



October in Tampa

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

Vol. 21 No. 10 October 2008

Meeting

Computer Hardware
by
Steve Singer from
RDI @ Tampa Bay Inc

Wednesday, October 8, 2008
6:30 PM
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th St
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer from RDI @ Tampa Bay, Inc. will give his annual presentation of new computer hardware. 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
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Thanks to Jim Purcell and Ron Weinberg, we have a newsletter this month. They each simply wrote about a program they are using on their computer—Ubuntu and Microsoft Virtual PC for Ron and Adobe Photoshop Elements for Jim. Almost any member could do the same thing—if you would.

As for me, it has been a slow computing month. I have done a little VB.Net programming, provided descriptions and location information for recent digital photos and created web pages so that I could simultaneously watch several local TV stations in both New Orleans and Houston as the recent hurricanes approached those cities.

For the digital photos, I use Adobe Photoshop CS3 to add my own name, email, etc. to the creator Metadata item. Then I add a description and key words. Later, using Microsoft Pro

(Comments.....Continued on page 4)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
Meeting Preview	1
Editor's Comments	1
Minutes	2
Upgrading Ubuntu in a Virtual PC	3
Internet Picture of the Month	5
Links	5
Photoshop Elements 6 Organizer	6
SIGs	7
Map	8

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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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Minutes of the October Meeting

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

The meeting began at 6:35 pm. Bob LaFave began the Windows SIG with a demonstration of how to track a problem. Bob discussed the use of a print server and the increased flexibility that it provides, in that it is not necessary to have a host computer running in order for other computers to access the printer. He also discussed the ways to recognize printers on a network. He mentioned that Office can cause problems when it becomes necessary to uninstall the program. Bob said that the best way to uninstall Office is to start the installation disk, go to repair – uninstall, and uninstall the program. A member asked how to use “Aero” capability with Vista. Bob gave a brief description of how to take advantage of the things available in the “Aero” program.

He mentioned CPU-Z (a hardware monitor). Bob said that he has found the program useful in monitoring the performance of his computers, especially to insure that the computers are not overheating.

There was an expanded discussion of the pros and cons of Google’s new browser. Some members liked the new features and some thought that you paid a price for using them.

Bob discussed anti-virus programs and the ones that are his current favorites. A member asked Bob to identify the free anti-virus programs that he prefers. He explained how to find the one that best serves the individual’s needs by determining the one with which they are most comfortable. Member Merle Nicholson mentioned that most programs have a 30- or 60-day trial period, which allows users to make sure they understand the features and peculiarities of the program. There was a discussion of working

(Minutes.....Continued on page 4)



Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups

Upgrading Ubuntu in a Virtual PC

*By Ron Weinberg, Member at Large,
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Like some other group members, I have been experimenting with Ubuntu Linux using Microsoft Virtual PC 2007. I do this out of professional curiosity and for the challenge. With a Virtual PC, I don't have to dual boot or compromise my host XP Pro system in any way.

Day to day use of a computer running Ubuntu is relatively easy. You get a free open source operating system that will run, even on some old under-powered hardware, and programs that provide all your basic needs and features and a lot more. For example, the free Open Office Suite has all the essential functionality of Microsoft Office and good interoperability with it. Each new release of Ubuntu brings added improvements.

However, there are still some rough spots that might intimidate the ordinary PC user. I am reminded of the old days of DOS and early Windows when you had to learn by trial and error and often use a command line. As then, time and patience are required here.

I selected Ubuntu because it seems to be one of the most popular distributions with great potential and it is improving rapidly. Frankly, the Virtual PC aspect does complicate and somewhat compromise the features of Ubuntu.

My original install was version 6.10, so I tried to use the automatic upgrade offered by the built in Update Manager to move to a newer version, 7.04.

Before proceeding, I found out that there was a new Service Pack1 for Virtual PC which supports XP Professional SP3 and Vista, and I installed it.

Using the built-in Update Manager, I started the upgrade to version 7.04 and failed, receiving multiple error code 404 errors (failed to fetch). I retried several times and got the same errors. It was time to get

help.

There were so many proposed fixes for these errors posted in search results that it was impossible to determine which would be correct to use in this case.

One of the great assets of Ubuntu is the myriad of online help resources, including the large and very helpful user community easily reached at <https://launchpad.net/ubuntu>.

I posted a question there, giving the exact problem, and included all the error messages. Suggestions began arriving the same day, but the solution came after 10 days. Remember, patience is needed as respondents are volunteers.

The answer was that Version 6.10 is no longer being supported and there was a link to confirm it at <https://launchpad.net/ubuntu>. It was suggested I upgrade offline using the 7.04 Alternate install CD, which could be downloaded as an ISO file at <http://releases.ubuntu.com/7.04/>. Then I was instructed to make a CD from the ISO image. (This requires a free program, such as Infra Recorder or ISO Recorder.) Using Ubuntu 6.10, you then insert the CD into your drive and you get a request to upgrade.

When the upgrade was completed, there was no mouse function.

Searching Google, I found that the problem was that Ubuntu did not recognize the mouse within a Virtual PC. Google provided a makeshift fix, turning the numeric keypad into a pseudo mouse, which was very inefficient. Further research located a permanent fix by editing the Grub Boot Parameters. This sounds difficult, but exact and easy instructions were provided.

After this fix, and the upgrade to 7.04 having succeeded, the Update Manager now offered an upgrade to 7.10. I wanted to move up to this release. Of course, I could have just installed a new Virtual PC with each later version, but I wanted to proceed as if I were actually using the product.

I started the upgrade from 7.04 to 7.10 and left it un-

(Ubuntu.....Continued on page 4)

(Ubuntu.....Continued from page 3)

attended overnight. My PC rebooted due to a Microsoft auto update so any messages were lost. I could not determine how far the upgrade got, but I still had 7.04, and, when I clicked on the Update Manager, nothing happened.

I posted another question on launchpad and got the solution the same day. It told me to try to update in a terminal window. You open a terminal in Applications > Accessories > Terminal. Then type: `sudo aptitude update && sudo aptitude upgrade`. This command line restored the Update Manager. Once it was restored, I was able to run the upgrade to 7.10. It started over from step 1, "Preparing the Upgrade," and completed successfully.

The upgrades themselves, while automated, do take several hours. In going from 7.04 to 7.10, a time remaining bar appeared showing 13 hours, but the actual time was much less.

Finally, I tested the installation, and everything worked. I could use the Internet, found my local Network Places, and could even share between Virtual Ubuntu and the host computer running XP Pro.

But again I discovered another limitation of the Virtual PC. You can share files, see and use them, but you cannot cut and paste between Virtual and Host. There is a trick found with Google, which I have not tried, that tells you how to do it using Remote Desktop.

Next, upgrade to 8.04, maybe? ◆

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

Photo Tools, I add the longitude and latitude of the photo (if I can remember exactly where I took it). So, now I am considering this as computing and not just photography since I am using the two computer programs to accomplish this task.

For any who have created web pages, you may know that you can insert as many Windows Media Player

(Comments.....Continued on page 8)

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

online or offline and how it is that you find yourself offline when you had not specifically requested the option. There seemed to be no answer to the problem, in that there are several things that might have been the cause. The Windows SIG ended at 7:14 pm.

John Witmer, our president, opened the business portion of the meeting at 7:15 pm. He mentioned that, in October, Steve Singer will discuss new developments in hardware with his usual insights on all of the technical details. In November, Jim Purcell will discuss digital storage, editing, scanning and sharing. John mentioned the FACUG meeting to be held in Clearwater on Saturday, October 25. The details of the registration requirements and program content can be found at FACUG.org. He also stressed the need for members to furnish newsletter articles. John reminded the members that there were computer related items on the back table that Jennie Lind Olin brought in for any of the members who might have a need for them.

Merle began his presentation on the Vista operating system at 7:20 pm. He explained that the computer in a box that he was using for his presentation was built and designed by him to make it easier to change hard drives and to update and repair the computer. He detailed many of the changes and improvement that he has made since its original construction. He has several SATA ports built into the box so that he can easily use different hard drives for special requirements. He brought three versions of Vista so that he could illustrate his responses to member questions about the various versions. He talked about Vista requirements and why you might go to 64 bit and why you might not go to 64-bit. A primary reason to select the 64-bit version is the ability to address more memory. The additional memory, in addition to the obvious advantages, makes "Super Fetch" even more efficient than it is with only the usual 3GB or less of memory. Merle said that he has found very few programs that would not run with the 64-bit version of Vista. One of the exceptions is Nero. He said that there are a lot of differences between Vista and XP. For instance, the Vista control panel is more complete than in XP, and some of the changes are helpful, but there are many of the fea-

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

(Minutes.....Continued from page 4)

tures that seem to have been changed for no apparent reason.

He demonstrated some of the many features of Aero. One that he showed was a very good calendar that is available from Vista. He commented that Vista help is very good. He thinks that Vista Windows Explorer is poorly designed, very confusing and difficult to use. He has made extensive changes to the

structure, but there are some things that you cannot change. Networking with Vista is much faster and much simpler. He recommends that you uncheck Automatic Restart on System Failure in the control panel's System & Maintenance link. so that you will get a blue screen and see what is causing a problem. Merle warned to not turn off your User Access Warnings (UAC's). Although UAC's may be bothersome, they help prevent viruses from doing their work.. He also warned not to use the hibernate or sleep modes. Merle has taken all of the frills off of his computer in order to make it operate as efficiently as possible. Merle emphasized how important it is to read the instructions on how to use the Search function. There is valuable information in "Help," particularly on the use of prefixes, which will dramatically improve your efficiency in the execution of searches. He says that Vista fonts are superior to XP



Internet Picture of the Month

Cattle Roundup

This photo from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/26/us/26cattle.html>. Quoting the Times:

"Two weeks after Hurricane Ike blew through Southeast Texas, cowboys on horseback and in helicopters are still trying to round up thousands of head of displaced cattle. The storm's surge carried cows up to 20 miles from their pastures in coastal Jefferson and Chambers Counties."

fonts. Merle said that he does not believe that anyone should upgrade to Vista, His recommendation is that Vista should only be installed on a new machine that meets the requirements for Vista. The meeting ended at 8:55 pm. ◆

October's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Bloomberg.com
New York Times Business
Is Your Bank Safe (at bankrate.com)
Yahoo Finance

<http://www.tpcug.org/>
<http://www.fdic.gov/>
<http://www.bloomberg.com/>
<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/business/>
http://www.bankrate.com/brm/safesound/ss_home.asp
<http://finance.yahoo.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.

Photoshop Elements 6 Organizer

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

I know that those of you who saw William LaMartin's presentation on digital photography were impressed with the program that he has created in Access to organize his photo collection. Not everyone has the skills to put together such a program. There is an excellent alternative that is not as flexible but is relatively inexpensive.

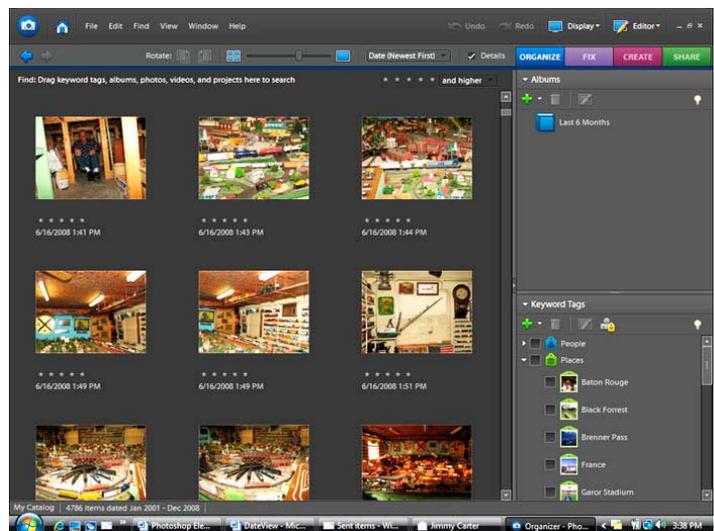
Photoshop Elements, which is an offshoot of Photoshop, is an extremely powerful program for amateur photographers. Some of the professionals admit to having a copy running on their machine because some of the Photoshop tools that have been modified to make them easier to use often work as effectively as the Photoshop version. There is normally a new version of Elements when there is a new version of Photoshop. Most of the downloads and plug-ins for the new version of Photoshop will work in the new version of Elements. A new version of Photoshop Elements has just been released (Version 7) to coincide with the new release of the newest version of Photoshop, but I will discuss the Organizer in Version 6.

Before I start, I feel that I should give you a broad overview of the software. The list price is \$99, but it is often on sale in the \$50 -\$60 range and will possibly go lower since a new version has been announced. You can have more than one version of Elements on your computer at a time, but Adobe recommends that you have only one version open at a time. There are four main sections: 1. the Organizer, which I will discuss in more detail; 2. the Editor, which is divided into Full Edit, Quick Fix (similar to point and shoot with your camera) and Guided Edit, which takes you through a number of editing tasks a step at a time; 3. Create, which contains several programs to help you do such things as Photo Books, Photo Calendars, Collages, Slide Shows and many more; 4. Share, which allows you to share photos using Online Galleries, Photo Mail, Email, CD/DVDs and more. I know that all of this looks like a lot of complicated stuff with a rather steep learning curve, but the beauty of the program is that you can use as much or as little as you like and the Help system is extensive. There are also

many books available if you get interested in really pushing the program. I'm going to discuss a summary of the features of Organizer with just enough detail that you can see how easy it is to store your photos and find the ones that you are trying to locate.

The Display Menu is probably the first place to start in showing how the Organizer helps you keep track of your photos. The basic way that you get your photos into the Organizer is to identify which of your folders that you want included. Once this is done, any additional photos that you add to these folders will be added to the Organizer. Once in the Organizer, there are five different ways to look at your photos:

1. The **Thumbnail View** displays your photos as thumbnails, with or without the detail that you have identified in your options. They are normally sorted by the date in your metadata, either oldest or newest first. You can adjust the thumbnails larger or smaller, which will increase or decrease the number on screen.



Thumbnail View

2, **Import Batch** displays the thumbnails into the same batch configuration (by date) in which they were loaded into the Organizer.

3. The **Folder Location** places the thumbnails in the order in which they appear in your Windows Explorer folder tree and places the tree to the left of your thumbnail collection. You only need to click a

(Organizer.....Continued on page 7)

Special Interest Groups

Visual Basic .Net SIG (and sometimes Access 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.

Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

(Organizer.....Continued from page 6)

folder and the thumbnails that are in that folder appear.

4. **Date View** displays your photos on a calendar either by the date assigned to the photo by your digital camera, or the date it was loaded into the organizer, or a date that you have assigned to the photo.

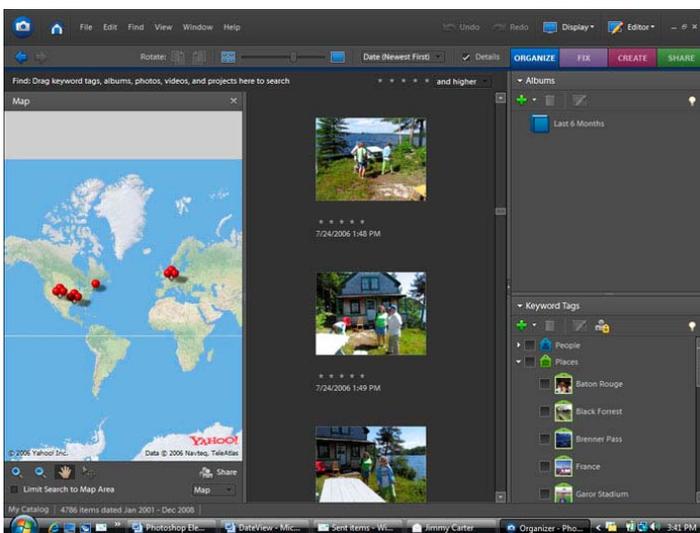
5. **Show Map View** allows you to place your photos on a Yahoo map to show where they were taken. The map has a satellite view that allows you to zoom in and out so you can, in many cases, place the photo in almost the exact spot that it was taken. Once you have processed these pictures at their locations into an online gallery, you can send the gallery to an Adobe web site or your own web site. You can also save the gallery to a CD/DVD, which can be displayed with Flash Player. The tagging system, which I will discuss

later, allows you to put a location tag that you have created on several pictures from the same location and move them all at once by dragging the tag to the location. There will be one pin on the map for each location. When you click the pin, it sets up a slide show for the pictures at that location.

The View Menu allows you to modify the way your thumbnails are displayed and the type of descriptive details that are visible.

Keyword Tags is a system that lets you further identify your photo in as much or as little detail as you wish. You determine the hierarchy for people, places, events, or whatever you like. For instance, you can have only one tag for family, or you can have sub tags for children, or the children by name, or name tags for each member of the family. You can add several tags to the same photo. You could, for instance, have a tag for every name in a group picture if you desired. You can do the same sort of thing for places, events or points in time. When you click on a tag, every thumbnail in your collection with that tag is placed in a group. When you unclick the tag, the thumbnails return to their normal order.

The Find Menu is quite versatile; some of the ways you can search are: The program allows you to group your photos into various Collections and you can search for the individual Collections. You can search by Caption, or Note, or File Name. You can also search by Metadata. You can search for up to seven different historical events. You can search for photos that have a visual similarity to a selected photo(s). You can select a group of photos and have them scanned to find faces for tagging. You can look for



Map View

(Organizer.....Continued on page 8)

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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Tampa, FL 33601-3492



First Class Mail

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

(Organizer.....Continued from page 7)

items with unknown dates or times and for photos that are untagged.

This by no means covers everything, but it should give you an idea of the capabilities of the Organizer.



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

objects in a page as you want. It only takes a few lines of code for each one. Then all you need is the link for the content you want to show in each media player. You then put the web page on any web server and you can watch as many stations as you can fit on the page—just be sure to mute the volume on all but one at a time.

For Hurricane Gustav, I chose two New Orleans stations; for Hurricane Ike, I chose four stations in Houston. ◆

