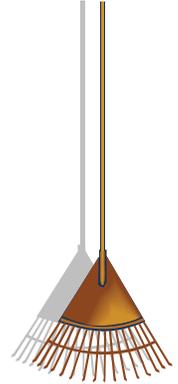




A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.



Vol. 22 No. 3

March 2009

March in Tampa

Meeting

Vista Ultimate Movie Maker

by

Bob LaFave

Wednesday March 11, 2009

6:30 PM

**Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida**

Meeting Preview: Bob LaFave will demonstrate the use of Vista Ultimate Movie Maker. He will also 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*

Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Jim Purcell, I don't have much space to fill this month. That is good since I have not really been doing much that I could write about, especially along the programming line. However, I have been using a program new to me — Adobe InDesign CS4, part of the Adobe Creative Suite 4 Design Standard upgrade which I purchased in January. And although I used it to create the February newsletter, I don't feel proficient enough to write about it yet.

For many years, I have had Adobe's Photoshop, Illustrator and Acrobat Pro, which I would upgrade individually every other year. However, I noticed that I was paying more for these three upgrades than the price of an upgrade from, say, Adobe Creative Suite 3 Design Standard to CS4 Design Standard (which contains these three programs and additionally InDesign). There was an upgrade path from either Photoshop or Illustrator to CS4 which was somewhat expensive, but there was no upgrade path

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April 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.

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Minutes of the February Meeting

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

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at about 6:30 PM. There was a question about the use of special programs for moving to a new computer from an old one. Bob does not recommend using PC Mover to move applications. Bob stated that the best way to put your applications on a new computer is to use the original CD and install the program on the new computer, just as you did on the old one. He recommended that you use the Windows Transfer Wizard or Windows Easy Transfer to move files and settings from one computer to the other. The transfer can be done in a number of ways, including a "Windows Easy Transfer Cable". There was also a discussion of the problems encountered in installing and uninstalling some antivirus programs. A member asked about dual layer DVD's. Bob discussed the various formats, their capacities and their relative costs.

John Witmer started the business portion of the meeting at approximately 7:15 PM. He purposely kept the discussion short to leave plenty of time for the Creative Memories presentation. He mentioned the need for members to pay their dues on time and suggested some methods that might be used to help members keep up with the expiration dates. He reminded members of the FACUG conference in Zephyrhills. John introduced Kathy Eustis and covered her experience and expertise with the Creative Memories programs. Kathy Eustis started her presentation at about 7:20 PM. She began with an open discussion with the members on how we use and store our pictures once they are taken. She stressed the importance of storing them in such a way that we can easily find them and of having an adequate backup system to preserve the pictures. She pointed out that pictures do not normally stand alone, that we need to record and preserve the story as well as the pictures. Kathy described the "Memory Manager" program as a complete system for storing your digital photos, clippings, children's art, as well as video and audio clips. The program allows you to record the story of the picture in as much detail as you wish. You can easily print, email or create a slide

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New PC Setup

By Merle Nicholson, Tampa PC Users Group
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For some reason, I've been setting up new computers the last few months – mostly notebooks. Offhand I'd say six since Christmas, just ten weeks ago. I thought I'd go through what I do to these machines and recommend software to add that will make them a "complete" PC. That would be just those mostly free software applications that should be of interest to everyone. To those, you'll have to add your own software that follows your own interests.

To get started, the first thing I do to a new computer is make operating system backup disks. Sometimes it's not necessary when disks are included in the package. However it's handled, it's the number one priority. Do it first. Also, later that day after removing crapware, it is necessary to make some Acronis image backup CDs and then a bootable Acronis CD for recovery and put all these CDs away for WHEN (not IF) you need them. I don't consider a recovery partition a valid option because it's useless in the case of a hard drive failure.

I'll continue to use the new \$550 HP/Compaq as my example. There is an HP program that you can only run once that will make recovery CDs. It is not an Operating System CD, so it will put the PC back to its delivery state. Do it now, not later.

The second in priority is to clean the crapware from the new PC. The last notebook I bought for myself at Office Depot, the sales guy offered a \$15 program on CD that will clean up my computer! Later I found it on the HP site as an ordering option. I was just a bit indignant, and my wife said to him "That's why I have him to do that!" meaning me. It's true I'll do a much more thorough job because I have a very well-defined crapware definition. "If I don't know what it is, uninstall it!"

I uninstall everything I do not need from the "Programs and Features" in Control Panel. On an HP consumer PC, there's a lot to do, almost all of them identi-

fied as HP. They have even rebranded Wild Tangent as "HP Games". That was the first to go. The problem in uninstalling is the risk of losing something essential, but I've never really encountered that. If I were to accidentally delete a hardware driver, I can get that driver back from their web site. I always uninstall any "trial" software. That will include copies of Office and Norton AntiVirus. Also, I uninstall anything that has the word "toolbar", "MSN" or "AOL". Now reboot one last time, and install an antivirus. Then start doing Microsoft Updates. All this will take quite a while.

Antivirus:

At this point I usually install AVG Free 8.5 (<http://www.download.com>). There are a couple of reasons. First, it's free. Second, it's reasonably unobtrusive even on a netbook PC like ASUS EeePC. It includes anti-spyware, and it has a very understandable user interface. If I put footprint size as most important, I'd use Sunbelt Software VIPRE (\$29.95) at <http://www.sunbeltsecuritynews.com/LYFUQ0/090218-VIPRE-for-Netbooks>. They have specifically tested on netbooks. Remember also that Vista has Windows Defender installed by default, and it probably was installed in some Windows XP update. It's just an anti-spyware program. So if you install a fully integrated anti-malware program, you can disable Defender if you wish. It's in your startup list in msconfig, labeled "MSASCui.exe. It's also installed as a Service in Computer Management, Services. Find it, right-click for Properties, stop and disable it.

I also use Microsoft Windows Live One-Care, <http://onecare.live.com/standard/en-us/3/default.htm>, on three of my computers. It's very easy to install and use. It's \$50 for three PC's for one year. It's very unobtrusive and has the best reporting system and user interface I've seen. It includes an enhanced two-way firewall, schedules tune-ups, checks for updates and schedules automatic backups. By the end of 2009, Microsoft is supposed to rename it and make it free.

Firewall:

If you don't want to depend on the Windows Firewall, and your antivirus package does not include one, there are several free ones available. My favorite free one is

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Webroot Desktop Firewall, free at: http://www.webroot.com/En_US/consumer-products-desktopfirewall.html

Updates:

After the antivirus and firewall programs are running, it's time to install all updates. First make sure XP is at Service Pack 3, and Vista is at Service Pack 1. If not, install those first, then do the remaining updates. After you have the updates installed, do it again until there are no more updates available. The reason is that updates need updates, and you'll get the first one, and when Update rescans, it'll find more.

In Windows Updates, there are usually "optional" hardware driver updates. I always, always skip those, and also I'll mark them as hidden so I won't be bothered with them again. Then I'll go to the manufacturers' website to see if there are later drivers there. My philosophy on hardware drivers is: Don't fix it if it ain't broke.

Back Up:

Ok, here's a very good time to back up the system. All the crapware is off, and it's up-to-date and an anti-virus is installed. Also, the backup will not be large because I haven't begun to move data files, and I haven't installed any software. I usually do an Acronis full backup. I really don't want to use a file backup here now because I want to have a fast recovery method. So I use either an external hard drive or DVDs – or both. Then I make sure I have a CD that will recover the image.

Essential Software:

PDF Writer: Every PC needs a PDF printer installed. It appears in your printer list, along with all other printers. The difference is that the resulting print is a PDF file. You should never send someone a word document or a text file just to have them read it. Everyone has a PDF reader.

There are many PDF printers. I use PrimoPDF. Other popular freebies are CutePDF Writer and PDF995, all from <http://www.downloads.com>.

PDF Reader:

Well, everyone has Adobe Reader. <http://www.adobe.com/reader>, and you probably need it for the add-in for Internet Explorer, but it's gotten so very large it takes forever to load. For a while the install included an IE toolbar which you had to uncheck. And now it installs Adobe Air, and you don't have any choice. However, you can go to Add/Remove and uninstall just Adobe Air. Also, you must (should) remove Adobe Reader from Startup in msconfig. I hate programs that are always "calling home." I would never install Adobe Reader on a netbook.

A very good solution to Adobe Bloat is to install a lightweight reader. Foxit Reader (<http://www.download.com/windows/>) is very popular. My personal favorite is Haihaisoft PDF Reader. http://www.drm-x.com/PDF_Reader.aspx. It's very small sized at 1.7 MB.

Office Software:

Everyone needs word processing. Most students need a presentation program and a spreadsheet. You can't go wrong with Microsoft Office. The current price for Office Home and Student is \$100. I purchased one in December 2008 that is licensed for three computers for \$90 at <http://www.NewEgg.com>. But there are some competitors, and they're very good. OpenOffice is free at <http://www.openoffice.org>. Its close cousin, Sun StarOffice, is \$34.95 at <http://globalspecials.sun.com/>. You should not have file compatibility problems sharing with Word documents. But check the compatibility out first before committing a lot of work.

Photos:

My favorite free photo searcher/viewer/slideshow/cataloger/photo editor is WildBit Viewer 5.3 at <http://www.wildbit-soft.fi> The photo-editing capability is not complete like you'd expect of a commercial package, but it does a lot. I found it because I was looking for a program that would sequentially rename all of the photos in a folder. This does that, and much, much more.

More Photos and Paint:

Two very good free Paint Shop substitutes are Paint.NET and GIMP. GIMP is a Linux derivative and is the standard photo and paint program in Linux. Also there

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show with your photos and keep up with the status of each item in storage. The program also includes four pages of editing tools. The editing program is quite comprehensive, is very easy to use, and most scrap bookers will find the tools intuitive. Kathy then described the capabilities and versatility of Storybook Creator Plus, the Creative Memories software

program that allows you to create a digital scrapbook. To start a project, you choose from a list of sizes and themes. You begin with the templates provided (or you can start with a blank page). The program populates the first 20 pages with the photos or digital articles that you have selected. You have complete freedom to move or change the photos and rearrange them as you desire. You can also create text boxes where you

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Internet Picture of the Month



The Dow Jones Industrial Average

As of March 2, 2009, the Dow Jones Industrial Average of 6763 was about back to where it was on April 1, 1997, when it closed at 6611. The chart above is from the Wall Street Journal site, <http://online.wsj.com/>.

March's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

- Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)
- Vanity Fair
- Microsoft Fix It Solution Center
- GlobalPost
- lynda.com - instructional videos
- 1914 State Maps

- <http://www.tpcug.org/>
- <http://www.vanityfair.com/>
- <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx/fixit#tab0>
- <http://www.globalpost.com/>
- <http://www.lynda.com>
- http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~shastaca/maps_index.html

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is a smaller version of GIMP called GIMP Portable. All are available at <http://www.download.com/windows/>

Media Player:

It's hard to beat the free VLC Media Player from VideoLAN Project. I always get frustrated with the Windows Media Player because I can't seem to remember what file types it WON'T play. With VLC you don't have to worry about that for audio and video files. It also has a simpler user interface than WMP. Any program that offers "skins" isn't for me. Hell, I don't know what a "skin" is.

Backup:

It's hard to beat the free Microsoft SyncToy 2.0. But if you use Vista, don't forget that a built-in "Backup Status and Configuration" (Orb, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools) is very good and easily scheduled. SyncToy 3 is available at the Microsoft Download Center: <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/default.aspx>.

Disk Defrag:

The built-in Windows defrag is pretty boring. I use the highly rated Auslogics Disk Defrag 1.5.23.350. from Download.com: http://www.download.com/Auslogics-Disk-Defrag/3000-2094_4-10567503.html?tag=mncol

Outlook Email Organizer:

xobni (all in lower case – inbox spelled backwards) indexes and searches all your outlook emails and attachments. It's a plug-in for Outlook 2003 and 2007. Once you see what it can do, you'd actually pay money for it. Thankfully it's free. <http://www.xobni.com/>

Three Windows XP Specific MUST HAVES:

Microsoft ClearType Tuner http://www.download.com/ClearType-Tuner/3000-2094_4-10628947.html?tag=mncol

Microsoft ImageResizerPowerToy http://www.download.com/Image-Resizer-Powertoy-for-Windows-XP/3000-18487_4-10905400.html?tag=mncol

Microsoft TweakUI PowerToy 2.10 http://www.download.com/Tweak-UI/3000-2072_4-10002117.html. ◆

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that would be cheaper for those like me with both Photoshop and Illustrator, not to mention Acrobat. So I phoned Adobe about this and laid out my case and did receive a better price for the upgrade to CS4 Design Standard which was cheaper than an upgrade from either Illustrator or Photoshop but more expensive than an upgrade from CS3 Design Standard.

By the way, Adobe InDesign is for desktop publishing and will replace Microsoft Publisher for me in creating newsletters, booklets, brochures, etc. Now I had a new program I needed to learn, and Adobe had just the thing to teach me — a one-month free subscription to lynda.com, where I could watch all the training videos I wanted. In the past, I had temporary access to some of these on a CD for learning Photoshop and knew how good they were. Now I would have access to the entire catalog of training videos.

I highly recommend that you go to <http://www.lynda.com> and look around. You can sign up for as little as \$25 for one month. And a few of the videos may be viewed for free. For example, I think Photoshop CS4 Essential Training has about six that may be viewed for free. Additionally, as is true for all versions of other programs, there is training for all versions of Photoshop.

A list of the programs — some of which I didn't know existed — for which there are videos is below. ◆

3ds Max	Captivate
Access	Carrara
Acrobat	CINEMA 4D
Acrobat Connect	ColdFusion
Adobe CS4	Color
After Effects	Compressor
AIR	Contribute
Amorphium Pro	CorelDRAW
Aperture	Device Central CS4
Audition	Director
AutoCAD	Dreamweaver
Avid Xpress Pro	Drupal
Bento	DVD Studio Pro
Blogger	eBay
Bridge	Encore CS4

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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@tam-pabay.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.

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Encore DVD	Mac OS
Entourage	Mac OS Server
Excel	Mask Pro
Expression Blend	Maya
Expression Design	Motion
Expression Web	Movie Maker
FileMaker Pro	Numbers
Final Cut Express	Office 2003
Final Cut Pro	Office 2007
Fireworks	Office for Mac 2008
Flash	OneNote 2007
Flash Lite	Open Source
Flash MX	OpenOffice.org
Flex	Outlook
FreeHand	Pages
FrontPage	Paint Shop Pro
GarageBand	Painter
GoLive	Photoshop
Google Docs	Photoshop Elements
Google Sketchup	Photoshop Express
Groove	Photoshop Lightroom
iDVD	Picasa
iLife	Poser
Illustrator	PowerPoint
iMovie	Premiere Elements
InCopy	Premiere Pro
InDesign	Pro Tools
InfoPath 2007	Project
Interactive Designer	Publisher
Internet Explorer	QuarkXPress
iPhoto	QuickBooks
iTunes	Quicken
iView Media Pro	QuickTime
iWeb	Reason
iWork	Shake
Joomla!	Sharepoint
Keynote	Silverlight
Kuler	Soundbooth
LiveType	Soundtrack Pro
Logic	Studio

Ultra CS3	Windows XP
UltraDev	Word
Vegas	WordPerfect
Visio	WordPress.com
Vue	Xcelsius
Vuvox	ZBrush 3
Windows Vista	



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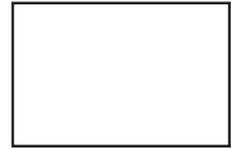
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http://www.epchc.org/household_chem.htm

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want. There are a large variety of pre-designed pages that you can customize with the software program. Once you have created your book you have a variety of ways to show your photos. You can upload the information to Creative Memories and have them published in a beautiful bound book of 20 to 100 pages. The books are available in sizes of 12x12, 11x8.5, 8x8 and 7x5 inches. You can also have individual pages printed or you can print your own pages to be framed or placed in an album. Creative Memories has a wide variety of optional packages that you can purchase to embellish your pages or you can use your imagination and create your own.

The meeting ended at 8:40 PM. ◆

