

January in Tampa

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

Vol. 21 No. 1 January 2008

## Meeting Office Depot

Wednesday, January 9, 2007  
6:30 PM  
Pepin Distributing Co.  
4121 N 50th St  
Tampa, Florida

**Meeting Preview:** Representatives of Office Depot will talk to us about wireless routers and other things they sell. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.

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### Editor's Comments

*By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group*  
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It's a new year, and thanks to my contributors I have only this small area on the front page to fill. That should give me just enough room to properly put CompUSA to rest. As you probably know by now, CompUSA has sold itself to a liquidation firm and is in the process of disposing of its inventory and will then close its doors.

CompUSA opened their first store in Tampa on Hillsborough Avenue near Dale Mabry in December 1991. I know that because in the November 1991 Bits of Blue, then-TPCUG president Harvey Bruneau noted that they would be open for the holidays. This was a very exciting event for all of us local PC users, and many of us spent a lot of time and money there. Apparently we didn't spend enough in recent years.

I was curious what I had contributed over those 16 years, having bought only one computer from them. So I checked Quicken, and it revealed I spent \$25,743.02--not including the few items I purchased in December. So I feel that I still did my share. ♦

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**February Meeting: To be announced**

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Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

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.

Technical information found in this publication is not necessarily compatible with your hardware and software, plus other errors or misprints could occur from time to time. Therefore, the use of programs, commands, functions or anything of a technical nature appearing in this publication will be at your own risk.

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TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

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\$60 Corporate = 3 employees + \$20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site <http://www.tpcug.org> and click on the  
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**Check the address label for your renewal month**

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*We acknowledge*

**Pepin Distributing Co.**

*for their support*

**Minutes of the December Meeting**

*By Doug Mullis, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group*  
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Due to this being our annual Holiday party meeting, we did not have our usual Windows SIG meeting preceding the business session or a guest speaker. President John Witmer began the business meeting at about 7:00 pm. The important item this evening was the election of officers for calendar year 2008. Two members did step forward this year offering to serve the group. They were Ron Weinberg for member at large and Roy Dearmond for Treasurer. Jim Purcell acknowledged his willingness to give up his member at large position and serve as secretary, which would create an opening for a new member at large. Additionally, Roy agreed to withdraw as a candidate for treasurer to allow Doug Mullis an opportunity to serve a second year in this position.

Current member at large Jim Purcell then asked for further nominations from the floor before presenting the slate for a vote. Hearing none, the following slate of officers was presented:

For President	John Witmer
For Vice President	Kevan Sheridan
For Treasurer	Doug Mullis
For Secretary	Jim Purcell
For Member at Large	Ron Weinberg

A motion was made to accept this slate and to vote. All members present voted in favor. Terms of office begin January 1, 2008.

John then thanked those willing to serve the group as officers and acknowledged some past officers present at the meeting, including Merle Nicholson, Mary Sheridan, Jenny Lind Olin and Roger Waters. Appreciation was also extended for the years of ser-

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



**Member of**  
**The Association of**  
**Personal Computer User Groups**

## Bluetooth

By Merle Nicholson, TPCUG  
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I've just installed a new Bluetooth device on my brother's new Vista notebook, and while it's fresh in my mind, I think Bluetooth may be a topic of interest to those who haven't seen the full potential of this very fine device.

Most people think of Bluetooth as being the means for the geeks you see walking around with a blue blinking thing stuck in their ear, and talking to no one in particular. Yep, that's Bluetooth, and it's communicating over a short distance to their cell phone in a pocket or purse. And, obviously, it's a short-range communications protocol that allows multiple simultaneous devices to attach to a computer, cell phone or car; wirelessly. The maximum range is 10 meters.

Bluetooth devices include headsets and headphones, keyboards and mice, PDA's and cell phones, GPS, ultra-mobile PCs, Playstation 3, Barcode scanners, in-dash radio/mp3 players, navigation devices, drawing tablets, cameras, printers, speakerphones and hands-free car kits.

My interest, of course, is in its use on a computer. I have three computers with Bluetooth. My main PC that I'm writing this with uses a "Microsoft Desktop Elite for Bluetooth" keyboard and mouse, and my Media PC in the next room is set up the same, with its own identical keyboard and mouse. The third computer is my notebook.

The notebook is a little different. I use Bluetooth on the notebook to communicate with a GPS device sitting under my windshield in the car, and occasionally with a Bluetooth mouse and keyboard when I borrow one from one of the desktops. I do have a Logitech headset (earbud) that I was going to use for IP telephone (Gizmo Project), but I wasted my money on that one--too early, too cheap.

When buying the notebook, I made a mistake in not getting Bluetooth built in. I'd picked up this HP at CompUSA about two and a half years ago, and, as

was typical then, computers that were in stock didn't have that option. It's fairly common to have Bluetooth installed internally now, but you really can't count on it unless you research it thoroughly or order it installed as a custom order. As you'll see further down, having it built in is a real advantage.



It was apparent from the start using my notebook in the car that I was on dangerous ground. It sits in the passenger/navigator's lap and gets folded up and put on the floor sometimes or maybe put on a back seat. And I'm always aware of that damn Bluetooth "dongle" sticking out the side of the computer. Once when it was to be passed from the front passenger to the backseat passenger, I remember saying, "Be careful and don't bend the Bluetooth". "Be careful", "Be careful". When it got back to the front seat, it was bent severely.



So, as you can see in the second photo, I've largely

*(Bluetooth.....Continued on page 4)*

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resolved that problem by replacing the Microsoft device on the left with a Cirago BTA-3210 EDR, shown on the right. Note that you normally would only have one of the devices plugged into the USB ports. Both are shown here to compare sizes.



Bluetooth “dongles” vary in price from about \$7 to \$35. On my desktop, I attached a USB cable, installed it internally to the motherboard and snaked the cable and dongle so that it’s under the front plastic cover of the PC. On the Media PC, the dongle is just plugged into a USB port on the back.

When you install the dongle, most times the PC will ask for the Bluetooth drivers. Not always, though. My brother’s Toshiba has the drivers already installed, presumably for the models they sell with Bluetooth built in. So the best thing to do is be patient for a half minute to see what happens. Also, you can look in Control Panel to see if there’s a Bluetooth icon already there, or one appears after the dongle has been plugged in.

After the Bluetooth driver is installed, there will be a “Bluetooth Devices” icon in Control Panel. Most often the icon will be the official



Bluetooth symbol.

To make it start talking to a device – let’s take a keyboard for instance, open “Bluetooth Devices” in Control Panel and select “Add”. Turn on the device (a keyboard is sometimes “always on”; sometimes it has a power switch). Make it “discoverable” by pressing on the small round button on the bottom and holding while the computer goes into “discovery mode” and the keyboard is found.

Select the keyboard from a list of devices found and then select “Select a new passkey”. The computer will generate a passkey of numbers that you then key into the keyboard and press Enter.

The keyboard should be ready to use and will “pair” the keyboard to the computer automatically when the operating system boots. So this passkey business and identifying the device to the computer should happen only once.

So far, in my experience, mice don’t use a passkey. My GPS does require one, but it’s fixed at “0000”.

One downside exists to Bluetooth that I can think of, and that’s a Bluetooth device like a keyboard will not work when the operating system is not running, like setting BIOS, or utilities like a DOS-based disk copy of disk diagnostics. I keep a USB keyboard and mouse around for that purpose.

You also may ask why not just buy a standard wireless mouse and keyboard and save some money? Standard wireless mice and keyboards are somewhat cheaper. Remember though that Bluetooth uses a dedicated dongle that takes a USB slot all its’ own; and that dongle cannot communicate with other devices.

My next notebook will have the Bluetooth built inside.

Cirago BTA-3210 EDR Bluetooth adapter <http://www.eXtremePCgear.com>. It was \$22.99 but had a \$8.34 shipping charge.

Also available now at Amazon.com and Tigerdirect.com. ◆

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

vice William LaMartin has volunteered to our group as newsletter editor and webmaster. His fine work is evident to us all. John also introduced his wife, Donna, who had assembled our party buffet for the night. We appreciate her hard work in preparing and presenting such an outstanding offering of food and desserts. Our thanks are also extended to John and Pepin Distributing for accommodating us and providing the array of beverages. The applause of those present attested to the above. For this year's Holiday party, the TPCUG Board Members decided that the party food should be paid for out of the Group's funds, thus alleviating those attending of having to deal with trying to bring anything other than themselves to have a good time.

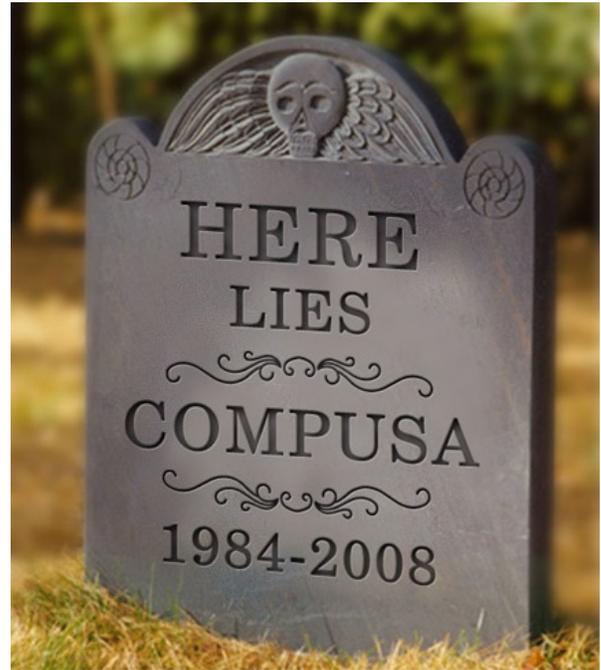
John reminded those whose dues are due to forward payment. William reminded us of the ease in using our web site with your credit card electronically for dues payment.

Next month we have asked Office Depot to do a presentation. We are also seeking topics for member presentation. Merle Nicholson offered to have a Windows Vista session ready if a fill-in is needed.

The business meeting adjourned about 7:30 pm. The party continued till approx 8:45 pm. ♦

Please don't forget to use the link at our site, <http://www.tpcug.org> if you are going to order from Amazon.com. We get a commission, and it costs you nothing extra.

## Internet Picture of the Month



### CompUSA Tombstone

This image is located at the URL <http://www.counteragent.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/12/compusa-here-lies-gravestone.jpg>. The very short story is at <http://www.counteragent.com/2007/12/13/here-lies-compusa-beloved-father-lousy-customer-service-rip/>.

It is not much of a website, but it had the best image I could find on the web of the demise of CompUSA. Most places I went said that the company died because of poor service and bad pricing. One such article is the PC World blog at <http://blogs.pcworld.com/staffblog/archives/004100.html>.

## January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)  
 Internet Archive Wayback Machine  
 Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man  
 Newegg.com - online computer store  
 Overlawyered

<http://www.tpcug.org/>  
<http://www.archive.org/web/web.php>  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=OMIM>  
<http://www.newegg.com/>  
<http://www.overlawyered.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.

## eBook Readers Using E-Ink Technology

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group  
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My only hands-on experience with eBooks so far has been with my Palm Pilot. I downloaded my first eBook about three years ago. The Palm Pilot leaves a lot to be desired as an eBook reader but it does have the advantages of portability and instant access to a reasonably large dictionary while reading another book. By purchasing and installing the Merriam-Webster Collegiate dictionary, it became directly linked to any other book that I installed on my Palm Pilot. When reading a book on the Palm Pilot, I merely had to tap on any word and the definition popped up. It didn't clear up what the real definition of "is" is, but about every thing else was covered.

I enjoyed the portability, convenience and the luxury of finding the meaning of a word I didn't know before I'd even left the sentence I was reading. I was on the lookout for a better reader that would provide a page that would compete with that of a book but would provide portability and take advantage of the things that a digital electronic device can provide. I saw the Sony Reader advertised about six to nine months ago. Detailed information was difficult to obtain, but as I read reviews and was able to find a demo at a local Borders store I found that there were desired features that were not provided. The new Kindle Reader has several new attractions, but it also is lacking in some features. Both readers use the e-ink technology mentioned by Steve Singer at our November meeting. This technology paints each new page to the screen, which results in a page that closely resembles a printed page. You really need to see one of these readers to fully appreciate the quality of the page. Borders bookstores have demos displayed. The only time there is any appreciable battery use during the process is when the page is actually being painted. Unlike most digital screens, there is no backlighting so the page is clearly visible in sunlight or normal reading light but is not visible in the dark.

I'm only looking at two of the readers using this e-ink technology developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Lab, but there is a lot of com-

petition from a lot of locations. A list of some of the competitors is at:

<http://blog.wired.com/gadgets/2007/11/e-book-readers.html> (the chart is included below if you prefer using it rather than the link). I won't go into all of the specifications and all of the details of the features of these two readers, but I will discuss what I consider important pros and cons.

### **Sony reader Digital Book PRS 505**

Sony just upgraded their reader from Model 500 to Model 505. They made several improvements and reduced the list price to \$299.99. As mentioned earlier, it uses the e-ink technology that produces a page that is easy to read. You can switch to and from small, medium or large print on your books. The number of pages are increased or decreased accordingly. In spite of these changes, your bookmarks remain in the proper place, no matter which font you select. You can store approximately 160 average size books in internal memory and hundreds more with the optional removable Memory Stick Duo or lIISD memory cards. The unit weighs about 9 ounces, is about the size of a paperback book and is only 0.3 inches thick. They claim about 7500 page turns on a single battery charge. There are about 20,000 titles in the CONNECT eBooks Store. You can view and access Native-RTF, TXT, BBeB and Adobe PDF, BBeB Book, Microsoft Word, plain text and RSS internal content. Supplied accessories include soft cover, USB cable, CD-ROM EbOOK Library Software. The AC charger is extra. There is no keyboard. You can buy a dictionary but it is not linked to your books, you must exit your book to search the dictionary.

### **Kindle Wireless Reading Device**

Amazon recently released their e-Ink Kindle Wireless Reading Device with many new and convenient features. The convenience that they built into their system certainly "kindles" interest, but the price is \$399.00. You need to look closely at these new features to insure that they provide every thing that they appear to provide. The unit is lighter and thinner than a typical paperback, weighs only 10.3 ounces and holds over 200 titles. More than 90,000 books are available, including more than 95 of 112 current New York Times Best Sellers. You can download and read first chapters for free before you decide to buy. New York Times Best Sellers and all New Releases are \$9.99, unless

(Readers.....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.

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

otherwise marked. You can subscribe to top U.S. and International newspapers, including The New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post, and top magazines, including TIME, Atlantic Monthly and Forbes, and they will all be auto-delivered wirelessly. Unlike WiFi, Kindle utilizes the same high-speed data network (EVDO) as advanced cell phones, so you never have to locate a hotspot. There are no monthly wireless bills, service plans, or commitments, so you can simply click, buy, and read. Wireless connectivity enables you to shop the Kindle Store directly from your Kindle, whether you're in the back of a taxi, at the airport, or in bed. When you buy a book, it is auto-delivered wirelessly in less than one minute. You have long battery life. If you leave the wireless on, you will need to recharge approximately every other day. If you turn wireless off, you can read for a week or more before recharging. The unit fully recharges in 2 hours. You must email your Word documents and pictures (.JPG, .GIF, .BMP, .PNG) and pay a small fee to have them formatted for Kindle for easy on-the-go viewing. Supplied accessories are a book cover, power adapter and USB 2.0 cable

### Comments about Both Readers

I've described the features of both readers in general terms and did not go into a detailed listing of the specifications because I believe that if you are going

*(Readers.....Continued on page 8)*

## e-book readers

(old crappy ones not included)

	size	weight	files	store	DRM	battery	price	features
 Amazon Kindle	4.9" 7.5" 0.7"	10.2 oz	TXT HTML AZW	256MB	AZW	"1 day"	\$400	Free EVDO
 HanLin eReader V3	4.7" 7.2" 0.4"	7 oz	PDF RTF DOC TXT HTM	512MB	Own	9k flips	\$330	Native PDF/ DOC support Free 512MB SD Card
 Sony Reader PRS-505	4.9" 6.9" 0.5"	8.8 oz	BBeB PDF TXT RTF	128MB	BBeB	7.5k flips	\$280	Looks nice
 iRex Iliad	6.1" 8.5" 0.6"	13.7 oz	Any	128MB	MOBI	"15 hrs"	\$700	Powerful: Practically an e-ink Tablet PC
 Bookeen Cybook Gen3	4.7" 7.4" 0.3"	6.1 oz	MOBI PDF TXT HTML	64MB	MOBI	8k flips	\$350	Lightest and thinnest
 Seiko-Epson								1200x1600 Display  Not Out Yet
 Fujitsu		6.2oz						Not Out Yet
 NUUT NP-601		6.2oz	XML HTML TXT	512MB		7.5k flips		Only 600x800  Korea Only?

**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 \_\_\_\_*

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to spend \$300 or \$400 for an eBook reader, you need to look closely at the features and specification to see if they satisfy your individual requirements. For instance, the literature on PDF documents is confusing for both readers. The Sony Reader literature says that PDF is supported. You have to dig to find that a PDF document formatted 8½ x 11 shows up too small to be read and the format cannot be adjusted by the reader (small, medium, or large) as it can for the books. You need Adobe Acrobat software or its equivalent to reformat the document. The Kindle literature says that PDF document compatibility is in the experimental phase. It seems that the requirement to email your documents to Amazon for formatting for a fee also needs some further clarification. The operating manuals and startup sheets for both readers can be downloaded in PDF format, and there are numerous reviews that you can consult online. ◆

