



August in Tampa

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

Vol. 20 No. 8 August 2007

Meeting

A visit from CompUSA

Mytu Tran

Wednesday, August 8, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Mytu Tran (pronounced Metoo), the Business Services Sales Representative with CompUSA on Hillsborough Ave., will tell us about the services they provide to the home PC user and their current line of PC related products. 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

What to write about? I have had the new Adobe Photoshop CS3 for several months. I have had the new Microsoft Office 2007 Ultimate for less than a month. Photoshop CS3 was a two version upgrade from my previous Photoshop CS. Office 2007 is the next upgrade from my previous Office 2003. However, the Ultimate version has several more programs than did Office 2003 Professional: OneNote, InfoPath and Groove. I won't be using Groove since is for collaborative work among a group of people, but InfoPath and OneNote might be of some interest. Then there are the usual suspects of Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Publisher and Access, all of which I use. The problem of doing a re-

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September Meeting: To be announced

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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 July Meeting

*By John Witmer, President, substituting for
Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com*

The meeting began with the Windows SIG led by Bob LaFave. Bob stressed the importance of periodically doing a Disk Cleanup. This utility can be found by clicking on Start, | select All Programs | Accessories | System Tools. Both Disk Cleanup and Disk Defragmenter can be found there. On the More Options tab of Disk Cleanup, there are several additional options that can be selected to free up additional disk space. Disk Defragmenter is another utility found there that should be periodically used to help speed up your system accessing the files and data stored on your hard drive.

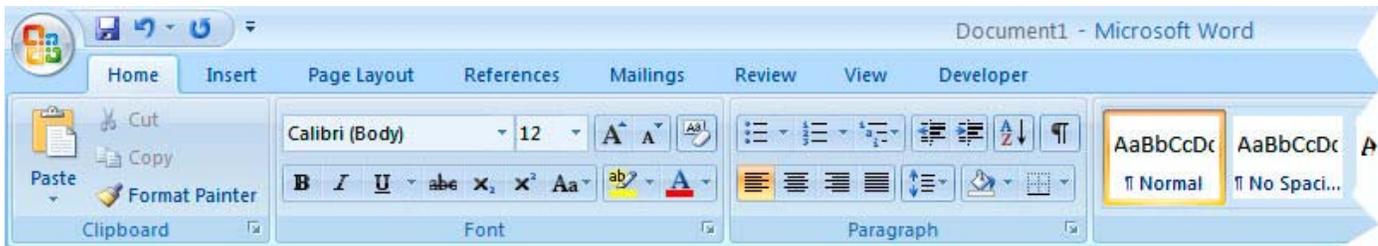
Bob next took us on a trip down memory lane, bringing up Windows 3.1 in a Virtual PC environment, giving us a flashback to how the old days looked and functioned, including use of the old File Manager, etc. Following this flashback, discussion took place on the benefit of disabling and getting rid of the Language Toolbar, if you don't need it for any reason. This program uses resources to monitor for microphone input and is not necessary if you don't have or use a microphone to capture speech.

A question was asked about monitor resolutions. The response was that your video card and video memory determine what resolutions are available to you; you must also have the correct drivers installed to match the video card. A comment on a different topic had to do with removal of old security programs before installing new ones. If you are unable to uninstall a Symantec problem application that does not respond when you use the add/remove programs approach, you can find a Removal Tool that removes everything that Symantec ever created. This tool is available on their website. This concluded the Windows SIG portion of the meeting.

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Member of
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Microsoft Office 2007: My First Impressions

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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The first thing I noticed when saving this document I am writing in Word 2007 is that there is now a new Word document type. It has a suffix of docx instead of doc. Docx is the extension of the new file format based on XML. Microsoft lists several benefits of this format over the old format:

- More compact files: It uses zip compression to compress and decompress on the fly.
- Improved damaged-file recovery: The modular construction of the file allows it to be opened if one component of the file is damaged but others are OK.
- Better privacy: You can use “Document Inspector” to remove hidden data and personal information.
- Easier detection of documents containing macros: Office 2007 Word (.docx), Excel (.xlsx) and PowerPoint (.pptx) files cannot contain macros or VBA code. Only files ending in m like .docm, .xlsm, and .pptm can contain such code.

Of course, you can still save documents in the formats of earlier versions of Office. Additionally, someone using an earlier version of Office, e.g., Office 2003, can open, edit some items, and save Office 2007 Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents by using the Compatibility Pack for the 2007 Office system, from Office 2003. The Office Compatibility Pack for Office 2007 is available at the Microsoft Download Center.

Access has a new file format, also. The suffix for

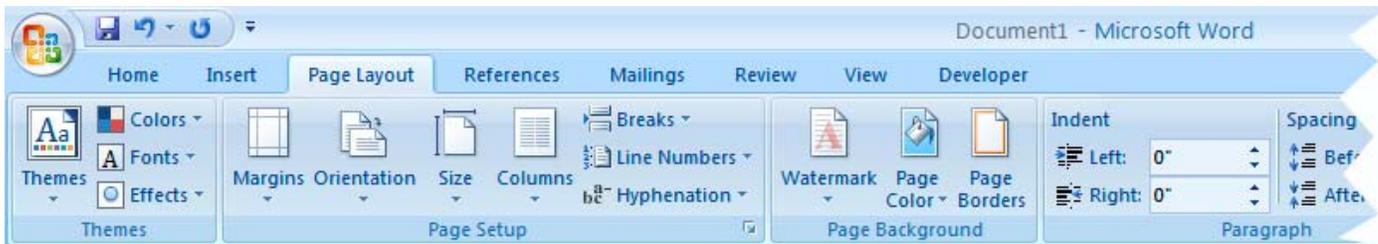
that is accdb. As above, you can convert the new file format to the earlier mdb file format if your Access 2007 database does not use any of the new features in Access 2007. Things get quite technical when discussing the reasons to use or not use the new Access file format, so I will not venture there.

I had no trouble installing the full version (not an upgrade) of Office 2007 on both my desktop computer and my laptop, both of which had Windows XP as the operating system and also had Office 2003 Professional installed. I chose to leave Office 2003 Professional installed and to install Office 2007 Ultimate in a separate folder. The reason for doing this is that two individuals had warned me that I might find a time when I needed to use the older version for something. So far that need has not occurred, but, of course, I have done very little with the new product so far. I should note that you are allowed to install the product on a desktop computer and a laptop computer simultaneously.

Word was the first program I started after the installation, and I was a bit disorientated by what I saw at the top of the screen. Things are not where they used to be. As you will note, there are no File or Edit menu items in the image above. Instead, what you see is called a Ribbon, with different tabs and each tab divided into separate sections.

To get to your file options, you need to click on that large round button in the upper left-hand corner. The usual Edit options of Copy, Paste, etc. are right in front of you on the Clipboard section of the Home tab. If you need to insert something such as a picture, you would click on the Insert tab, where you would be presented with a Ribbon containing a Pages section, a Tables section, an Illustrations section, etc. The Illustrations section is the one containing a picture icon to be clicked on to start the inser-

(Office.....Continued on page 4)



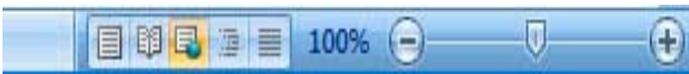
(Office.....Continued from page 3)
tion of an image.

The Page Layout ribbon tab looks like the second image, above.

I think the Themes section is something that is new with 2007 (I never saw it in 2003). Of course, the other settings for Margins, Orientation, etc. are the same as before. A check shows me that I am using what is termed the Office Theme in writing this in Word. There is a selection of 20 different themes available, and, as I hover my mouse over any one, my document immediately displays according to that theme's colors, fonts and effects.

Times New Roman is no longer the default font for body text. It is now Calibri if I am using the Office Theme, as you can see in the first graphic for this article.

I suspect the new interface might actually be easier for a novice user since they would not have to search for features hidden in the old labyrinth of menus. For me, though, it has taken a little time to get used to it since, it is so different from the old interface, but I am getting comfortable with it quite quickly.

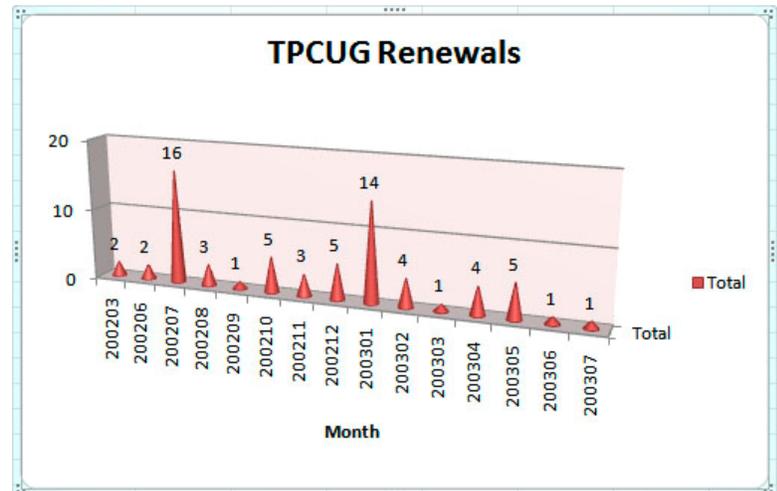


One neat new feature is the zoom slider bar in the lower right-hand corner of the Word screen, as shown directly above. This makes it real easy to zoom the document in or out.

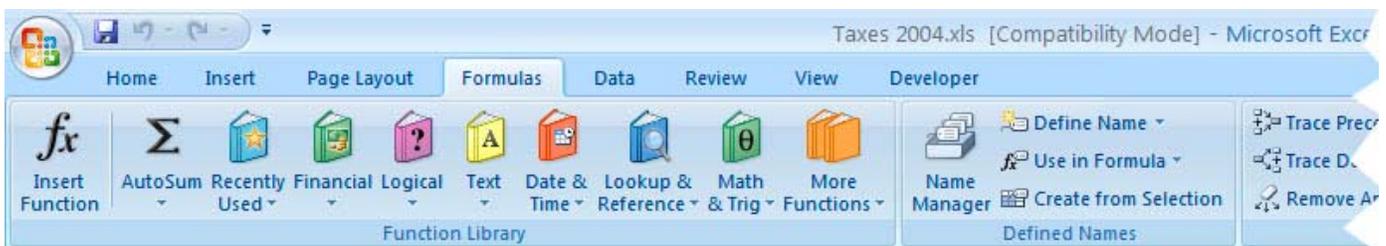
Excel also has a new interface with a Ribbon, like Word. In fact, the home tab ribbon in Excel looks much like the one in Word for the first few sections. So, to show something a bit different, I have displayed the Formulas tab Ribbon from Excel at the bottom of this page.

As in Word, if you hover your cursor over one of the icons in the ribbon, a small window pops up to describe the functionality of the item and also to give you a keyboard shortcut, if such exists and if you should want to learn that.

Also, just as I found with Word, all the documents created with previous versions of the program opened in the 2007 program without problems. I was able to save the document in its "old" format, or I could choose to convert it to an Office 2007 XML format.



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In my brief look at Excel, I could find nothing different about the functionality other than a larger and more colorful selection of charts. The chart on the previous page is an example of that. It is a Columnar 3-D Cone chart based on a pivot table created from the membership renewal data for the club in 2002 and 2003. You might rightly ask why such old data. Well, I keep the membership data for newsletter mailings in Access—not Excel. But, for some reason, in looking for some Excel files with data to graph, I found this old membership data already there in Excel and thus used it to create the graph.

Excel 2003 does have a cone graph style; however, in 2007 there are many more variations that can be applied to it, one of which I used, so the workbook containing the chart has to be saved in the Excel 2007 format.

Merle Nicholson alerted me to one improvement in the new Excel—no limit of 65,535 rows in an Excel sheet. Now you can have million-row sheets.

Outlook in appearance looks basically the same to me as did the 2003 version. I see no Ribbon across the top like the ones in Word and Excel. What I do notice is that Outlook is now fully indexed so that you get quick results for any text search of the messages. To get this going, Outlook first has to index all your messages, which may take some time. But after this, it indexes each new message that comes in, and I gather that when a message is permanently deleted its index information is also removed.

One thing to note is that, as mentioned earlier, I have both Office 2003 and Office 2007 installed on my

(Office.....Continued on page 6)

Internet Picture of the Month



Postcard of old federal building in Tampa

From the Jacksonville Florida Public Library's site, <http://jpl.coj.net/>, we have one of the postcards from their postcard collection. Their postcard collection at <http://jpl.coj.net/dlc/florida/postcards.html> is divided into Jacksonville cards and cards from the rest of Florida.

This card depicts the federal building and post office on Florida Avenue in Tampa. It must be fairly old since it shows a horse carriage and no cars. The card's URL is <http://jpl.coj.net/dlc/florida/pc/PCJPG/PCJAX211-008.html>.

August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)

<http://www.tpcug.org/>

Stonehenge Aotearoa

<http://www.astronomynz.org.nz/stonehenge/>

W3 Schools—free web building tutorials

<http://www.w3schools.com/>

SunPass

<http://www.sunpass.com/>

Cyberhomes.com

<http://www.cyberhomes.com>



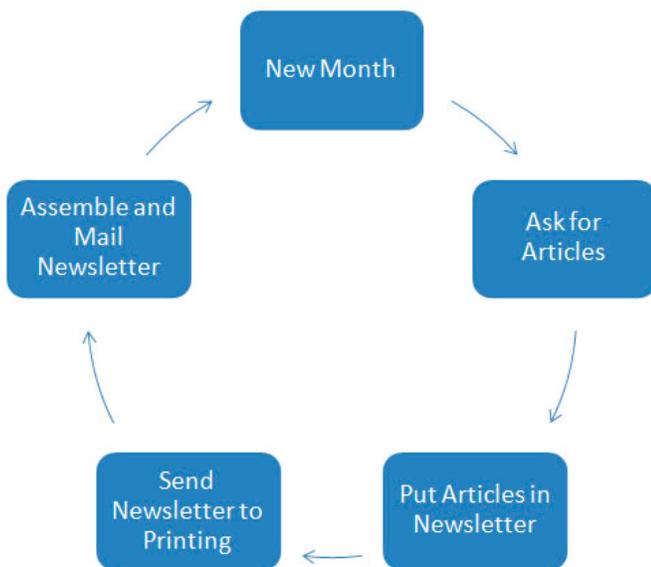
Some of these links will join the many already on the Links page at our web site, where you need only click on the name.

(Office.....Continued from page 5)

computer. However, that is not totally true since I no longer have Outlook 2003 installed—only Outlook 2007. You can have only one version of Outlook installed.

PowerPoint has the ribbon interface, and after getting used to it in the previously-mentioned Office applications, it is straightforward and easy to use. Of course, there are new templates for presentations, but, since I do fairly unadorned presentations, it is hard for me to tell what new or improved features this new version has. One exception to that is something called Smart Art on the Insert tab or the ribbon.

Example of Smart Art



The types of Smart Art fall into the categories of Lists, Processes, Cycles, Hierarchies, Relationships, etc. The image above is a Cycle example.

Access is probably the least used Office application and is, in fact, not even available in some of the distributions of Office. It is, however, the most powerful and also most difficult to master of the applications. You can make a good living programming Access applications. Of course, the same could be said for Word if you used it to write Harry Potter books.

Much of my Visual Basic programming involves deal-

ing with data stored in Access databases. I would say that Access is Merle Nicholson's primary area of work at present. He sometimes presents some of what he has been working on at our Access Special Interest Group.

It was Merle mainly who caused me not to install Office 2007 over 2003 since he had found that some of his applications created in Access 2003 did not port to Access 2007. He uses custom tool bars in his applications, and the new Access Ribbon is not compatible with them. Such things would not be a problem for Access users who do not create custom applications.

At present, I have found none of my Access databases that didn't open and display properly in Access 2007. I did, however, encounter one problem that was easily fixed.

Many of my Access databases have Visual Basic code modules in them. I found that when I tried to open such databases and then do something like a query or report that used this code, I would receive an error message like *Undefined Function Trim in Expression.....* In this instance, it was telling me it did not know what the Trim function was (the VB function that removes spaces before and after text). A check of Google told me that it was a reference problem that could be easily fixed by opening any code module, displaying the references, adding any new reference at random, closing the reference dialog and then reopening it and removing the recently added reference. And, you know, I think I had this same problem when I installed Access 2003 and used the same technique to fix it.

One new feature I noticed in Access and have tested is the ability to create an email message in Outlook that contains a form to collect information corresponding to certain fields of an Access table. When I receive a recipient's reply to the email, what they entered in the form's fields is automatically inserted into a new record in the database table. This has possibilities for questionnaires within our group.

I just about forgot to mention the program with which I am creating the newsletter.

Publisher 2007 appears the same to me as Publisher

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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, or Merle Nicholson at merle@merlenicholson.com.

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

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

Our presentation by Jim Purcell covered a multitude of things related to digital imaging. Jim started off his presentation by showing us a collection of film and digital cameras that he has collected since the late 1940's and early 50's, giving us a little background on why each particular camera was selected to be used by him. For a little show and tell, Jim was able to connect one of his digital cameras thru the room's VCR to the overhead projector, and, thus, we were able to see on the screen what he could see when taking a picture, including some of the settings and the changes made to them. Jim demonstrated the differences in results by varying the white balance settings. He also showed us the differences obtained when choosing the bracket shooting mode, whereby each of three pictures taken sequentially have slightly different exposure settings, allowing you to choose the best one. There was also a discussion on the benefit of getting a digital camera that had Image Stabilization capability, which can eliminate photos that are slightly blurred due to movement in your hands and arm when taking a picture.

Jim next moved on to demonstrating photo corrections that could be achieved using Photoshop Elements 4.0. Through his familiarity with using this program, he made it seem fairly simple to correct blemishes, coloring, red-eye, etc. in your pictures. This is a program that he would like to demonstrate further in a future Digital Imaging SIG, once that group's meetings are reinstated.

Jim brought to the meeting two different scanners that he uses, and he demonstrated use of the Minolta film scanner. He also had a flatbed scanner set up, but, due to the lateness of the hour, he only mentioned some of the ways he uses it. Jim concluded his presentation by reeling off a list of books and publications that he rec-

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.

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.

This is a correction to my article "Are CD's and DVD's A Reliable Place To Store Your Data?", that appeared in the July issue of our newsletter. Lora Swenson, Sales Manager of MAM-A Inc., graciously agreed to review the article to make sure that I had reported their product information correctly. I know that all of you are indeed shocked to learn that I did make an error. She provided the following correction to my article:

"The only correction that should be mentioned is that MAM-A's Silver CD-Rs are estimated to last conservatively 50+years under proper storage conditions, but Silver DVD-Rs are rated only for 20+ years. This is because DVD recordable discs have two bonded plastic layers, which will allow oxidation to occur for the silver metal layer over time, compared to CD-Rs that have only one plastic layer. DVD-R dye is also not as UV resistant compared to Mitsui's CD-R dye.

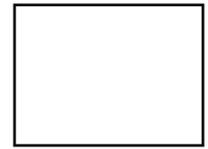
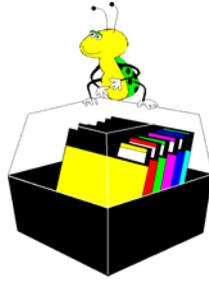
True archival discs should be 24K Gold, with accelerated aging tests for Gold CD-Rs rated at 300 years, and Gold DVD+/-Rs at 100+ years."

— Jim Purcell

ommended for a more in-depth understanding of the world of digital photography and imaging. Unfortunately, I was not able to get that information written down to include in these minutes, so I would recommend anyone interested in which books Jim has suggested to contact him directly to discuss the particular topics that interest you.

The meeting concluded at the end of Jim's presentation. We had a total of 26 members and guests present at this meeting ♦

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First Class Mail

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

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view of them so soon after getting the 2007 versions is that I really don't have time to see what is new in each program in any detail. However, I think there is probably more interest in Office than in Photoshop. Certainly more people have some version of Office than they do of Photoshop (not to be confused with Photoshop Elements). So that is what I will write about this month and save anything concerning Photoshop for the future. ◆



(Office.....Continued from page 6)

2003. It does not have the Ribbon across the top, but it has the usual menu bar and tool bars. I really see nothing new, although I am sure that is not the case and that there is at least a larger collection of publication templates than before, if nothing else.

Groove, InfoPath and OneNote are the minor components of Office 2007 Ultimate. I have some interest in InfoPath and One Note and will possibly write about them later. ◆

