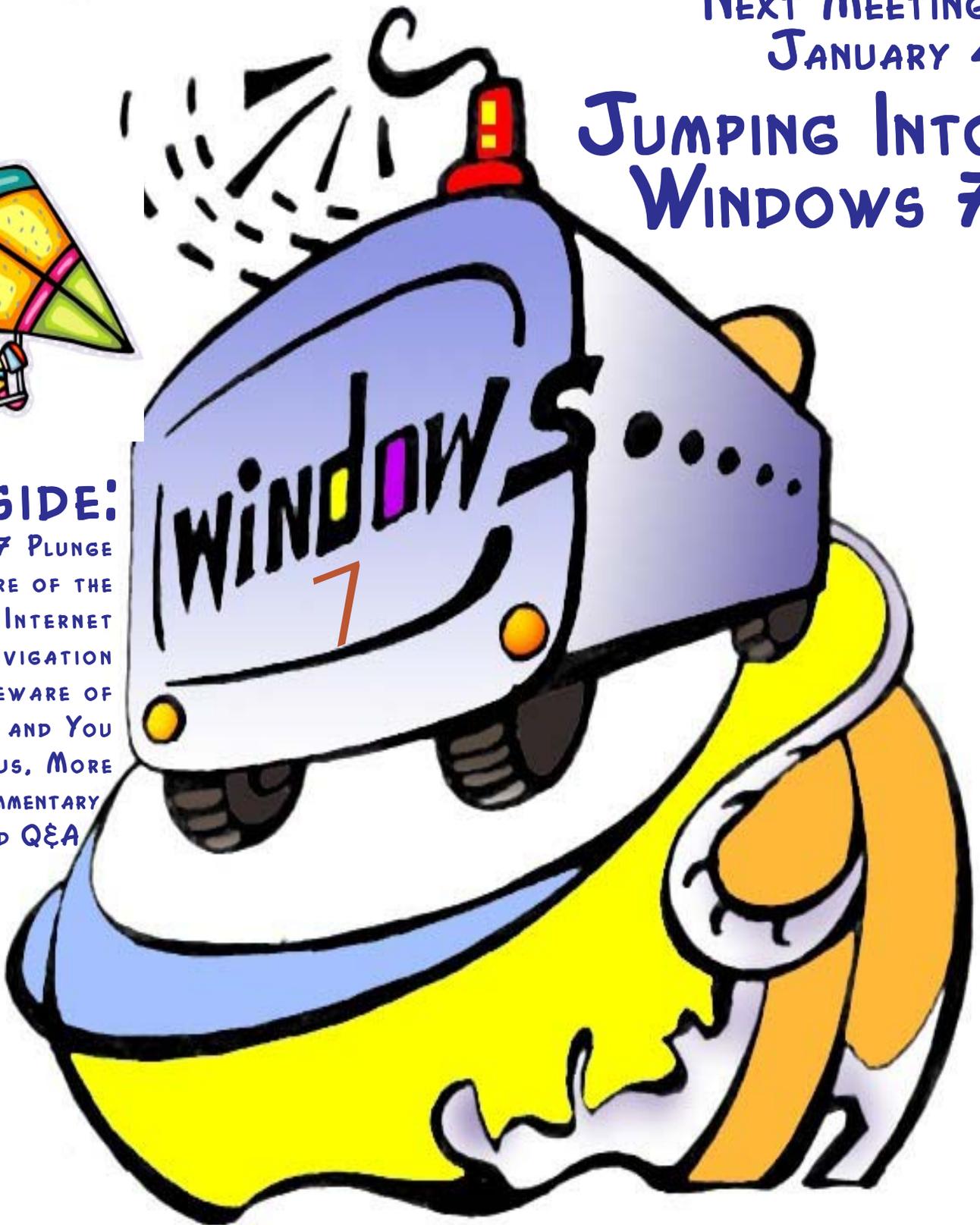


**NEXT MEETING,
JANUARY 4**

JUMPING INTO WINDOWS 7



INSIDE:
WINDOWS 7 PLUNGE
FUTURE OF THE
INTERNET
GPS NAVIGATION
BEWARE OF
THE EGG AND YOU
PLUS, MORE
COMMENTARY
AND Q&A



President's File



Ah, a New Year! Last year was fast and brought some new challenges for many of us. Not everything I set out to do in 2009 got finished, but much of it did. The year had it's share of bucking, but in the end it was a good year for learning many new things and retouching on some things that needed some attention. Overall, I am glad and thankful for the experiences of 2009. Hope you can say the same.

DACS needs members to come forward to assist with some of the volunteer efforts:

- The newsletter team needs at least three folks to help proofread articles;
- The December 2009 newsletter mentioned several committees that need volunteers;
- Officer elections are in March 2010 and the elected officer terms will run from April 2010-March 2011. Candidates for President, Secretary, and Treasurer are needed.

This great organization exists because like-minded volunteers want to help, teach, share, and learn together. DACS turns 20 this year. This organization needs the efforts of member volunteers to keep the momentum of the group progressing forward.

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2010 - Reset

I love my new Brother MFC-9840CDW 'All-In-One' color laser printer, scanner, and fax machine. I'm about 40% complete converting my file cabinet into Adobe PDF files. While I still like printed materials for 'disconnected reading', I no longer want to be keeping historical paperwork. To help push this transition I'm going to begin 2010 with 'digital archiving', which includes receipts, bills, and anything else that currently takes up space as paper. The MFC-9840 can scan in duplex direct to PDF on a USB key—just put a few pages in the feeder, press a few buttons, and away we go! After I confirm the scans are good the original paper is put into a 'shredding box'.

Why this push? Well, I don't want another file cabinet for one. Secondly, by going digital with that type of paperwork I can back it up remotely using a service such as Mozy or Carbonite. If my file cabinet is compromised (fire, theft, flood), I can recover the information rather than lose it all. Third, I can access the info from anywhere in the house.

I'm also making this push with other media—film in particular. Pictures, like financial documents, are hard to replace if they are not digital. Pictures also degrade over time. By digitizing them now I can take measures to preserve them and keep copies.

I guess that counts as a New Year's resolution!

If you're looking to get rid of clutter and/or preserve memories by digitizing and safeguarding them, let me know. Perhaps we can make a workshop of it and share experiences. There are certainly some learning curves I had to go through!

Must get back to other matters... See you at the next meeting!

—Rob Limbaugh
dacsprez@dacs.org



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Applications & Hardware to enhance dacs.doc are welcome.



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Apple User Group

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HelpLine

Volunteers have offered to field member questions by phone. Please limit calls to the hours indicated below. Days means 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; evening means 6 to 9:30 p.m. Please be considerate of the volunteer you are calling. HelpLine is a free service. If you are asked to pay for help or are solicited for sales, please contact the dacs.doc editor; the person requesting payment will be deleted from the listing. Can we add your name to the volunteer listing?

d = day e = evening

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APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(e)
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VB.Net, Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	(203) 431-4050	(d)

Directors' Notes

A regular meeting of your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Wednesday, December 9, 2009, at 7:00 p.m.

Present were: Charles Bovaird, Richard Corzo, John Lansdale, Patrick Libert, Rob Limbaugh, Anna van Ommeren, Jim Scheef, and Joseph Tobin.

President Rob Limbaugh presided and Secretary Mary Tobin kept the record.

A correction was made to the November minutes before approval. The Windows 7 general meeting presentation is occurring in January 2010.

A vote via email prior to the meeting approved the change of the Board of Directors meetings from second Monday to second Wednesday.

Minutes of the last meeting held November 9, 2009, were presented and approved with the aforementioned correction.

Treasurer Charles Bovaird reported current cash assets of \$5755.16, consisting of total bank and postal accounts in the amount of \$5694.27 plus postage on hand of \$60.89.

Subtracting a liability of prepaid dues in the amount of \$22.00 left a net equity of \$5733.16. He also reported that the current membership is at 188, 80 of which receive newsletter via mail.

General Meetings

General meeting reviews/previews: Rob Limbaugh is writing the review for December, Jim Scheef to write the preview for January, Richard Corzo will write the review for January and the preview for February. A writer is needed for the February review.

The general meeting schedule for 2010 (first Monday or first Tuesday) still awaits to hear from Danbury Hospital. If necessary, DACS needs to consider a flexibility of dates/days of week, if the hospital proposes a varied availability.

2010 general meeting topics:

January – Windows 7 - To be presented by Rob and possibly Jeff Setaro: It will include a discussion of Windows 7 and its applications – adding a printer, tablet usage, how to install the application, the vital differences between XP, Vista, Multimedia, Ultimate vs. Professional vs. Business, and antivirus capabilities.

February – Social Networking – presented Dan O'Connor - one of the points we should ask him to address is how to manage one's privacy.

DIRECTORS' NOTES, Cont. on page 13

From the Editor

Editorial Bits

by Patrick Libert

Program Review

IN THE EIGHTEEN years that John Patrick has been prognosticating to DACS audiences on the Internet phenomenon, I have been a member for only five. But in a single presentation, I feel like I've relived the whole revolution. He has that special knack to make technology a fresh and interesting subject, regardless of the composition of the audience



I embraced computer technology in the early nineties, not as a contributing "geek" but as an end user with a technological degree who loves everything scientific.

The development of the Internet has allowed me to delve ever deeper into the ocean of this technological explosion which we are witnessing in our lives daily. I will be the first to try a new software, a tantalizing piece of hardware, almost as soon as it released.

John Patrick confirms that we are only at the threshold of what we will be able to accomplish in the future, thanks to technology. What is the most important accomplishment of the Internet? In my opinion, increased communications between human beings anywhere. Increased communication > better understanding > less conflict!

Let's all embrace it.

New and Notable:

Snowtape

(<http://snowtape.com/>)

I have been experimenting with the free version of Snowtape. This software allows me to listen to a radio stream and record at my choosing any portion of the broadcast. It then transfers automatically to my iTunes music gallery for future listening. There are other similar applications, but so far, this is my favorite.

Browser Speed

Being primarily a Mac nut, my principal browser is Safari. I also use Firefox and Opera 10.10 regularly. Less frequently, I have used Flock and, very recently, Chrome, now that I have an Intel mac.

I like Firefox, but find it to be at times a little slow compared to Safari 4. There appears to be a lot more going on in the background with Firefox, which may explain the speed differential.

Chrome is mean and lean. It is very fast on my Mac, and as it adds more functions and extensions, I may use it more often—ever mindful that, as a Google product, it probably is the equivalent of having a spy cam watching all my actions.

Opera continues to amaze me with its multiple capabilities, allowing the browser to serve as your email program, your RSS reader and many other functions integrated in the browser. The latest release is version 10.10 but there is much more coming from the developers. I have been a beta tester for Opera since mid-2003, and I can tell you that this is an exciting venture. The speed of the latest version matches that of Chrome, but in a much more complex offering. Stay tuned.

HELP!!!

You have seen the appeals for proofreading help in other parts of this newsletter.

We are not crying wolf! If you want to continue to see perfection in our publication, then we need you to help us.

Proofreading takes a little time but it is fun and a learning experience. Honest! I have learned more about computer science in the past few years from editing DACS.doc than I could have learned by reading magazines.

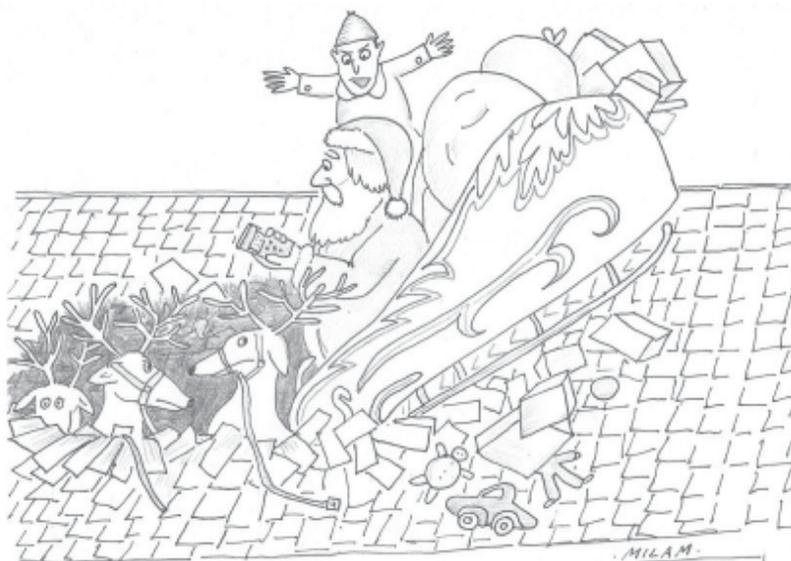
Give us a hand; just type dacseditor@dacs.org in your email destination and get in touch!

Remembering Larry Buoy



Lawrence Ford Buoy, a longtime DACS member and secretary to the board, passed away on October 29, 2009 at the age of 85.

A former Wall Street business consultant, part-time actor and baritone singer, Larry imposed a style of clarity, eloquence and professionalism on our corporate records and the minutes of our board meetings. We will all miss him!



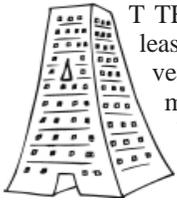
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"Santa, I warned you about texting when driving"

Meeting Preview

Jumping Into Windows 7

By Rob Limbaugh



THE TIME Microsoft released Windows Vista in November 2006 newspapers, magazines, and blogs buzzed with complaints—most notably about performance. In October 2009, Microsoft released its answer to those complaints: Windows 7

Right off the bat, the booting, shut-down, and stability problems went away. But what else?

Many devoted Windows XP (and below) users continued to hold off. Is now the time to upgrade? What should I be aware of? Can I use my old machine, or do I need newer hardware?

I heard about nightmares people were having migrating to Windows Vista and getting printers and other devices to work. How could I avoid them?

Then there are the sub-version names... *Windows 7 Starter, Home Premium, Professional, Ultimate, and Enterprise.* Which one should I use? Do I need 32 or 64-bit? Can I use the 'Upgrade' version and save some money?

Perhaps you heard rumors about some built in features no longer bundled in Windows 7 that were included in previous versions of Windows XP and/or Vista. What are they? How do I get them back?

Come to the January 4, 2010 General Meeting and get the answers to these

questions and more. We'll even give you some suggestions on applications to use if you're just getting started with a new system, including office suites, graphics applications, and system protection tools.

As a reminder, our General Meetings are free and open to the public, so invite anyone you know who may be considering a new computer, has recently bought one, or is planning an upgrade to Windows 7.

DACS meetings are held at the Danbury Hospital auditorium. Activities begin at 6:30 p.m., with registration and casual networking. The meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. with a question and answer period (Ask DACS), followed by announcements and a short break. The featured evening presentation begins at 8:00.

Danbury Area Computer Society (DACS) is a registered nonprofit and has been serving the region since 1990. Members receive an award-winning newsletter, members-only workshops and events, and access to volunteer phone support.

Meeting Review

Future of the Internet

by Rob Limbaugh

WE HAD A FABULOUS turnout for John Patrick's annual presentation, "The Future of the Internet". This was John's eighteenth time back and he brought several new perspectives along with updates from the past year.

The U.S. still lags behind many other countries in public technology infrastructure. We also pay for slower delivery compared to those in Europe. Many municipalities outside of the US offer Wi-Fi everywhere.

America is also slower at adopting the 'Internet in your hand' or, as John put it, "When asked where the Internet is, what would you answer?" In many countries the answer is "Wherever you are" because of Internet connectivity on cell phones and PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants).

He commended the US Government's stance of being mostly "hands off" with regard to restricting the Internet and how it interconnects and works. John pointed out how it is important to note how easily and swiftly things could have become re-

stricted, in part due to events such as 9/11, and how such restrictions and changes would have completely disrupted

the core concept of the Internet as it is today.

We were introduced to a new term: *lifelogging*. This is where people are blogging on sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, and refers to others who have a history of their life already 'online'. John said that

whatever one's personal view on 'lifelogging' is, everyone—especially young people—should be very mindful of the long term impact that it can have and of the possible repercussions. Our social lives are becoming more and more searchable on the Internet and some of us are contributing to the point that privacy may hardly exist for some. (Side note: Recent news headlines have included reports of authorities using publicly available searches on the Internet for solving crimes, determining whereabouts, social connections, and possible motives.)

Medical information sharing is rapidly changing. John explained how Danbury

Hospital, local practices, pharmacies, labs, and radiology services are establishing methods and systems so that a medical profile is accessible to those that need it. For example, digital copies of blood test results can be accessed by a doctor who can then electronically submit an updated prescription to a pharmacy that can then fill the order after confirming there are no issues with other drugs or allergies. Then, it can be ready for you to pick up. You could access the information and also consolidate your medical records for historical purposes.

Cloud computing was another point of excitement. John explained that the Google Android phone and the Chrome OS are changing where the 'desktop' resides, as well as your information and the way you access it in general. The phone and netbooks are moving in a direction where they are access portals rather than computing devices.

Some things still need work. John recapped how companies really need to step up to the 'always on' concept, especially for playing in a global consumer base. Email is still the 'killer app' because we all use it, but the paragraphs of disclaimers need to go. A business that still has a cheesy looking website cannot expect to be taken seriously anymore—if an inferior competitor has a better site, they will probably win out.

I certainly look forward to having John Patrick back next year and hear his assessment of how things he's explained have panned out, what netizens learned from them, and how the Net will change as a result.



Navigation Tools

Adventures in GPS Navigation

by Douglas Agee

THIS PAST JUNE, I received a GPS navigation unit (Garmin Nuvi 765 T) as a father's day gift. As soon as I opened the package, however, I was informed that I had only a few days to checkout the unit before the store's return period expired, so I quickly reviewed the Quick Start Guide and put the unit through a few simple navigational exercises, which it passed with flying colors.



The unit seemed intuitive and user-friendly enough because it was easy to enter a destination address and navigate to the destination. Another plus was the unit's feminine persona—let's call her Gretchen—who consistently updated my backseat drivers by telling me in a pleasant voice precisely when and where to turn to get to my destination. Soon, however, I began noticing some unfamiliar icons on the display, icons that were not fully addressed in the Quick Start Guide. So I downloaded the owner's manual from the Garmin website—all 74 pages—and things really got interesting. I discovered that the Nuvi was not only a GPS navigational system, but also

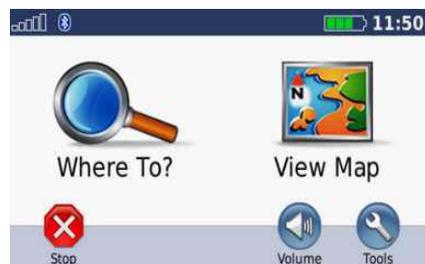
- a traffic information system that provided real time traffic updates via its FM receiver
- a bluetooth device that enabled me to wirelessly connect with my cell phone for "hands free" calling
- an MP3 media player that enabled me to listen to music via the unit's internal speaker, Bluetooth headset or the vehicle's stereo speakers
- an accessory computer that allowed me to compute my vehicle's fuel economy, make monetary conversions, check the time in different cities around the world, consult bilingual dictionaries, create custom routes, view slide shows, and accomplish a host of other things.

In other words, this new GPS system was an amazingly versatile onboard computer, one with a fair learning curve. In order to acquaint myself with its features and capabilities, I decided to carefully study the owner's manual, rigorously checkout the unit for a month or so and document my experiences in Throughput.

In this review, I'll discuss the unit's features and capabilities as well as my experiences on a recent vacation trip. I'll also talk about some of my frustrations in downloading the Garmin software necessary to obtain software and map updates.

Introducing the Nuvi

The Garmin Nuvi 765T is one of about 30 models in the Nuvi series with navigational capabilities that enable you to find your way from point A to point B virtually anywhere in the US. Before you embark upon your destina-



tion, you have to mount the unit on your windshield or dashboard and plug it into your cigarette lighter. When the unit turns on, it loads its software and map database and then admonishes you—for safety reasons—not to attempt to enter route information or manipulate the unit while driving. The next screen to appear has several touch screen icons that enable you to operate the unit and to assess its operational status (battery status, GPS Satellite signal strength, Bluetooth status and current time).

To select your destination, you simply touch the "Where To?" icon on the screen. The next screen to appear will give you several options to specify your destination. For example, you can touch the "Spell Name" icon and then type in a



specific street address, city and state. Or you can touch one of the other icons and select from "food," "fuel," "lodging," "shopping," "transit," etc. The next screen will display all of the optional selections available. Once you've selected your destination, you simply touch the "Go" icon. Immediately you'll see an onscreen map showing you the streets at your location and Gretchen, in her mellifluous voice, will tell you precisely when and where to turn to get to your destination. It's just that simple.

En route, you'll see onscreen indications of the estimated arrival time, your vehicle's location and speed, and the local speed limit. If you fail to follow Gretchen's directions or accidentally miss a turn, Gretchen will inform you that your route is being recalculated, and will promptly give you the new turn-by-turn instructions. If there is a traffic alert along your route, the Nuvi 765 T, which comes with a lifetime traffic subscription, will display a circular yellow or red icon, which you can touch to obtain more information on the alert. (Note: Only Nuvi units with the "T" designation come with a lifetime traffic subscription). If the alert indicates an extended delay, the Nuvi will calculate an alternate route if one is available. And, of course, Gretchen will let you know!

Vacationing with the Nuvi

As mentioned earlier, I took the Nuvi along on a recent vacation to see how it would perform. I specified my destination by entering the address of the San Diego motel that I'd booked earlier in the



month. The Nuvi immediately established the route—from my residence, to Trans Mountain Road, to I-10 West, to I-8 West, to San Diego, to the motel—in a few sec-

onds. Along most of this route there wasn't much for Gretchen to do except to remind me to turn onto the Interstates and to "keep left" when traveling through the cities of Las Cruces, Tucson and Yuma.

To liven things up a bit I decided to play some songs on the Nuvi's MP3 player—songs I'd copied to a Micro SD



card, which I'd inserted into the Nuvi's SD card slot the night before leaving El Paso. With the Nuvi you have the option of listening to the songs via the Nuvi's embedded speaker, via a Bluetooth headset or via your vehicle's stereo speakers. If you want to use your vehicle's stereo speakers, you can have the Nuvi automatically select an FM channel for you and then you can tune your FM radio to the selected channel. You can also manually tune the FM transmitter using a four step procedure in the Owner's Manual. It's best to set this up before you embark so you won't be manipulating the Nuvi en route!

While en route to San Diego, I made several phone calls using the Nuvi, which I had paired with my cell phone using the Bluetooth wireless capability. This enabled me to carry on "hands free" conversations. To make a call, I touched "Phone" on the Nuvi's screen, entered the number and then touched "Dial." To receive a phone call, I simply touched "Answer" on the Nuvi's incoming call screen and conversed via the Nuvi's internal microphone. The Nuvi's internal microphone and speaker are loud enough for everyone in the vehicle to carry on a conversation with the other party, eliminating the hassle of having to pass the cell phone from person to person. To end the call, I simply touched "End" on the Nuvi screen. During these conversations, my cell phone never left its case.

The trip from El Paso to San Diego was uneventful and not much of a challenge for the Nuvi or for Gretchen. The desert between Tucson and Yuma was bone dry and the outside temperature was a scorching 107 degrees. The saguaro cacti looked as if they had been torched and appeared to be praying for rain. The Nuvi, which was in direct sunlight for a portion of the trip, was warm to the touch, so I fashioned a makeshift paper canopy

to fend off the sun's rays. This worked well for the duration of the trip.

Upon descending the mountains into the San Diego area, Gretchen and the Nuvi came to life again. The Nuvi continuously displayed the number of miles to the next waypoint and Gretchen intervened constantly, telling me to "keep left" or "keep right" along Interstate 8 West. Traffic on the Interstate was heavy and the situation very stressful, with California drivers zipping along at breakneck speeds in lanes to the right and left of me. But Gretchen was unperturbed, calmly telling me when and where to exit the Interstate and guiding me to my destination through a maze of streets in the Motel Circle area. The Nuvi's navigation was absolutely flawless!

Over the next three days, I visited Sea World, Old Town, the Birch Aquarium in La Jolla, and some relatives who were house sitting in Point Loma. The Nuvi never made any mistakes, but I missed turns on a couple of occasions and the Nuvi had to recalculate the routes to get me back on track. The recalculations were accomplished in seconds and time lost was minimal. The only thing that was a bit disconcerting was Gretchen's pronunciation of La Jolla, which she pronounced La "Jola" instead of La "Hoya." One other minor issue involved traffic information system reports, which occasionally reported traffic delays on routes where there were no discernable delays.

Updating the Nuvi

After returning to El Paso and reviewing all of the documentation that came with the Nuvi, I decided to register the unit on the Garmin website. This was necessary to obtain periodic software and map updates. When you buy a Nuvi, you're entitled to one free map update if you register your Nuvi within 60 days of first using the unit. The maps on the Nuvi were at least a year old and a free update was available, so I embarked on what turned out to be a seven and one-half hour adventure.

After registering the Nuvi on the Garmin website, I had to download a Garmin Communicator Browser plug in before I could download the map update. I downloaded and installed the Garmin plug in without any problems but when I attempted to download the map update file, I was unable to do so because of insufficient memory on my hard drive. To increase the available memory, I eliminated several programs until I had about 3.4 GBs of memory available. I was then able to download the map file, which was a little over 2 GBs in size (compressed), but this took a couple of hours. When I attempted

to install the map update, I was again informed I had insufficient memory—that at least 3.6 more GBs would be required. This would have required me to re-partition my computer's hard drive, so I decided to install the plug in on my wife's computer, which had sufficient hard drive space.

However, I was unable to download the plug in on my wife's computer and had to call Garmin technical support for assistance. I waited over 30 minutes for the techie and talked to him another 20 minutes before I was finally able to download the file. Unfortunately, I was unable to install the plug in and get it working properly.

So I decided to move the map update file to my wife's computer and see if I could uncompress the file and install the map on the Nuvi. The map update file was an executable file that opened a Map Update Installer, which expanded the file and installed the map update on the computer. Then the installer prompted me to connect the Nuvi and transfer the map data via the USB connection and install the maps on the Nuvi. Although it took a couple more hours to accomplish this, I finally succeeded.

Other Nuvi Features

As noted earlier, the Nuvi has a number of other features of interest to travelers.



• If you get lost, you can find out where you are by touching the "tools" icon, then the "where am I?" icon. The unit will indicate your position in latitude, longitude and elevation and will also show you the nearest address as well as the nearest intersection. You can also quickly find the nearest hospital, police station or gas station by touching the appropriate icon.

• If you need to convert from English to metric units (or vice versa), you can touch the "conversions" icon and convert distances, speeds, temperatures, areas, weights, volumes and currencies.

• If you want to find out the current time in another city in the world, you can touch the "world clock" icon. The time is shown for three default cities, but you can change the city by touching the screen and typing in the name of the new city.

GPS, Cont. on page 15

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: January 2010

Access. Designs and implements solutions using Microsoft Access database management software.

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (bpreston@mags.net). Meets on 2nd Tuesday, 7p.m., by virtual connection.

Next meeting: Jan 12 (check Website for technical details)

ASP.Net. Focuses on Web site/server application development using Microsoft Visual Studio, C#, VB, Javascript and SQL Server programming tools. Starts with Random Access, followed by a programming discussion with examples.

Contact: Chuck Fizer *cfizer@snet.net*.

Meets 1st Wednesday, 4-6 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Jan 6

Digital Imaging. Digital cameras, retouching and printing.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 *graffic@bigfoot.com*.

Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Returns in Spring

Jobs. Networking and jobs search

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 *aam@mags.net*.

Meets by e-mail.

Next meeting: TBA

Linux. Provides Help in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. Also of interest to Apple owners using OS X.

Contact: Drew Kwashnak 203-910-6477 (Cell)

Meets 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Jan 20

Macintosh. Focuses on all aspects of the Mac operating system.

Contact: Richard Corzo *macsig@dacs.org*.

Meets 1st Thursday at DACS Resource Center at 7 p.m.

Next Meeting: Jan 7

PC Maintenance. Review of PC hardware and OpSys maintenance and use.

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 *aam@mags.net*.

Meets irregularly, at the Resource Center, announced by e-mail.

Server. Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook.

Contact: Jim Scheef *jscheef@telemarksys.com*

Meets 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next meeting: Jan 14

VB.Net.. Focuses on Smart Client Windows application development using Visual Studio, VB, C# and SQL Server programming tools. Starts with a random access session, followed by Object Oriented discussions and programming with examples.

Contact: Chuck Fizer, 203 431-4050 *cfizer@snet.net* or Greg Austin, 845 494-5095 *greg.austin@ryebrookpba.org*.

Meets 1st Wednesday, 7 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, preceded 1 hour with a shared cost pizza snack.

Next Meeting: Jan 6

Virtual Computing. This SIG will explore virtual computing technologies and how to leverage them as additional system resources. Our main focus will be on the free VMWare products, but we will also look at other technologies and tools.

Meets 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center

Contact: Rob Limbaugh *relimbaugh@dacs.org*, 203 648-9176

Next Meeting: Combined with Server SIG.

Web Design and DTP. Learn about Adobe software for web, graphics and desktop publishing.

Contact: Annette vanOmmeren(*avo555@earthlink.net*).

Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Feb 16

SIG News & Events

Access. Our first virtual SIG meeting was held Dec 8 and other than a few minor glitches the technique of using Dimdim for screen casting and Skype for conference call support worked well.

In discussions held subsequent to the meeting we have decided that the next meetings should start with 'the basics' so the January 12 meeting will concentrate on the principles of database table design.

If you would like to participate, let Bruce know well before the meeting and he will assist you in getting your Skype account set up and tested, and add you to the conference call group list.

ASP.Net&C#VB.Net. Is there a future for small business? Yes there is, with automation. See that bottom line grow with improved programming for customer's fulfillment. "What programming?" you ask. Move closer and you shall learn of exemplary improvements at one small home based business where online order management gets sharper with a plus from C#.

We reviewed our latest effort with C# to support processing of orders. This small business takes orders placed online at its Web site, hosted by Yahoo stores, to have products drop shipped from some 800 vendors around the country that are tiny mom and pop operations.

Automation is at an early stage of development at which charges for ordered item, shipping and handling must be assessed and levied with notification to all parties to this sales transaction: manager, shipper, and customer.

We composed a probable business scenario with various test cases.

1. Product is available and shipped.
2. Some items are available immediately but others in the order must be backordered.
3. Some part of the order must be cancelled because of discontinuance or a customer's second thought.

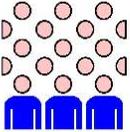
We saw a few opening moves for a program strategy to assess charges accurately in various contingencies. We developed a Web application that accessed an SQL Server 2008 database to obtain three classes of data to present to the specific vendor providing some or all items noted in the customer's order. Based on a link sent to the vendor, the Web application is invoked and product specific to the vendor is presented for order confirmation.

A key aspect of this implementation is that the vendor need only click on the confirmation link to access his part of the order. A simple way was needed so that access to the information is

SIG Notes, Cont. on page 10

January 2010

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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SIG NOTES, Cont. from page 8

secure yet easy to access. We want not to have the vendor enter a password.

The approach adopted implements a Globally Unique Identifier (GUID) that is 32 bytes long. A GUID was created for each of the vendors. Using the GUID and the vendor order number, the vendor can access all the products they are required to supply to the customer. The other interesting aspect of this application is that multiple vendors may be required to satisfy the customer's order. The application determines which vendor(s) are to contribute to the customer's order and submit confirmation to each vendor for their product contribution.

We reviewed the programming code for populating the confirmation Web form. An interesting aspect here is the use of an SqlDataReader to return multiple record sets with a single access to the database server. First for security reasons, and second for database access speed, this application only uses SQL Stored Procedures to access the database. Our data population query is submitted to the database by way of the stored procedure. TSQL in the stored procedure then makes 2 accesses each resulting in a recordset. Processing in the web applications code behind file has several methods, each of which accesses its own specific database result set.

After our pizza refreshment intermission, we then progressed to code discussion used in the code behind files.

At its current state, the application references and employs a DbObject.dll assembly that provides database access. The DbObject has database access methods that return an SqlDataReader object and a DataSet object based on several input argument configurations. We looked at all the current methods and discussed how they worked and are identified by their signatures. The DbObject assembly is a standard Class object. In the next iteration of the object we plan to change it to an Abstract Class and derive from it to create other database methods, particularly ones that will write inserts and updates to the database. The update methods, will employ a time stamp on every row in the database that could be updated by a vendor confirmation submission. Using the time stamp the method would then be able to determine if the insert or the update is the most current or that it may have been preempted by some other user on the system.

During our random access session solicitations, Rich DeFranco showed us an interesting and troubled computer. It appears, but not for certain, that it has a very strange virus. A virus that corrupted or disabled the computer's networking and USB ports leaving no way to execute external programs to assess the problem. If so, a very astute virus. Bruce Preston worked with Rich, to determine the magnitude of the problem. When we finished our SIG session, the computer was in a 'we'll see tomorrow' state. I expect to learn more of the computer's fate by the time of the next dotNet C#VB SIG session in January.

The next SIG session will continue where we left of on the small business web confirmation application. More of the application will have been programmed and we will discuss the details.

Linux. At our December gathering, Dave Mawdsley explored the inner workings of the cron utility. He provided a number of practical examples of its use, including creating desktop reminders of events, and automatically performing backups of systems on the network to the server. He showed how you can use cron to invoke a script that can be as simple or as complex as you desire, as well as stacking multiple commands on one cron command line. He explained some of the esoteric syntactical rules embedded within cron.

Jim Ritterbusch demonstrated how to use Puppy Linux, currently with the smallest footprint of memory and disk usage of

any Linux distribution. He booted his laptop from a live CD, showing how little memory was consumed by the running product. Jim then showed how to create a bootable USB thumb drive with puppy linux, saving all of the session options. This distro includes XFPROT, an F-PROT variation virus checker for Linux to scan Windows partitions, which can be run directly from the thumb drive. This can be very useful when your friend calls and says his Windows machine is too crippled by viruses to start up normally. Jim also pointed out a flaw in the XFPROT installation which causes errors on some Windows paths.

For the first meeting of the new decade, we intend to cover how to install an application from its source file. There comes a time in every Linux geek's life when the package that you want is just not available for your distribution. Or perhaps it is, but you want all of the bells and whistles that are in the development package, but not yet rolled out by the package managers. It's time to break out the gcc compiler and the make utility and get it running.

Macintosh. In December we looked at Mac OS X Snow Leopard.

I explained my migration strategy of looking for updates to all my existing applications. By now, sufficient time has elapsed since the release of Snow Leopard for the developers to update their applications to make them compatible with the new OS. Although I had been using Time Machine, I took the precaution of using Carbon Copy Cloner (<http://software.bombich.com>), which we talked about last month, to make a bootable copy of my Leopard installation onto an external drive. I then did an upgrade in place on my Mac's internal drive.

The upgrade seemed to go pretty smoothly. There only seemed to be a couple of minor hiccups, such as one of the iLife applications hanging the first time I opened it, but the problems seemed to resolve themselves.

Snow Leopard is touted as being even more 64-bit than its predecessors. However, by default most Macs will boot with a 32-bit kernel, the lowest level of the system that runs directly on top of the hardware. The rest of the system will be running in 64-bit mode, except for any 32-bit applications you may have, which Snow Leopard is still capable of running. The reason for running with a 32-bit kernel is that you may have kernel extensions supporting peripheral hardware, that are 32-bit. You can see which extensions are 32-bit by opening the System Profiler (in Applications:Utilities) and selecting Extensions under the Software category. The 64-Bit (Intel) column will indicate Yes or No.

If you would like to force booting with a 64-bit kernel, you can shut down the Mac, and then press and hold 6 and 4 simultaneously after your power it back on. Any 32-bit extensions will then be disabled.

We also took note of some small changes to the dock in Snow Leopard. If you click and hold the mouse over an active application's dock icon, it will invoke Exposé and show all the open windows of the application on a dimmed background. If you open a folder on the right side of the dock, and there are too many items to view at once, you can scroll the dock view of the folder. You can also open any subfolders without leaving the dock view.

Server and Networking. In December, we continued our look at Drupal installation on both a hosting provider and a local machine. We also looked at the machine that hosts the DACS website. We plan to reinstall Drupal on that machine so we can begin a gradual migration to Drupal.

The next Server and Networking SIG meeting will be Thursday, January 14 at 7p.m. in the DACS Resource Center. We still address networking, so bring your questions!

Web Security

Stealth Spyware: The New Spyware Threat

by Kristofer Simon

FOR MOST OF US, the word spyware is not an unfamiliar term anymore. It can mean cookies that track your movements on web pages or other little programs that put garbage applications on your machine. While spyware intentions have not changed much over the past few years, their infection practices appear to be doing so. The newest kind of spyware, which I personally came in contact with a few months ago, should be referred to as “stealth” spyware. What I mean by that is that this spyware installs on your machine without you even knowing about it. You do not become aware of the spyware infection on your machine generally until the next time you reboot and the spyware program activates. In this short article, I will describe my experience with a piece of this spyware and what I had to do to get rid of it so that, hopefully, none of you have the same experience that I did.

The piece of spyware that infected my machine was called “XP Police Antivirus.” I became infected, I believe, after visiting a third party website that provided updated information and screen shots for Nintendo Wii games that were about to hit the market and that were in development. As I said earlier, this program was a piece of “stealth” spyware and installed on my machine without my knowledge. It did not slow down the performance of my machine at all (at least not that I was able to notice), nor did any installation screens pop up during the install. The next time I booted up my machine, an icon appeared on the lower right hand part of my screen that looked like the XP Security Center shield. When I put my cursor over it to see what it was, it said “XP Police Antivirus.” For just a split second, I wondered if maybe Microsoft had tried to install a new version of an antivirus program they created on my machine, but I quickly realized that this

was a piece of spyware that had infected my machine without my knowledge.

The program tried to fool me into thinking that anonymous users from the Internet (it would put public IP addresses in the warning dialog boxes) were attempting to access my computer maliciously and it recommended that I install the full program to prevent these attacks. I wasn't going to do this because I had the full and up-to-date version of McAfee Security Center so I knew this was bogus. When I tried to remove the program through the Add/Remove Programs option in the Control Panel, I was able to wipe out the program temporarily but the next time I rebooted my machine, the application icon was in my system tray again and I was getting the same bogus dialog boxes about people trying to access my computer. This spyware also put another program on my machine called Security Center 2009 that also was made to look as realistic as possible.

Finally, I went on my Motorola Q Smart Phone and searched on the XP Police Antivirus program. Immediately, I got a link to a page that told me that this was a piece of stealth spyware and told me how to get rid of it. I actually had to go into the computer's registry (kind of like the computer's brain) and delete the entry that the spyware had made there, as well as delete a number of files the program had put on my machine. Once I did that, the spyware programs (both XP Police Antivirus and Security Center 2009) were finally gone but I still had one more hurdle to overcome from this program.

The spyware also installed a software program known as a “browser hijacker.” For those of you who don't know what this is, let me explain. Let's say you launch a web browser and you want to go to www.cnn.com to see the latest news. You type www.cnn.com

into the address bar of your browser and either hit “go” or hit return. The browser initially begins to go to that page, but suddenly the browser gets “redirected” to another page. This happens every time you try to access a web page. These programs are EXTREMELY hard to get rid of but I was able to get rid of the one on my machine using a third party program that found the program and removed it.

While this may sound like a dire situation, the most important thing you can do as an end user in these situations is to remain calm and scrutinize every program that you see on your machine, that you haven't specifically downloaded (ex. a game, a patch from Microsoft, etc.). If you do get infected by stealth spyware and can't seem to get rid of it, go to a non-infected PC or web enabled cell phone and do a search on the program's name. You will almost always get a link telling you how to get rid of the program. Also, never send personal information over the Internet to any site that you cannot confirm is a legitimate site that you use (ex. Amazon.com, Paypal, etc.). Using these steps you can help eliminate most of the problems caused by spyware, but you should always remain vigilant. You can get infected with a stealth spyware program from just about any website, so be careful out there!

KRISTOFER SIMON is a member of the Fox Valley PC Association, Illinois; www.fvpc.org; krisdream@earthlink.net

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When dining at the
DACS Resource
Center, please
carry your
leftovers
out with
You.
Thanks!
The
Management



Circuit Writer Version 7.4

by Jim Scheef

Open Office 3.1

I'm writing this column using OpenOffice Writer from the newest release. The "normality" of the menus and toolbar are reassuring, and it is so close to Word before 2007 that you forget it's not from Microsoft. When I get some time, I want to try my fuel oil usage data in Calc. This file is my most complex and sensitive Excel file with graphics and a custom function written in VBA. That will likely be the deal breaker, but there must be an alternative to write such complexities. So far my only annoyance is the fact that it does not use the same spelling dictionary as Microsoft so it does not yet understand how some words are spelled in Chicago.



An Honest Census

How honest would you be on your census form if you thought that your answers could land you in jail or worse? Fortunately the Census Bureau understands this. So the "Commerce Department, the agency that runs the census, recently concluded that Title 13 — the law under which the Census Bureau operates and which guarantees the confidentiality of individuals' census information — trumps the Patriot Act, which granted law enforcement the power to collect otherwise personal information such as banking and library records. The act doesn't specifically exempt census records." (tinyurl.com/y8zqbb7) While not specifically anti-Patriot Act, I hope this ruling stands as a precedent to show that not everything is open to the warrant-less searches of the Patriot Act.

Patient Medical Records

A year ago the New York Times had an article about how the City of New York was subsidizing doctors (tinyurl.com/729lpx) and related articles) who move to computerized patient medical records. The doctor featured in the articles was one of a few to allow patients direct access to their data. When I found my note on this article I was reminded of how John Patrick

said he had access to his health records minutes after visiting his doctor. John is a hospital board member, so what about the rest of us?

Why Obscurity is not Security

There are three stories here...

Story Number One: Have you read about how insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan have been able to intercept video from Predator drone aircraft? A rather sensationalized version of the story is on the Wall Street Journal (tinyurl.com/yeqrip2). As the WSJ story goes, the insurgents use "off the shelf" software called SkyGrabber (skygrabber.com/en/skygrabber.php) from SkySoftware, a Russian company. This is a packet sniffer that reads and stores packets from an Internet satellite downlink. Apparently the Pentagon has known about this for many months, but of course cannot fix it overnight. Instead they have "taken steps."

To make the capture, you need to be in the cone of the satellite signal and point your antenna at the satellite. A fix requires encryption software on all the various endpoints. One of those ends is the drone itself. I would imagine that making changes to the drone software is, shall we say, less than straightforward? Another endpoint is the battlefield facilities where the intelligence (the military calls it "intel" to not confuse it with brain power) is used. There are many of these and they would all need to be updated before the encryption could be used. Apparently the Pentagon knew of this possibility but thought the insurgents were too dumb to figure it out. Surprise!

A more technical analysis is on the HackedOff blog on DarkReading (tinyurl.com/yb4xcwm) which says the WSJ article is incorrect. SkyGrabber is a packet sniffer that reads and stores packets from an Internet satellite downlink. Its true purpose is free porn that is being downloaded or viewed by satellite Internet service users. According to HackedOff, the drones use different technology (l3com.com/csw/Product/docs/07-ROVER-III-Receiver.pdf) plus I would think that the satellites involved are all military and not those that carry Internet service. Regardless, somehow video cap-

tured from Predator drones was found on laptops captured from insurgents so the fact is, while it is probably more complex that buying a copy of SkyGrabber, somehow they made something work.

Story Number Two: Let's say that you are a cracker and you would like to find an easy-to-hack server somewhere. Wouldn't it be handy if there were a search engine that let you search for machines (servers) connected to the Internet that had the characteristics you want? Well, last month your prayers were answered in the form of Shodan. This URL (shodan.surtri.com/?q=country:us+port:23) returns a list of all the servers in the US running the telnet service - approximately 2500. By its nature telnet is a security vulnerability which is why the results is "only" 2500. Full use of the search requires a browser helper or add-in which I did not install. This tool was not created for the bad guys and is intended for all sorts of security research. So far it does not include all servers everywhere, but they seem to be working on it, so you might think you're invisible in the vastness of the Internet, but in reality, you can't hide.

Story Number Three: Some people (CNN) called it a "how-to manual for terrorists" and the "biggest security leak since 9/11" (tinyurl.com/y9tql5n). The Department of Homeland Security intentionally posted a redacted version of the procedures manual used by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for preflight screening. The CNN article above is headlined "TSA puts 5 on leave after security manual hits Internet." A big problem was that the manual was edited using the shapes tool in Adobe Acrobat which can be broken by just about anyone. Eventually an unrevised version made its way to WikiLeaks (wikileaks.org). In response, DHS said that the manual was several versions old and that most of what was revealed could be gathered by watching the screening line at any airport. So, are the five TSA employees suspended because they blew the process of blocking out the text, or because they posted the wrong version of the manual?

Droid Does Update

Last month, I gave a blow-by-blow as I began to use my first app-phone, a Motorola Droid. App-phone is the term voted by David Pogue's readers in the New York Times for the iPhone and similar phones that are more than just "smart". The password challenge remains and this will become a serious problem over time. As you may recall, I use RoboForm to

encrypt, store and manage the 586 passwords I use wherever it is that I use passwords. Now RoboForm has a new online service that looked like it could be my salvation, but no, it is not compatible with the Droid's browser. The people at Siber Systems brazenly had the timidity to suggest that I "copy and paste" user ID's and passwords from one browser view into another – all on a 3.7-inch screen! They recently introduced an app for the iPhone, so I suggested that they port this to the Droid with all possible haste.

While passwords remain an issue, another hurdle that seemed so daunting last month that I barely dared to mention it, has been solved. My Exchange Server email now syncs automatically with the Droid using the latest "push" style of update and this brings along my calendar and contacts! Way cool! The phone is finally becoming the tool for which I had hoped. After receiving the phone last month I followed the instructions to set up email. First I had to set up a Gmail account (what, my 20th email address?) because the Droid, and probably all Android phones, has pretty tight integration with Google. That went as smooth as butter on a hot summer afternoon. Next, I followed the instructions for Exchange email and nothing happened. After doing this more times than I can count, I called Verizon support and they agreed I had it right, so they passed me off to Motorola support. Motorola also agreed I had everything just right and it should work, but neither offered any tips to help find the problem. Since Exchange Active Sync (EAS) is the same server software used to support Microsoft Windows Mobile-based phones and the Apple iPhone, I started searching the Microsoft Knowledge Base for similar problems. As I searched, I found that I had not installed an Exchange service pack. So I installed Exchange Server 2003 SP2 hoping that this would be the cure. It wasn't but at least I now had the latest version of EAS. More searching and I found an article about Windows Mobile phones not working with EAS on Small Business Server 2003. I won't go into the gory details of the fix, but moments after I clicked to close RegEdit on the server, the Droid went nuts! The default notification sound is a low robotic-sounding voice saying: "Droid..." The first "Droid" was followed by another and then they came so fast that the phone was stuttering. When it stopped, there were all my contacts and a full calendar plus that day's email. Mercy me.

Next month I learn to use the navigation – maybe.

DIRECTORS' NOTES, Cont. from page 3

- March – Backup Possibilities and Procedures- On the cloud and on separate hard drives. No presenter has been chosen yet for this topic.

- Suggested Topic for a later meeting – Spring Cleaning your computer. How to take apart a computer and remove the dust on a routine basis.

Old Business

The projector issue has been resolved and Richard has been reimbursed.

New Business

- Charlie will send an email communication to all members requesting volunteers for committees and newsletter proofreaders. There is an urgent need to find replacements and backup for: Program chair/VP, Public Relations, and President.

- A discussion ensued on membership renewal and varying expiration dates/months depending when they joined DACS. The possibility of having renewals all on the same date was discussed and no decisions were made.

- Rob has a Touch Screen computer which he is contemplating donating to DACS. Possible uses would be to allow people to check in at a meeting or for voting, sign up for committees, or to write a point of sales system.

Operations

- Rob is checking into the Livescribe Smart pen for note taking. This is a new technology that records what is written and said with immediate digitalization of the information. Perhaps the company would consider offering it to DACS in exchange for testing and evaluation.

- The current calendar needs to be updated for 2010 and setting up a recurring date for every month is not automatic.

- There should be a unified Point of Contact for DACS information: Rob is setting up phone/fax numbers using GoogleVoice for the telephone and K7 fax for faxing. The GoogleVoice phone number for DACS is: 203-744-9198; The telephone number for using K7 Fax is: 206-309-4978.

- A discussion followed of who will handle voice messages and since they will be digital, to whom they should be sent. This to be decided by email.

- We need to clean up distribution lists, and digitize legacy info. Rob has a Brother all in one color laser duplex printer which can scan documents and create PDF's for digital storage.

- There was a discussion of setting up user accounts for each member on DACS

forum to increase communication between users. Data import into migration of Drupal. Go forward with current members or Email address. Requires input fields? To be decided.

- The immediate benefit of phpBB is that mass emails can be sent to all members from a centralized point. A decision needs to be made whether to use user names or handles.

Announcements

- Patrick Libert made the following announcements:

- Our current Microsoft TechNet subscription is due to expire June 23, 2010. There are still software titles which can be downloaded and burned to a CD – the Board voted and approved to renew the subscription at a cost of \$21.00 for 2 years.

- TechSoup: We still have the opportunity until the end of December to order copies of Windows 7 in either 32 or 64 bit versions. Patrick to order 2-32 bit versions for two Board members.

- Proofreading of the newsletter draft – We really need more than two persons to proofread the draft copy before it is sent to the printer. Charlie will email the membership to emphasize this requirement.

- APCUG annual newsletter contest – we need recommendations for submissions of the best two newsletters of 2009 Dacs.doc. This must be sent to APCUG no later than January 31, 2010.

Rob motioned to Adjourn, all seconded.

—Mary Tobin



Do you have a burning computer question, but can't make it to the meeting or just never seem to get your hand up in time? Email your inquiry to Jim Scheef, the answer guy, at askdacs@dacs.org, and your question will be taken up at Ask DACS at the next meeting.

Ask DACS

December 2009

by Jim Scheef

WE WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM the floor at the start of our General Meetings. In addition, members who are not able to attend the General meeting may submit questions to askdacs@dacs.org. We will ask the question for you and post the reply in *dacs.doc* and on *dacs.org*. Please provide as much information as possible, since we can't probe during the session.

AskDACS is a Question and Answer session before the main presentation at the monthly General Meeting. We solicit questions from the floor and then answers from other audience members. My role as moderator is to try to guide the discussion to a likely solution to the problem.

Q – How can I synchronize browser bookmarks (favorites, shortcuts) between browsers on one computer or between computers for PCs and Macs?

A – While this is not the exact question, it expands it to cover the solutions discussed. Given time, the possibilities seem to expand forever to solve various subsets of the total puzzle.

One member suggested Xmarks (xmarks.com). Formerly called Foxmarks, this solution works across Firefox, Internet Explorer, and Safari (Mac OS), so it is both cross-browser and cross-platform. Chrome will be supported when Chrome includes extensions. Xmarks seems to require an account on their website.

I use a Firefox add-on called PlainOldFavorites (iosart.com/firefox/plainoldfavorites). This allows Firefox to directly use your IE Favorites. It adds a Favorites option to the Firefox menus and looks and works exactly like IE to add or use a favorite. Since IE Favorites are a special kind of shortcut, each one is a separate file kept in your Favorites folder. There is nothing to add or change in IE. Synchronizing IE favorites is a matter of copying these files between computers. When all computers have the latest files, then they are all in sync. There are many tools available to synchronize folders. For automatic synchronization, I use GoodSync from Siber Systems (goodsync.com) or a PC Magazine utility called WMatch for manual

sync.

There are many other Firefox add-ons (extensions) that synchronize favorites so I suggest searching the Firefox add-ons page (addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox) to find a solution that suits your needs. I even found one or two that support Opera.

Another option is to use a website that stores your favorites somewhere online. Yahoo and Google both have Favorites services that are more convenient if you also install their browser toolbar. Both support Internet Explorer and Firefox on the PC only. I use the Yahoo Toolbar which makes using Yahoo Favorites very easy. When your bookmarks are online in this manner, you no longer care about synchronization and just use them where they from Yahoo or Google.

Moving toward the social networking side of this issue brings us to things like Delicious (delicious.com) and Digg (digg.com). Both of these sites are geared as much to sharing bookmarks as to making them easily useable. Both have search features that allow you to benefit from the shared bookmarks of other site members.

So far we have totally ignored Linux. Some, but I dare not say many, of the Firefox add-ons are Linux-friendly. Linux presents a unique situation as it has a different set of browsers like Konqueror and various forks from the old Mozilla. Synchronizing between browsers on Linux may be as simple as pointing all browsers to use the same bookmarks file, although this would not work if more than one browser were open at the same time. [Background: Many browsers follow the bookmark storage method first established by the original Mosaic

from the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois – yes, before Netscape. Such bookmarks are saved as entries in a file and are coded the same way as a link in a web page. The unfortunate side effect of this is that individual bookmarks become difficult to copy, let alone synchronize, between computers because the program must parse this bookmark file. Microsoft made life much easier when they made bookmarks work like shortcuts, but naturally none of the browsers that came later could adopt this model for political reasons.] Versions of Chrome for Linux and the Mac are imminent as I write this; see the Chrome and Chromium (open source version) websites.

After all this discussion, another member mentioned a sync solution for the Macintosh, but I could not hear the name on the tape. Searching for “sync safari bookmarks” found a surprising number of solutions that include Safari, Chromium and IE for cross-platform to a PC.

Q – Using Skype software when the call reaches a voice menu, I can't signal to pick an option like “Press one for English”.

A – The suggestion was to get a keypad dialer. This is a small device that is held over the mouthpiece of a phone. It has a keypad on one side and a speaker on the other. Pressing a number sends the appropriate dual-tone multifrequency (DTMF - en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual-tone_multi-frequency) sound into the phone. For Skype you would hold the device up to the microphone on your computer or headset. These were popular long ago as a way to speed dial calls on a pay phone. They could often store long strings of digits that included your calling card number (remember those?) plus the number you were calling. Another member offered that amateur radio operators (hams) use to access repeaters. Where these are available today is left as an “exercise for the user.”

A more likely solution is a “Skype phone” handset. There are

a variety of such devices on the Skype website (*Skype.com*).

Q – When I use my iPhone to visit websites like the New York Times with video require Flash. Is there a way to make this work on the iPhone?

A – Apparently Flash is not supported in the iPhone browser – so far. My quick web search seems to indicate an impasse between Apple and Adobe over the development tools and libraries need to make it work. The first blog posting I read on the topic was from 2007 and ones from this year sound the same. I would not hold your breath waiting.

Q – The touchpad on my laptop will autoscroll – make the screen jump – when I don’t want that. This happens in Excel.

A – Several members contributed to this answer. Some touchpads have regions of the pad that are intended to behave like a scroll wheel. These should be controllable by the mouse applet in Control Panel or by a touchpad application supplied by the manufacturer. If you no longer have software to control this, look on the manufacturer’s website for the software supplied with your computer.

GPS, Cont. from page 7

• If you need to translate from English to another language (or vice versa), you can touch the “language guide” icon and then select the languages (Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese). You can scroll through the Oxford English dictionary to the word you want to have translated and you’ll be shown the foreign equivalent. By touching the pronunciation icons, you can actually hear the English and foreign pronunciations. Unfortunately, the dictionary included with the Nuvi is a sample dictionary with a limited number of entries. You’ll have to access the Garmin website to obtain a fully functional dictionary—at an additional cost!

• If you need to do some routine computations, you can touch the “calculator” icon and do some quick addition, subtraction, multiplication or division.

• If you want to get an estimate of your vehicle’s fuel economy when traveling to a particular destination, you can touch the “ecoRoute™” icon and enter the requested data (fuel type, estimated city mpg and highway mpg, fuel price etc.). The Nuvi will then compute your vehicle’s average fuel economy, carbon footprint and the cost of the fuel consumed on the trip.

Final Thoughts. The Nuvi is an amazing piece of equipment although I’m still learning how to efficiently use some of its features. For the most part, however, it is relatively easy to use and its navigational performance in the situations I’ve encountered has been flawless. As mentioned ear-

lier, I’ve had some problems updating the maps and I’m still not certain why the plug in failed to install on my wife’s computer. The only other problem I’ve experienced is that the letters on the “QWERTY” keyboard are fairly close together and I sometimes have trouble accurately entering addresses.

The original price of the Nuvi 765 T was around \$480 but I’ve seen lower prices, including Costco’s current online special of \$280. Many of the lower priced GPS units made by Garmin and other manufacturers don’t have all of the Nuvi 765 T’s features, so if you’re interested in purchasing a GPS unit, I’d advise you to compare features and prices on the Internet or check out the current issue of Consumer Reports magazine (September 2009), which compares ten of the latest GPS units.

DOUGLAS AGEE has been a member of the Southwest International Computer Club (SWIPCC) in El Paso, TX for over 12 years, serving as the Photo editing SIG team leader for several years and club president for three years. His hobbies include reading, photography, photo editing and computers. Before retiring from Federal Civil Service, he worked as a physical scientist and missile engineer at White Sands Missile Range, NM and an electronic engineer at Ft. Bliss, TX. He has a BS degree in Mechanical/Aerospace Engineering from the University of Southern California. He can be reached at dougagee@sbcglobal.net.

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Diversions

The Egg & You: These “eggs” are subversive and fun!

by Charles W. Evans

CRACK ONE OPEN. Did you ever marvel at the engineering of an egg? What else makes an egg so fascinating, you ask? Enjoy these web sites, from real eggs to man-made eggs, including the “care and feeding” of eggs!

1. I hope you don’t think computer programmers are dry as bones and boring as cactus. The fact is, sometimes they will just outright surprise you. Buried within many software applications are delightful, little, hidden, amusing tidbits called “Easter Eggs”. Some are ordinary and others will amaze you. Several seasons of “Lost” have eggs. Learn where to find them at: www.eggs.com.

2. Next time you crack a farm fresh egg, think about the road it traveled from the hen pen to your plate and all the stuff along the way, plus egg safety. Surf to: www.aeb.org.

3. OK, before you read #5 and for those who are chronically egg-chef challenged, the eternal question is now answered here, plus egg selection, separating, poaching (eggs, not deer), etc. Yah, yah, I know, real men don’t “separate” eggs, but this site will show you how, for those times when you are alone! Surf to: www.fabulousfoods.com/school/csingred/eggs.html or www.joyofbaking.com/eggs.html.

4. And now for something completely different. Magnificent manmade eggs, courtesy of Mr. Faberge of Russia. Surf to: www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/faberge/fmain.html.

5. The flames of your passion, or whimsy, will explode because there is an egg recipe for all occasions, all tastes and all people. Surf to: www.recipelink.com/rceggs.html.

I know, I know, enough is enough, but I thought this brief foray would be eggsactly perfect to break the doldrums of working at your computer...and the tedium of thinking about your CY2008 taxes.

CHARLES W. EVANS, Reviews Editor, HAL-PC Magazine, July 2009; www.hal-pc.org/reviews@hal-pc.org

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Future Events:

January 4

Windows 7 OS
Rob Limbaugh

February 2*

Social Networking
Don O'Connor

March 2*

Back-up Possibilities
and Routines

April 6*

TBA

* Note: Starting February, meetings return to first Tuesday