



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



Vol. 24 No. 9

September 2011

September in Tampa

## Meeting

### Windows 7 Backup

by

**Bob LaFave**

**Wednesday, September 14, 2011**

**6:30 PM**

**Pepin Distributing Co.**

**4121 N 50th Street**

**Tampa, Florida**

**Meeting Preview:** Our September presenter is Bob LaFave, who will cover backing up your Windows 7 computer with Windows 7 Backup. Also, as usual, he will conduct the Windows SIG for the first half-hour of the meeting.

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## Editor's Comments

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

### TPCUG Forum

**A**s mentioned in last month's newsletter, we have a new forum at the TPCUG site where you may post or answer questions. The forum has received little use, with only a handful of members logging on and posting or answering messages. However, a number of the existing posts have been viewed more than 50 times. Unfortunately, we are having a problem with SPAM. Before writing this, I checked the forum, and there were four such postings arriving on Sept. 5 and Sept. 6 with the following titles:

- download comedy movies
- Htc touch pro 2
- karen millen dresses
- Quick question about number one treatment for acne

It is difficult to understand anyone going to the trouble that you have to go through to be able to post to the forum. To be able to post, they would have to: Press the register button; give a user name, email address, password; then read and type in the

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**October Meeting: Steve Singer concerning the latest hardware**

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

President: John Witmer (president@tpcug.org)	949-8007
Vice President : Kevan Sheridan (kevan@tpcug.org)	988-6480
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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>

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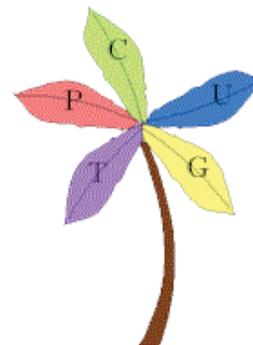
**Minutes of the August Meeting**

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

**T**he 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. During this session, a member's printing problems were discussed, as well as expiration dates of files, and Bob discussed video file conversion.

This month's SIG concluded at 7:00 PM.

Our speaker this month was Blain Barton, Microsoft Evangelist, who kindly has given us an interesting and informative presentation each year for several years now. This presentation was on Microsoft Cloud Computing, coinciding with the introduction of Microsoft's Office 365, and touched upon the corporate data center needs first, then the consumer side with SkyDrive, Office Web Apps and Microsoft Live Essentials. Blain was well-prepared with an extensive slideshow – stored in the cloud, of course, and using web editing tools – and explained what needs to be in the cloud and what does not. Many thanks go to Blain for his usual excellent presentation. ◆



## Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX5V Part Two

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

In the September 2010 newsletter, I wrote an article describing the many features of the Sony DSC-HX5V Digital Camera that I had recently purchased. I ignored the fact that there is no viewfinder and that the camera probably would have a high learning curve due to its many features and the fact that the rest of my digital cameras have all been Canons. I reported that I had quickly learned that even a high-tech screen is no substitute for a good viewfinder. I have also since learned that, for me at least, the camera does have a high learning curve.

The features that most influenced me to purchase the camera were:

1. The 10.2 megapixel Exmor R CMOS image sensor, which was reported to have exceptional low-light sensitivity with improved image clarity and drastically reduced grain.
2. A 10x (equivalent to a 25-250mm lens for a 35mm film camera) professional-quality optical zoom G-Lens (the G lens is used in Sony's top-of-the-line SLR cameras).
3. An integrated GPS receiver and compass to record the location and direction of every shot you take, and it lets you view your images on a map. I will try to demonstrate the success or lack of success that I have had with some of the more futuristic features.

**Intelligent Sweep Panorama Mode for taking panoramas:** Most high-end cameras now have the ability

to produce a panorama. It usually involves using a series of pictures that you take of the area that you want to be included in your panorama. It is necessary that you take the pictures with sufficient overlap so that a “stitching program” can recognize common points on the photos where they can be joined. It is also best if you use a tripod in order to prevent straying from the track of the panorama. You cannot be sure that your subject will allow stitching until you try it with the program because some subjects don't work (such as all trees or similar backgrounds). These stitching programs are on your computer, not contained in the camera. They are often a part of software programs included with your camera or as a part of image-editing programs.

The big differences between the above procedures and with the Intelligent Sweep Panorama Mode in this camera are: (1.) You don't have to take 3, 4, 7 or more photos, you only take one. You depress the shutter and sweep the area to be included in the panorama. There is a limit to the maximum length of the track, but I believe that it is generous enough for most occasions and you have a choice of two sizes: The Standard size, Horizontal: 4912×1080, or the Wide Size, Horizontal: 7152×1080. (2.) You probably will be happy with the results from a hand-held sweep. (3.) All of the stitching is done within the camera. (4.) Processing is rapid and provides you with an image for review. It takes less than 15 seconds from the time you press the shutter button until you see the completed panorama on your screen. (5.) Your first view of the shot is a narrow strip across the LCD screen, but one touch of the control button switches to an image that fills the screen and automatically pans the full length of the panorama, giving you the same quality review that you get with your other pictures. (6) You know within 15

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Camera.....Continued from page 3

seconds whether or not the scene is a good candidate for a panorama shot. An example of a panorama taken with this camera is shown at the bottom of page 3.

**Anti-Motion Blur Mode:** This is suitable for indoor shots, without using the flash, to reduce the subject blur. A burst of six shots are taken (the camera is capable of up to 10 frames per second), and image processing is applied to reduce subject blur and noise. The pictures below were taken in a darkened scene. The top one (extremely dark) was taken with a Canon SLR camera at ISO 800, 1/50TH of a second and a lens aperture of f4.5. This picture is an attempt to capture the scene as it would appear to the naked eye in order to provide some comparison to the bottom picture produced by the Sony camera shooting in the Anti-Motion Blur Mode. The Sony camera has a range of seven ISO settings from 125 to 3200, including



“Auto ISO.”

**Backlight Correction HDR:** Shooting high-contrast scenes can often lead to washed-out backgrounds and/or details lost in shadow. Backlight Correction HDR is supposed to help correct for this by taking two pictures at different exposure settings and processing the best elements of both into a single image for more natural-looking shots. This, so far, has been my most disappointing feature of the camera. HDR technology has allowed the production of some remarkable photos. I had hoped that, when I was shooting a picture in which background lighting washed out a background which I wanted included in detail, I could merely turn the Mode Dial and fire away. To this point, I have not been able to make that happen. I plan to work on finding out why I can't make it work and then consult Sony if I have no success.

**In-Camera Retouching Tools:** This function allows you to perform Trimming, Red Eye Correction and Unsharp Masking functions on the playback image of your photo. Trimming was the only function that I actually tried, and it was frustrating and unreliable. My experience with automatic Red Eye Correction within a program is that it seems to work more often than it doesn't but, when it doesn't work, it can create a real mess. The owner's manual, in discussing the Unsharp masking function, states, “Depending on the image, sufficient correction may not be applied and the image quality may deteriorate.”

**Summary:** In spite of the shortcomings, I am happy with the camera. It is very small, so it can easily be carried almost anywhere (almost too small for my large arthritic hands). The most serious shortcoming, in my opinion, is the lack of a quality viewfinder. There are also many features that appear to be quite useful but that I have not had occasion to use. Smart phones have provided many with all that they need in an easily portable camera, but these phones don't provide the capability to capture the high-quality photos and the extra features that others desire and that this and similar cameras do provide. The camera is still available on Amazon and the price has been reduced from \$349.00 to \$205.99. Its apparent successor is

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## Internet Picture of the Month



From the site <http://artofjohnpugh.com>, which features the work of John Pugh, an American artist who creates trompe-l'oeil murals on the walls of public buildings. The mural above is on Taylor Hall at Chico State University in California.

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

automatically generated CAPTCHA text. After this submission, they receive an email with a link which takes them to a page at the forum which completes the registration. That seems like a lot of work to be able to post their silly messages. Further, it makes work for Merle Nicholson since he then needs to both delete the postings and remove those people as registered users.

**Steve Jobs** has removed himself from the daily activities of Apple due to his obvious health issues. Since then I have read quite a few laudatory articles, some even placing him on the same level as innovators such as Henry Ford. I am not sure I would place him that

high, but he certainly did great things. And I will be forever grateful to him and Steve Wozniack for the Apple II, my first personal computer. I did love that little computer, but I moved to the PC world in 1991 and have not bought an Apple product since then other than an iPod for my daughter many years back. But someone out there is buying those Apple products since, as noted in last month's newsletter, Apple had pulled even with ExxonMobile in Market Capitalization.

**Patent Lawsuits** Speaking of Apple brings to mind all the patent lawsuits that have recently been filed,

*Comments.....Continued on page 7*

## September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)  
 Living Computer Museum  
 A robot that flies like a bird  
 Money in Politics  
 175th anniversary of The Times-Picayune

<http://www.tpcug.org/>  
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[http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=Fg\\_JcKSHUtQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=Fg_JcKSHUtQ)  
<http://www.opensecrets.org/>  
<http://www.nola.com/175years/>

## Password tracking – Windows and Mobiles

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

**T**racking passwords has always been a problem for me. Years ago I started a password document to track everything, and, while it worked, it left a great deal to be desired. The problem was much larger than just username and password. I needed to save the URL to log in to websites. I needed to track expiration dates for subscriptions. I needed key codes for software. I have five different logins with Microsoft. Yes, I could reuse some of those, using the same login and password, but not always. For instance, sometimes your login is the same as your email address, but most times not. Making it more complicated, different sites have different login and password requirements.

And Verizon! I have SIX different logins with Verizon: Call Assistant, Verizon Central, Verizon FIOS, Verizon Mail Account, Verizon Mail and Verizon Wireless.

So I developed some “password rules” for myself. I decided that if I could remember more than just a couple of passwords, it was because 1) I had to reuse them (a bad thing) and 2) they were too simple. So something had to go. I decided I need really good passwords and I couldn't handle it in my head.

One of my sons suggested the KeePassX database he'd been using for a while, and I started using it sparingly, slowly embracing its features as I got used to it. The program is maintained professionally and is available free of charge. You can look at the program at <http://www.KeepassX.org/> to see if this will suit your own needs. Of particular interest is the variety of devices that it works on. You won't see any mobile versions at the website, but each of the mobile devices has a version available from its own app store. I use the Android version on my Motorola Droid X.

The program uses an encrypted database, and I guess ideally there should be a way to automatically update

or synchronize between devices. I own several computers and my Droid, and I need the database on all of them. I could use Microsoft Live Mesh or Dropbox or something like that for synchronization, but I dislike the idea of my password database being in the “cloud.” So for now I use a flash drive to copy the database file to my computers, and I connect my Droid to my base computer via USB and drag and drop the file. I've found that, in practice, I don't have to refresh the files very often. None but the one on my main computer is up to date at any one time, but it never seems to matter.

What is so useful about this program is that I can store any useful information along with the URL and the logon and the password. For instance, my Amazon/Kindle account logon has the names and Kindle email addresses of two Kindles, two Droids (smart phones) and two PCs. It's a logical place to keep all this stuff. Right now I count 82 database entries, and I'm very careful to keep it trimmed of anything not useful. It has a configurable password generator and the ability to look at the password when you want to instead of a line of \*\*\*\*\*.

I got an email to my Droid with a notification of an event on the TPCUG forum before I would even think of firing up my main computer. I needed to log on using a regular account on the forum. The peculiarities of a smart phone with just an on-screen keyboard that needed a complex login and password should have been just too daunting. But on the Android version of KeePassX, when you select the group (TPCUG) and title (User Logon), the database puts two little buttons in the notification strip at the top of the screen. So when you open the browser to the site, you just poke the login notifier, then poke and hold on the login box and a paste menu appears that you poke and it's pasted in place. Then the same for the password and I was in and out in seconds.

What a deal, and it's free. There are versions for Linux, Mac OSX, Windows, iPhone, PocketPC, Blackberry and Android. [Http://www.KeepassX.org](http://www.KeepassX.org). And if you think you don't need one, your passwords are too simple and you're using the same one for everything. ♦

## 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).

## 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.

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

many by Apple, regarding various computer and phone devices, or the software than runs them. It seems as if everyone is suing everyone else; and sometimes it is for things that seem so obvious you wouldn't think they could be patented. Such a suit by Apple has caused Samsung to have to stop selling its tablet computer in Germany. But everyone seems to be involved: Apple suing Samsung, Samsung suing Apple, Google suing everyone and everyone suing Google. Microsoft and Oracle are also taking part in all the fun. Google recently paid \$12.5 billion for Motorola Mobility for their patent portfolio, not for their phones. There is, however, speculation that they actually want the phones too since several years down the road they may be producing their own Android phone for worldwide distribution and at that time making the Android system proprietary and tough luck to all the phone manufacturers who have jumped on the Android bandwagon.

Then there are companies who really have no product and whose sole value consists of the patents they have acquired and with which they essentially try to extort money from companies that do have products by claiming that these products are infringing on some patent the patent-aggregating company possesses. Many of these dubious patent suits are filed in some small East Texas county where the judicial system seems predisposed to favorable rulings to the plaintiffs in such cases.

Mark Cuban, a successful entrepreneur (Broadcast.com of the DotCom bubble era), said in a *Wall Street Journal* interview that he would do away with the patent system entirely for technology. It was stifling any innovation because any time you come up with an idea and try to implement it some patent troll is going

to sue you for infringement of their supposed patent. He went further to say that if patent litigation had been at the same level in the 1980s as it is today, there would be no Microsoft. His reasoning was that Digital Research would have taken out all sorts of patents on CP/M and then submerged Microsoft in litigation before they even got started. Now companies buy up troves of patents so that if a company sues them, then can then probably find some patent in that trove that can be used to sue the company. It is sort of like mutually assured destruction.

**Data Breaches** I just read where Stanford University Hospital has exposed emergency room care patient records online for a year. It seems that we have a new story like that every week. In my small world, I have received Visa cards with new account numbers for two different cards this year because at least two vendors exposed account information for many accounts, apparently including my two cards.

In the Stanford instance, a spreadsheet that was provided to a billing contractor ended up on a website called "Student of Fortune," where students can solicit paid help with schoolwork. The article I read in the *New York Times* said that it appeared "as an attachment to a question about how to convert the data into a bar graph." This is just another example of why such data should, in my opinion, never leave such places as the hospital and why such material should never be on any network connected to the Internet. Of course, there is still the old-fashioned way of losing data. The same article mentions that an employee of Massachusetts General Hospital "left paper medical records on a subway train while commuting to work." That cost the hospital a \$1 million federal fine. Perhaps the time of confidential information has passed and everything will eventually be public. ♦

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*Camera.....Continued from page 4*

the Sony Cyber-Shot DSC-HX7V 16.2 MP Exmor R CMOS Digital Still Camera with 10x Wide-Angle Optical Zoom G Lens, 3D Sweep Panorama, and Full 1080/60i HD Video (Black). The newer version with new features sells for \$269. The manual for the camera in PDF format will allow you to find the details of all of the functions the camera possesses. You can view it at this link:

[http://www.docs.sony.com/release/DSCHX5V\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.docs.sony.com/release/DSCHX5V_handbook.pdf). I found it to be the most searchable PDF document that I have ever encountered. You might want to take a glance at it even if you have no interest in the camera. ◆

