Bits of Blue

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

May in Tampa

Meeting

Windows Backups
by
Dave Palmer

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

6:30 PM

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

Meeting Preview: Dave Palmer will be moderating an interactive session on windows backups, and we need your help.

The idea is to present the schemes that our members use for backups and discuss them. So in preparation for this, if you will put your thoughts down: Computer type, software used, backup hardware (external drives etc), backup frequency and bring that with you. Or better still:

If you feel that a presentation slide would be interesting, email it to Dave and Merle and we'll put it on the screen. We can handle Google Slides, Microsoft .PPT and LibreOffice Impress formats. Or any document type for that matter.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Thanks to Merle Nicholson and Dave Palmer for their contributions this month. The newsletter sort of snuck on me this month, and if not for Merle asking me about its status, it would probably have been late. And it still might be a little late since I am struggling to get it finished and to the printer with the hope that they will print it immediately.

June 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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Minutes of the April Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator, 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. This month Merle demonstrated several Windows 10 Tips and settings items.

The presentation was given by a TPCUG member, Michelle Burgess, on her favorite applications. It turned pretty interactive with lots of suggestions and quick demonstrations. It was a lively and interesting session.

Favorite apps: Keyring, Google Maps, Bubble Levels, Google Goggles. Michelle opened the Windows 10 store and we looked at Fresh Paint (Interesting!), USA Today, iHeart Radio, TuneIn, Allrecipes Video cookbook, PicSketch (turns your photos into pencil sketches) and My Radar (available for Android as well)..

Our heartfelt thanks go to Michelle for an interesting and informative presentation. ◆

I have taken a slight break from programming and have been using my new Sony Video Handycam to take videos and then edit and piece them together in Adobe Premier Elements 14. You may have a look at my amateur attempts at my website http://www.lamartin.com by selecting the Videos menu item.

In closing, I note that Microsoft, after purchasing Xamarin and then making it free to developers, refunded anyone who purchased the program after February 1 their purchase price. I paid $800 on December 28, 2015, so I missed out on the refund by 34 days. That's $23/day to use the program. I am not happy. ◆

What Interesting Phone Apps!

By Dave Palmer, Baord Member,
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At last month's TPCUG meeting, Michelle Burgess demonstrated a wide variety of highly-rated smartphone apps. I'll attempt to recap the presentation. Michelle began the presentation by recognizing our own William LaMartin's apps, Computer Group Newsletters, Hyde Park Flowers, Civil War Photos and Old Florida Photos. They are free, and I understand they are available for Microsoft and Android but not iPhones. I especially like the fact that the newsletter app is searchable.

First Aid, an app by the American Red Cross looks especially useful. They advertise it as "…expert advice for everyday emergencies in your hand." The app features videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice.

Are you tired of carrying around all those loyalty cards? Key Ring might be a solution to consider. One of many such solutions, the app offers the benefits of carrying not only your loyalty cards, but also the stores' weekly ads, coupons, and your shopping lists – all in one app.

One app that woke up my normally dormant inner-handyman was the Bubble Level app. My understanding is that this and similar apps use the accelerometer in the phone (the chip that allows your phone display to move when it's tilted) to help create a digital image of a working spirit level. Some apps also display the angle in tenths of a degree. Looking at the range of similar apps, I'm drawn to the 'tool kits' that contain a range of useful tools. One that caught my eye is the Army Knife for Android. It contains a flashlight, a unit converter, a timer, a stop watch, a compass a bubble level, a calculator, a magnifying glass, a mirror and a ruler, depending on the hardware/software combination. For us primitive Homo habilis (handy man) types a tool kit like that is nearly irresistible. The permissions on that app are quite benign. No forays into my phone looking for my location or contact list.

Frank Weitzman mentioned a highly-rated app called Like That Garden - Flower Search. This and similar apps take image recognition and attempt to extend it into the garden. As Frank mentioned it's a work in progress, but is improving by leaps and bounds, much to the delight of tech-savvy gardeners.

Google's app Goggles was discussed as well. This highly interesting app is a combination of tools - image recognition, optical character recognition (it 'reads' print), translator (Goggles can read text in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and Turkish, and translate it into other languages), as well as a barcode & QR code reader. The app works by taking a picture - a landmark, a famous painting, a barcode or QR code and Goggles will bring you information on the image. If you take a picture of text in a foreign language, Goggles will provide a translation.

The bottom line is that there are many (many) potentially useful and interesting apps available. Thanks for the interesting meeting Michelle ◆

Casper 8.0 Disk backup/utilities by Future Systems Solutions, Inc.

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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I've been using Acronis for many, many years, through our long term relationship with Gene and Linda Barlow at http://ugr.com/, and I expect that to continue. But I recently ran into something that Acronis was failing at. I needed to make a clone disk of my primary boot drive for the transition from Windows 7 to Windows 10, and Acronis failed with an error message that it failed to read from sector yada, yada. I wasted quite a bit of time trying to find out what was going on, because I had a good working boot drive with no errors … and well, it's not a mainstream disk product. It's an OCZ (Now Toshiba) RevoDrive, an SSD that is plugged into a PCIe video slot and is about three times faster than a conventional SSD. So I contacted OCZ and they acknowledged that they know of the problem and it isn't their fault, and they are having good service from Casper. So I downloaded a 30-day trial version from Future Systems Solutions, and cloned the drive. Since then I have purchased a standard one-user version for $50. Yep, a bit expensive if you have more than one computer as I do, but I can stick with Acronis for my other three Windows machines (Server, notebook and Media Video machine). Gene and Linda have attractive multi-computer license prices.
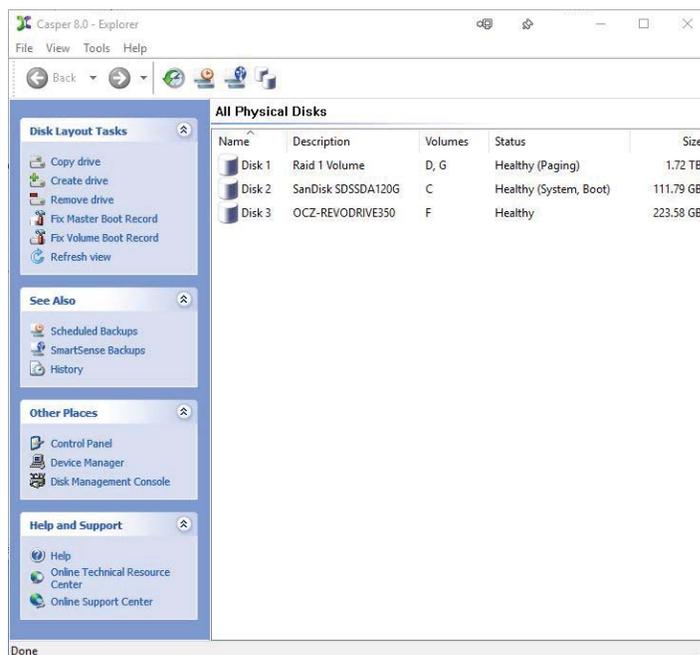
I like to use Casper. It's a simpler user interface compared to Acronis, and it covers everything I want to do, which includes making full image backups using wizards, and creating a boot disk on USB. I do full image backups to the server, and I also clone all the boot drives to separate drives so they can be connected in seconds and get a machine running quickly without software. You just mount the cloned drive physically, and boot to that. The prices for good quality drives are now so low that I value my time much higher than the $60 it takes for an alternate boot device.

Casper makes that clone process fast and easy, and I do mean fast. I cloned my primary drive on my desk-

top to an SSD in minutes. I don't know how long it takes, but it's not more than 10 minutes.

There are three entry points to launch Casper: Wizard, Explorer and SmartStart. SmartStart figures out for you which drive it thinks you need to back up and pre-configures the settings. If it guesses wrong, it's no harder to change to what you want than any other backup method.

Explorer interface shown below.

Explorer has a good collection of utilities like the "Fix Master Boot Record", create a startup disk and Schedule a Backup.

Launching Casper into Wizard gives you the basics. Copy Drive, Create Image, Restore Image. All other actions are on the menu, or you can jump to Explore. See the screen capture on page 6.

The current version (8.0) is not yet optimized for Windows 10. I asked their support about Windows 10 before I purchased, and here's their reply.

"We are currently preparing a new version of Casper specifically for Windows 10. That said, there are no known issues with creating or restoring a backup

Internet Picture of the Month

The Tampa Tribune is No More

The Tampa Tribune was purchased by its local rival, The Tampa Bay Times, on Tuesday, May 3, 2016. The image above is from a video at the Tampa Bay Times website, http://www.tampabay.com with an actual link of http://www.tampabay.com/news/business/tampa-bay-times-purchases-tampa-tribune/2275765?platform=hootsuite. The announcement is being made by the Times CEO, Paul Tash.

From the accompanying article: "The purchase marks the end of the 121-year-old Tampa Tribune as a daily newspaper. It was started in 1893 when Wallace Stovall moved his existing news operations to Tampa from Bartow, according to Tribune files. Stovall's first Tampa Morning Tribune debuted on March 27, 1893, and became a daily in 1895."

May's Links

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)	http://www.tpcug.org
AnyWho	http://www.anywho.com/whitepages
London review of Books	http://www.lrb.co.uk/
Scientific American	http://www.scientificamerican.com/
Project Gutenberg	http://www.gutenberg.org/

Casper..........Continued from page 4

of Windows 10 using Casper 8.0. (NOTE: Due to a driver change in Windows 10 support for booting directly to a USB backup is not currently supported, but booting from an internal backup or alternate external connection (e.g.,eSATA) is fully functional.) Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance. Thank you."
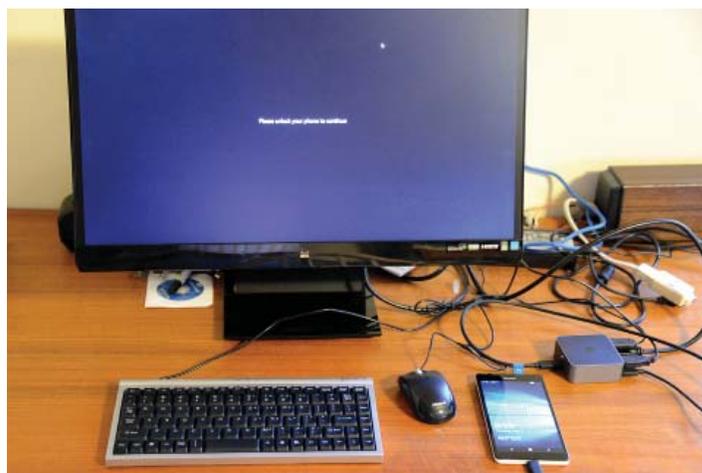
I can recommend this product; having a simpler user interface may justify its higher price, but keep in mind you may want to delay if you're using Windows 10. Also you can contact them and ask them to waive the charge for the upgraded version when it becomes available as I did. The normal upgrade price is $25, and in my opinion it should have been ready for Windows 10 a year ago. https://www.fssdev.com/

In my opinion Acronis has been trying to add some minor functionality every year and changing the look without actually justifying a new product every year. I'm happier with my Acronis 2009 than my Acronis 2015 because the new user interface is messier. It has that flat, colorless "material" design with no borders. Still, the price for multiple computers is much more attractive, and Gene and Linda make it easy. ◆

Continuum

By William LaMartin, Editor,
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It is a pity all of you don't have a Microsoft Windows 10 phone, either a 950 or a 950 XL. Since if you did then you wouldn't need a regular computer for most of what you do. I think most people only surf the web, use email and possibly work with Microsoft Word or Excel. With certain Windows 10 phones, you can do all of this on a screen of any size and also do it with a mouse and keyboard--but without a laptop or desktop or tablet device.

What you need in addition to the phone, is a Microsoft Display dock ($99), pictured above as the small cube looking device with all the cables emanating from it. In that photo there is a power cable, a USB cable to the phone, an HDMI cable to the monitor, USB cable to the mouse and also one to the keyboard.

What apps can you use? Anything that will run on the Windows 10 phone. That includes the usual phone apps plus the Edge browser, Outlook email, Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint and OneNote. And these last Microsoft items are quite full-featured.

And if your monitor has wireless connectivity, then you can connect the phone to it in that manner with no cables. I have no such monitor or TV, so I cannot test that feature. However, you can view it in use in the

Continuum..........Continued from page 6

demonstration video at this link: https://www.micro-soft.com/en-us/windows/Continuum.

I don't have much to say about Continuum at the moment other than I have used it, and it works. I have

created and/or edited both Excel and Word documents using it, as pictured below. I also have opened and viewed PowerPoint presentationes but have not done any editing in PowerPoint on the phone using Continuum. ◆

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