



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



Vol. 24 No. 8

August 2011

August in Tampa

## Meeting

### Microsoft Office 365

by

**Blain Barton**

from Microsoft

Wednesday, August 10, 2011

6:30 PM

**Pepin Distributing Co.**

**4121 N 50th Street**

**Tampa, Florida**

**Meeting Preview:** Blain Barton from Microsoft will tell us about Microsoft Office 365. 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](mailto:william@lamartin.com)

### TPCUG Forum

We have a new forum at the TPCUG site, <http://www.linux.tpcug.org/forums/>, where you may post or answer questions. Being the webmaster, I set up the forum at the site and then turned it over to Merle Nicholson to configure and manage, since he had volunteered to be the forum manager. Merle has an article in this month's newsletter going into detail on how to use the forum. I encourage the members to sign up and use this new item.

Our web site is hosted on a Windows 2008 server. Additionally the hosting company also provides for free an additional Linux sub-site hosted on an Apache server, with whatever space it uses being subtracted from the space available on the Windows server, of which we have more than we could ever use. I had never been interested in the Linux sub-site until I looked into finding free forum (also called bulletin board) software. There didn't seem to be any for a Windows server. Although I could have written a very basic program myself, I wasn't about to take on that project. I did a bit of research and found that there were nu-

*Comments.....Continued on page 5*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<a href="#">Meeting Preview</a>	1
<a href="#">Editor's Comments</a>	1
<a href="#">Minutes</a>	2
<a href="#">Kinect Without the XBOX</a>	3
<a href="#">Picture of the Month</a>	5
<a href="#">Links</a>	5
<a href="#">TPCUG Forum</a>	6
<a href="#">SIGs</a>	7
<a href="#">Map</a>	8

**September Meeting: To be announced**

**\*\* OFFICERS \*\***

President: John Witmer (president@tpcug.org)	949-8007
Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org)	988-6480
Treasurer: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)	234-9343
Secretary: Merle Nicholson (merle@merlenicholson.com)	879-3602
Member at Large: Ron Weinberg (rswjbr@verizon.net)	960-4132

**APPOINTED (Volunteers)**

Editor: William LaMartin (william@lamartin.com)	251-3817
Programs: Doug Mullis (dmullis@tampabay.rr.com)	234-9343

**Home Page** <http://www.tpcug.org>

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 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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.

**RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP?**

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU WILL

MAIL YOUR CHECK AND ANY  
ADDRESS OR NAME CHANGES TO:

TAMPA PC USERS GROUP  
PO BOX 3492  
TAMPA, FL 33601-3492

\$25 Individual                      \$35 Family  
\$60 Corporate = 3 employees + \$20 each add'l employee

Go to our web site <http://www.tpcug.org> and click on the  
About Us | Join link to join or renew online

Check the address label for your renewal month

**Friend of the User Group**

*We acknowledge  
Pepin Distributing Co.  
for their support*

**Affiliations**

Florida Association of User Groups  
Association of Personal Computer User Groups

**Minutes of the July Meeting**

*By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,  
Tampa PC Users Group  
[merle@merlenicholson.com](mailto:merle@merlenicholson.com)*

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) 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 briefly mentioned Prey software, one of the subjects of last month's meeting.

Arthur Williams described a problem with his PC sound; it was discussed for a while and not resolved. Bob introduced the TPCUG Forum to the membership at <http://www.tpcug.org>. This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM.

Our speaker this month was member Michele Burgess, who gave a very interesting talk and demonstration on wordpress.com and wordpress.org, the open source blog and website creation organizations.

Michele demonstrated the building of a web-based, template-driven website builder and blog site, all supplied free (the .org site is self-hosted). She demonstrated and addressed security concerns and how to protect against spam and keep bots off your site.

WordPress is software you download to your PC to create a website or blog. It claims to have thousands of plugins and themes available to transform your site into anything you can imagine. WordPress started out as a blogging system but has since evolved into a full content management system. As much information as you can possibly need is available at the website: <http://www.wordpress.org>.

Michele's presentation was well organized and very comprehensive. Since Michele is an active user, she was able to give us very helpful instructions based on her experience. She gave an interesting and useful look into a world of quality web and blog publishing. ◆

## Kinect without the XBOX

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group  
[william@lamartin.com](mailto:william@lamartin.com)

I don't own an XBOX and have only seen a Kinect device connected to an XBOX on the Internet. The Kinect allows someone playing a game on the XBOX to interface with it by using body motions, such as hand or leg movements. I am not a game player, so I had no interest in the Kinect – until recently when I heard that Microsoft had released a beta version of the Kinect for Windows SDK. That meant that a programmer could now program the Kinect using Visual Studio.

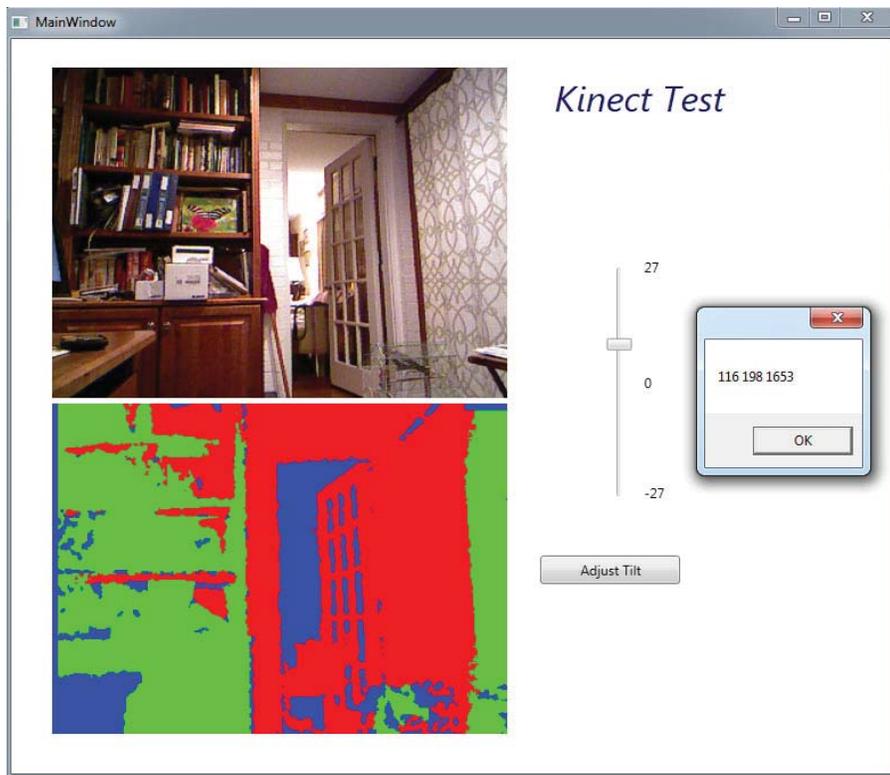
Was I interested in writing a game? No, at least not at the moment. My interest came from the Kinect being a stereo camera that can provide depth and other spatial information. I have worked with a stereo camera that costs around \$3,000, using its programming interface to find three dimensional information



about objects in its view. The Kinect, at \$150, offered a much cheaper alternative.

The image below is a screen capture of a program I wrote for the Kinect that displays an RGB image in the top frame, a color-coded distance image in the lower frame and a slider to adjust the camera's tilt. The message box that is displayed in the image below is showing the results of a mouse click on the box sitting on the bookcase. The first two numbers are the pixel coordinates of the point clicked; the last number, 1653, is the distance from the Kinect to the box, 1653 millimeters. And when measured with a tape, that distance proved to be right on the money. However, clicking the mouse in other locations sometimes produced distances that were obviously quite a bit off. By the way, the working range for the device to determine distances is from around four to 11.5 feet. This is not a very wide range; the expensive stereo camera I dealt with had a range of more than 30 feet.

The Kinect SDK was released in the middle of June. I started working with it a week or so later but then stopped to return to programming the Windows 7 phone. So I didn't get all that much done. In the project I mentioned, where you see the pixel location at 116,198 of a 320 x 240 pixel image in the message box in the screen capture on this page, I would like to replace the pixel coordinates with actual distance coordinates in millimeters measured from the center of the image. That way, I could use the camera to do such things as remotely measure the area of objects, or even estimate volumes if the object was positioned properly. This was the sort of things I was doing with the more expensive camera.



In looking at the data I receive using the camera, it appears that as you increase the size of the image, say, from 320 x  
*Kinect.....Continued on page 4*

*Kinect.....Continued from page 3*

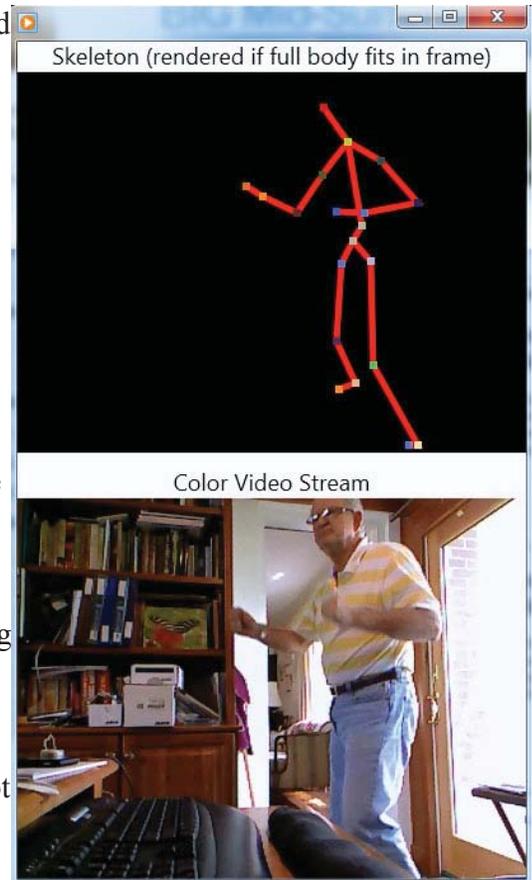
240 pixels to 640 x 480 pixels, more of the points do not have valid distance data. And I assume that this would also be the case for spatial data in the other two planes (the x-y coordinates if z is the distance coordinates).



This SDK is beta, and I believe when the release version is available, more features will be available, but I doubt the range will be increased past 11.5 feet, which is a bit of a downer for me.

With the SDK they provide some examples of what can be done. As opposed to my interest in finding distances, what is of most interest to Microsoft and other programmers is leveraging the Kinect's ability to recognize the human body and follow its movements. In one example, they have a game called the shape game, where you stand before the Kinect and look at a skeletal version of yourself on the computer screen with all sorts of shapes (balls, triangles, etc.) falling around you. The object of the game is for you to use your hands, feet, head or any part of your body to make contact with and deflect these virtual shapes. The image above is a screen capture of me playing this game. In the upper right-hand corner is an actual im-

age of me and below that is my skeletal representation. You will note that the skeleton is positioned exactly the same as the person in the actual image. I think I have just gotten five points from bouncing something off my head. The game is actually a bit of fun and not bad exercise. You do have to be careful kicking at the virtual objects since there are actually real objects in the room you can come into contact with.



Another sample allows you to make all sorts of movements and see them instantly displayed as a skeletal view. A screen capture of that is in the upper right of this page. Note how the software picked up my arm positions perfectly.

I should comment that these are not actually screen captures in the usual sense. Think about it. How could I do a screen capture by pressing the PrtScn key while I was a distance from the computer? What actually occurred was that I had running on the computer a program called Microsoft Expression Encoder Screen Capture, part of the Microsoft Expression 4 suite, that will record whatever activity is occurring on a selected portion of your screen and create a video file of it. That gave me a video file which, while being played, I could do a PrtScn for to capture a single image to use in the newsletter.

*Kinect.....Continued on page 7*

---

## Internet Picture of the Month



Tampa: From Paul B Kamp's photostream at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/21732433@N07/page4/>

---

*Comments.....Continued from page 1*

merous ones written for Linux. With this knowledge, I took a close look at what was available at our hosting company for the Linux sub-sites and found that there was a bulletin board called phpBB 3 available.

To add the bulletin board, all I had to do was click on a link, and the installation process began. When it was finished, I marveled at the complexity of what had been created. I could never have created something like this. For example, it created a MySQL database with 62 tables to manage all aspects of the content and appearance of the forum. Once the forum was created, I did a little configuration, such as adding the world famous TPCUG dancing palm tree as a logo, and set

up the ability of the forum to send email messages for whatever purpose the forum administrator, Merle Nicholson, should desire. Merle then took over and has been further configuring things and adding features, as described in his article on page 6.

### Apple beats USA

As we all know, our federal government recently had a bit of a to do about being allowed to borrow more money. And if Congress didn't OK raising the limit on how much the government could borrow, the country would run out of money to spend (or give away) on around August 2. Well, someone sent me a link to a CNN article, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/>

*Comments.....Continued on page 8*

---

### August's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)  
 eReplacementParts - Repari Parts for major brands  
 RepRapWiki - 3D Printer  
 Money in Politics  
 Angry Birds Chrome

<http://www.tpcug.org/>  
<http://www.ereplacementparts.com/>  
[http://www.reprap.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.reprap.org/wiki/Main_Page)  
<http://www.opensecrets.org/>  
<http://chrome.angrybirds.com/>

## New TPCUG web site feature: TPCUG Forum

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,  
Tampa PC Users Group  
[merle@merlenicholson.com](mailto:merle@merlenicholson.com)

We have added a forum for the membership to post questions and answers, tips and just to document interesting resources and other things. It's free, it's open to everyone to read and post most anything computer-related that interests you. Take a look at it right away and see what ideas pop into your mind. It's at our club website, <http://www.tpcug.org>. Look at the menu on the left, and you'll see "TPCUG Forum." When you get there, make a shortcut, or add it to your favorites.

The purpose is limited to the mission of the club. We have deleted several posts that are not on subjects related to the club, and we will continue to do so. It's surprising to me that the forum has been found by foreign commercial interests, and I've had to delete a half dozen posts and deleted the users' accounts. At least it's not difficult.

To post subjects, you must first join the forum - "Register". You declare a username and password and supply a valid email address. Also, there is a code to type in that is a random character and number combination. But - you're not a forum member yet. You must then wait for just a few seconds for the arrival of an email from the forum. In the email is a link that you select to confirm the registration. More about this process later.

So far, there are four "boards" or forums. Under each board are topics, and under each topic are posts, or "replies" to each topic.

A forum is an overall collection of topics. You, as a registered forum member, can create new topics under any of the existing forums. So far, the three existing forums are "General TPCUG topics," "Windows 7 and Vista (64- and 32-bit versions)" and "Windows XP". I'll add new forums when it's apparent that they're needed. Feel free to post suggestions.

There's a top level forum, "Guidelines and Sugges-

tions," that is there just to provide brief instructions, and the other three are open to new topics and replies to those topics.

So say you are having a problem with a rogue anti-virus and need some help with it. Go to the forum "General TPCUG topics" and create a new topic. This is a one-liner where you state the topic of discussion. Name it, say, "Need help with malware." After it's created, post the first reply, and give it a full description of what you're experiencing, with screen capture or camera pictures, if you have them, and details about the computer system. The more descriptive you can get the easier it is to help you. There are several people who are currently monitoring the posts, and, hopefully, you'll get some help from some club member. You will be notified by email when other replies are posted to this topic. There is a check box that determines this. It's checked by default to get the email notice, and you have to clear it if you don't want to be notified.

The registered user can:

- Post new topics
- Reply to topics
- Edit your posts
- Delete your posts
- Post attachments

So far, under General TPCUG topics, we have:

- Best Software I'm using and recommend
- Hack Cell Phone
- Microsoft now has a bootable antivirus
- Best free software list

There are three topics under Windows 7 & Vista

- Create a bootable flashdrive for Windows 7 installation disk
- IE 9 and Helvetica
- Set my computer to auto log on to my account

When you get used to the forum, it's really easy to jump around to areas of interest. There's a good text search and controls to display and sort topics, for

*Forum.....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. For information, contact Editor William LaMartin at [william@lamartin.com](mailto:william@lamartin.com).

*Forum.....Continued from page 6*

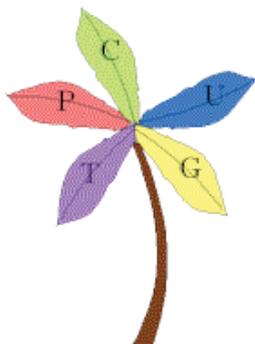
when it gets large enough. So far it's pretty small, but we have hopes that it will become second nature for the club members to log on and see what's new.

### About the registration process

The username and password are necessary to be able to identify you and to keep track of your own posts. You have the right to edit or delete your own posts, and the registration process is the only way to do that.

When you register, you need an email address. This is pretty much necessary to determine that you are a real person – not a computer – and are willing to give out the address and have a sufficient level of interest in the forum to return to post your first topic. Many do not click on the link in the email – and they are deleted.

It's about the same situation as when you have to type in a code at registration that is presented to you as a graphic. The idea is that a machine is unlikely to be able to figure out the code, requiring a real person. This is expected to filter out the automated systems that post advertising, or that use the forum to post links to malware. ◆



## 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.

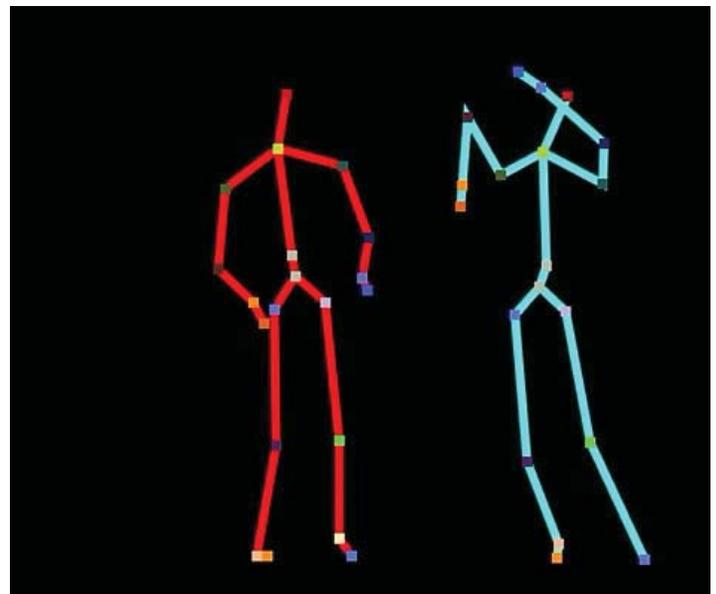
*Kinect.....Continued from page 4*

The skeletal stuff works with more than one person. The example provided will track up to two people moving about in front of the Kinect, and I believe that it is possible to actually track several more. Below is a screen capture on the computer of two people dancing in front of the Kinect.

After doing only a little work with this, I can see how one could write a game, say a handball game, where a single player would hit a ball that was bounced off a wall. All of this following the applicable laws of physics. And I believe that it would be possible to present your skeletal figure with some clothing. But all of that is for the future when I have time. Right now, I have other things that need my attention.

If anyone is interested, the SDK may be downloaded

*Kinect.....Continued on page 8*



**Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.**

P. O. Box 3492

Tampa, FL 33601-3492



**First Class Mail**

*Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

*Kinect.....Continued from page 7*

from <http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/redmond/projects/kinectsdk/default.aspx>. You need to have Visual Studio 10 and Windows 7 and have purchased a Kinect, which you may do from the Microsoft Store, <http://www.microsoftstore.com/store/msstore/DisplayHomePage>. ◆



*Comments.....Continued from page 5*

[TECH/innovation/07/29/apple.cash.government/index.html?hpt=te\\_bn1](http://TECH/innovation/07/29/apple.cash.government/index.html?hpt=te_bn1), the headline of which was: *Apple now has more cash than the U. S. government.* On that day, the government had an operating cash balance of \$73.8 billion; Apple had a total of \$76.2 billion in cash and marketable securities. And I suspect that, if Congress hadn't raised the limit, on or around August 3 the TPCUG would have had more cash on hand than our federal government. Now that is a scary thought. ◆

