD's, we'll briefly discuss the two DVD formats (DVD-R and DVD+R), but the quality is the same for both. MAM-A does not make rewritable CD's or DVD's (CD-RW, DVD-RW or DVD+RW).

**Gold CD-R's:** There is an Archive and a Standard Gold CD-R. They both come from the same production line. The product is closely monitored during production and those of the highest quality are pulled and identified as having archival quality. Both the Archival and Standard version are tested to have an estimated storage life in excess of 300 years and are available in 74 and 80 minutes.

MAM guarantees compatibility. "MAM Gold CD-R's guarantee a perfect recording compatibility up to 52X, allowing an additional time saving for all users, while preserving an absolute reliability in storage and retrieval of data. MAM CD-R's media are compatible with all recorders and readers."

You can review specifications, as well as labeling and packaging alternatives, for the Gold CD-R at: [http://www.mam-a.com/products/gold/Gold%20CD-R%2010\\_10\\_03.pdf](http://www.mam-a.com/products/gold/Gold%20CD-R%2010_10_03.pdf).

**Silver CD-R's:** The Silver CD-R's have basically the same qualities as the Gold CD-R's except for the storage life. The Silver CD-R's estimated storage life is in excess of 100 years, and they are available in 74- and 80-minute format.

You can review specifications, as well as labeling and packaging alternatives, for the Silver CD-R at: [http://www.mam-a.com/products/silver/Silver%20CD-R%2010\\_10\\_03.pdf](http://www.mam-a.com/products/silver/Silver%20CD-R%2010_10_03.pdf).

A list of the Gold and Silver CD-R's made by MAM-A can be found at: [http://www.mam-a.com/products/cd\\_product\\_list.htm](http://www.mam-a.com/products/cd_product_list.htm).

**Gold and Silver DVD-R's:** The recordable DVD Discs are recordable General Purpose DVD-R media. As mentioned earlier, none of MAM-A's products are "rewritable". They can be used in any format (DV-Video, DVD-Audio etc). Although MAM-A recommends the MAM Gold DVD-R for archiving, both the Gold and Silver DVD-R's have an expected storage life of more than 100 years. When you write your data to a

(Data.....Continued on page 4)

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MAM-A DVD-R disc, it adapts the same playback characteristics as a DVD-ROM disc. This makes it compatible with the world-wide base of both DVD video players and DVD-ROM drives that support DVD-R media.

The DVD's are available in both formats, the dash R (DVD-R) and the plus R(DVD+R).

MAM-A recommends that CD-R media be handled and stored as follows:

### Precautions Before Recording

- Handle the disc only by the outer edge to prevent fingerprints and smears on the surface.
- Never touch the recording surface (unlabeled side) or set it down on a hard surface.
- Store the disc in its protective case. Proper storage helps protect the data from damage due to scratches on the disc surface.
- If dirty, clean the surface with canned air. Cleaning by wiping the surface is not recommended

### General Handling Precautions After Writing

- Never use a ballpoint pen or any other sharp object to label your discs. Using a felt tip pen is the easiest and fastest way to label a CD-R. Note, however, a few caution items. Some chemical properties of the ink can actually permeate the disc surface and cause damage to either the reflective layer or dye layer below the surface. Never use a solvent-based permanent marking pen on the top surface in the data area. The absolute safest area to label your CD-R is in the clear center near the center hole (any marker can be used here). A water-based, permanent marker is recommended when labeling the top surface.
- Do not attempt to erase anything that has been written on the surface of the disc.
- If you will be using any adhesive labels or stickers, some precautions should be taken:
- Labels must be perfectly adhered to the disc surface. Any bubbling or creasing can imbalance the disc, which can cause tracking errors or noisy spin-ups. Never attempt to remove an adhered label. This can damage the protective layer or the reflective layer, causing permanent damage to the disc. In addition, as with writing pens, insure that your labels' adhesive does not contain any chemical solvents that can become absorbed into the top layer. The adhesive on some labels has been known to damage discs. Labels can also become loose with age. Adhesive labels are not recommended for discs being used for archival purposes. (See list below)

- If you need to remove dirt or fingerprints from the read side of the disc, please follow these guidelines:

Use a CD-cleaner cloth if available and wipe the disc from the inside to the outside, perpendicular to the tracks. (Lens cleaning cloths work well, or a clean cotton cloth. The cloth should be a "non-wood product," i.e., not a facial tissue or paper towel). Do not wipe in a circular motion around the disc, as this may scratch the disc ALONG the track if dirt is on the cloth. (Scratches ACROSS the disc are easier to correct than ones that follow the track) Commercially available CD cleaning liquid, ethyl or isopropyl alcohol, clear or soapy water can also be used. Do not use gasoline, kerosene, benzene, acetone, lacquer thinner, anti-static agents, or LP record cleaners, as they may damage the recording surface.

### Quick List for Archiving:

- Use gold CD-R or DVD-R media for the best longevity
- Never touch the recording side
- Do not use adhesive labels
- Store vertically in a protective case
- Protective cases should be rigid and contact the disc at the center hub only
- Store at room temperature at moderate humidity (below 50%)
- For labeling, use a water-based, permanent, felt-tipped marker for writing on the top (write area) of the disc, or mark in clear center hub with any marker, or, ideally, write only on protective case
- Do not subject CDs to rapid changes in temperature or humidity
- Protect from light
- Never flex a recordable disc
- Store one copy offsite if possible.

**Firmware:** They also point out that if the firmware for your CD or DVD drive is not up to date, it might not record at the top-rated speed and may not produce acceptable recording quality even on the best media. All CD and DVD writers have firmware that contains basic operating instructions that allow them to write to the wide range of disc types in the market place. Drive manufacturers test recordable CD's and DVD's from all major disc manufacturers. These samples are used to find a "writing strategy" that is best suited for each media type. MAM-A has provided the following "pdf" document on their site that will provide even more information and has links to all of the major manufacturers of drives so you can just click to find the most recent firmware upgrades: <http://www.mam-a.com/upgrade/default.htm>.

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**Where to Buy:** The product is available at Amazon.com. Just go to our web site (TPCUG.com) and click on the Amazon.com link on the home page, which, at no cost to you, will give our user group a commission. When you reach Amazon just search Electronics for "MAM-A". Depending on the quantity and label or no label, the prices I saw were in the range of \$0.47 for a silver CD to \$1.99 for a gold DVD. A solvent free pen is \$1.90. MAM-A has a web store that didn't have quite the selection that I found at Amazon.com. I'm sure that if you contacted them for a particular item that they would either get it for you or tell you where you can find it. This store has closeout items at excellent prices so it would be worth your time to check there before you buy. Their site is: <http://www.mam-a-store.com/>.

**Summary:** I confined my discussion of CD's and DVD's to one company. There are a couple reasons for not covering several manufacturers. One, MAM-A is the name that kept coming up when people talked about CD or DVD quality. Once I visited their web site and encountered the wealth of information available on the site and answers to my questions provided by their Sales & Marketing and International Inquiries representatives, I decided to limit my presentation to the MAM-A product. I hope that this and the links from their site provide information that will help you select the media to fit your needs.

I've include an unusual number of links because I felt that further information would be of interest to some but not all. I am also adding more links at the end of the article because they are quite informative but are not essential to the purpose of the article. As you know, we have the luxury of having all of our newsletter articles available on our web site in "html" and "pdf" format shortly after publication. They can be downloaded, so that you can click on the links to view them.

Beware of Fading Dye WSJ: [http://www.mam-a.com/technology/Tech%20News/WSJ\\_Portals2.pdf](http://www.mam-a.com/technology/Tech%20News/WSJ_Portals2.pdf)

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## Internet Picture of the Month



**Print, Cut & Fold:**

For all us poor suckers who can't wait

### iPhone Cutout

From almost anywhere on the Internet, you can find an image of the new iPhone. An unbelievable amount of free advertising was given Apple for the introduction of their entry into the cell phone market. Price \$499 or \$599.

If you don't want to spend that much and already have a phone, then why not go to the link below and download the full-size version of the image above so that you can make your own iPhone.

<http://www.t2business.co.uk/images/iphone.jpg>

## July's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)  
iPhone cutout  
Tampa Neighborhoods  
Environmental Working Group  
Microsoft Live Mobile Search  
France for Visitors

<http://www.tpcug.org/>  
<http://www.t2business.co.uk/images/iphone.jpg>  
[http://www.tampagov.net/appl\\_neighborhoods/](http://www.tampagov.net/appl_neighborhoods/)  
<http://ewg.org/>  
<http://mobile.search.live.com/about/download/default.aspx>  
<http://france-for-visitors.com/>



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.

## FACUG Spring Conference at Kissimmee

By Bruce Register, Tampa PC Users Group  
[bregist3@sw.rr.com](mailto:bregist3@sw.rr.com)

**Editor's Note:** Bruce submitted this several months back, and I misplaced it and forgot about it. So the delayed publication date is my fault, and the information is just as good now as it would have been earlier—just not as timely.

**Gene and Linda Barlow** (<http://www.usergroupstore.com>) have been regulars at FACUG for several years. They have been visiting the Florida PC user groups, making presentations and giving door prizes. This year Gene says that he will cut down on his traveling. He will “focus on tutorials instead.” Visit his website for tutorials. He will provide groups with review software.

He publishes a technical newsletter that is free to members and friends. Contact Gene/Linda to sign up for it. Go to their website shown above. I made notes to the best of my ability to understand and follow his presentation.

Gene said, “Now is the time to go Vista.” He said, I think I understood it correctly, for us to go the MS Product website and view Vista, 300 pages. That must be some review or discussion. I have not been there yet. He says Vista will require “more memory and contains upgraded graphics.”

He recommended purchasing the Vista Home Premium edition, \$159. Business users may want Windows Vista Business. Current Windows users could upgrade to Windows Vista Ultimate, \$259 upgrade price.

He said to avoid replacing XP; buy a new computer and install Vista to avoid problems. He suggested other ways. The new computer route seemed to be his recommendation. He suggested one could make a clean install. In other words, start new with Vista to avoid upgrade over XP problems. Or, partition your drive for both systems.

Gene mentioned software that will transfer applications from one computer to your new PC, named PCMove, which is \$49 in store. He also mentioned partitioning your computer with an extra D drive for your data. Keep your applications on the C drive. One example he gave was C:\XP, C:\Vista and D:\Data. That way you get a clean install. You can expand or reduce space in the partitions. Acronis Disk Director Suite assists with partitions. Vista can do partitions, but it cannot expand or reduce without wiping out all applications and data. Gene has many software programs. User group members get discounts.

**Smart Computing** with Jen Clausen and Marcy (Gunn)

Kremer (“Yep! She got married.”) provided the buffet and a great program. The program was filled with good information and a lot of fun games. Prizes were awarded. All agreed that there was no better money spent than on a subscription to Smart Computing. The support, research and all the other features and help are fantastic. You can even get Smart Computing Magazine and articles from their website. They can and will assist you with tech support via an 800 number. This is a subscriber-only feature. Much information, research and support is free to non-subscribers. Going to buy something new, go to Smart Computing product research. Among many, many services that they provide is your own research library maintained on their system available to you 24/7, as are their other services. Quick Studies is another service. Phone contact is 800-368-8304. A user group member who subscribes should subscribe through their system as they have it set for PCUG members so that your group can get credits. Credits are used for freebies to your group. Go to <http://www.smartcomputing.com>.

As usual, **Corel** presented an excellent program and a buffet meal. They presented Paint Shop Pro XI. They also presented several other software programs. The new Word Perfect program is available. I decided to replace my Paint Shop Pro 8 with this newer fantastic application.

The presentation was made using their “Learning Center.” That is also available to you. Go to <http://www.corel.com> and click on the Community link. Then select Tutorials.

Scott Moore of **Ai Squared** presented Zoom Text 9.0 by Scott Moore. Zoom Text is a most unusual magnifier. It is billed as the world's best magnification and reading software for the vision impaired. It does so much in so many ways that it is far ahead of other magnifier programs. You will be amazed at the features. It was designed for handicapped, but its usage goes far beyond. Close work can be viewed, manipulated and presented in “Wow!” ways. It has a hefty price tag. One version is \$395, another is \$595. Upgrades are much cheaper. Ai Squared, <http://www.aisquared.com>, (800)859-0270, will provide you with a trial version which is a really good presentation of the program. Scott was asked if his company will provide a group with a copy of the program for review and group presentation and the reviewer can keep it. He said that he would take the idea back to his company. Give the trial presentation to your group. I think that I remember reading on my copy of the software they gave everyone that it was a free 60-day trial.

Carl Lofstrom presented “**Trouble Shooting**” using PowerPoint. He kept everyone attentive to hear and see all that he presented. One cure for troubles is, “Every 30 minutes, get up from the computer and walk around.” I seem to remember him saying that his presentation is available at <http://polk-pcug.org>. Always carry USB memory sticks to the meetings. The pre-

(FACUG.....Continued on page 7)

## 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.

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

sender will frequently download the presentation for you on site. Carl mentioned so many websites for free help that I could not write them fast enough. He will answer your emails. A program chairperson could do no better than to get Carl to come over and do a demo. He is most courteous, is very qualified in all aspects and wants to be helpful. One can find him in the list of PC user groups on the FACUG website. I lost a UPS from plain overuse and old age. I followed his advice when I replaced it and “did not skimp on money when buying an uninterruptible backup power supply.” Low voltage and power surges can be very damaging if not protected.

Microsoft made presentations of several applications. Mind-share was the main focus. Microsoft donated the meal, as did the other presenters. We are lucky and grateful.

New officers were elected. Meritorious Awards were given. Door prizes have become leaner and leaner each year for the last several years. Vendors have had to cut back on budgets, staff, travel and prizes. We appreciated everything donated. Exhibitors were very few. Attendance was way down this year. Numbers were smaller but QUALITY was still very good. Everyone would be rewarded by attending the Fall Conference for one day in October 2007 and attending the Spring Conference the first or second weekend of March 2008. Much, much more was presented. You cannot attend every session as three different ones are going on at the same time. You will just pick one of interest. The breakout sessions are all day. Breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets are in the main auditorium of the Kissimmee Convention Center. Everyone attends those. ◆

**Editor’s Note #2:** Bruce, a longtime member of the TPCUG and still a member has moved to Dothan, Alabama and is in the process of starting a computer users group there.

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

VPC 2007, Ubuntu worked by far the best with no modifications. For example, connecting to the Windows network and the Internet worked from the beginning. He said that there were two newer versions of Ubuntu, 6.10 and 7.04, but both had problems with the installation (which, however, could be overcome with a bit of command prompt work). Since version 6.06.1 gave you the same basic functionality, why bother with the extra effort to install the others.

He showed how to begin the installation of Ubuntu on a VPC and, since that would have taken some time, switched to a VPC on which he had already installed Ubuntu. From there he demonstrated working within Linux using the Open Office Suite of programs: word processor, spreadsheet, presentation program and database. We saw how to install new programs by installing a game and trying it out. A brief look at the Apache web server and the MySQL database ended the presentation.

At the conclusion of William’s presentation, John Witmer reminded the group of Jim Purcell’s digital presentation at the July meeting and thanked everyone for coming. We had approximately 25 attendees at the meeting, including four visitors. The meeting concluded at 8:40 pm. ◆

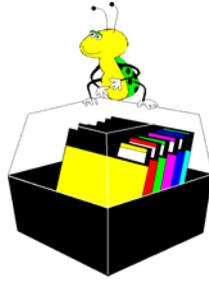
*(Data.....Continued from page 5)*

Not all CD’s Are Created Equal (Contains Discussion of Significance of Colors and Black CD’s): <http://www.mam-a.com/technology/Tech%20News/Not%20all%20CDRs%20are%20created%20equal.pdf>

CD and DVD Care and Handling Guide developed by NIST, Dept of Commerce: <http://www.itl.nist.gov/iad/894.05/docs/CDandDVDCareandHandlingGuide.pdf>

Dye Details: [http://www.mam-a.com/technology/cd/organic\\_dyes.html](http://www.mam-a.com/technology/cd/organic_dyes.html) ◆

**Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.**  
P. O. Box 3492  
Tampa, FL 33601-3492



**First Class Mail**

- Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
- Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page \_\_\_\_*

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

with which I have some familiarity. At this point I have only tried to do simple things, like display message boxes, display images, change the image based on a file that is selected from a directory, do simple calculations and connect to a MySQL database. As time permits, I hope to do more.

Programming in monodevelop is somewhat similar to programming for Windows in Visual Studio using C#—except that Visual Studio is light years more advanced than is monodevelop.

I hope my presentation might have tempted a few of you to try out Linux in the VPC environment. If you do, you will probably find what I found: You can do most everything many people want and need to do from within the Linux environment. But for me, there are many things I cannot do in Linux that are important to me, so it will remain just a novelty to investigate while I continue with Windows for my main endeavors. ♦

