



November in Tampa

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

Vol. 21 No. 11 November 2008

## Meeting

### Scanning, Editing and Sharing Your Slides, Negatives and Digital Photos

by  
Ed Purcell

Wednesday, November 12, 2008  
6:30 PM  
Pepin Distributing Co.  
4121 N 50th St  
Tampa, Florida

**Meeting Preview:** Member Jim Purcell will share with us his knowledge of both scanning in slides and negatives and digital photography in general. 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](mailto:lamartin@tampabay.rr.com)

I will give the usual contributors a rest this month (other than our hard working secretary, who provides the minutes each month) and write about a new software suite that I have been working with. It is Microsoft Expression Studio 2. As noted in the article, the average computer user will probably only find one of the programs useful and, if they additionally maintain a web site, two programs. The other three programs are more specialized.

It would be much appreciated by me—and the other regular contributors and the readers, I am sure—if more members contributed articles. An article doesn't have to be long or technical. One page about something of interest in your computing life would be fine. ♦

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Preview	1
Editor's Comments	1
Minutes	2
Microsoft Expression Studio 2	3
Internet Picture of the Month	5
Links	5
SIGs	7
Map	8

December Meeting: Holiday Party

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**Friend of the User Group***We acknowledge***Pepin Distributing Co.***for their support***Minutes of the November Meeting**

By *Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group*  
[Edward\\_J\\_P@MSN.com](mailto:Edward_J_P@MSN.com)

Bob LaFave started the meeting by opening the Windows SIG at approximately 6:30 pm. He discussed several sources which he had researched concerning antivirus programs. He had discovered several that were available at bargain rates. He also covered several sites that offered a variety of "Freeware" for practically anything that you want to do with a computer. One of the members asked about whether Microsoft would make its Publisher program available to a nonprofit group. Bob suggested that they contact the local Microsoft Office since they often provide some of their products to nonprofit groups, and they have a person especially designated to handle nonprofit relations. There was a question about links from places like Walgreens not working properly. Bob explained how to follow the information contained in emails concerning links to obtain coupons or other offers. He cautioned that you should be sure of the reliability of the information you are receiving from vendors because you can possibly install a virus by opening a link. He advised to be aware of phishing, especially on emails referencing bank accounts.

A member asked for instructions on creating a virtual PC. Bob gave the information on how to set up a virtual PC. He and Merle explained the operating system licensing requirements for legally installing operating systems on a Virtual PC. Bob mentioned that if you add a digital tuner card to your computer, Vista allows you to record the programs that you are watching to a DVD.

Steve Singer of RDI, Inc., gave a detailed discussion of the capability to view TV programs and movies on your computer. He discussed Media Center and its capabilities and limitations. He also mentioned that

*(Minutes.....Continued on page 7)*



## Microsoft Expression Studio 2

By William LaMartin, Editor,  
Tampa PC Users Group  
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Expression Studio 2 consists of five programs: Expression Web, Expression Design, Expression Blend, Expression Media and Expression Encoder. Expression Web was the first on the scene a few years back as the replacement for the HTML editor and web site management program FrontPage.

I switched from FrontPage to Expression Web 1 in December of 2006 (and gave a presentation on it to the group at the January 2007 meeting). For me, the transition was fairly easy, since I was already using Visual Studio to do a lot of my web work that required server programming and Expression Web was designed to work well with web pages that used Visual Studio's VB or C-sharp code. I would use Expression Web to edit the visual aspects of the page and use Visual Studio to edit the code behind.

Also, moving to Expression Web encouraged me to start using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to control the appearance of pages. What one lost by leaving FrontPage were all the "web bots" that did things for you, such as a search bot, a discussion-web bot, a feedback forms bot, etc., which all require FrontPage Extensions. Losing the ability to include such bots in new web pages created using Expression Web produced a good bit of angst among FrontPage users. However, for me, I really didn't need these bots since I could program such things using Visual Studio. Furthermore, Expression Web created pages that met web standards much better than did FrontPage.

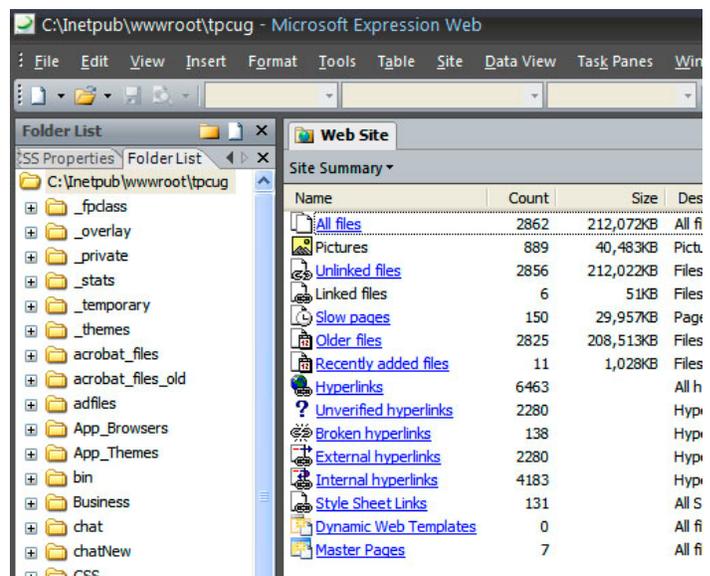
Now there is a new version of Expression Web out as one of the programs in Expression Studio 2. Of course, you may purchase it or update it separately from the entire suite. I chose the option to purchase the Expression Studio 2 Upgrade since I was allowed to do this by already having Expression Web 1 (which was itself an upgrade from FrontPage). Additionally, I had been working with Expression Blend in a free preview version so as to be able to

visually edit my Microsoft Silverlight pages. As you may recall, Silverlight is Microsoft's answer to Adobe Flash, and I mentioned it in the April newsletter, [http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl\\_2008/april2008/comments.htm](http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2008/april2008/comments.htm), with a link to some simple Silverlight examples I had put on the web.

If I wanted to work with Silverlight, I needed to move from the preview version of Blend to the new Expression Blend 2, and purchasing Expression Studio 2 seemed the best solution. The web site for Expression Studio is <http://expression.microsoft.com/> with a link there to all the different products included. For me the tutorials and forums are of particular interest.

Clicking on the Products tab at the Expression Studio site will give you a brief description of each component. Below is my brief take on each product based on my use to date.

**Expression Web** I have already mentioned this program. I should add that new to version 2 is that those who use PHP code can now edit it from inside Expression Web with IntelliSense, which helps you with coding options. You can easily insert Flash or Windows Media files and edit their properties. You can insert Photoshop files and Expression Web will automatically convert them to png, jpg or gif files appropriate for the web. However, I saw no option to resize the converted files while this was being done. Since I typically want to make my Photoshop



(Expression.....Continued on page 4)

*(Expression.....Continued from page 3)*

images much smaller for web work, this feature is not of much use to me. I will still need to resize the images in Photoshop, save them as jpgs and then import them into Expression Web.

The screen capture on the previous page is one of the many reports that you may view in Expression Web. This one is the Site Summary for our TPCUG site, which lists information about files, hyperlinks, and other items at the site. You might note that there are 2,862 files at the site.

**Expression Design** is a vector graphics creation program. In that regard it is the same as Adobe Illustrator. The latter, though, is a much more powerful program (and more expensive). Recall vector graphic images can be made as large as you want without destroying quality. Raster graphics images (like those used in photo editing programs, such as Adobe Photoshop) lose quality as you enlarge them.

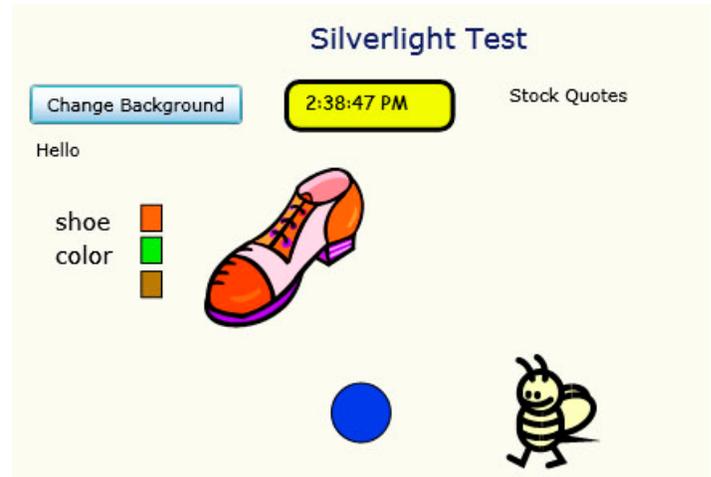
I think Expression Design was not meant to compete with Illustrator (whose files it can open) but rather was to be a simple tool to create images for use in the Expression Blend program that I describe below.

In Expression Design, you create your graphic objects using the brush, pen, rectangle, ellipse, polygon and line tools. You apply colors to the interior of the objects or their borders. You add text with the text tool, selecting a font, size and color. All of these types of objects are then combined to form your graphic. Your resulting graphic may be made up of one layer or many layers of such objects.

If you wish to use your new creation in Expression Blend, you then export it as a xmal (pronounced zammel) file, which is really just a text file.

**Expression Blend** is used to create the visual effects of a Silverlight application. Visual Studio 2008 is used to create the code behind, for example, what happens when a button is pressed.

In the screen capture at the top of the next column, you see one of my Silverlight Test programs from <http://www.lamartin.com/Silverlight/>. It has a continuously running clock, a button to change the color



of the background, boxes to click on that change the color of the shoe, a bouncing ball and moving bee. There are some stock quotes that are supposed to appear, but in moving from the beta version of the software to the new version, something went wrong with the code for that and I need to look at it.

All of the visual components of this were created in Blend. The shoe and bee were wmf files from Microsoft clipart that I brought into Adobe Illustrator and then exported as xmal files (there is a xmal export plug-in available). Since Expression Design was meant to create files to use in Expression Blend, it is strange that Microsoft does not seem to support the opening of wmf files in Design since wmf is a Microsoft format.

The bouncing ball and moving bee are examples of animations using Blend. The button click that changes the background is done from code created with Visual Studio. You can also start and stop the animations from code in Visual Studio if you wish.

**Slide Shows** I am always looking for new ways to create my own slide shows to display photos. I know that you can download such things from the web that use JavaScript to make the show run, and Adobe Photoshop will create several different types of slide shows which you can modify slightly to suit your purposes. But I prefer to be able to create my own. Using Blend and Visual Studio, I created a Silverlight slide show that you can view at <http://www.lamartin.com/Silverlight/> by selecting the Slide Show link.

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

(Expression.....Continued from page 4)

In the past I have used just Visual Studio to create slide shows. However, if I use it to create a Silverlight project instead of just a standard ASP.Net web project, I get the ability to be a little more creative with the appearance of the show. The see-through photo information box that can be displayed in the slide show is one such item.

Now, where does all the information that is displayed about each photo come from. As you may know, when you take a photo with a digital camera and save it as a jpg, all sorts of information is saved to the header of the jpg file. There are free programs available, as well as programs like Photoshop, that will display this sort of information for you—when the photos were taken, shutter speed, f/stop, and much, much more. Additionally these programs will allow you to enter extra information, such as a caption, author, keywords, etc. Recently, I wrote about a free Microsoft program, Pro Photo Tools, that allows you to also add longitude and latitude information to this header information if you can find the location of the photo on a map. But one can also do that with the following Expression Studio program

**Expression Media** is a program that allows you to create catalogs of all your digital media files. For me that means mainly digital images. In addition, you can view all of the files' header information, such as date taken, flash status, shutter speed, etc., along with things that you can edit yourself, like author, key words, latitude and longitude, etc. It allows you to filter your photos based on such things as a key word. For example, if you filtered on the keyword flower, you would see thumbnails of images where you had previously entered flowers as a key-

(Expression.....Continued on page 6)

## Internet Picture of the Month



### Physicians Recommend Cigarettes

Those were the days—when doctors recommended cigarettes. This image is from a slide show of such images at the New York Times site at [http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/10/06/business/media/20081006\\_CigaretteAd\\_Slideshow\\_ready\\_index.html](http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/10/06/business/media/20081006_CigaretteAd_Slideshow_ready_index.html). Another ad says that “More Doctors smoke Camels.” There also you will see Mickey Mantel endorsing Viceroy's but then later switching to Camels in another ad.

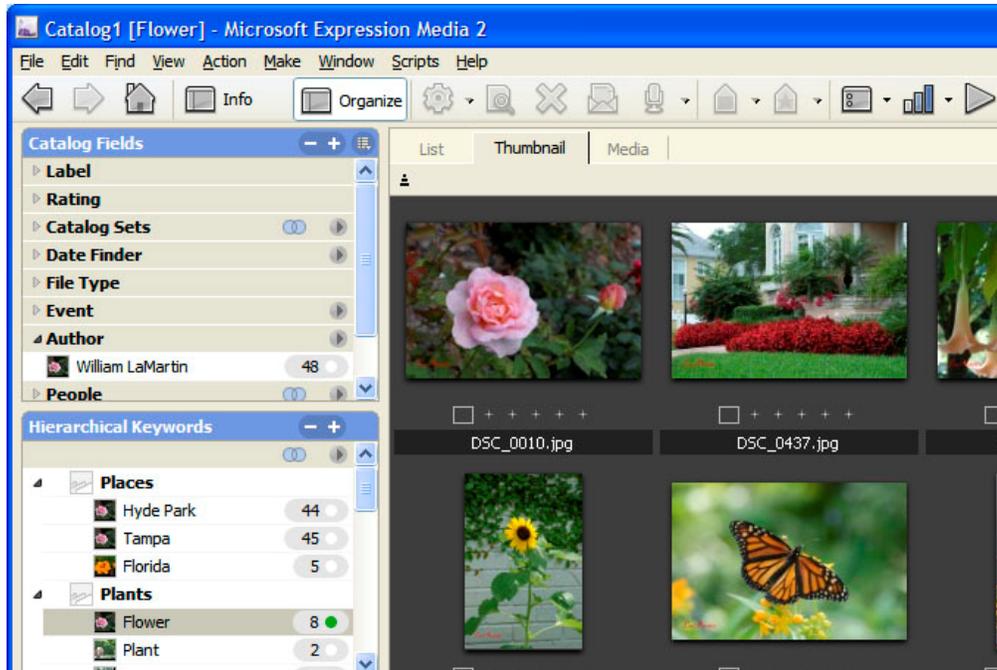
## November's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	<a href="http://www.tpcug.org/">http://www.tpcug.org/</a>
HubbleSite -- Out of the ordinary	<a href="http://hubblesite.org/">http://hubblesite.org/</a>
DIGIBarn Computer Museum	<a href="http://www.digibarn.com/">http://www.digibarn.com/</a>
Charity Navigator	<a href="http://www.charitynavigator.org/">http://www.charitynavigator.org/</a>
Pinnacle (makers of Dazzle video capture)	<a href="http://www.pinnaclesys.com/">http://www.pinnaclesys.com/</a>



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.

(Expression.....Continued from page 5)



word. This is pictured in the partial screen capture above, where all photos in the slide show with the keyword flower are shown.

In Expression Media you can do a number of time-saving tasks for any collection of files:

- Batch rename
- Batch convert to a different format, e.g., jpg to tiff
- Batch change certain information, such as author, or clear such information
- Make an HTML Gallery
- Make a contact sheet
- Make a tab or comma-separated data file containing all the information for each image
- Make an xml data file containing all the information for each image (of particular use to me for my slide show)
- Display a Virtual Earth map so that you can drop an image on the map to set the location's latitude and longitude where you took the photo.

**Expression Encoder** According to Microsoft, “Expression Encoder is an advanced video encoding and live broadcasting application especially suited for generating content that takes full advantage of the rich graphic and interactive capability of Microsoft Silverlight playback scenarios.”

Expression Encoder is the one program in Expression Studio that I have done very little with—not that I didn't try. I wanted to see if I could use it to capture a DVD made about my neighborhood and then convert it into some sort of file that could be played in Windows Media Player. Expression Encoder seems to want either a live feed from a camera or a media file on your computer, not a video on a DVD. The problem possibly could be due to my lack of

knowledge in dealing with video as compared to still photography.

I wrote about one of the few things I have done with video in an article on the Dazzle video capture USB device in the June 2005 newsletter in the article at the link [http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl\\_2005/june2005/dazzle.htm](http://www.tpcug.org/newsletter/nl_2005/june2005/dazzle.htm). That gave me the idea of connecting the Dazzle device between a DVD player and my laptop computer, which could be easily taken to the room with the DVD player. Since I had Expression Suite installed on the laptop, as well as the main computer, I was ready to see if I could do a DVD video capture this way using the Dazzle device as the live input and Expression Encoder as the software. A good sign was that Expression Encoder recognized the Dazzle device, but it was downhill from there, and I won't go into the details.

But that gave me another idea. The idea was to use the Dazzle device and the Dazzle software to first capture the DVD's 21-minute video. I then used the Dazzle software to create a MPEG-2 640x480 MPG file of the video, which came to about 400 MB. That

(Expression.....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](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.

### Digital Imaging SIG—Cancelled until further notice

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

Verizon's conversion to 100% digital format practically eliminates the ability to record and burn any of their programming.

Steve believes that Cloudmark makes the very best spam program available. It does not work on the 64-bit Vista operating systems. He says that Cloudmark also checks email for viruses. Steve recommends using the 64-bit edition of Vista if you are upgrading. The reason he gave is that the 64-bit version is required to access 4 gigabits of memory or more. He mentioned that he has a motherboard that will hold up to 16 gigabytes. He described the many features of the new motherboards and said that they are continuing to increase capacity. The board he showed had heat pipe technology and the highest quality capacitors that they could find. He explained that the importance of the capacitors was due to the fact that they are what "blows" if you have overheating. He also discussed the new developments in small computer cases for automobiles and other uses that have limited space available. He mentioned that he sells high-end cell phones. Displays are nearly all going to LCD's. OLED's are the replacement display that is just coming on the market, but they are very expensive and Steve believes that it will be 10 years before they are priced reasonably. There is a program called Vista Antivirus that is not associated with Microsoft. Steve says that you should not even click on the product's ad or even the button to get rid of it. Once you get it on your computer, it is almost impossible to uninstall. He recommends a free program called Magic Disc, which allows you to create virtual CD drives and CD/DVD discs on your computer that can be played at anytime without inserting the disc. Steve explained the concept of connecting to a server with a "Thin Client." This is a small box with a VGA plug, a USB keyboard plug, a USB mouse plug, a network plug

and an amplified sound plug. Steve ended his presentation with a question and answer session, Steve provided a 802.11n wireless pci adapter for the raffle.

John Witmer began the business portion of our meeting at approximately 8:45 pm. John announced that Jim Purcell would give the presentation for November. The subject of the presentation will be "Scanning, Editing and Sharing Your Slides, Negatives and Digital Photos". He reminded members of the FACUG Fall Conference at Clearwater on October 25th. He also mentioned that we would have our annual holiday party at the December meeting. The meeting ended at approximately 9:00 pm.

The wireless card donated by Steve Singer was won by Jim Purcell. ◆

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

finally gave me something I could import into Expression Encoder. I then transferred this file to my desktop machine, where I set Expression Encoder to work encoding the file as a Windows Media Video (WMV) file, which after much, much work ending up being about 175 MB—still a pretty large file for the web. But at least I finally managed to find a use for Expression Encoder.

Perhaps I should try to do a shorter video as above so that I could then have a much smaller example to put on the web.

*(Continued on page 8)*

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- Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
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*(Expression.....Continued from page 7)*

That's it for Expression Studio's five programs. For most computer users, Expression Media which allows you do all sorts of things with your media files, will probably be the only one of interest. For those few who do web work, you will find Expression Web quite valuable. And for anyone who wants to take their web work one step further and create Silverlight applications, Expression Blend, along with Visual Studio 2008, are the tools to use. I should note that Visual Studio can be quite expensive, but, to work with Silverlight in Visual Studio, Visual Studio 2008 Standard for under \$300 is sufficient. The free Visual Studio Express does not support Silverlight. As for Expression Design, the vector graphics program, it could certainly be a stand-alone program for anyone who desires to create vector graphics. I am just not sure of the audience for it. ◆

