



Bits of Blue

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



Vol. 22 No. 5

May 2009

May in Tampa

Meeting

Optical Character Recognition

by

Patrick Courtney

Wednesday May 13, 2009

6:30 PM

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

Meeting Preview: Patrick Courtney, a member of the Brandon group, will give us an Optical Character Recognition presentation that begins with a Power Point show about OCR followed by a demonstration of some practical applications of OCR using OmniPage Pro 14. Bob LaFave 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
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Thanks to Jim Purcell we have some content for the newsletter this month. And since I made a small computer related purchase, I wrote about that.

Last month, right at the end of the meeting, Bob LaFave took us to a site of interest to him--Live Ships Map, in the links this month. That got me to thinking that I might be able to do something similar. Recall that I have mapped census data and NPR stations, among other things. After a good bit of work, I have things the way I want, and you can view the results at <http://www.lamartin.com/ShipLocations/>. There was a fair bit of programming involved with this: Getting the marine traffic data as a zipped file, unzipping the data, supplying country names and flags for the ships, and, lastly, displaying the data on a map. All done when you select a location to view.

In the continuation of this article, is a view of the program dis-

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June 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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Florida Association of User Groups
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Minutes of the March Meeting

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

Bob LaFave started the Windows SIG at approximately 6:30 p.m. He explained the use of TV and FM tuners. He also discussed the use of programs that let you record any sound coming into your computer. He demonstrated the use of these programs. Bob explained the things which you can listen to and record with "Download Helper." Bob outlined a procedure to play ASF files in Windows Vista, since there is a bug in Windows Media Player in Vista that will not allow ASF files to play. William LaMartin discussed problems he experienced when Norton installed a new version of the anti-virus program he was using. He felt that the problems were serious enough to cause him to switch to another anti-virus program despite several years of satisfactory service from Norton. Bob ended the session at approximately 6:55 p.m.

William LaMartin started his presentation, "Online Program Training Videos at lynda.com and More" at approximately 7:00 p.m. William discussed his use of the online training program at lynda.com. He began with a discussion of his experiences over the years with many copies of a wide variety of software and their updates. He said that he installed and learned these programs "by the seat of his pants," or searched the Internet when he was unable to work out a solution. He said that had he found training videos that were as effective and easy to use as these, he would not have wasted so many years of his life learning the programs and also would have discovered capabilities of the software that he never realized existed. He said that the videos were very efficient and reasonably priced and that, in fact, many are free. William described how he used Adobe Illustrator to plan his installation of a water sprinkler system, which served as an example of the complexity of many software programs.

William went to the lynda.com web site to show the large variety of subjects available and the flexibility of the subscription program. He played programs that showed the quality and versatility of the training. The

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Monitor Calibration

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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For several years, ever since purchasing an Epson Stylus Photo 2200 printer, I have never been sure that what is printed will appear the same as what I see on my computer monitor. This is not really a complaint about the printer; I have printed many stunning images using it. Yet I have also had to reprint images several times to get the proper degree of lightness and, more rarely, the correct color cast.

The most persistent problem has been that the printed images appear a good bit darker than what I see on my monitor from Photoshop. My solution to this has been to simply make the image about +25 brighter in Photoshop when I want to print it. Additionally, a small reduction of the saturation for red is often needed if I want the printed result to be the same as seen on the monitor.

Now, you might ask: How do you know that what you see on the monitor is correct? Good question, and that is where a monitor calibrator comes in. There are several such devices on the market. The one I chose is the one I was shown at North Tampa Photography, the huey by Pantone. It is a small USB device about 4 inches long and a little over one half-inch wide and about one-half inch thick. The cropped photo, Image A, shows it dangling from the top of my monitor over the blue color portion of Image A during a calibration, with its progress display and cancel button to the left.



It is quite simple to use. First, you install the software from a CD. (By the way, the huey pro is the same hardware item--it just has more advanced software.) Next, you run that software, where the first screen tells you to click the start button. After that you see the second screen, shown at the bottom left of this page, Image B, which tells you to attach the sensor, which has suction cups, to your monitor. Then you simply follow the on-screen instructions. A number of different colors will appear on screen under the device, as photographed above with a blue light on the screen.

When the calibration is finished, you will be able to see the results of before and after and will also be given the opportunity to place the device in a cradle

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Improving Your Workspace

By Jim Purcell, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group
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Our workspace requirements are sometimes obvious because we have been using the same space, furniture and equipment for years and are perfectly happy with what we have. This is probably not completely true for most of us because it's rare that there is no change in all of these factors for any of us.

There is an awful lot of assistance out there to help you decide how to approach and accomplish your goal. I won't attempt to discuss all of these possibilities, if for no other reason than the fact that the article would consume more than one newsletter and still wouldn't answer all of your questions. I have just been through this process so I'll give you a quick summary of what I considered, the sources of information I used in reaching a decision and the resulting workspace.

Goal: About five and a half years ago my wife and I began a project, which I have used to identify my workspace requirements. We started by cataloging our estimated 1800 35 mm slides taken between 1953 and 1985. We also began accumulating and arranging any pictures of our family history, both slides and black and white prints and negatives, up to the time we met in high school. We already had begun to accumulate pictures after that time, once we were married. I became interested in photography at an early age. My next door neighbor and best friend since we were 4 years old had our first photo lab in his mother's wash shed in 1947. I got my first 35mm camera in 1953, after college graduation and marriage. My wife also became interested in photography as the number of our children increased at a steady pace from zero to five. When the three grandchildren started arriving, the previous numbers were quickly eclipsed. As a result, in addition to the slides, we have about twelve hundred color negatives in APS format and hundreds of black and white and color photos and negatives to scan. The goal is to create a searchable cross referenced library of all of the images on DVD and on external hard drives. The second part would be to produce DVD

slide shows which depict our family and show how our lives evolved in these areas, to give our children and grandchildren a good view of the conditions that existed when and where they were born in the United States and in Germany.

Required conditions: I have long been a fan of Katrin Eismann, an internationally recognized artist, author and educator. She seems to be most proud of her role as educator. In a book that she coauthored with Sean Duggan, they devoted four-and-a-half pages to "Building a Digital Darkroom." It covers practically everything you consider in building a workspace to fit your needs. I discussed their recommendations with some of the many knowledgeable members that we have in our group to try to fit their recommendations to my needs and to update equipment changes since the book was published in 2008.

Equipment: After my information gathering, I decided to, at least initially, keep all of the equipment that I had: (1.) A Dell Laptop Inspiron 9100 with Windows XP that I have had for several years, (2.) A Dell Desktop Dimension 8300 with Windows XP that I have also had for several years, (3.) An HP Pavilion dv6675us laptop with Vista Ultimate 64 bit (4gb of memory) that I purchased about a year and a half ago to replace the Dell laptop, (4.) A Minolta Dimage Scan Dual III film scanner that was purchased several years ago and (5.) An Epson Perfection 3200 Photo scanner that I have had for over four years. I also plan to keep all of my printers, which will not have much effect on the project, with the exception of an all-in-one that could provide limited scanning of photos and documents. I added a new scanner, the Epson Perfection V700 Photo. This dual lens scanner will provide increased quality and speed. It can batch scan 12 slides or negatives, as opposed to four with my other scanners. I may be able to quickly pass my other Epson scanner on to one of my children, but I wanted to try a few weeks of production to see whether it is needed. The last thing that I added and the pride of my stable is a new desktop. Merle Nicholson provided me with a parts list to order and allowed me to help him put it together (I held the flashlight and gritted my teeth). I never saw so many pipes and towers. It looked like it

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had been designed in Los Alamos. Briefly, it has Vista Ultimate 64 bit, 8GB of memory, an AMD Phenom II X4 940 Deneb 3.0GHz Quad-Core Black Edition Processor, 2 Sata 150GB 10,000 RPM drives combined into one drive using RAID technology for program files and a 750GB 7200 RPM Sata drive for data files and two Samsung 22" monitors. There should be no doubt that this configuration will provide rapid processing of photos in Photoshop or Lightroom.

Furniture:

Once I decided on the equipment, I started searching for additional furniture. I decided to get all of the additional furniture from IKEA, Their furniture is modular and can be easily shaped to use the available space. You can add to the furniture if you need to do so at a later date. Their design is innovative and easy to modify. There is an assembly requirement so don't buy it on Christmas Eve. It is sturdy as a rock but also just as heavy. IKEA has a program that you can download that allows you enter your dimensions and window and door placements to create a scale model of your room to which you can add the exact furniture that you wish to buy and it is loaded into your room to scale. The program allows you to move the furniture around to fit the model. I was also able to insert a model of my old non-IKEA desk to make sure that it all fit. Once you are satisfied, you close out and print. You get a layout of your room and a list of the parts you need to assemble the furniture. You take them both to IKEA, and their representative in the show room that has assembled models of your furniture

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Internet Picture of the Month



Tatoosh in New Orleans

What software can buy. From the site http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2009/04/paul_allens_yacht_tatoosh_dock.html.

“Owned by Paul G. Allen, the co-founder of Microsoft Corp. and a frequent visitor to the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the Tatoosh is 301 feet long, larger than all but a few dozen super yachts, according to published sources.

The vessel reportedly cost \$100 million when Allen bought it slightly used -- one year old -- in 2001.”

May's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)

Live Ships Map

Pictures and History of Tampa

TrekEarth - the world through photography

Butterflies of Florida

Matching prints to your monitor

<http://www.tpcug.org/>

<http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/>

<http://www.tampapix.com/>

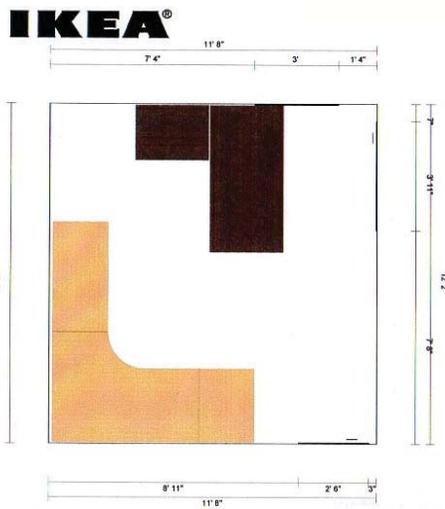
<http://www.trekearth.com/>

<http://www.thebutterflysite.com/florida-butterflies.shtml>

http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/article_pages/match_prints_to_screen.html

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will review the list with you to make sure that it's accurate. He or she will then print a new list which identifies the bin number where each part is located. The special tools such as allen wrenches are provided, but if you're doing much, you'll be much happier if you have a power screwdriver and a ratchet socket wrench. This is also a two person job although I did assemble a mobile drawer unit by myself.

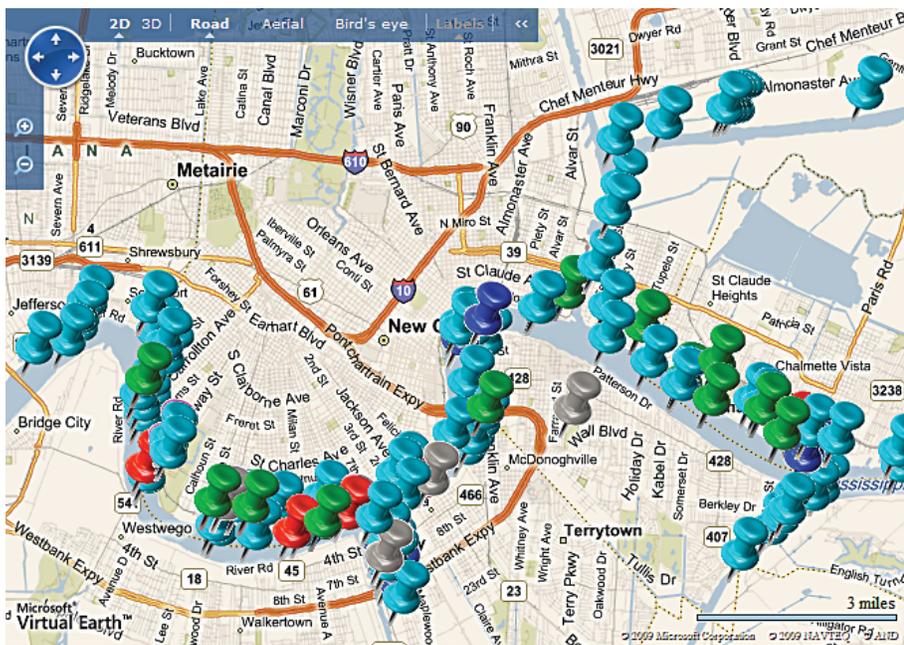


scanner is old but it is the only scanner that can process this film and, though it's slow, it can batch process a whole roll (25 negatives). The Dell laptop is slow but this is the only use I intend to make of the computer and it can scan practically unattended. The older of my Epson flatbed scanners I plan to use with my Dell desktop for digitizing photos of high-quality and medium-size black-and-white negatives. The new laptop will be used as a new laptop but is capable of running the new high-quality scanner. The new desktop with the dual monitors will be used editing, organizing and creating slide shows and, hopefully, intelligent archives that will be useful to my children and grandchildren. ♦

Workflow: I'll give a short summary of my thoughts on workflow. First you probably wonder why I'm clinging to all of this old equipment. The oldest of my equipment is the Dell laptop and the Minolta film scanner. I plan to use them together for one purpose only, to scan the APS film cartridges. The Minolta

Comments.....Continued from page 1

playing ships on the Mississippi River at New Orleans. You may zoom in and then hover your mouse over a pin to get specific information for that ship. ♦



Ship locations
 Double-click map at new location

 There are 314 ships in the area

- Cargo
- Tanker
- Towing
- Other
- Tug
- Passenger
- Pleasure

Data from: <http://www.marinetraffic.com/>
 William LaMartin

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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on your computer desk next to the monitor so that it can re-calibrate your monitor periodically as the room lighting changes.

So, how has this helped my photo-printing problem since I have done nothing to calibrate my printer?

The answer is that, in using a calibrated monitor, you know that what you saw yesterday and see today and will see tomorrow and also see under different room lighting conditions will be the same. That gives you a base from which to make further adjustments. Those adjustments and settings will be made in Photoshop and in the printer dialog settings when you actually print from Photoshop.

All modern photo printers should have an ICC profile for each paper. For example my Epson 2200 printer has a profile named SP2200 Premium Glossy_PK to use when printing using the Epson glossy paper, and it has similar profiles for each of the other papers. So, when printing my image from Photoshop, I select this profile in the print dialog, along with other settings, which I will omit here but which you can read about in the Matching Prints to Screen link and the huey & huey Pro User Guide link below.

This is supposed to give me a printed result that matches what I see on the monitor. But not quite. It seems that for many photos, I need to increase the brightness in Photoshop to get a printed result matching the monitor.

I purchased my huey locally at North Tampa Photography for \$77. I have seen it on the web anywhere from \$65 to \$90. The huey pro costs around \$30 or \$40

more, and there is also an upgrade from Pantone from the huey to the huey pro. The Pantone site is <http://www.pantone.com>

Color is a much more complicated subject than you might think. Just do a Google search for things like “monitor calibration” or “printer calibration”.

The first three links below are articles by a professional photographer named Keith Cooper, whose knowledge about color far exceeds anything I could write. So, if you are interested in better printed photos, read his three articles.

If you are interested in purchasing a Pantone huey color meter, then read the pdf user guide at the link below. This document also has good information on printing from Photoshop, in its last section titled “Printing after the monitor is calibrated.”

Review of huey: http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/reviews/pantone_huey.html

Review of huey Pro: http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/reviews/pantone_huey_pro.htm

Matching Prints to Screen: http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/article_pages/match_prints_to_screen.html

huey & huey Pro User Guide: <http://www.pantone.com/downloads/products/pdfs/hueyhueyPROUser-Guide.pdf> ◆

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presentation ended at approximately 9:00 p.m.

John Witmer, our president, opened the business session and discussed the May presentation, which will be on “OCR” technology. He also talked about some of the programs under consideration for our meetings later in the year. He acknowledged visitors Steve Singer and Wayne Lawrence. He discussed the FACUG meeting and some of the interesting programs that were presented. He mentioned that, through a contract with Microsoft, APCUG has made the program “Live Meeting” available to its affiliated user groups at no charge. Steve discussed some recent developments in computer technology and eBooks. John closed the meeting at approximately 9:30 p.m. ◆

