

May in Tampa

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

Vol. 21 No. 5 May 2008

Meeting

Elevate Tampa Bay
by
Ed White & Ed Neugaard

Wednesday, May 14, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: See page seven for some background information about this month's Elevate Tampa Bay presentation. Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting as usual.



Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
lamartin@tampabay.rr.com

Spanish and French Newsletter

As many members surely know, member Ed White is a big proponent of Spanish, and he has mentioned to me several times about the possibility of a Spanish version of the newsletter. Well, my foreign language abilities are severely limited to one year of Spanish in high school, one or two (I can't recall which) years of French in college and one semester of German in college. I was not a very good student in any of these courses, and they were a long time ago. But time has produced progress, and we can now let Google or Microsoft do our translations for us. These computer translations are not always that accurate—based on what people proficient in the two languages in question have remarked to me about such translations in the past. However, they seem to do a pretty good job on our usually simple and straightforward newsletter articles.

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June Meeting: To be announced

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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

Bob LaFave opened the Windows SIG at 6:40 pm. Ed Cohen asked how he can change the default view of his file folders. Bob showed the different ways to set the default to have the folders displayed as he desired. Rick Goldstein and John Waldon both reported that they recently began receiving a message to put the "Sonic" CD into the computer so that the program could be installed. Neither knew of having a "Sonic" program on their computer. Bob stated that Dell used "Sonic" software as utilities or drivers for different devices. The consensus was that their problem was the result of a Dell update. He showed different solutions that might solve the problem. There was a discussion of virus programs and their characteristics and costs. There was also an extended discussion of how to troubleshoot wireless connections. Bob advised that there is a bug in the software "Diskeeper" that can cause loss of data when used with the Vista SP1 operating system.

John Witmer began the business part of the meeting at 7:00 pm. He announced that we would have a raffle after the presentation of Voice Recognition software by Patrick T. Courtney. John mentioned that we are revising our method of notifying members their annual renewal date had passed. He said our financial status is good. Our expenses are relatively low because our newsletter printing expenses have been reduced to the cost of the paper and postage and we do not have to pay for a place to meet. He then turned the meeting over to Patrick Courtney.

Patrick advised us that he is a registered Professional Guardian. He explained the requirements to become a Professional Guardian and the services that they perform. He noted that the very sensitive nature of

(Minutes.....Continued on page 6)



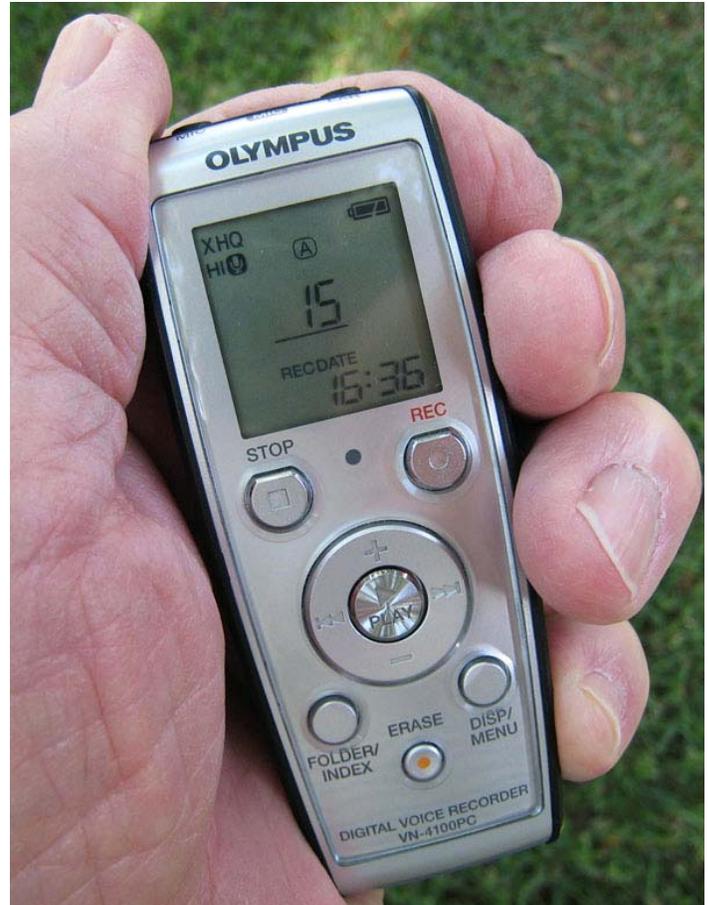
Member of
APCUG The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups

Olympus Digital Voice Recorder

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
Edward_J_P@MSN.com

After being elected secretary (by a landside), I felt an obligation to my constituents to report the minutes in the same accurate detail as Doug Mullis, my predecessor, had recorded them. He captured the details of each meeting with a small voice recorder. I had toyed with purchasing a voice recorder for quite some time to record memos and passing thoughts when it wasn't possible or was inconvenient to write them down. It seemed that a digital voice recorder would accomplish both tasks.

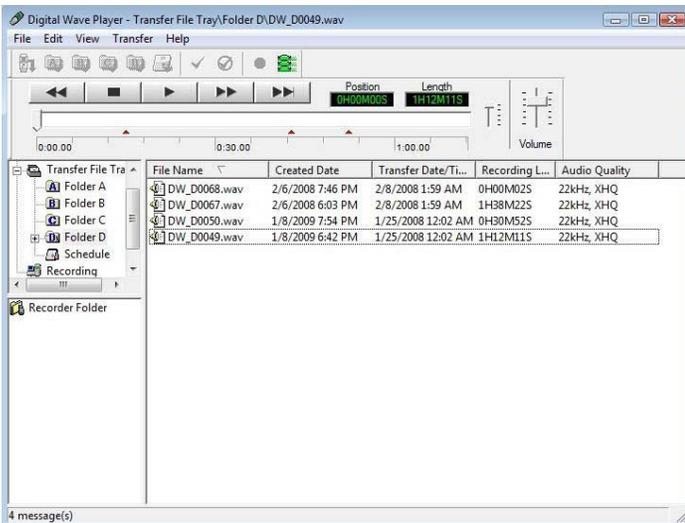
I started looking at Olympus recorders and went no further, because I quickly found what I was looking for at a reasonable price. I purchased the Olympus VN4100PC (list price \$59.99, currently available at Amazon.com for about \$45.00 plus shipping). This recorder is 4 inches long and weighs a little over 2 ounces. It operates on 2 AAA batteries. It is rated to provide approximately 25 hours of operation with alkaline batteries or approximately 15 hours using NiMH rechargeable batteries. It has four recording modes that allow a remarkable maximum recording capacity of over 144 hours (XHQ mode: Approx. 11 hours & 40 minutes; HQ mode: Approx. 23 hours & 40 minutes; SP mode: Approx. 47 hours & 20 minutes; and LP mode: Approx. 144 hours, 20 minutes). It has four folders built into the recorder, each of which will hold up to 100 files. A digital wave player and USB cord are included with the recorder, which allows you to easily transfer your recorded files to your computer (the model VN4100 does NOT have these features). The digital wave player includes a "Device Detector" which recognizes the recorder when it is connected to your computer and automatically opens the Olympus Digital Wave Player. You have several options in transferring your files but the folders (A, B, C & D) are already set up to correspond to those on your recorder. The included wave player is the only way files can be extracted from the recorder and transferred to the computer. Once the file is transferred to your computer, of course, it can be transferred internally or to another computer, copied and renamed, or played on other digital players that accept a "WAV" format



file. The Olympus Digital Wave Player is not supported for 64-bit operating systems. I have the 64-bit Vista Ultimate operating system on my laptop. Although the Olympus Digital Wave Player runs the same as it does on my Windows XP computer, the "Device Detector" does not work so I can't extract the files to my 64-bit computer. I extract the files on my XP computer and then transfer any files that I need on my laptop by copying them like any other file. (See the second image in this article.) There are at least two Olympus recorders that are 64-bit compatible, the WS-210 (only available at Radio Shack) and the WS-110. These two recorders plug directly into your USB port and come without the wave player software. The WS-110 has 256mb of internal memory and the WS-210 has 512mb of memory. Both of these recorders function as a flash drive and can be used to store files other than those you have recorded.

I've been pleased with the performance of the recorder. I try to sit near the center of the room when I'm recording meetings. I just put the recorder on the

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(Recorder.....Continued from page 3)

table and turn it on at the beginning and let it run until there is a break or the meeting is over. Surprisingly, it picks up practically everything that is said. There are problems sometimes if someone near the microphone is talking rather loudly at the same time as someone else is talking. I've been able to sort these things out by using the wave player's playback feature and the cryptic notes that I've taken during the meeting. This ability might be a disadvantage for some projects. I purchased a "Noise-Canceling Microphone" from Olympus, and even when I reduce the sensitivity of the microphone it still seems to pick up some background noise. The instruction sheet has specific directions on how to use the microphone with voice recognition software. If you are purchasing the recorder for this purpose, I'm sure you can get more precise information from Olympus.

The built-in folder organization has proven to be handy. By dividing my recordings into four categories, it has been quite easy to locate files. I put notes that I want to keep when I'm reading technical books and magazines in one folder. I use one folder exclusively for TPCUG meetings. I put all of my reminders, passing thoughts and things I want to do that that I think of when it is not possible to write on a pad or in my Palm Pilot in another folder. I can quickly review them at the end of the day and take whatever action is necessary. The last folder is my miscel-

laneous folder for things like odd facts, unusual experiences, or thoughts that I don't know how to spell.

I found the Olympus Digital Wave Player useful in managing and playing my recordings. It is organized like the recorder, so it is easy to extract and organize your recordings. It has an indexing capability that allows you to insert and delete index marks while you are reviewing the recording, and you can also insert a limited number of indexes while recording. It does not allow you to edit the content of the recording or to run it fast or slow, although the recorder itself has a fast or slow mode when you're using it to listen to the recording. As mentioned above, the recordings are in the "wav" format so you can use a player that has the functions that you need.

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

So, for the April HTML version of the newsletter, I added links to each article that provide either a Spanish or French translation. I may or may not continue this into the future, since all a person desiring such a translation need do is go to <http://www.windowslivetranslator.com/> and enter the URL of the web page they want translated.

Graphing

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



(Comments.....Continued from page 4)

I was looking for something for which I could write a program to do real-time graphing. Since foreign exchange trading seems to be all the rage now, taking the place of the day trading of stocks that proved unprofitable to most people who engaged in it during the dotcom bubble, I settled on plotting various currency trading pairs — for example, the Japanese Yen (JPY) against the US dollar (USD)

I retrieved the data for these trades from Yahoo in real-time by writing code to “scrape” such information from the Yahoo pages which display that financial data. The graph above is such a graph showing the USD to JPY conversion.

With all my programming, I had never done much graphing. So, with my interest in graphing growing, I then thought about three-dimensional graphing. This involved plotting on a two-dimensional computer screen an object that would appear to the viewer’s eyes to be three dimensional. The first image below is an example of such using, Cartesian coordinates (x,y,z) in three-dimensional space and projecting the image on the $y-z$ two-dimensional plane so as to produce a 3D-appearing image.

The second image is an example of doing a similar thing but using polar coordinates (ϕ,θ,r) , where the Greek letters ϕ and θ are angle and r is a distance from the origin. If you have had some geometry in the past, this probably makes sense. If not, then just look at the images. If you find such images interesting, I have a collection of 3D images I have generated with my 3D graphing program at <http://www.lamartin.com/ComputerGraphing.aspx>. There

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Internet Picture of the Month



Microsoft & Yahoo

The image is from the site
<http://sarahmeyers.wordpress.com>.

Well, for now the Microsoft purchase of Yahoo is off. They couldn’t agree on the value of Yahoo. Microsoft was willing to pay around \$43 billion; Yahoo thought they were worth over \$50 billion. Today’s stock market price says Yahoo is worth \$34 billion. Market-watch.com says that Yahoo had a net income of \$660 million in 2007. To my uneducated eye, any of those numbers seems like a lot to pay to make \$660 million a year. By the way, Google had a net income of \$4.2 billion in 2007, and Microsoft had a net income of \$14 billion.

May’s Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that’s us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Graph Function Online	http://graph.seriesmathstudy.com/
FlightAware - Free Flight Tracker	http://flightaware.com/
Ronnie Gaubert’s Photos	http://www.pbase.com/ronnie_14187
Marc Andreessen’s blog	http://blog.pmarca.com/
Patent Searching	http://www.freepatentsonline.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.

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

these services, legal requirements and the complete vulnerability of some of his clients required that his actions be completely documented. Many professions have similar requirements; for example, he related the story of a friend of his who was a social worker and was also required to document her actions. He said that while he was talking to her he noticed a sign on the inside of her door which read, "In God We Trust, the Rest of Us Must Document". Voice Recognition software helps him to comply with the requirements that his documentation meets the criteria of being factual, thorough, accurate, clear, brief, timely and well-organized.

He then gave an excellent demonstration of how he used "Voice Recognition" software to perform his duties. He showed how the software recognized his vocal documentary and transformed it into a written record of his comments and also how effectively he could use his voice to punctuate and move through the document.

Patrick was very careful to relate that he did not represent nor was he reimbursed by the software company. He was using Dragon Naturally Speaking Version 7 Preferred and recommends Dragon Naturally Speaking Version 9 Preferred, which is the latest version of the software. Merle Nicholson found that the software was available from NewEgg for \$69.99 after a \$50.00 rebate (includes a wired headset). It's \$199.99 from the publisher, Nuance.

Patrick's presentation convincingly illustrated that the software that most had considered a toy or a curiosity has been developed into a valuable tool that can effectively perform a very difficult and exacting function. The presentation ended at approximately 8:30 pm. The raffle winners were as follows:

Sam Christy	Subscription to Smart Computing
Harry Lochabay	TPCUG T-Shirt
Jim Purcell	TPCUG T-Shirt
Dennis Neal	TPCUG T-Shirt
Merle Nicholson	TPCUG T-Shirt
Linda Neal	TPCUG T-Shirt
Todd Grubb	TPCUG T-Shirt
Ron Weinberg	TPCUG T-Shirt
Kevan Sheridan	Trend Micro Software

Eddie Rodriguez
Ed Cohen

TPCUG T-Shirt
TPCUG T-Shirt

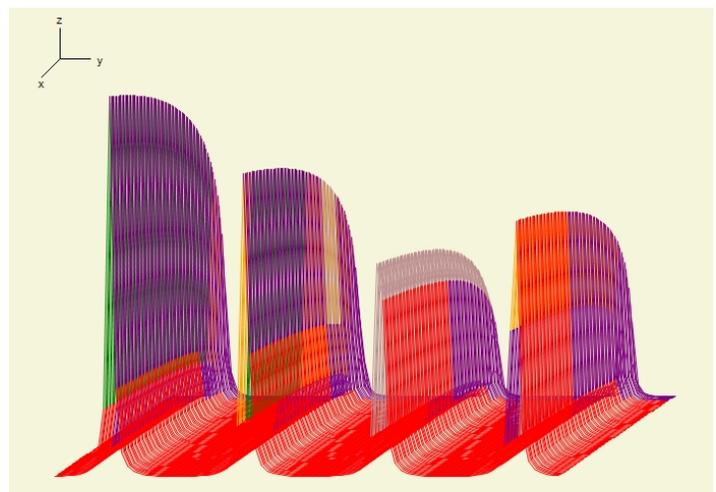
The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 pm. . ♦

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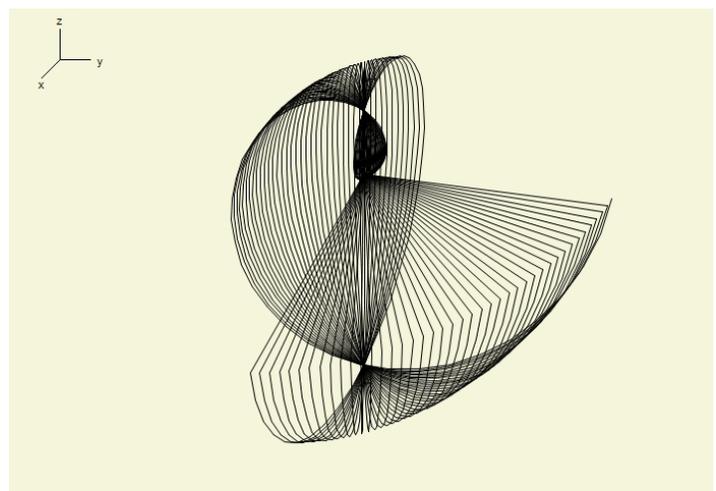
you will see the graphs full size and in color.

It is addictive to sit and think of new equations to graph. After all, there is an infinite supply.

Below is the 3D graph generated using Cartesian coordinates, and below that is a 3D graph generated using polar coordinates. ♦



$z(x,y) = \log(x)/(\sin(y) + 1.01)$ | Amplitude Adj. = .7 | $0 < x < 250$, $0 < y < 500$ | x Step 3, y Step 6



$r(\theta, \varphi) = 40^\circ \varphi$ | Amplitude Adj. = 1 | $0 < \theta < 1.570795$, $0 < \varphi < 6.28318$ | θ Step 3, φ Step 12

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.

ELEVATE MIAMI / ELEVATE TAMPA BAY

By Ed White, TPCUG
cwhite1@mail.usf.edu

To understand this idea, you have to know that it all starts with Jim Osteen. He is James E. Osteen, Jr., Assistant Director - Information Technology, City of Miami.

In conversations in his office, I asked him to explain to me a little more about what he wanted to accomplish.

To understand his answer, you need a little background. Jim Osteen will be retiring from the City of Miami in two years. He wants to leave behind “something really good.”

He got his big chance when Manny Diaz was elected Mayor on a platform of improving the schools in the City of Miami. Jim is a very modest guy and will not say, “This is my idea”, but I am certain that it really is his baby. Instead, he says: “The IT Department got together to see how they could make the Mayor’s plan become a reality.” And it is probably true that the mayor jumped on the idea and pushed everybody who works for the city to support it. You have to see this thing in action to believe it. I think that Jim personally is probably spending at least 50% of his time on this project and he seems to get anything he wants from city employees – from printing jobs to city cars for his people.

His original thought was this: The City of Miami, like most big operations, replaces 25% of its computers every year. They had been selling them at auction and getting about \$5 apiece for machines with a lot of life left in them. He said: “Why don’t we put them in government buildings open to the public? We have lots of them in parks, beaches and other public areas.” And the Mayor said: “DO IT!!!” And they did it.

Then they found out that the public did not use the machines because they did not know how to use the machines.

So they saw the need for a basic training program in email and web-surfing. The City got AT&T and the other supplier (I forget the name) to provide free DSL service at these locations. Of course the City of Miami spends lots of money with these outfits, and I can see that I really need to get the City of Tampa and/or Hillsborough County to sponsor/support/take credit for, or whatever, and then I can get just about anything.

About this time along comes the priest in charge of Gesu, which is a very large, old and beautiful Roman Catholic Church in the heart of downtown Miami. This priest is technologically-oriented and he tells the mayor: “I have this giant basement below the church. We call it the Gesu Senior Citizens Center. It has a big kitchen with lots of nuns to do all the work, and we serve free breakfast and lunch to the many poverty-stricken senior citizens living in the downtown area. I want computers and training for these people.” And the mayor said: “DO IT!!!”.

They installed four computers in a little room in the basement, brought in the City’s one and only teacher, AND WERE OVERWHELMED WITH DEMAND, especially since the teacher, Maria Martorell, is from Puerto Rico, and teaches beautifully in Spanish, as do the other teachers she has now recruited. I did not see any classes in any of their locations in English.

So the priest built a bigger room, Maria got the old one for her office, the “school” now has twenty computers and is still overwhelmed. Quite a few of the students have purchased computers for home use. And AT&T and the other outfit give them a year of DSL at \$10 per month.

They have plans to expand this way beyond senior citizens. The other “legs” of the program are: small businesses, parents and after-school. So the possibilities are infinite. And Microsoft damn well knows it.

Jim Osteen’s personal goal is to expand this throughout the

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- Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
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state, eventually making Florida another “Silicon Valley.” So far, I am the only “civic leader” to bite on this idea, and they are leaning over backwards to help me. I asked him if it would be all right to use “ELEVATE TAMPA BAY” as our name in Tampa and he said: “Yes, do it”.

BUT, in May or June or July (I forget a lot), Miami is hosting a big convention for Florida municipalities and naturally Mayor Manny Diaz will make a speech. He will say that ELEVATE MIAMI is the greatest thing since sliced bread and recommend it to all the other city mayors who will be present. They already have posters printed, and leaflets, etc. on the way.

So we think this idea is a winner and we want to pursue it. ♦

