Bits of Blue

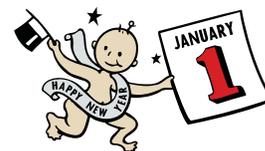**A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.**

January in Tampa

Meeting

Patrick Courtney

on
**Dragon Naturally Speaking
Voice Recognition Software**

Wednesday, January 9, 2013

6:30 PM

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Preview: Patrick Courtney will be coming from Brandon to tell us about and to demonstrate the Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition software. Bob LaFave will as usual conduct the Windows SIG.

Editor's Comments

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

Last month was pretty much a Merle Nicholson newsletter, for which I was extremely grateful, but he said he couldn't do it two months in a row. And since no one else has come forward at this late date, it appears that this month it will be pretty much a William LaMartin newsletter.

I am going to give you an overview of my latest Windows 8 application, which has a lot to do with our club. Its sole purpose is to allow you to read and search all of our newsletters back to 1988. I don't think more than a small handful of our members have yet installed Windows 8 or purchased a new device with Windows 8, but as time goes by many of you probably will. And when you finally do, the Computer Group Newsletters app will be there at the Windows Marketplace waiting for you. It will cost you nothing, since it is free. Merle Nicholson has previewed it for me and even made two suggestions to make it more user friendly. And just before I started this newsletter, I submitted Release 2 of the app containing those improve-

February Meeting: To be announced

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 December Meeting

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

The December meeting was our annual dinner meeting held at Pepin; catered, organized and hosted by John Witmer. The dinner as always was excellent and well-attended. There was no formal program, just plenty of conversation and good food.

A special thanks must go to John for his hard work in making this a special evening.

Our slate of TPCUG Officers remain unchanged for 2013.

John Witmer, President
Kevan Sheridan, Vice President
Doug Mullis, Treasurer
Merle Nicholson, Secretary
Ron Weinberg, Member at Large ◆

---

ments to Microsoft with the hope that they would pass scrutiny and the new version will be available by the time this article reaches you. But you can't tell. Sometimes the submission process takes just a couple of days and sometimes it can take over a week. In this case, it took less than a day and the new version is now in the Windows Store.

I know that some of the TPCUG members received some sort of technical gadget for Christmas about which they could write an article for the newsletter. It would interest your fellow members and help the editor.

As usual, the images in this newsletter appear much nicer and in color in the Acrobat version at our website.

Happy New Year! ◆

TPCUG Newsletter App

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

W e are quite possibly the only computer club with its own Windows 8 app, although I must confess that I haven't done a search. It just sounds like the sort of thing no one else would think worth doing. But I wanted to do a couple of free Windows 8 apps before submitting some of my ideas for paid apps to get some practice with the Windows 8 app submission process, it being a bit different from the Windows Phone app submissions. My first such app was one that allowed to you view both private and public cell tower locations on a map of the United States. As I recall there were around 600,000 private ones and perhaps 60,000 public ones. I collected that data from the Federal Communications Commission site, put it in a database and wrote the mapping application. I like working with data and maps, and that application used both.

But what to do next? Then, on a visit to the local Microsoft office for a monthly meeting on programming, I saw an app where there was a grid of images (Boy Scout merit badges, I think) that you could click on to learn about a particular one. And I had a vision: A scrollable grid of TPCUG newsletter first pages that when you tapped on a particular one, the first page of the newsletter was produced such that you could read it and also move through the rest of the newsletter. But what I really wanted to do was to allow you to search the newsletter collection for any combination of words. In this article I will tell you how I did that.

Before going further, lets note that although the Tampa PC Users Group has been in existence since sometime in 1984, the earliest newsletter is from 1988. And for the first several years, our collection of existing ones has holes, but beginning with 1991 the collection is pretty much complete. Since I was the newsletter editor, a job I inherited in December of 1995, former member Edward Buzza gave me a box of newsletters when he was going to move from Tampa to Pennsylvania. I don't recall the year. Later current and long-time member Roger Waters gave me his collection.

Over time, I scanned those paper newsletters into Adobe Acrobat and performed Optical Character Recognition on them. That is the source of the newsletters from 1988 up to December 1995.

From December 1995 onward, whenever I created a newsletter in, first, Microsoft Word, then later in Microsoft Publisher, and still later in Adobe InDesign, I would also have the program create an Adobe Acrobat version. I was able to do this since I had a copy of the full version of Adobe Acrobat thanks to Adobe providing for the small charge of $25 a copy of Acrobat to computer club newsletter editors. They no longer do that, and I have been paying full price for any updates for many years.

Thus, I have all the club's newsletters as Adobe Acrobat files, and you can actually view them at our website at http://www.tpcug.org. And, I also made available a CD or DVD containing all the newsletters through, I think, last July, along with an index that could be used in Acrobat to search the entire collection. And that was what I wanted to be able to do in my newsletter app. And that is where a good bit of the work in the project resided.

At first, my plan was to somehow display the Acrobat files, or possibly the individual Acrobat pages, within the Windows 8 app, but I found that was not possible. So the next best thing would be to display an image of each page. Thus, the first thing I needed to do was to create from each page of the 281 newsletters a corresponding image. That would be 2,924 pages, so we are not going to be taking individual screen shots of the pages while being viewed in Acrobat.

Fortunately Acrobat full version has all sorts of tools. I am using Acrobat X Pro. Here is the sequence of things I needed to do using the tools available in Acrobat:

1. Remove the password for each newsletter
2. Split each newsletter into its individual pages
3. Produce a jpeg image of each page
4. Produce a text file for each page

Newsletters..........Continued from page 3

1. Each of the newsletters is password-protected as to making changes (not to opening to read), and I needed to remove the password from each newsletter so as to do any work on it. Removing the password from each newsletter by first opening it, removing the editing password and then saving the newsletter would be a bit tedious if done for 281 newsletters. However, it can be accomplished quickly and easily by creating an action that first asks for the password and then simply opens each newsletter that is in a folder you select and subsequently saves the newsletter without any password protection to another folder.

2. Acrobat has a tool that allows you to split an Acrobat document into its individual pages. All I need to do is have it do this process on all the 281 files I have in a folder that I point it to. It will split each file into its individual pages and output them to a second folder I point it to. A typical name for one of the resulting pages would be pcnl2005-01_Page6, which is page 6 from the January 2005 newsletter. When finished, we have 2,924 individual Acrobat pages.

3. The next step is to create an image file from each

of these 2,924 pages. Again this is accomplished via an Acrobat tool. You create an action that opens each of the individual Acrobat page files created above that are all in the same folder and simply choose the option to export the file to an alternate format. In this case it will be as a jpeg file. When finished, you will have 2,924 jpeg images of the individual pages in a separate folder.
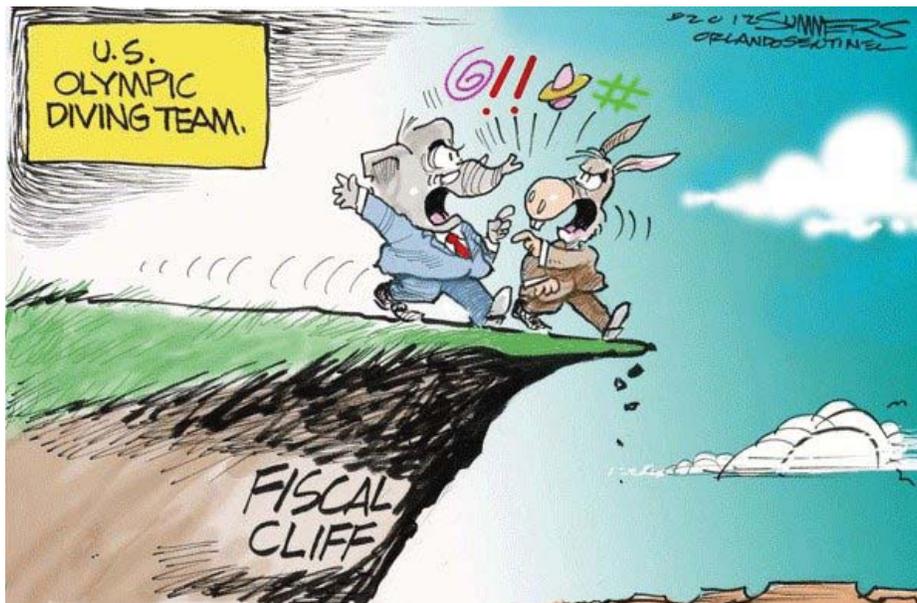
Now to get the images of just the first page of each newsletter, I could go and select each of the 281 first pages from the above, or I could again do a batch type process to extract only the first page of each newsletter and then, as in 3 above, create an image file from each such page. It has been awhile since I did this; however, I think I approached it a bit differently in that I created a batch process in Adobe Photoshop where it would open an Acrobat file, select the first page and save it as a jpeg image. Anyway, it got done and I had a folder with 281 first pages as jpeg images, which I also batch-reduced in size since I wanted small versions of them.

4. To get a text version of each of the 2,924 pages, I

Internet Picture of the Month

The Fiscal Cliff

Continuously in the news for the past month or more, the so-called Fiscal Cliff has finally come and gone with the country going over the cliff for one day. We are all still here and will have to live with the patchwork solution our representatives have worked out. So I thought a cartoon about the cliff would be appropriate for this month's Picture of the Month. And I found one close by from the Orlando Sentinel. It is a cartoon by their cartoonist Dana Summers. The cartoon actually appeared July 26, 2012. http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/opinion/dana-summers/os-summersfiscal-cliff-20120726,0,5208460.photo.

Newsletters..........Continued from page 4

follow the same method as in 3. with the alternate format of the export being a text file instead of jpeg file.

I want a text version of each page so that when you search for Bill Gates, I will have some text to search. In my app, I am going to use the 281 first page images as a sort of list that you can choose from if you just

want to browse the newsletters. When you choose one, say the June 1995 newsletter, you will be presented with the first page of that newsletter as an image you can read and additionally that you can enlarge with your finger gestures if you have a touch screen. But how to enable a search of all the newsletters for a collection of words like Bill Gates?

January's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

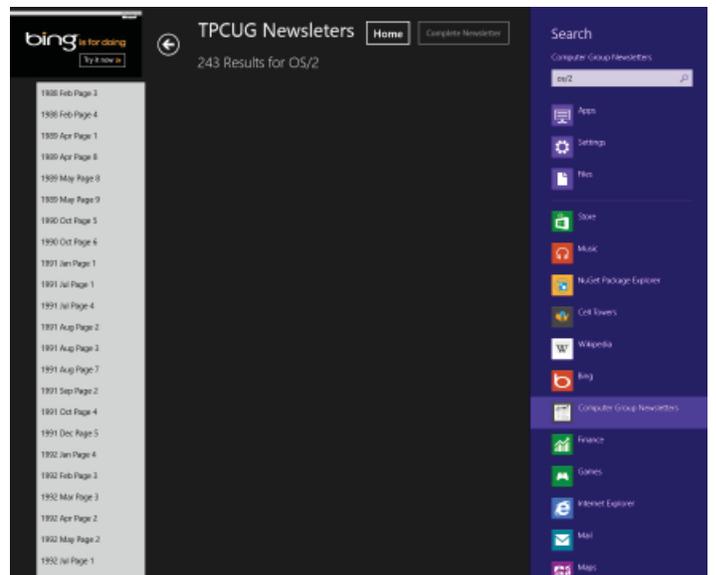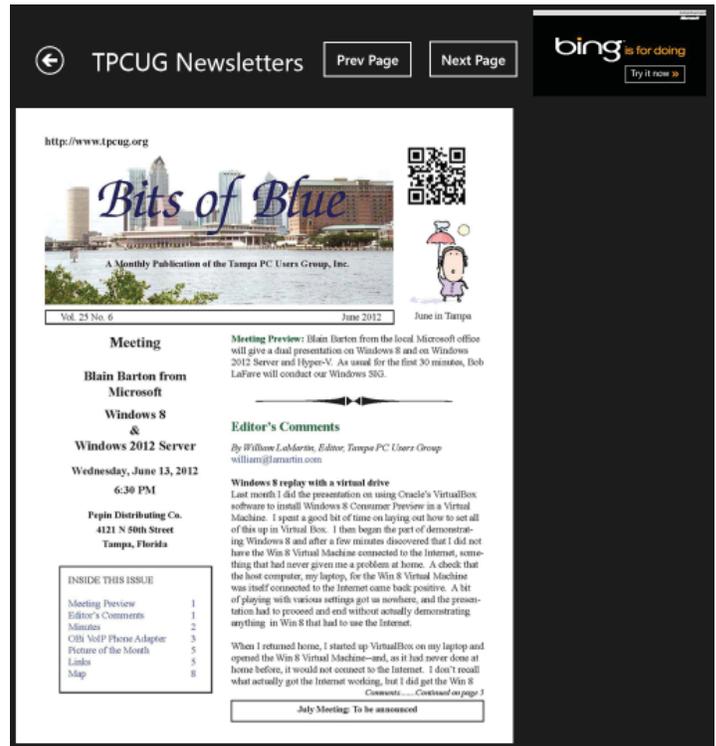|	
Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org/
Nuance Software - home of Dragon Naturally Speaking	http://www.nuancesoftwareonline.com/
Census DotMap	http://bmander.com/dotmap/index.html
Hal's (Im)Perfect Vision – the technology world	http://hal2020.com/
Windows 8 boot alternatives	http://winaero.com/download.php?view.46
Computer Power User Digital edition	http://www.computerpoweruser.com/DigitalEditions/

My solution was to create a database of 2,924 records that had fields representing the year, month, page number and a final field holding all of the text on that particular page. The database I chose to use was SQLite, a database that works with Windows 8 applications. To get the data into the database, I first had to create an empty SQLite database with the requisite fields mentioned above. I then had to write a Windows desktop application using C#(I could have used VB) to fill the database with the 2,924 records containing the newsletter page data. Once I had my database, which turned out to be 10 MB in size, I was ready to create the Windows 8 app that would allow you to read and search all the TPCUG newsletters since 1988 through November of 2012.

The image you see on page 4 is the main window of the app. It displays all 281 newsletter front pages in a scrollable grid. What is visible are the newsletters through April 1993. You simply tap on a newsletter to bring it up for reading. The image to the top right is a screen capture of the result of selecting the June 2012 newsletter. You move through the newsletter by tapping the Next Page or the Prev Page button. You will notice an ad for bing in the upper right corner. Sometimes there are different ads. However, Microsoft has not gotten its advertising for Win 8 apps in full swing yet. That is why you see bing a lot. As you might guess, this is not a real popular app, so there is very little advertising income--almost none at the moment.

The second image to the right is a screen capture of invoking what is known as the Search Charm and then entering it as a search term os/2. If have sharp eyes and can read the text, you will see that it says there are 243 pages containing os/2. The first time it was mentioned was on page 3 of the February 1993 newsletter and the last time was on page 5 of the August 2011 newsletter (you would have to scroll the list on the left far down to see that). Of course, you can search for multiple words, such as for the two words os/2 microsoft, and you would get 151 pages containing those two words. If you add my last name of lamartin to the list, the result is 37 pages. You could spend hours doing such search combinations and relive a bit of

computing history. Let's finish this search stuff with a more recent one: android iphone. The result of that is there are 13 such pages, and if you select the June 2011 page 6 one, you will see what is displayed on page 7 of this article.

Of course it takes a fair amount of code behind the

Newsletters..........Continued from page 6

scene to make all of this happen. For example here is the code to do the search

```
string[] A = SearchText.Split(' ');
    string[] B = new string[A.Length];
    for (int i = 0;i<A.Length;i++)
    {
        B[i] = "PageText like '%" + A[i] + "%'";
    }
    string Query1 = "";

    if (A.Length == 1)
    {
Query1 = "SELECT * from NewsletterPages Where " + B[0];
    }
    else
    {
Query1 = "SELECT * from NewsletterPages Where " + B[0];

        for (int i = 1; i < A.Length; i++)
        {
            Query1 = Query1 + " And " + B[i];
        }
    }

    string strSQL = Query1;
    cmd.CommandText = strSQL;

resultSearch = cmd.ExecuteQuery<NewsletterPages>();
```

If you are running Windows 8 on a desktop machine, laptop or tablet, I certainly encourage you to give the app a try. It will obviously work best on a multi-touch screen monitor because then you can make the pages as large or as small as you like. In general, if you need to resize them it will be to make them larger so as to be more easily read.

To install the app in Windows 8, simply go to the marketplace and search for Computer Group Newsletters. If you don't have Windows 8, then you can't install the application, but there are a number of ways to get with the program. For example, when Microsoft introduces its new Intel CPU based Surface tablet later this month, you can purchase one. I think that might put you back a bit over $1,000. Alternatively, you might prefer the current ARM processor version of the Surface that is already out. It will also run the newsletter app. However, the ARM versions will not run regular Windows desktop programs like the soon-to-be-released Surface Pro will. Then there are all the other Win 8 devices that are out there or soon to be out there from Acer, Dell and the other usual suspects. Or you may do what I did and contact Merle Nicholson about building your own Windows 8 desktop computer with a multi-touch screen monitor, as I described in the October newsletter ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
P. O. Box 3492
Tampa, FL 33601-3492

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*

to I-275

Hillsborough Ave

56th Street

TPCUG Meeting Site
Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street

Harney Road

I-4

Martin Luther King Blvd

50th Street

to Tampa

N

Columbus Ave