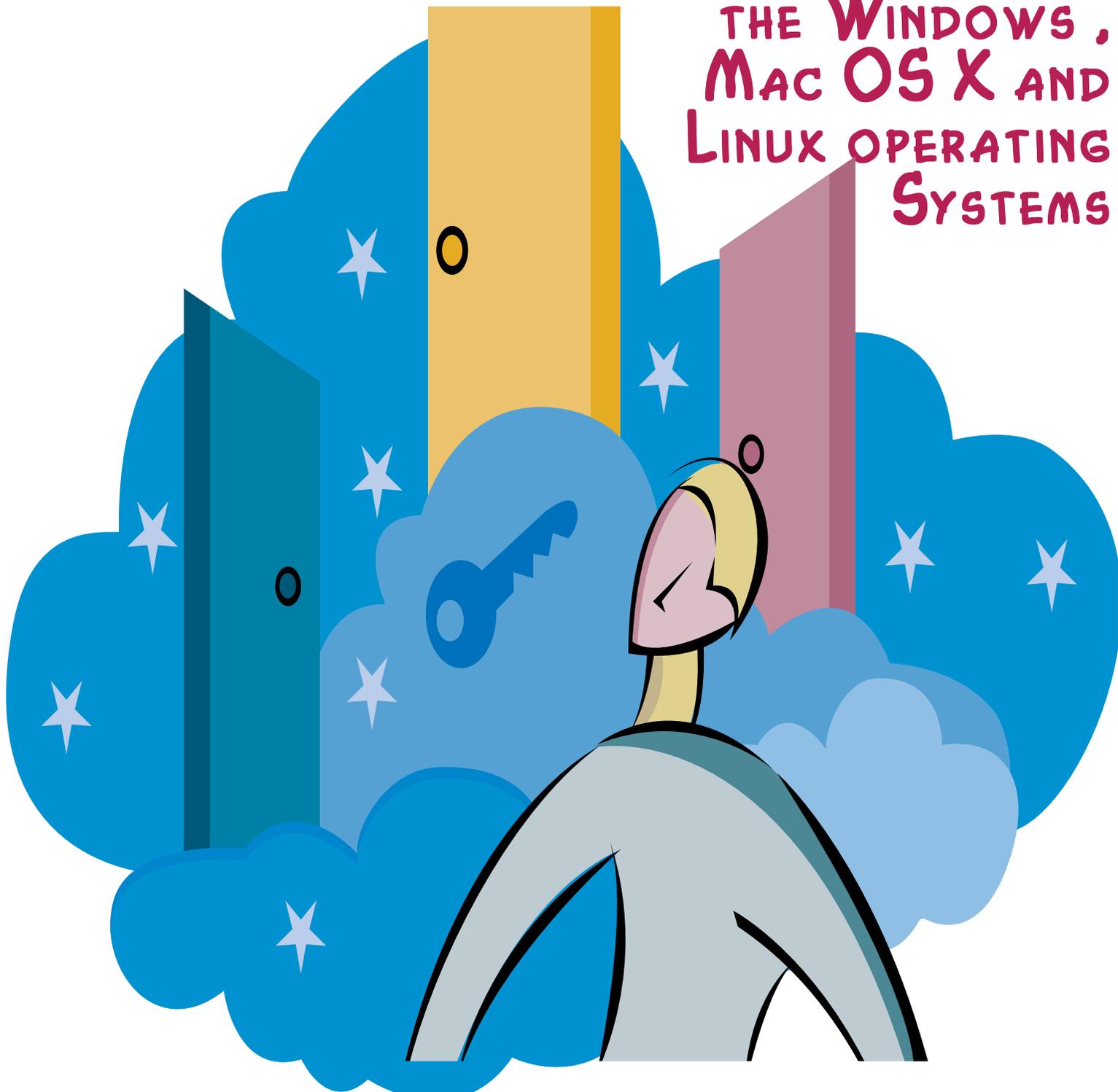


Next Meeting: **A FURTHER PEEK INTO THE
INNER WORKINGS OF
THE WINDOWS,
MAC OS X AND
LINUX OPERATING
SYSTEMS**



Directors' Notes

A meeting of your board of directors was held on Wednesday, January 11, 2012. The meeting was called to Order at 7:10 p.m. Attending were Richard Corzo (President), Jim Scheef, Andy Woodruff, Lisa Leifels, Elizabeth Talian, Bruce Preston (Secretary), Patrick Libert, David Green (Treasurer); Guest: Charlie Bovaird, David Mawdsley.

The Minutes of Last Meeting were accepted with corrections.

Treasurer's Report

Balance on hand 12/01/2011	\$5,286.97
Income	
Dues	\$565.61
Bank Interest	\$0.45
Income Total:	\$566.06
Expenses	
Resource Center Phone	\$70.57
Newsletter Printing	\$85.00
Newsletter Postage	\$47.36
Renewal Letters Postage	\$8.70
Total Expenses:	\$211.63
Balance on hand (12/31/11)	\$5,641.40

The treasurer submitted a 2012 budget to the board.

Membership Report

	NOV	DEC	JAN
Paying members	142	141	139
w/ email addresses	137	136	133
New members	0	1	1

General Meeting

Nov: Snowed out
 Dec: Live Music Recording
 Jan: 3 Operating System comparisons

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	Nov	Dec	Jan
Attendees	Snow	33	36
Members Signed In	-	31	27
visitors signed in	-	2	6

DACS.DOC

	100	100	100
NL printed	100	100	100
NL mailed	76	76	76
NL mailed-memb	56	56	56
NL mailed-other	6	6	6
NL mailed-free lib	14	14	14

Old Business

1. General meetings

- January 3: Jim Scheef, Drew Kwashnak, and Richard Corzo-Performing tasks in Windows, Mac, and Linux-3 way comparison. Preview: Bruce Preston, Review: Lisa Leifels.

- February 7: Jim Scheef, Drew Kwashnak, and Richard Corzo-Windows, Mac, and Linux comparison-part 2. Preview: Richard Corzo will update preview, Review: Elizabeth Talian & Lisa Leifels.

• Possible future topics:

- Tentative March: Windows tuning-Safe Mode, MSCONFIG, turning off unneeded services, Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper (Beta), etc. We could also call it "How to be an administrator of your machine." Contacted Rob Limbaugh, who said he is willing for March.

- Andy will continue his communication with Google regarding a possible Google speaker. He will ask that the speaker focus on Google Apps (Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Sites, and Google Docs) and Google Voice.

- May: John Patrick - Annual State of the Internet

- June: Patrick Libert will do Music Services - Pandora, Spotify, iTunes Match, Amazon Cloud Player

- Apple - Lion OS, other offerings, (Dave Marra?)

- Artificial Intelligence - from Alan Turing to Eliza to Watson - Bruce to develop, targeting July or August.

- Smart Computing - "Presentation in a box" - needs about 8 weeks notice - held in reserve.

- Ultrabooks, Tablets, etc. Perhaps a comparison of iPad, Android-based tablets, Kindle Fire, etc.

- Cloud storage/backup services-Dropbox, box.net, Skydrive, Mozy,

Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 3

Membership Information

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Applications & Hardware to enhance *dacs.doc* are welcome.



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RESOURCE CENTER: (203) 748-4330 • **WEB SITE:** <http://www.dacs.org>

HelpLine

Our former telephone HelpLine has been replaced by our web-based DACS Community Forum at <http://forum.dacs.org>. We have topic-specific forums where DACS members can post questions. Questions may be answered by SIG leaders or other DACS members. If none of the categories fit your question, just post it to the Ask DACS forum.

Topic

Microsoft Access
.NET Programming
Digital cameras/scanners/image processing
Content Management Systems
Linux
Mac and iPhone/iPad/iPod touch
PC maintenance

Forum

Access SIG
ASP.Net and C#VB.Net SIG
Digital Imaging SIG
Drupal SIG
Linux SIG
Apple SIG
PC Maintenance SIG
Virtual Computing SIG
Web Site Design SIG
Windows SIG

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 2

Carbonite, etc. What features to look for?

- Open positions
 - The membership chairperson/greeter position is still open.
- 2011 income and expense report - Dave Green submitted a review of last year's income and expenses, and produced a budget for 2012. After brief discussion it was decided to form a finance committee consisting of Richard, Andy and David to review. They will meet next Tuesday (Jan 17.)
- We have planned a display for the Bethel library. (Andy Woodruff, Drew Kwashnak, and Richard Corzo) Andy and Richard to install next week.
- How might we make use of meetup.com to draw more membership interest? Elizabeth will look into what establishing a group would entail - setting up, costs, etc. This evolved into a discussion of Facebook - whether and how DACS should use it to promote DACS, and also whether we should consider a presentation on what portions of Facebook may be of interest to members. This would include security issues, privacy issues, applications, etc.
- Patrick updated our APCUG records, and we are now listed when users search for a user group in CT.

New Business

- Contacted former Fairfield County Computer Users Group (FCUG) to ask if they will add us to their home page (<http://www.fcug.org>). We have only received an auto response.
- Advertizing in DACS.DOC or on the site. After discussion it was moved and accepted that we quote \$25 for 3 months, the size to be the same as the Café Press DACS ad.
- Charlie suggested that there be a top-level menu item (buttons on left) for JOIN DACS in addition to the link on the right.
- Charles also recommended that the links for joining be made more visible - you have to scroll to find it.

Adjourned: 9:15

—Bruce Preston

Meeting Preview

Side-by-Side—Part 2

By Richard Corzo

MOST CONSUMER computers come in one of three flavors: Windows, Mac OS X or Linux, and often you find yourself reaching for the system with which you are most familiar. But what if you're curious about how to perform the same task in a different operating system?

The Danbury Area Computer Society started to answer that question at the January general meeting. This was such a rich topic, that we will continue to explore it at the February 7, 2012 general meeting. We'll continue our side-by-side comparison of how various common tasks are performed on each of the three most popular operating systems.

The program format will consist of a team of presenters—representing Mac OS X Lion (Richard Corzo), the latest Ubuntu Linux (Drew Kwashnak), and Windows 7 (Jim Scheef). After a brief

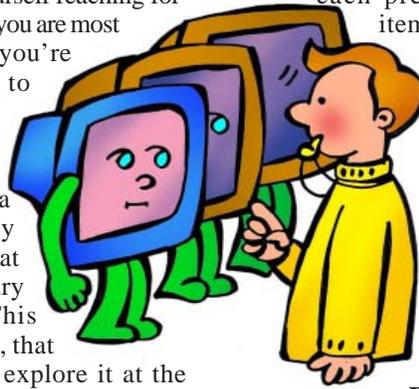
description of the environment (hardware and operating system/version) we will alternate between platforms with each presenter demonstrating items within a category.

Previously, in our January meeting we covered:

System: The intent here was to show where files are stored, where programs are located, how to manage files, run applications, find or create shortcuts, install and remove applications.

Personalization: Everyone likes to customize their environment to reflect their personal preferences—so we looked at wallpaper, themes, multiple desktops, etc.

Productivity: If your computer isn't just a toy, you want to know how to edit and print documents, compose, send and receive e-mails, manage a calendar, manage contacts, etc.



At our February 7 meeting the presenters will demonstrate the next two categories:

Digital Images: How easy is it to import, organize/catalog, edit, and publish images?

Multimedia: How do you download, organize/catalog, play music and/or videos?

If there's time, we'll also cover the last category. Otherwise we'll save it for a future meeting:

Networking: How do you set up a home network? What's involved in creating a shared folder, or accessing a shared folder?

Once through the categories, our presenters will be available for questions. So come to the meeting and see some alternatives. Perhaps one will be just what you have been wanting, but just didn't know it!

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. The meeting is scheduled to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

DACS General Meetings are free and open to the public. Members and prior attendees are encouraged to extend invitations to anyone interested in this topic.

Meeting Review

Side-by-side by DACS

By Lisa Leifels

AT THE JANUARY 3rd general meeting we were fortunate enough to have three different presenters, each showing us their expertise on how to perform some of the more common tasks in the three most popular operating systems. Jim Scheef showed us Windows 7, Richard Corzo demonstrated Mac OS X Lion, and Drew Kwashnak presented Ubuntu Linux. Isn't it comforting to know that you have more than one choice when it comes to operating systems?

The presentation was done in a round-robin format, with each person demonstrating how the operating system they were using handled specific tasks, such as browsing files, installing and removing applica-

tions, customizing your desktop and using productivity software.

Most of us are familiar with the Windows operating system, since it comes pre-installed on the majority of computers sold and it is the predominant choice in the business community. Jim Scheef presented Windows 7, which is the latest version of Windows available. There are many different ways to accomplish the same task

in Windows, which at first may seem confusing, but this also gives you the ability to navigate through the software in the way that you prefer. One of the advantages of using Windows is that it will work with a wide range of hardware and software; but as we all know, it isn't free. Another draw-



back is that due to its popularity most of the computer viruses and malware are targeted at Windows computers. Many of the people who use Windows computers also use the well-known Microsoft Office Suite of products, which includes Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint for word processing, spreadsheets, email and presentations. Microsoft is now offering Office 365, which gives you access to their office suite delivered in the cloud for a monthly cost.

The Mac operating system is included when you purchase a computer from Apple. The advantage to Apple bundling their hardware and software together is that the Mac software is generally more stable, and works extremely well with the Mac computers, since they were designed to work with each other. There are also not as many viruses targeted at the Mac operating system. Unlike Windows, there aren't quite as many ways to perform the same task, which some people feel lends itself to ease of use. Many people like the user interface of the Mac operating system and say that it is intuitive to use. Richard showed us how you can use the Mac App Store application to download and install new software appli-

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: February 2012

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

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (bpreston@dacs.org).

Meets on 2nd Tuesday, 7p.m., by virtual connection.

Next meeting: Feb 14 (check Website for technical details)

Apple. Focuses on all aspects of the Mac and iPhone operating systems.

Contact: Richard Corzo (macsig@dacs.org).

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

Next Meeting: Feb 2

Digital Imaging. All about digital cameras, retouching, and printing using various programs.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (graffx@gmail.com).

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

Next Meeting: Spring 2012

Drupal. Covers all things on Drupal, the open source content management system (CMS).

Contact: Jim Scheef (jscheef@dacs.org).

Meets on the second Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center, or go to the DACS Community Forum (<http://www.dacs.org/forum/>) within the Members-only area.

Next meeting: Feb 9

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: Dave Mawdsley, linuxsig@dacs.org

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

Next Meeting: Feb 15

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

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

Meets irregularly, announced by e-mail.

Server. Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook. SIG is on hiatus and presently merged into the Drupal SIG.

Contact: Jim Scheef (jscheef@telemarksys.com), or go to the DACS Community Forum: <http://www.dacs.org/forum/>, within the Members-only area

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

Contact: Annette van Ommeren (avo@annagraphics.com).

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

Next Meeting: February 21

SIG News & Events

Apple. In the January meeting I brought in my new NOOK Tablet, an Android-based, 7-inch tablet from bookseller Barnes & Noble. I talked about what you would get and what you would give up as compared with the more expensive, larger screen iPad. Look for my complete review of the NOOK Tablet elsewhere in the DACS.DOC newsletter.

Linux. Jim Ritterbusch, Drew Kwashnak and I, made presentation at this session. Since we all had computers at the meeting, the topics allowed for active learning and practice with some of the items discussed. (A loaner laptop supporting Ubuntu was available for this meeting and was used.)

Jim demonstrated the uses and abuses of Bash history at the command-line interface. Methods of returning to earlier commands, searching for strings in previous commands and special execution strategies were shown. Cautions were indicated particularly when commands affect installed software or the contents of folders in superuser mode as "Undo" aren't available if mistakes are made.

Drew demonstrated the GNOME Shell 3.x user experience in the distribution Ubuntu 11.10—at this

point in its on-going development. GNOME Shell provides basic functions such as switching to windows and launching applications. The Shell looks and behaves the same across differing Linux distributions such as Fedora and Ubuntu and has already advanced to a very useful working stage. (Hopefully the developers will continue to improve the features and remove the remaining problems.)

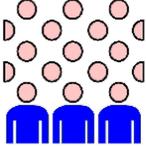
My presentation centered on understanding how layers work using the GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP). Layers in this sense are like sheets of glass with images on each. Practice centered on manipulating the layer order and selecting a layer to be the default. Those practicing the image procedures managed to properly fit an oversized hat onto a smaller Tux penguin. The concept of Alpha Channels was briefly introduced and used.

We invite new members to our sessions which are geared for the beginner, intermediate or advanced user. Topics and discussions are motivated by those attending and also cover hardware and software problems that members may have with their computers.

Dave Mawdsley,

February 2012

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																			
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Ask DACS

January, 2011

Moderated and reported by Jim Scheef

WE WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM the floor at the start of our General Meetings. The role of moderator is to try to guide the discussion to a likely solution to the problem. 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.

Q – *Is it necessary to use an anti-virus or anti-malware product to protect a smartphone? If so, what products are available and does anyone here have experience with these products?*

A - The term “smartphone” has been around for a long time and predates even the first Apple iPhone. I prefer the term “app-phone” meaning a cellular phone device that can also run applications. What we are discussing are app-phones and not merely a cell phone with a nice contact list and primitive web browser. The first comment came from a member explaining the difference between the “protected” environment of the Apple iPhone and the almost totally open Android Market. All apps distributed through the Apple App Store have been tested and reviewed by Apple. With only rare exceptions, this has kept rogue applications away from iPhone users. Next, it is extremely difficult to directly install apps on an iPhone. You must first “jailbreak” your phone which allows the owner to bypass much of the iPhone’s security features.

In contrast, applications in the Android Market are not tested at all, by Google or anyone else. The developers submit their programs and that’s that. Customer feedback (comments below each app in the Market) is all that’s available to prevent you from installing a program that does bad things. From time to time, Google will remove apps reported as malicious. Discussion continued about how such programs work.

Both types of app-phones employ many security features to prevent access to key areas of the phone’s operating system by either the owner

or applications, both normal and rogue. Since the Android operating system is a version of Linux, “root access” is the key to bypass all internal security. The Android equivalent of the jailbreak is “rooting” your phone, giving access to all parts of the operating system. Normally only programs with special permissions have such access, and presumably a rogue program would also be limited, just as in the iPhone, provided you have not already opened the door.

We did not discuss how rogue software or malware could spread from phone to phone over the Internet. This is the theoretical danger against which the anti-virus manufacturers hope to protect your phone. While all app-phones are theoretically vulnerable to some degree, such exploits have seen no press coverage and little in the trade press. I believe that should such a worm be found to replicate in the wild, the press coverage will be quite loud. After all, everyone has one of these phones, so there is ample reason for reporters to exaggerate and twist the facts out of all proportion.

With all this as background, there are a surprising number of companies offering mobile security products. In my post-meeting research, I was surprised to see the range of features these apps offer. For example, here are the key features of F-Secure Mobile Security - \$40 (tinyurl.com/6tzbjcp):

- Protects your personal and confidential content from viruses and malware
- Enables safe browsing and safeguards your identity online
- Locates your lost or stolen

device, or the person holding it

- Protect your children from unsuitable web content

- Locate your children anywhere using their mobile device (source: f-secure.com)

Kaspersky Mobile Security 9 costs \$10 “on sale” and offers these Key Features:

- Disables or cleans stolen phone - even if the SIM card has been replaced

- Advanced phone-finder technology provides Google Maps coordinates

- Blocks unwanted calls and texts from specified or unknown numbers

- Real-time virus scanning and advanced firewall for 24/7 protection

- Privacy mode hides designated contacts, calls, and SMS texts

- Supported Platforms: Windows Mobile, Symbian, Blackberry, and Android (limited features on some platforms) (source: kaspersky.com)

Note that Kaspersky lists virus scanning fourth, indicating its importance relative to the other features. AVG Mobilation offers both free and pro (\$1, Android only) versions Others include Norton Mobile Security (\$30, Android only, tinyurl.com/86zd92w) and Trend Micro Mobile Security (\$30, Android only, tinyurl.com/6pezzap).

Some observations:

1. Obviously no one trademarked the name “Mobile Security”.

2. Theft or loss of the device is probably the biggest danger, followed by identity theft. With physical access to the device, a thief can get at your personal data via a USB cable - unless it is encrypted, of course.

3. I particularly like the Kaspersky feature that can remotely wipe or disable a phone even if the SIM card has been replaced. Norton locks the phone if the SIM card is removed.

4. Given the replacement cost of a lost or stolen phone, a program to help find it could be cheap insurance.

5. The anti-virus industry predicts that Android phones will be targeted by malware. Of course they do - they pray every day for this to happen! They need a new market.

6. Scareware - just like the fake anti-virus programs on PCs - is likely to become a problem on all types of app-phones as soon as browser vulnerabilities are found. (tinyurl.com/7b839lt)

An aside to this discussion is the process by which Android OS updates get from Google to your phone. Unfortunately, the phone manufacturers must massage each new version of Android before the carrier can send it out to the phones. Some manufacturers and carriers are better (as in more prompt) than others at this process. The sad fact is that any phone more than a year old is unlikely to get any updates, and these updates are the only way vulnerabilities will ever be patched. So, as your phone ages, it becomes more vulnerable to malicious exploits. Someday "new every two" may not be new enough. Given this scenario, a security program may provide some benefit.

One last point: the fact that most of the programs are available only on Android does not mean that the Android platform is inherently more vulnerable. Android is now the most popular cell phone operating system (it is the Windows of cell phones), so this is where application developers, and malware authors, now see the largest market.

Q - I just bought a Barnes and Noble Nook Tablet e-book reader which uses a version of Android. Using the developer settings to load an app directly, rather than from the App Market, I installed a file browser program. Now I'm trying to find the directory where third-party apps are installed. Does anyone have any helpful experience?

A - In "regular" Linux, user application binaries (programs) are installed in /usr/bin or /usr/sbin. Often there is no special subdirectory, but the binaries are simply dumped in with all the other programs. Configuration files go in /etc. Here a special subdirectory is often created for the application. Configuration files and directories are often hidden by placing a period in front of the filename. Program data is generally stored somewhere

in the /var directory tree. Remember that Android apps are written in Java and will not have a ".exe" file extension.

Discussion continued with much speculation about where the apps might be found; but no one really touched on the permissions issue of normal "user" privilege versus the total access allowed under root privileges. When you install an app from the Android Market, a page is displayed showing the permissions required by the app. You then approve these permissions before the Market downloads and installs the program. When the app runs, it gets those permissions and no more. This includes the file manager so it cannot bypass any file permissions.

In my post-meeting research, I found that it is likely the device owner cannot access many areas of the file system due to permissions set by Google or Barnes and Noble (who act as the "carrier" for a device like this). Why the owner can find and read the folder where the system apps are installed but not the folder where user-installed apps are installed is a mystery, but this situation seems to also exist on my Droid 3 phone. So, the most likely answer to this question is that the file explorer program cannot access some areas of the file system without first rooting the device. To sample available file manager apps, I installed two such apps from the Android Market: "Explorer" by Speed Software and "Linda File Manager" by nylinda.com. Of these two, Explorer offers the most information while Linda File Manager offers ease of use in exchange for detailed info. Both let me explore the files on both the SD card and the phone's internal storage. Both also blocked access where permissions would not allow access when running under normal "user" privileges. Some file manager apps offer two versions: one for user-mode access and one for devices that have been rooted.

Is anyone interested in starting an Android SIG?

D - The discussion then digressed into philosophies about information on the Internet. That discussion is outside our scope, and is not covered here.

Q - On the Windows 7 task bar, when I hover the mouse over the icon for Firefox, sometimes I get thumbnails of the active windows and sometimes I just get a list of the window titles. What causes this and how can I get the thumbnails back?

A - The thumbnail display is called "Aero Peek". The first approach was to look at a setting in Firefox 9 that enables showing multiple thumbnails. This is on the Tabs tab on the Firefox Options dialog. Unfortunately, this was not the issue. Some quick typing into a search engine led us to a Windows 7 function that controls the thumbnail feature. This showed us that the thumbnails are a feature of the Aero Windows interface. This explains why the virtual machine I use for demonstrations displayed the list rather than the thumbnails - none of the Virtual PC environments support the Aero interface in a guest machine. I will distill all of the discussion and my post-meeting research as follows:

- The thumbnail view is only available when an Aero theme is active. Keep in mind that most of the Aero themes included with Windows have an identical non-Aero theme. If your window title bars are transparent, then you are in Aero mode, the reverse is not necessarily true.

- Anything that disables Aero mode disables the thumbnail display. Anything that "pushes" Windows out of Aero mode disables the thumbnail display. What things can cause this is not known (by me).

- Windows 7 switches from thumbnails to title list whenever there is insufficient room to display the thumbnails. Thus, with Firefox set to display thumbnails, the display will change to a list of titles when there are more tabs open than can fit across the bottom of the screen. Of course, "more tabs than can fit" is a fluid number. I had to open sixteen tabs before the list replaced the thumbnails. It took nine tabs to fill the bottom of the screen.

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Ask DACS, Cont. from page 9

As I opened more tabs, Win7 gradually reduced the size of the thumbnails up to a maximum of fifteen. The sixteenth tab caused the switch to a list. Your mileage will undoubtedly vary.

- As I experimented with all this, Firefox became unstable and crashed repeatedly with 15 or 16 tabs open. The crash may not be a Firefox problem, as I also had eleven other windows open in nine applications, including two virtual machines, Outlook email and MS Word with this document.

- The thumbnail behavior is not limited to Firefox. All other applications, including IE, that open multiple windows or tabs behave exactly the same between thumbnails and the title list.

Since the meeting I received several emails from the member who asked this "quick question" and, in his case, the open source media player VLC (videolan.org) seems to cause Windows on his machine to switch out of Aero mode - sometimes. Looking at the skins available for VLC, perhaps some are incompatible with Aero, and force Windows to drop out of Aero mode. The Wikipedia article on Windows Aero is a good place to start, as it gives the hardware requirements for Aero and details several features (besides transparency) you can use to confirm your machine is in Aero mode - such as Aero Shake.

During the discussion, someone found this posting on Windows 7 Forums: "Windows 7 - Taskbar List or Thumbnail Previews Mode - Change" (tinyurl.com/42qqbdk). This is the site I said I would include in the write-up, so here it is. There are links to many tutorials on how to use advanced features in Win7.

[Disclaimer: Ask DACS questions come from members by email or from the audience attending the general meeting. Answers are suggestions offered by meeting attendees and represent a consensus of those responding. DACS offers no warranty as to the correctness of the answers and anyone following these suggestions or answers does so at their own risk. In other words, we could be totally wrong!

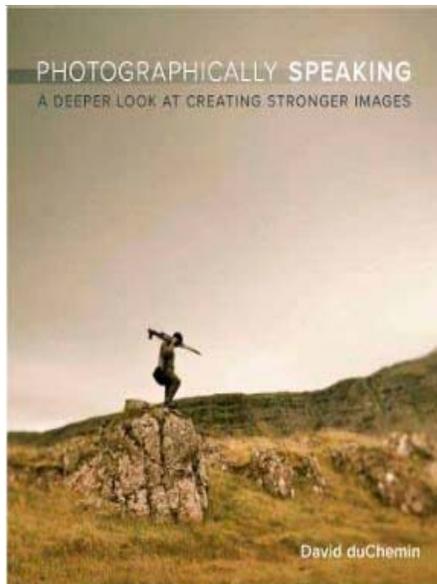
Book Review

Photographically Speaking

Review by Marlene Martin

Photographically Speaking: A Deeper Look at Creating Stronger Images, by David DuChemin. New Rider Press; 1st edition (*Voices That Matter*), 2011.

DUCHEMIN, IN HIS introduction states that the "subject of this book is the expression of vision or intent and not the vision itself." DuChemin's premise is that successful photographs "communicate a key thought or feeling."



To accomplish this, photographers must first be clear in their own minds about their "intent" prior to making decisions about what to include or exclude. Only then can the more technical decisions be made to portray those chosen elements to communicate that vision or intent. The author compares the craft of photography to writing but with its own visual language and grammar.

Learning to use photographic language effectively allows photographers to communicate their intent to the reader, i.e. the viewer, in ways that evoke a response. After setting the stage in Part I, and making a case for his premise that "mindfully" determining your intent will lead to stronger images, DuChemin looks at how to use the elements of Visual Language along with compositional and technical aspects to communicate intent.

"Part II - "Visual Language" explores the Elements (words) that can be manipu-

lated within the photographic frame and the Decisions (grammar) that determines how we visual present the elements to the "reader." Each element (lines, repetition, contrast, color, etc.) is explored, individually and in depth, using the author's photographs as examples of that particular element.

This is one of the real strengths of this book. The author not only shows us the picture, he describes what he did and why, but also what he wanted to communicate with the selected element. His descriptions are clear, articulate and are often accompanied by additional graphic examples or photographs on which he superimposes additional information to illustrate his example. He also, where it adds to the lesson, includes photographs taken immediately before or after and discusses, in the same depth, why they aren't as strong and/or don't communicate his intent as well as the selected photo.

The same format is used to explore each decision that organizes and presents the selected elements - framing, placement, optics, focus, etc.

To assist the reader to explore each concept for themselves, each subsection ends with a suggested "Creative Exercise." These are fairly simply, short exercises to trigger making an idea or technique part of your photographic thought process. For example, in the section on color, the creative exercise is "pick six of your favorite color photographs, rendering one of each into black and white."

There are then a set of suggested questions to use when viewing the original and changed photos - what is the difference in your emotional response, does your eye travel differently when you view the photograph, does color add or detract, etc.

DuChemin suggests that photographers are often distracted by color and that it prevents them from looking critically at the elements in the photograph. He believes that the ability to see beyond the color and pay more attention to the elements prior to making the photograph will improve the decisions used to create the image.

I found that just reading and thinking about each "Creative Exercise" was very helpful in reviewing and driving home the concept being explored, and many of them

are definitely on my "to do" list.

The last section of the book, Part III is a series of 20 photographs selected from the author's work to represent the concepts explored in the book. Each is discussed in detail in terms of the elements and decisions used to make the photo, plus possible alternatives that might have made the photograph stronger. DuChemin challenges the reader to critically view each photograph - intent, subject, elements, decisions, etc. and actually write down their responses - before reading his description.\

For each photograph, the format is similar to that of Part II - alternative photographs taken at the same time and graphic overlays to illustrate a concept present in the photograph. Careful viewing and reading of this section helps solidify the educational and practical material presented in this book.

Appended to the final photograph, "Candles & Prayers, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2010," is a list of 19 questions to "mindfully ask" when viewing your own or other's photographs. They include questions designed to elicit your feelings and emotional responses in addition to how decisions about elements ("words") and decisions ("grammar") affect the photograph and thereby communication with the reader. They are a very useful summary of the book.

In his conclusion, DuChemin cautions that while he has simplified the material for educational purposes, to fully integrate the concepts into your photographic workflow is anything but easy. Just like learning any new language, it takes time and conscious practice.

While this is the fourth book of a series DuChemin has written on photographic vision, it stands on its own and is eminently readable and usable without knowledge of the first three books. I have not read any of the others. I can enthusiastically recommend this book to anyone except perhaps a very novice photographer. A basic knowledge of focus, shutter speed, etc. and how these affect a photograph would definitely add to getting the most from the material.

The book is probably most helpful for someone who has mastered the technical aspects and now wants to improve how they create their "intent" within the photographic frame to increase the impact of their work. The author presents organized, well written concepts and information with appropriate images and detail and has caused me to think about how I approach photographs in a more thoughtful way.

My suggestion would be to read Part I,

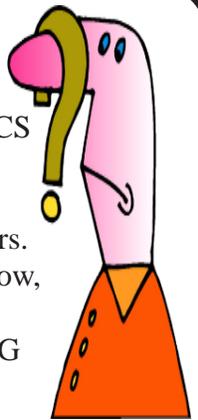
"The Photographer's Intent" first but without getting too caught up in whether you agree or disagree with his "message."

Read Parts II and III for the specifics and consider doing the "Creative Exercises" as you go along or pick and choose afterwards. Then go back and re-read Part I. This worked for me.

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This article appeared in the December 2011 issue, eJournal, and is distributed for reprint by other user groups.

Are you up to your nose with computer questions? DACS Special Interest Groups may have the answers. If not, let us know, and we'll try to create a new SIG that helps you find them.

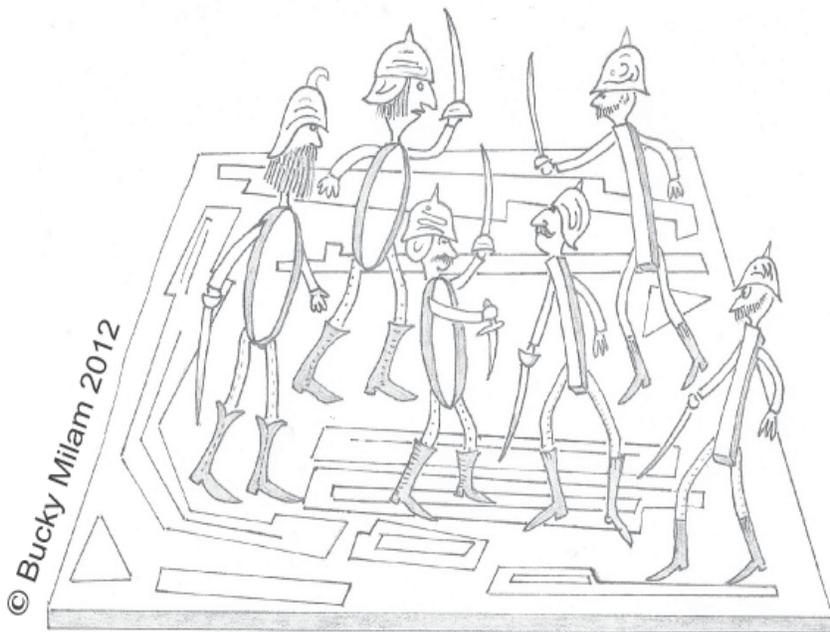


DACS Community Forum

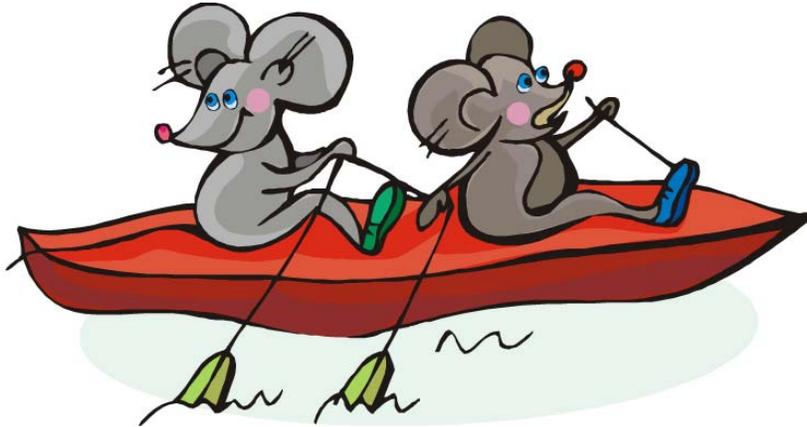
Ever wanted to ask a question and get an answer without waiting for the next general meeting? How about sharing news with other DACS members, or communicating with fellow participants in a SIG you attend?

The DACS Community Forum (<http://www.dacs.org/forum/>) is another benefit of being a DACS member, and it's open 24/7. Once you register there you'll be able to post questions, answers, and comments. You can even set up an RSS subscription to be notified of updates to the forums.

Try out the DACS forum today!



The epic battle between the ones and zeroes, and the end of cyberspace



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