



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



April in Tampa

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April 2011

Meeting

Android Phones & Tablets

by

Steve Singer

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.

4121 N 50th Street

Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Steve Singer of RDI@TampaBay returns. This presentation will focus on phones and tablets using the Android operating system. As usual, Bob Lafave will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting..

Editor's Comments

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

Android phones, part of the topic for this month's presentation, are giving the iPhone and Blackberry pretty good competition. According to Merle Nicholson, his Android is just great. I suppose the only thing missing from an Android phone is the ability to end each email sent with the tag line *sent from my iphone*. I see a lot of those, but for some fortunate reason the Android people don't add *sent from my Android*.

Regarding the picture of the month photo in the March newsletter, member Larry Anderrs wrote: *Hey, I liked your picture this month. I've eaten at that restaurant several times. The hotel I stayed in the last couple times I was in Paris is right down the street from that McDonald's so I am quite familiar with it. Thanks for the memories.*

Nancy Cottrell The TPCUG lost long-time member Nancy Cottrell last month. She died March 27 at age 72. I have no idea of when she first joined our group. I have photos taken

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May Meeting: To be announced

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However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Minutes of the March Meeting

*By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com*

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) normally opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees. Bob leads the group in finding answers to questions and solutions to problems. Discussed during the March SIG were questions about monitoring network resources in Windows 7, Backup and Restore and creating restore disks for both Acronis and Windows 7 Backup and Restore. Also, the IEEE 1394 Firewire was discussed, and Bob did a quick mention of Google Cloud Printing. This month's SIG concluded at 7:05 PM.

John Witmer conducted a brief business meeting and mentioned his election as the treasurer for FACUG, the Florida Association of Computer User Groups. John noted the next January "2012 FACUG Technology Bahamas Cruise" is January 23rd through January 27, 2012. See registration details at <http://www.facug.org/Conference/2012/2012conference-Reg2.asp>

Our speaker for March was Bob Gostischa, a volunteer speaker for Avast! Anti-virus software. Bob displayed a detailed slide show about the present state of virus infections, who is doing it and why. For instance, 85% are through web pages and 15% through infected devices. Surprisingly, 6 out of 10 legitimate websites are infected in some way. He detailed the various ways anti-virus software detects viruses and recommended some free scanners to help clean up your infected PC. Thanks for an excellent program, Bob. ◆

Keyboards and Stuff

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I've modified and programmed keyboards, trying my best to optimize my time at the computer. Not that I don't enjoy my computer and the things I can accomplish, but, first, I'm a lousy typist, despite having practiced continuously since 1976, and, second, I hate messing with things that are obviously flawed. Keyboards are all flawed, that's a given. Here's how I'm coping.

I'm pretty much settled, a couple of years ago, on a Logitech Gaming Keyboard model G11. It's been succeeded by a model G510 (\$106 at NewEgg), which is only slightly improved from the G11. I'm always on the lookout for new keyboards, but so far I haven't found anything else to excite me. The G11 is distinguished by 18 programmable keys, key backlighting and multimedia controls. The G510 is the same except the backlighting is probably better and it has a small multipurpose LCD screen. It's the backlighting and programmable keys that make it worth it to me. The picture to the right is the left side, showing the key arrangement and my labels.

You can use these 18 keys in 18 times three ways (54) because there are three buttons at the top of the array – M1, M2 and M3 – that will switch the whole bank of 18 to three sets. So far I haven't found a use for switching the banks. Eighteen seems to be enough, so it stays on M1. Programming is pretty versatile. It accepts macros, shortcuts, functions, text and a scripting language, so I'd guess that you'd be hard pressed to



find anything you couldn't program.

The bottom three keys in the picture are pretty obvious: They're a replacement for Ctl+X, C and V. I use these three constantly, since I'm a real believer in cut, copy and paste because I make a lot of mistakes and need to avoid typing as much as possible. The next set up is new for me, marked 1 2 3. They (and cut, copy, paste) don't need labels; I marked them for this article. 1 2 3 run a little program I wrote in VB.NET that will pop the mouse cursor to the center of my monitors 1, 2 and 3 and blip some eye-catching circles. The only disadvantage in using three monitors is finding the

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mouse and how to get it where you want it. Problem solved: The buttons “Computer”, “F:”, “G:”, “C:” and “D:” all just open Windows Explorer to those drive letters. “UP” moves Windows Explorer up one level in the directory tree, “close” closes the current window (it’s really Alt+F4, and a bit hazardous to use). “KP”, “outlook”, “IE” and “WAtacker” all launch programs and are used perhaps once a day. I’ll ditch any of these if I find any other use for the keys. “Date” runs another program I wrote to push the time and date into the clipboard ready for pasting. I use this, well,...sometimes.

There are several other ways to alter keyboards. I’ve disabled the “Caps Lock” key. It has no effect when pressed. It takes a complicated little registry change to do that, but just think about it; the only time I EVER use the Caps Lock is to switch it off after accidentally switching it on. What a waste of keyboard space. Likewise “Scroll Lock.” I’ll bet not one in ten thousand keyboard users know what Scroll Lock is, and it’s on every keyboard waiting for an accidental bump. How about the “Ins” key? Although I probably would not disable it as I did Caps Lock, I’d like to at least disable it from an accidental bump almost all the time.

Now that I’m started on this – let’s look at Num Lock. Ok, I’ll concede that some people use it. But I do own three keyboards (two on notebooks) that have no numeric keypad. But Num Lock switches an array of character keys to numbers if you don’t have a keypad. More than once I’ve gone crazy knowing that I know the logon password on a computer that wouldn’t take. Guess what. The num lock was on, the password used characters U,I,O,J,K,L or M, and being a password wouldn’t show up on the screen. Man, I hate that.

What I really want is a 100% fully programmable keyboard program built into Windows. How hard could it be? There are programmable keyboards. One or two really are 100% programmable. Even some that you just place the key switches wherever you want on a slate. But I don’t want it bad enough to pay them \$1500!



Pictured above: Logitech G510, NewEgg Item#: N82E16823126100 \$106.

Also nice in my living room (think NetFlix): Logitech diNovo Mini Black 63 Normal Keys Bluetooth Wireless Mini keyboard Item#: N82E16823126039 \$120, pictured to the right. ◆



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of meetings in 2001 that include her. But I am sure she was in the group long before then. As I recall, whenever she was at a meeting she usually had a question for the Windows SIG, which, of course, is the purpose of the SIG.



The photo above is of Nancy at the March 2002 meeting at the old Pepin location.

Lost Data I had an accident in my computer room that could have been serious if I didn't have multiple

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Internet Picture of the Month



Mushroom

One of a collection of nature photos by Wolfgang Uhlemann at <http://totallycoolpix.com/2011/03/in-the-picture-wolfgang-uhlemann/>. Another interesting collection at Totally Cool Pix is Rio de Janeiro Carnival 2011 at the link <http://totallycoolpix.com/2011/03/rio-de-janeiro-carnival-2011/?css=light>. And there are many more.

April's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)
 International Space Station comes together
 Internet Health Report
 Tampa Changing
 Totally Cool Pix
 Exploring Florida

<http://www.tpcug.org/>
http://i.usatoday.net/tech/graphics/iss_timeline/flash.htm
<http://www.internethealthreport.com/>
<http://www.tampachanging.com/>
<http://totallycoolpix.com/>
<http://fcit.usf.edu/florida/>

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copies of my computer backups.

While having a new storage cabinet delivered, I was asked to move one of the monitors on my computer desk just a little so as to avoid the possibility of the delivery people hitting it while placing the new piece of furniture. I complied and in the process knocked to the floor one of the external hard drives that was sitting behind the monitor. The floor is made of unforgiving quarry tile, and the drive no longer works. When connected to the computer, the drive has a light on it that lights and the computer beeps as it always should when a USB device is connected. But the drive is listed as an unknown device with no way to access the data on it. I downloaded the Western Digital Diagnostic program from their site, but it didn't detect the drive, so that was of no help.

What was on the drive? I know that there were several Acronis full-system backups of my main desktop computer, along with possible Acronis backups of my main laptop. I think there were also a lot of other data and image files that had been copied there, too. Of course, I have other Acronis backups of those computers on different external drives, but I was not sure about the data files and image files since I don't know what they were. I am 95% certain that I should have them on my main computer and thus also on any other Acronis backups of it. So nothing is really lost.

I ordered a replacement drive from Amazon with the new one being 2 TB, whereas the old one was 1 TB. The new one probably didn't cost any more than the smaller old one. The first thing I did was perform a complete backup of the desktop computer with Acronis, followed by Acronis backups of my two laptops. I then verified the Acronis backups. And I have also placed this new drive in a less vulnerable location.

The moral of the story? Look before you move something and have multiple backups.

New York Times Digital has moved to a pay-to-read format – that is, after you have read your 20 free articles per month. I have been reading *The New York*

Times online for years; the same for *The Wall Street Journal*, except the *WSJ* has been charging me for years, with \$155/year being the most recent fee. And, to me, the *Times* was the more important source of information, so I was ready to pay up if that is what it took to continue. However, I received an email from the *Times* saying that Lincoln was going to cover my subscription until the end of 2011. I suppose Ford hopes to sell me a Lincoln. My daughter received the same offer; however, my son in Manhattan did not. I suspect the offers went to longtime readers who were potential Lincoln purchasers, possibly based on zip code information. My son, living in Manhattan is not a very good candidate since almost no one there has a car. My daughter is certainly not a candidate for a Lincoln, but her zip code, the same as mine, may indicate otherwise.

Years ago when the newspapers began putting their publications online, they seemed to compete as to how much material they could put there and how well and timely they presented it. You could go to any of the major US dailies and see great news sites online. Locally *The Tampa Tribune* site was up there with the best in the nation. Then some papers thought about charging for access. I recall *The Miami Herald* tried that and *The New York Times* tried it for their premium content, whatever that is. The *Herald* soon dropped the pay plan since it had resulted in very few paid subscriptions. After a longer try, the *Times* dropped their premium plan. *The Wall Street Journal* is the only major publication I know of that instituted a pay plan and made a success of it.

Then everything fell apart. The papers' advertising revenues plummeted along with their readership, and the nice online versions were scaled back. *The Tampa Tribune* site is a mere shell of its past, at least in my opinion. *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* bucked the trend, their online versions improving, if anything. But all that takes money. So if you really care about in-depth news and not just a headline and a couple of paragraphs, you need to subscribe.

Your email, my email, everybody's email has been compromised. That is basically the message

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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. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at william@lamartin.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. Member Bob LaFave moderates the discussion.

Yahoo! eGroup

*By Kevan Sheridan, Vice President,
Tampa PC Users Group
kevan@tpcug.org*

The purpose of the TPCUG Yahoo! eGroup is to inform and promote communication among members of the Tampa PC Users Group. This is a great member benefit and the easiest way to stay in touch with other members during non-meeting days.

Joining the eGroup is simple: Use the e-mail address with which you wish to join the group to send an e-mail to: TPCUG-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Include your full name in the text section of this e-mail. You will receive a verification request that you reply to, then you are up and running.

Note: if you join with a Yahoo! email address you get full access to the group site at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tpcug>

To post messages to the group, create an e-mail and address it to: tpcug@yahoogroups.com. Your message will be broadcast to everyone in the eGroup.

Use of the eGroup would include, but is not limited to:

1. TPCUG leadership

- Posting announcements of general interest to the members
- Notifying members of recent changes or additions to meetings or special interest groups
- Requesting feedback from members

2. The Members

- Further discussing topics presented in meetings
- Asking questions that were not answered during the Q/A portion of the meeting
- Posting announcements of general interest to membership or leadership
- Listing equipment, either for sale or wanted
- Holding discussions on consumer electronics or related topics and issues

You may also sign up for and access the Yahoo! eGroup from the link on the tpcug.org main page. ◆

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many of us have been receiving from businesses such as Verizon, Walgreens, Best Buy and many other companies that have farmed out to a company called Epsilon the sending of those annoying emails we don't want to receive anyway.

The message I received from Verizon says:

“We have been informed by Epsilon, a provider of Verizon's email marketing services, that your email address was exposed due to unauthorized access to its systems. Verizon uses Epsilon to send marketing communications on our behalf.

Epsilon has assured us that the information exposed was limited to email addresses, and that no other information about you or your account was exposed. “

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First Class Mail

Member: Your membership is up for renewal

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I wonder what other information about my account Verizon provided to Epsilon. Personally, I don't like the idea of a company I deal with farming out the data I provide them to anyone else. I bet they provided them with such info as my zip code and what sorts of phones I own. And since I have an account with Walgreens, what sort of information of mine did they give Epsilon? My address, my age, what medications I take? Who knows. So far I have not heard anything from my bank, but it was also on the list of companies using Epsilon to send what I consider junk email.

So, you can practice all the safe computing you want, but that will not stop some company you have a relationship with possibly doing you in. The people who stole all this info, by combining all they got from different sources about you, will now probably know almost as much about you as Google does. Happy computing. ◆

