Bits of Blue

November in Tampa

Meeting

**Steve Singer of RDI
New Computer Hardware**

**Wednesday, November 14, 2007
6:30 PM
Art Pepin Hospitality Room
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI will pay us his annual visit to inform us about what's new in hardware. As usual, the meeting will begin with our Windows SIG led by Bob La-Fave.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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LP to CD Following last month's presentation on Audio Visual duplication, I decided to restart my long-lapsed program of transferring some of my LPs to digital files which could then be put on CDs. I had done this for a few LPs many years back and recalled it was a bit tedious, so I asked Merle Nicholson if he had any suggestions. He said, "Do you have Easy CD Creator?" Well, yes, I have Roxio Easy Media Creator. He said to check and see if they didn't have some software for working with LPs. And they did. It is Roxio LP and Tape Assistant.

After that, everything was fairly easy. I simply connected two RC cables from the output of my very old (1968) KLH stereo system with an integrated turntable to an adapter that plugged into the stereo line-in jack of my computer's sound card. Next I started the Roxio software, started the LP playing and let the software determine the proper recording levels. Next, I restarted the LP and let

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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for their support

Minutes of the October Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG portion of our meeting at 6:30pm.

Eddie Rodriquez asked which is the fastest web search engine. Bob responded that Google is fast and will find almost anything. William LaMartin thought Microsoft had a good engine and didn't like the fact that if Google combined information from your Gmail account and your searches they could track your activity. William suggested we also check out Scroogle.org, which does not retain a history of your activities beyond 48 hours.

Bob said Office 2003 SP3 is now out but don't download it if you downloaded SP2. You should go instead to the Microsoft update site on the Internet for updates. Windows Vista SP 1 and 2 are coming, as well as Windows XP SP 3.

Harry Lochabay was at the recent FACUG seminar in Orlando and found the program interesting. At the concurrent computer trade fair, the vendors were mostly pushing notebook computers. Both XP and Vista operating systems were offered, however, XP seemed predominant. Microsoft is already hinting at the replacement of Vista as early as 2009.

The 2008 anti-virus software is constantly improving and is checking for newer forms of viruses. Depending on whom you are with, updates are downloaded anywhere from daily to monthly. Make sure you stay current with the updates.

At 7:05 pm, President John Witmer started the business portion of our meeting. John acknowledged the larger than usual attendance, then reminded everyone that we need a slate of officer nominees to serve the group in calendar year 2008. The elected offices are President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Member at Large. We need members who have not led the group to step up to

apcug   Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups

D-Link Wireless-G Internet Camera Model DCS-G900

By Merle Nicholson,
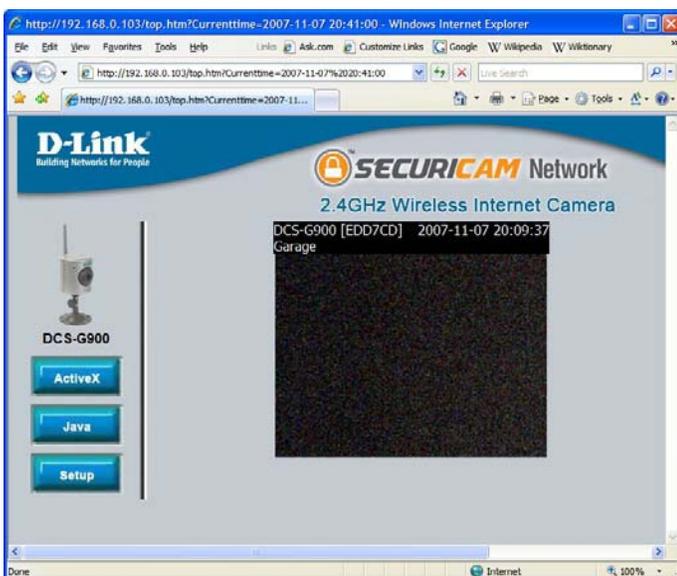*Tampa PC Users Group*
merle@merlenicholson.com

This is a camera you can place anywhere in range of your wireless router. You can then monitor the picture from any computer on your network. It's very easy to set up, and, other than the power cube, there are no wires to run.

My wife, Valerie, and I have wanted some way to monitor our detached garage for many years, and this appeared on sale at NewEgg, so I looked into it. I rely very heavily on the user reviews there in making my buying decisions. I looked at others, more expensive and cheaper, too. This one had very good reviews.

To understand how this guy works, you have to understand that it has a web server built in. It generates its own web pages, and all you do is connect to it with a browser – I use IE 7. It couldn't be simpler.
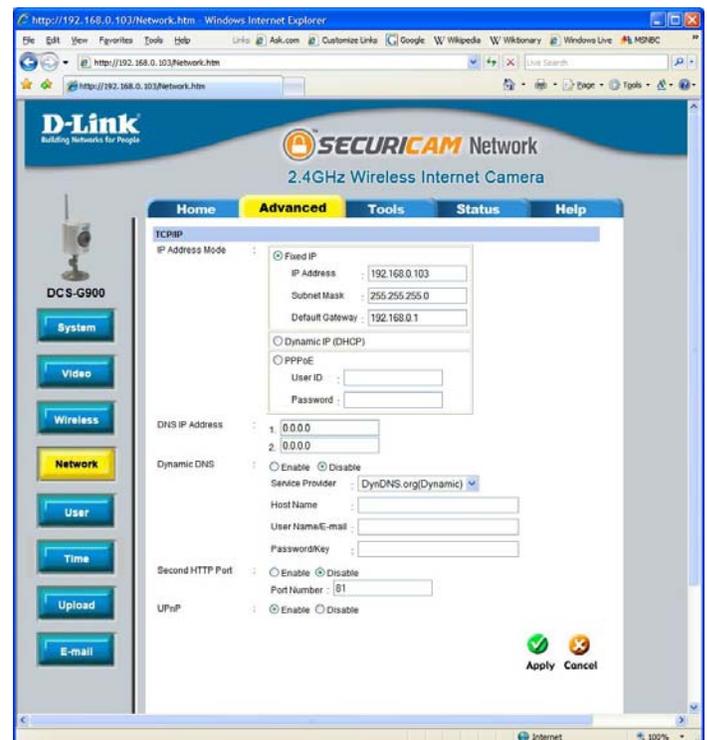
Some people program their router to expose the camera to the Internet, and, as long as you know your router's IP address, you can watch the cat tear up the couch from work! Or see that your hamster really sleeps all day.

I haven't any reason to watch it away from home. But if I did -- what I really like about it is that it isn't connected to a computer. You need the router and the webcam on, and that's it.

To set it up, you just plug it in and run the installation program. You'll connect to the camera's home page and select the setup, then you need to program the webcam with the router's SSID and whatever encryption key you use. Your wireless router DOES have encryption, doesn't it? You don't want your neighbor kid camping on your router to do his BitTorrent download of the latest Spiderman movie, do you?

When the SSID and encryption are set, the picture will start up using its default resolution and frame rate. You can set the resolution to 160x120, 320x240 or 640x480. You can set a data compression rate and frame rates in Frames/Sec of 1, 5, 7, 15, 20 and 30. There are brightness, contrast and saturation controls.

Other settings are available to FTP a picture to an FTP site at scheduled intervals, and there are email settings where you can set your SMTP server address and email address, and it will email a snapshot to you at intervals that you choose.

To view the picture in the browser, it will download an activex plug-in for your browser. There's an alternative Java plug-in, too. These install from the camera web server.

There is a stand-alone program, IPVIEW, that installs from the CD which takes up less screen real estate than a browser. This camera viewer can zoom in and out and also capture snapshots to a JPG file. Its main attraction is that you can view multiple cameras – up to four – in split screen. You don't need this program to view the camera, but it does have some real functions that compelled me to install it on one computer in my house. The others just use Internet Explorer.

With IPVIEW, there's a control panel that will scan your network for the cameras, so you don't need to assign a fixed IP address. From this control panel there are numerous setup options, including an alarm based on motion that will send an email, and there's a recording option.

View of my garage with door open

I've had it running for a month now. I have the application running continuously on my server machine that runs continuously anyway, and I'll set up an email or FTP to my website based on motion when we are out of town. In the meantime, it's there to check if the garage door is down, the garage lights off and the cars are there with their interior lights off. And that the bicycle hasn't yet fallen on my Honda. We like it; it's inexpensive, has a minimal footprint on the computers and easy to set up.

D-Link Wireless-G Internet Camera Model DCS-G900 $104.99 at NewEgg ◆

FACUG Fall Meeting

By Doug Mullis, Tampa P C Users Group
dmullis@tampabay.rr.com

Jane Jukes, Harry Lochabay and I attended the Fall conference of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups last month in Orlando. This group meets in the Spring and Fall each year in convenient central Florida locations. The purpose of the Association is to coordinate activities of statewide PC user groups and to exchange ideas for assuring the success of those groups. .

While few of us would attend a national conference in Las Vegas (the Association of Personal Computer Groups), why not go to the Florida association conferences? If you want to take an active role in leading our group (and you should) to assure its continuance with interesting programs, I encourage you to become an officer and attend FACUG conferences. Of course, you don't have to be an officer to attend. Registration fees are reasonable and include meals and many door prizes. Find out what common problems we have with other PC groups and share ideas on how to deal with them. FACUG programs are also educational, based upon current trends in our area of interest. Let me outline the most recent Fall program:

         9:00 – 10:00
Room A: How Does A Web Site Help Me Build Membership?
Room C: How To Do A Pod Cast
Room D: Networking
Room E: The Ins And Outs Of Blogging
         10:15 - 11:15
Room A: Double Your Membership
Room C: Bridging Mac And PC Users
Room D: Microsoft Vista
Room E: What FACUG Can Do For You
         11:15 – 12:15
Dining Hall: Catered Lunch
         12:15 – 1:15
Exposition Hall: Vendor Fair
         1:15 – 2:15
Room A: Group Treasury/ 501c Information
Room C: Web 2.0 Technologies
Room D: Newsletters And Editing
Room E: Using Education To Expand Membership
         2:30 – 3:30
Room A: Working With Digital Video
Room C: User Group Insurance
Room D: Success Of The Small User Group
Room E: Importance Of Software Reviews

the plate in at least two critical positions, Vice President and Secretary. Kevan Sheridan no longer can serve as Vice President due to work commitments, and Doug Mullis has served as Secretary for three years and holds two offices. Please offer your name to any of the current officers for any office so we can benefit from fresh leadership. Jim Purcell, our current Member at Large, must present a slate of officers at the November meeting, so act now.

Steve Singer from RDI will be our speaker in November to tell us the latest in computer hardware. In December, we will have our Christmas party, with no speaker planned. We will provide finger food and drinks paid from our treasury. Members may bring their favorite dessert or whatever they desire. We will need to take a head count of those planning to come for the party so we can order enough food and drink.

John indicated that the Digital SIG would be reactivated after the first of the year. Jim Purcell is planning materials for two sessions, and with sufficient interest, meetings will continue. John said these meetings could take place at the Pepin facility.

It was pointed out that some members are in arrears in their dues. Please check to see when your renewal month is and use our web site to make a payment or get a check or cash to our Treasurer.

At this point, John introduced our speaker for the evening, Mr. Ken Sparks with Media Concepts, Inc. of Gulfport, FL. Ken said he has been with Media Concepts for about five years. The company which is owned by Bob Skidmore and John Gallagher, both previously with RKO in New York, started in 1974 as a video equipment rental agency. They branched into video-library sharing (VHS tapes) in 1978. They predated Blockbuster and their first

Internet Picture of the Month

2007 California fires from space

A crop of one of the photos taken by NASA's Aqua satellite on October 24, 2007, over the California coast. This is the image at http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/natural_hazards_v2.php3?img_id=14588. The main site's link is http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/

November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)   http://www.tpcug.org/
Financial News at MarketWatch.com   http://www.marketwatch.com/
ZIPskinny - Get the Skinny on that ZIP   http://zipskinny.com/
Florida Historical Society   http://www.florida-historical-soc.org/
PharmaFraud   http://pharmafraud.blogspot.com/
Woodworkers—Livio DeMarchi   http://www.craftsmanshipmuseum.com/DeMarchi.htm

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.

Print or Write Labels

By Jim Purcell, Member at Large,
Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

I was late in recognizing the utility of Avery's "Print or Write" labels. There are approximately 60 varieties of these labels. Some of the 60 labels represent a different color of the same label, plus you can get permanent or removable versions of some labels, and they even have a gold notarial seal to certify awards. They come in 4x6 sheets and usually cost between $3.00 and $6.00 per package. There is one 3x5 label per page (40 per package) and twenty-seven 1/2″x 7/8″ labels per page (945 per package). This format is an excellent alternative to buying packages costing $15.00 - $30.00 when you only need a few labels of a particular size.

They are also handy if you only need to write or print one or two labels when you add a folder to your filing system or you want to label a magazine case or the AC adapter to your latest toy.

Avery offers some excellent free software that you can use with these and all other Avery products. You can pick from six options offered by Avery. One option allows you to edit on the web and print from there. A table to assist you in picking the product that best fits your needs is found at:
http://www.avery.com/us/software/
avery_software_guide.html

Page to Assist in Selection of Software

The "Avery Wizard for Microsoft Word" is probably the most versatile and easiest to use if you have Microsoft Office (or only Microsoft Word) and you print a fair amount of labels. The Wizard will appear in the Tools menu of Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and Outlook. I have only merged from Access. The merge with Access was easy to set up, and I imagine that merging with Excel would be even simpler. The Wizard software currently available for download contains Christmas designs that you can use to embellish your labels and cards. I also merged with an Access data base using the "Avery DesignPro Software" to print name tags on the normal format label. Again it was easy to setup, and it printed just as designed.

At the other end of the spectrum are the blank and pre-designed templates that you can download for the products that you are using. You can print single- or full-page labels, and it is easy to print additional labels at a later time on the page if you are printing less than a full page.

Example of Blank Template Page

You can use the labels and other products for many different purposes; I've included just a few examples below. To explore all of the products visit; http://www.avery.com. ◆

The following image is an example of some of the different labels you can have.

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.*

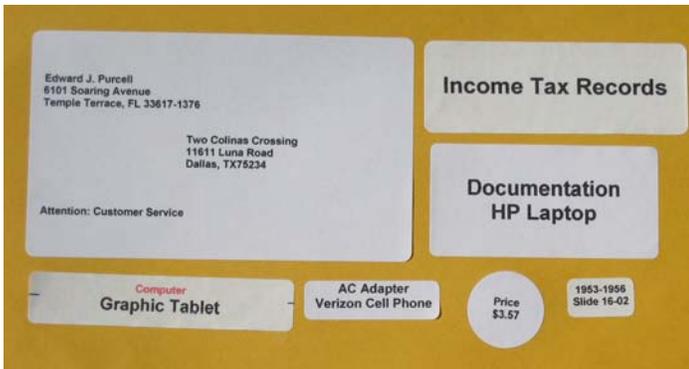**Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice**

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.

Different Labels

Roxio record the first side of the LP. That done, I stopped the software, flipped the LP and repeated the process. That resulted in an approximately 40-minute sound file.

The next thing to be done was to use the software to examine the resulting waveform and select where the track breaks occurred if the software hadn't already found them. I then entered names for each track along with an album name, musicians and date. The final step was burning everything to CD. I can now listen to music recorded by Louis Armstrong in the 1950s and '60s in my car and see the name of the song displayed in the car's information window. I have done about six albums so far. It really is quite easy after you have done one.

Census by Zip My latest programming project was to find a source of 2000 census data and build an application that will provide that data for whatever zip code you enter. You can see it at http://www.lamartin.com under the Useful Things link. I got the idea from http://www.zipskinny.com.◆

shop in this area was Video Corner in Tyrone Mall.

They started doing DVD duplication in 2001/2002 and currently have 64 DVD drive towers and 152 VHS duplicating machines. They also transfer video from mini DVD tapes, 8 mm and Super 8 mm movie film and 35 mm slides. Video can be put on VHS or DVD. For example, at funeral services they do memorial video shows from photographs. They also provide a service for recovering images from digital memory cards. Finally, they do web site design and sell or rent all types of video products. Ken handed out packets on equipment they provide.

Someone asked the price for converting color slides to DVD. Setup is $25 and $1 per slide, or $2 per slide if color correction is desired. On movie film conversion, every foot is monitored to assure the best quality possible. They do lots of movie film.

Ken then answered a few questions and offered opinions on plasma and LCD televisions. His preference is still rear projection for large screen television.

John thanked Ken for his presentation and noted our sizeable audience as an indication of the interest in the program. He then called attention to free trade magazines Ken had brought in and free used P C cabling and devices being offered by William LaMartin.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37pm. ◆

If you use Amazon.com, don't forget to use the link on our home page

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Tampa, FL 33601-3492

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
☐ *Vendor: Your product was reviewed on page ___*

(FACUG..........Continued from page 4)
     3:45 – 4:45
Dining Hall: Wrap Up Session/Door Prizes

You can see that many of the presentations are directed toward the successful operation of the user group, but these are balanced with current topics of general member interest. In the past, I attended sessions on "how to run a group," but this time focused on current trends and general interest sessions. Many of the sessions are posted on the FACUG web site at http://www.facug.org. Click on Fall Conference and then Roundtable and Panel Descriptions. You will find the presenter, a brief description of the presentation, and, in some cases, the entire outline used in the presentation.

Did I mention the camaraderie of PC users from across the state? Notice that this Fall even a computer trade show was held concurrently at the same site. While only an hour was allotted out of the program to attend the trade show, there were other opportunities to browse and to take advantage of "special show offers." Also, some of the contacts made for presentations to our group were made at these conferences. I hope you are inclined to attend a FACUG conference and that you come back with some exciting ideas to apply in your PC endeavors and at our group meetings. Won't you join Jane, Harry and me at the next FACUG conference? ◆