



# MUG Monitor

Macon Users Group—Serving Southwestern North Carolina and Northeastern Georgia

Volume 16, Issue 1

www.maconusersgroup.org

January 2009

## Next Meeting:

### Online Social Networking Sites

by Board Member Jim Swanson

Macon Community Facilities Building  
January 13th, 7 PM

## Inside this Issue:

- Windows 7 is Coming Soon.....1
- Linux SIG.....2
- Treasurer's Report.....2
- Best of Lou's Views: Trends to Watch For.. 3
- Advanced System Care Free V3.....4
- Let Me Count the Ways I Like Linux.....5
- The Deals Guy.....6
- Moving on to Vista, Part 11.....7
- Wacom Intous3 Writing Tablet.....8
- Traveling Then and Now.....9
- Directory Updates.....10

## Windows 7 is Coming Soon

by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS, www.compuKISS.com

If you ask 100 people their impressions of the Microsoft Vista operating system, 95 of them will tell you that Vista is no good, even if they have never seen or used it.

It is obvious that public opinion of Vista is in the mud. Microsoft made some major blunders when they introduced Vista. There were not enough drivers ready, so many printers, scanners, and other peripherals were incompatible. There was no noticeable speed increase over Windows XP. Vista requires much additional memory and more hardware, so it was often impossible to upgrade current Windows XP computers. Also, Microsoft did not woo the press as they did when they introduced Windows XP, so Vista got a lot of awful publicity. Vista is not a bad operating system, but Vista has gotten a bad name. Microsoft has lost the battle and they know it. So they are working on a new Windows operating system.

Microsoft hopes to make a clean break with previous Windows operating systems with this new version of Windows. They are especially distancing the new operating system from the "wicked" Vista operating system. This is obvious in the name they have chosen for the new OS. They are not using year names like Windows 2000. They are not using what they refer to as inspirational names, like XP or Vista. Instead, they will go back to their original numerical naming convention. There was a Windows 1, Windows 2, and Windows 3. Now there is to be a new operating system called "Windows 7".

If you have been following the versions of Windows as they have been introduced, you will find it difficult to comprehend that this next version is actually the seventh version of Windows, but Microsoft says that it is, so that is that. It's Windows 7.

More important than the name, however, is the fact that Microsoft cannot afford another misstep. They must make this operating system faster and better than Vista. Microsoft has already showed off Windows 7 at some developer's conferences and has made some announcements and promises.

Windows 7 will be built on the Vista base, so peripherals that work with Vista, which now includes most printers, scanners, and other devices, will also work with Windows 7.

Windows 7 will have a smaller storage footprint and will use less memory. This will allow it to run on the new small Netbooks that are now running Windows XP or Unix because Windows Vista cannot run on their small solid state drives.

(see Windows 7 on page 2)

## Online Social Networking

Presented by Jim Swanson  
7 PM, January 13th

## Macon Users Group Franklin, NC

Please see the printed edition  
for contact information

### Officers

President: Louis Vitale  
Vice President: Rhonda Tomlinson  
Treasurer: Phyllis Minnich  
Secretary: Lee Alexander

### Board of Directors

Nancy Cottrell  
David Gardner  
Tom Mackie  
Bob McGovern  
Bill Messina  
Jerry Ray  
Jim Swanson

### Committee Chairs

Newsletter: Rhonda Tomlinson  
Programs: Rhonda Tomlinson  
Lou Vitale  
Webmaster: Nancy Cottrell  
Linux SIG: Jim Swanson

### Monthly Meetings

MUG meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7 P.M. in the Macon County Community Facilities Building on Georgia Road (US 441 South).

### MUG Monitor Staff

Rhonda Tomlinson, editor

### Website

[www.maconusersgroup.org](http://www.maconusersgroup.org)

### Volunteers Available

The following club members have thoughtfully volunteered to be on call for other members having problems or needing a little extra help. If you would like to add your services, please email the newsletter editor.

Lee Alexander  
Jerry Ray  
John Rymer

*(Windows 7—continued from page 1)*

Windows 7 will boot up and shut down faster. It will have improved battery life on laptops. It is also promised to have an easier-to-use interface and to be easier to network in a home environment.

Although Microsoft is officially targeting January 2010 for the launch of Windows 7, logic indicates that they will have Windows 7 ready for next year's holiday selling season.

This holiday season you'll find some great prices on computers running Microsoft Vista. If all goes well, when the holiday season rolls around in 2009, the stores will be filled with computers running the next version of Windows, Windows 7. Microsoft has made mistakes before, but I think they will do everything they possibly can to make Windows 7 a winner. So if you are looking to buy a new PC, this year will be a good time to buy, but, if you can wait, next year may be even better.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at [sandy \(at\) pukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)pukiss.com).

## Linux SIG

with Jim Swanson, Mentor

The Linux SIG will meet at the Macon County Public Library on January 27, 2009, in the large meeting room. We don't have a formal program planned, but members who have some interesting stories about their Linux experiences, or some hints for the rest of us, are encouraged to share.

Anyone interested in exploring the Linux operating system is welcome and encouraged to attend. We are all learners, and we help each other up the learning curve.

## Treasurer's Report

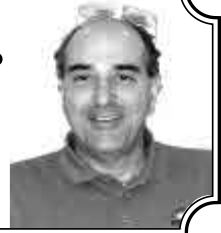
Phyllis Minnich

Balance forward.....	748.71
Income: interest, dues, 50/50.....	72.00
Expense.....	(79.00)
<b>Balance*</b>	
<b>(including equipment fund).....</b>	<b>\$741.71</b>
*Equipment Fund (50/50, auction).....	16.00
Investment Fund.....	1572.27

# November 2000: Trends to Watch For

*Best of  
Lou's Views!*

by Louis Vitale (aka 44RAILGUY)



The following is an article I wrote for the November 2000 *MUG Monitor*. Bill Clinton was still President, and we had survived "Y2K." You judge how many of my predictions came true. I think I did pretty darn good.

There are only 2 months left in the Year 2000. Remember the hype about Y2K? Many thought that by now we would be back in the cave. The dreaded problems of Y2K did not materialize. This should be a lesson to anyone who dares predict the "Future," but as usual, I will make some predictions anyway.

Although there are no obvious major changes on the technology horizon, there are many obvious trends. I intend to highlight a few of these trends in this article. As some of you may know, I will be attending the world's largest computer trade show in Las Vegas in November. Will the trends I see now be the same ones that I see at Comdex? I will let you know in December.

Will the window on your screen be replaced with a "Red Hat"? The Linux operating system has made major advancements in the last year. Will it become a real competitor to "Windows"? IBM and many other major companies are adopting the open Linux operating system in some form. These companies are following the lead of their customers who are demanding an open source option. Linux supports multiple platforms, which is critical for Internet applications. I will let you know how much Linux has grown in one year.

Flat screen monitor prices are dropping. Will \$700 for a 15-inch monitor

be competitive enough for people to put one of these on their desks? Price has always been the key to hardware sales, but will this price point be low enough? There should be some answers to these questions at Comdex and the coming holiday sales season.

The "Death of the PC" is again being predicted. The new threat is from "point computing" devices. These are dedicated terminals that do one thing without the cost of a PC. Here are a few examples. **Interactive TV** (iTV) will transform your television into a point for Web surfing and email. Once laughed at, iTV is now poised to take off.

**Handhelds** are already *the* hot item this Christmas. With more memory and more power, these points have Web access and powerful synchronization abilities. Sales of PDAs will more than double by the end of this year. **Game consoles** already outpace PCs as a games platform. These consoles will do more than just play games. Equipped with broadband capabilities, these devices will become points in your living room to do email, chat and surf the Web.

**Wireless everything.** New wireless products are being introduced every day. Pagers, cell phones, PDAs, laptops, appliances and digital cameras, to name a few, are all connected to each other and the Internet without any wires. Just how important is this? Is it necessary to walk down the street making stock trades on your cell phone? And, how can they all possibly communicate with one another? One answer to some of these questions is Bluetooth.

**Bluetooth** is a short-range wireless communication standard. 1,900 companies have agreed to make Bluetooth the short-range wireless communication standard for their devices. These include Lucent, IBM, Compaq, Motorola, and Ericsson. This year alone, according to projections, Bluetooth sales are expected to rise from nothing to almost \$40 million, all in about six months. This is one heck of a trend!

Will there be a **Crusoe** in your Future? The new Crusoe chip from Transmeta Corp. is the talk of the industry. Because of its new design, it will at least double the battery life of your portable computing device. Now your laptop won't die over Kansas, but will make it all the way to LA. The real impact of this new design will be in that growing number of tiny new wireless portables like PDAs and ultralight laptops. The breakthrough combination of long battery life, computing power and ultralight weight may make these products irresistible.

**Broadband** has come to Franklin. Every month, new broadband connections find their way into more club members' computers. How long before this becomes the "standard"? When that happens, how will Web content change and how will e-commerce take advantage of it? Most futurists agree that the Internet is still in its infancy; will this change bring on its adolescence?

Every year, thousands of new products are introduced at Comdex. Most of these products won't be around in a couple of years. But there are always products that set the trends and spark innovation. They are worth looking for.

## Advanced System Care Free V3— Improve PC Performance

by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Radio Show Host

One of the most frequently asked questions on my weekly radio show (KLVI 560AM, Mondays, 6–7pm) has to do with improving the performance of a sluggish computer. One of the utilities I most recommended was the free version of IObit's Advanced Windows Care—Personal Edition, version 2. Recently IObit released an upgraded and updated utility renamed Advanced System Care Free V3, which IObit claims has over 10,000 improvements and updates. Being a fan of system improvement utilities, I had to download and install this new version, replacing the older version 2 that I have been happily using for about the past 18 months.

Going to the IObit website at [www.iobit.com](http://www.iobit.com), and downloading the new software was an easy experience, as I was given the choice of multiple download sites. I selected one of the Texas mirrors of MajorGeeks, a major download service, where the download counter of this new version indicates that over 1.5 million copies of this new version 3 have been downloaded from MajorGeeks alone. The download was about 7.6 MB in size, and downloaded remarkably fast for a download that size, to the credit of the bandwidth available at the Texas MajorGeeks website. Once downloaded, I clicked on the file to install it, and it recognized my older version 2, which it replaced. I was given the choice of language, and "skin" (background color scheme), and selected the white (really a soft light blue) as the easiest to read.

Once the install was complete, I chose to run the program. I was displayed a clean fresh graphical interface that on the left of the window gave the choices

"Maintain Windows," "Diagnose System," "Utilities" and "Home." Whichever icon is selected opens the right half of the window. For my first test of the software, I chose to Maintain Windows. I was offered a checkbox selection of "Spyware Removal," "Registry Fix," "Privacy Sweep" and "Junk Files Clean." I selected all of them and clicked on "Scan." In just a few minutes, Advanced System Care Free V3 detected 20 items it labeled as spyware (all were tracking cookies), 66 correctable errors in my registry, 29 privacy issues, and 394 MB of junk files that could be deleted. I prefer to not blindly follow what is found, so I clicked on each of the findings to review what was found. After some minor tweaking, I decided to accept what was found, and clicked on the "Repair" icon. In just seconds, all of the corrections and deletions were carried out.

Selecting the "Diagnose System" icon, I was given the now familiar check boxes for "System Optimization," "Security Defense," "Disk Defragment" and "Security Analyzer." I checked all except Disk Defragment, as I had just recently defragged my hard drive using IObit's free standing and excellent disk defragmentation utility, and wanted to save the time, despite IObit's claim that the integral defragmentation utility is up to 10 times faster than some other competing products. System Optimization detected about two dozen "system bottlenecks" and corrected the system settings to improve performance. The Security Defense feature can immunize the computer against thousands of malicious websites, illicit tracking cookies, browser hijackers, dialers and other malicious

software. Security Analyzer examines running programs to detect and disable any malware that may be currently running on the computer.

The Utilities selection offers 20 distinct utilities to tune-up the computer and its applications; examine the security settings and backup critical system files and settings; and "Admin Tools" which includes an uninstall utility, as well as my personal favorite, a startup manager to identify and control what programs startup when the computer is booted. By cleaning up the startup, the computer will run faster, boot quicker, and have fewer conflicts, because fewer programs will be automatically loaded. Under the Tune Up tab, I found that Firefox (my preferred browser) can be optimized for maximum performance.

The "Home" icon displays program version, database updates, most recent scan, user account (free or paid "Professional" account), and the cumulative results of the scans that had been performed. The center "Care" icon automatically runs the system optimization utilities, as a one-click performance improvement function.

As is to be expected, IObit has a comparison chart that compares the features of Advanced System Care Free V3 with its software competitors, both free and commercial. The features listed on the chart are "All-in-one secure, repair, clean and optimize," "Optimize and speed up PC and Internet," "Complete registry care," "Security features," "1-click solution" and "Price." This software is compared to seven major competitors (one free and six commercial), and comes out

(see *IObit* on page 10)

# Let Me Count the Ways I Like Linux

by Kerry Miller, a member of the Front Range PCUG, CO. [www.frpcug.org](http://www.frpcug.org)

I used to use Microsoft Windows up to Windows 98. I then switched to Windows NT in a dual boot system with Linux. However, when I went to boot NT one more time and NT gave me a message to the effect of "I'm sick, fix me," I said goodbye to Windows, and Linux has been my main operating system since. I found Linux applications to match all my user data. I was able to move all that data from the NT file system (NTFS) to the earlier Windows file system (FAT). From there I copied all the data into the ext2 file system, which was used by Linux at the time.

Now let me count the ways I like Linux:

1. Linux resembled the HP-UX operating system ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HP-UX](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HP-UX)) I was using at work. This made going between work and home easier.
2. The roots of the Linux operating system go back to the late 1980's. By the time I decided to switch to Linux, it was a viable (if little known) multi-user, multi-tasking operating system for personal computers. That meant I could establish more than one user for my PC and run multiple programs simultaneously—I was not restricted to either the Windows or MAC operating systems for those PC capabilities. And, of course, Linux was (and still is) free.
3. Linux comes with a distribution of the X windows protocol produced by an international consortium. To understand this capability, think of it as "...providing the basic framework for building Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs), and moving windows on the screen and interacting with a mouse and/or keyboard." (extracted from

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X\\_windows](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X_windows)). Because this capability was (and is) not built into the operating system, it provides greatly enhanced flexibility for anyone creating Linux applications.

4. For those familiar with the Windows and MAC operating systems, it is surprising to realize that the software that creates what you see as the "desktop" can actually be a separate application program. I use the GNOME desktop together with X windows. This desktop (one of several that can be used with Linux) allows me to use a number of different screens and switch between them as I wish. This allows me to open an application on one screen and switch to a different screen to open another application. From [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNOME](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNOME): "The GNOME project puts heavy emphasis on simplicity, usability, and making things 'just work....'"

5. There are a wide range of user applications available, as well as tools to write your own applications.

6. Linux has (and has had for some time) a reputation for stability. The operating system doesn't crash unless the user does something to make it crash. Around 1997 (about the time I decided to change to the Linux operating system) I read an article (in a Linux magazine) professing to use two computers as near identical as production processes allow. They loaded one computer with Microsoft Windows and loaded the second computer with Linux. They ran similar benchmark programs on both computers. The machine loaded with Microsoft operating system crashed in a short time. The machine loaded with Linux continued to run for as long as the comparison experiment was set to run.

(see *Linux* on page 10)



**SMOKY MOUNTAIN**  
INTERNET SERVICES, INC.  
BY SMS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dial Up Internet</li> <li>• E-Mail Accounts</li> <li>• No Busy Signals</li> <li>• Business Solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web Hosting</li> <li>• Consultation</li> <li>• Tech Support</li> <li>• Internet Marketing</li> </ul>
--	---

**Telephone: 828-349-9541**  
**Toll Free: 866-697-6638 (mysmnet)**  
**Fax: 828-349-4672**  
**[www.smnet.net](http://www.smnet.net)**

**SERVING ALL OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA**

## The Deals Guy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group



### New Product From Diskeeper

Ms. Teal Thompson, Director of Public Relations, sent me the specifications and pricing for Diskeeper 2009 (just released). Diskeeper has always been a superb product.

“New Features List:

- *“Improved Trialware:* Trialware will now take an analysis of the volume(s) “before” and “after” initial installation. A comparison report is then generated, demonstrating improve conditions.
- *“Improved InvisiTasking:* The new, more assertive InvisiTasking can now operate in competitive environments, in conjunction with other always-on/idle-time tasks that run at lowest priority while still guaranteeing completely invisible, zero-overhead, operations.
- *“IPv6 (Internet Protocol version 6):* Diskeeper 2009 now fully supports communication, such as remote management on native IPv6 networks.
- *“Improved Free Space Consolidation:* About 90% of the available free space will now be grouped into less than a dozen free space segments. This will increase file *write* performance.

“About *InvisiTasking*—Instead of the operating system scheduler allocating the entire computer system to each process, one at a time, InvisiTasking empowers the system to allocate resources (CPU, memory, disk and network allowing overlapping usage of separate resources, not just reducing system overhead, but eliminating it altogether.

“*InvisiTasking is* what makes Diskeeper defrag in real time with zero overhead. Systems simply run fast, operate at peak and are reliable, constantly. The drives are *always* optimally maintained. (Check their website for further information.)

“The new Diskeeper 2009 is now available as a bundle with the new HyperFast SSD optimization product. *“HyperFast™* Solid State drives (SSDs) promise users a faster and better experience than conventional hard disk drives (HDD). However, Microsoft® Windows® is not optimized for NAND Flash as a principal storage device, such as with SSDs. The result is that, over time, customers of systems with SSDs will experience a very noticeable and dramatic deterioration (up to 80%), to the degree that their computers operate much slower than they would with a hard disk. The new HyperFast feature bundled with Diskeeper 2009 is specifically designed to eliminate performance degradation, and restore performance to like-new conditions.”

Special pricing only applies on multiple purchases.

Diskeeper 2009 Home: ESD \$29.95, 2-pack \$44.95, 3-pack \$54.95, 5-pack \$89.95.

Diskeeper 2009 Professional: ESD \$59.95, 2-pack \$89.95, 3-pack \$149.95, 5-pack \$269.75.

Order through their online store at [tinyurl.com/yooayx](http://tinyurl.com/yooayx).

**Want A DVD Creator?** Note: *I have not actually tried this product.* ZC Software has released ZC DVD Creator Platinum V. 6.2.2, a new

version of ZC DVD creator software that converts almost any video source to burn on a DVD directly without having to store it on a hard drive. ZC DVD Creator Platinum lets users customize their menu templates to match the user’s style, giving the movie a polished look. The software will edit, author and burn all DVD formats ever known. With ZC DVD Creator Platinum, it is possible to easily create personal DVDs.

ZC DVD Creator Platinum supports all known video source formats, such as AVI, DIVX, XVID, RM, RMVB, MPEG, MPG, VCD, SVCD, WMV, ASF, ASX, SWF, MOV/DAT, FLV (Flash Video), 3GP (3gpp, 3gp, 3gp2), MP4 (mp4, mpeg4), Nullsoft Video (NSV), AVS, Decrypted DVD File (VOB), MKV, DV video, mts, and m2ts. Also, the user has new menu template themes that can easily customize the new Hollywood-style DVD menus. It’s possible to trim and split-cut the videos, specify the DVD background music and images, edit the DVD Menu short description and preview the video file.

The video encoder guarantees the best DVD picture quality within one hour. If Nero is installed, the software automatically selects Nero as the default burning engine. ZC DVD Creator Platinum supports wide screens (16:9) as well as standard TV screens (4:3). It also supports both NTSC and PAL TV systems. The advanced Dolby Digital audio adds theater-quality sound. The software includes automatic matching of a broad range of DVD-R/RW and DVD+R/RW burners. The user can burn a DVD Movie image file placed on a hard disc to a

(see *Deals Guy* on page 10)

# Moving on to Vista, Part 1 I

by Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, WA, [www.fapcug.org](http://www.fapcug.org)

One of Vista's disk management systems that is new to me, is a dynamic disk and the ability to extend a volume. Suppose you have a volume or folder on your hard drive called Pictures for your photographs. If you run out of space on your hard drive, but you have space available on another hard drive installed on your PC, you can extend your Picture volume onto that drive to make it bigger. There are two limitations to this process. First, you cannot reverse the process. Second, once created, you cannot remove the space you've used on the second disk to reduce the size of the volume. The only way you can do this is to create a new volume on one of your drives, copy all of the contents of the spanned volume to it and then delete the spanned volume. The other limitation is you cannot extend the Windows System volume.

I'm not really sure how I would use this feature. My inclination is to create new volumes and not try to span a volume across two hard drives. Perhaps when working with video files, which can consume enormous amounts of space, this might be a useful feature.

How often do you start an operation on your computer which opens a dialog box on the desktop that requires you to click on "OK"? So you move your mouse to put the pointer on the "OK" box and click on it. You probably do this many times in a day. Did you know that there is a setting to automatically move your mouse pointer to the OK button so that all you have to do is click on it? Here's how you can configure Windows Vista to do this.

First, click on the "Start" button and then the "Control Panel." Under the "Hardware and Sound" entry in the "Control Panel" box, click on "Mouse." The "Mouse Properties" box will open. Click on "Pointer Options." Locate "Snap To" and click to create a check mark to activate "Automatically move pointer to the default button in a dialog box."

While you're looking at the "Pointer Options" box, consider the next option line, "Display pointer trails." If you occasionally have trouble locating the mouse pointer on the desktop, consider this option. Experiment with the length of the pointer trail setting. If you don't like it, turn it off.

On a slightly different topic, let's talk about shortcuts. Many application programs create a shortcut on

your desktop when you install the program. They're a convenient way to start a program without have to go to the Start menu. There are other ways to use shortcuts, too. Suppose you have a spreadsheet or genealogy file that you frequently update. Locate the file with Windows Explorer, right-click on the file name, scroll down the pop-up menu to where it says "Create Shortcut," and click on it. Now, before you close the Windows Explorer window, locate the new shortcut and drag it to your desktop. Because Windows (XP as well as Vista) associates application programs with certain type of files (i.e., Windows Excel with spreadsheets), when you click on the file shortcut, the application will start and open the file.

(see *Vista* on page 11)

Dnet's Dial-Up Service is \$19.95/month or \$199.50/year

**Fastlane DSL**  
POWERED BY DNET INTERNET SERVICES

High Speed Internet PLUS Dnet's Added Services:

- Pornographic Website Filtering
- Email Virus Protection
- Spam Reduction

Fulfilling your need for **speed**

Fastlane DSL Packages	
768 Kbs/128 Kbs	= \$24.95
Up To 1.5 Mbs/384 Kbs	= \$44.95
3.0 Mbs/768 Kbs	= \$59.95

\*Not including ISP and applicable taxes

visit [dsl.dnet.net](http://dsl.dnet.net) • 349-3638

# Wacom Intuos3 Writing Tablet

Reviewed by Jerry Goldstein, Vice President,  
PCUG of Connecticut, [www.fpcug-ct.org](http://www.fpcug-ct.org)



Tabula rasa (blank slate) has new meaning when you hold a pen to a writing tablet. Your creativity expands. After the stilted motions of a mouse, you get free flowing precision to transfer your thoughts to the screen when you use a writing tablet and pen. For graphic work and photo editing, the writing tablet is as invaluable as the palette is to an artist.

Writing tablets, aka digitizing, drawing or graphic tablets have been around since 1888 when the Telautograph was patented. They have come a long way since then with one manufacturer carving out its own market niche. That manufacturer is Wacom. Wacom created and patented passive tablets that use electromagnetic induction technology. This technology uses horizontal and vertical wires that transmit and receive electromagnetic signals between the tablet and a pen or mouse. For the non-scientists amongst us that means the wires let the tablet know where the pen is on or above the tablet and translates that to the screen. The pens are equipped with pressure sensitive technology as well. This allows you to adjust what you do on the screen just by how hard and the angle by which you use the pen. Electromagnetic power also eliminates the need for a battery for the pen.

Wacom patents prevent competitors from using its technology. That has kept Wacom the premier tablet company for artists, graphic designers, architects, and, well... anyone wanting to use a graphic tablet. Other technology for tablets include Active Tablets that use a battery energized battery to transmit a stylus's signal to the tablet, Optical Tablets that use a small digital camera in a pen that

matches patterns on paper, (watch future newsletters for an article on this emerging technology for note-takers), and Capacitive Signal Tablets that use electrostatic signals. Touch screens are also similar to graphic tablets, but you don't get the high level of precision a touch screen gives you. None of these other technologies are as popular as the electromagnetic tablets that Wacom offers.

When buying a writing tablet, you have choices depending on your budget and needs. Budget considerations may override your actual needs, but this is not a time to save. Wacom's basic or amateur level tablets used to be Graphire technology, but Wacom has since introduced a new basic tablet and called it Bamboo. The Graphire line is only available now as a reworked Bluetooth wireless tablet. Between my own research and what I have discussed with others who use graphic tablets, you don't want to buy the entry level Bamboo unless you want to quickly be frustrated by its restrictions. Intuos is much more sensitive, allowing precision detail in your work that is sorely missing in the Bamboo level tablet. I'm not saying that the Bamboo is a bad product for the money. It just isn't enough for most users' needs. You will pay almost double for the Intuos over the Bamboo. It is worth it.

Part of the value in buying a writing tablet is the bundled software that usually comes with your purchase. Wacom offers Adobe Photoshop Elements, Corel Painter Essential, Nik Color Efex and Wacom Brushes with the Intuos tablet. Separately this software would cost you some \$200. It comes free with your Wacom

tablet. Adobe Photoshop Elements is the basic level version of the well-known digital photo editing software.

Corel Painter is used to turn your photos into paintings, and Nik Color Efex applies lighting filters to your photos. Wacom Brushes customizes the brushes used with Photoshop. When I researched purchasing a tablet, I found a wide difference in what was being bundled with the offered tablet depending on the seller. Be careful what you are buying, as what seems like a good deal could be a reseller offering older product with outdated software.

The Wacom tablet comes in a variety of sizes. Wacom provided me with the 6"×11" size tablet (about \$370) to review based on my working with dual monitors. When buying a tablet, you want to buy the largest one that fits your budget. Stretching your budget for a bigger size will benefit you greatly later. The tablet space translates to the work you are doing. Precision is made easier when you are working on a larger tablet that understands minute motions. You can adapt a smaller tablet to work in tighter areas, but that requires extra work which gets tedious. If you are working with only one monitor, the 6×8 tablet is your best buy.

The tablet itself defaults as matching your monitor screen for size. When you reach the edge of the tablet surface, you are also at the edge of the monitor. For dual monitors, the tablet moves smoothly across the monitors as if they are one. The tablet divides itself in half so you work on both monitors like

(see *Wacom* on page 11)

# Traveling Then and Now— “Technically” Speaking

by Gregory West, Editor for the Sarnia Computer  
Users' Group [SCUG], Canada, [www.scug.ca](http://www.scug.ca)

(This article was originally published in Sarnia's *First Monday* magazine, August 2008 issue)

In 1974, Richard Nixon was the first US President forced to resign, while gasoline pricing rose to a whopping 55 cents a gallon US (14.5 cents a liter). They claim the reason was that “gasoline shortages and price increases throughout the world help to cause problems in most of the western worlds’ economies” ([www.thepeoplehistory.com](http://www.thepeoplehistory.com)).

Sound familiar? What isn't familiar is the technology that accompanies us on vacations.

I remember in 1974 driving to Fort Wilderness Disney World, Florida in a Volkswagen van built into a home-made camper, all decked out with plywood beds and a Coleman cooler for a fridge with a never-ending request for ice. CAA supplied the triptik maps that marked out the route and the construction sections of the highway. We had the best of the best for navigating the trip. As well, we had a brand new Instamatic camera with 7 rolls of 126 film that cost us a small fortune. Our son, four years old, rode a small tricycle back and forth inside the van to while away the hours and hours of monotonous driving as seatbelt legislation was non-existent.

Today, we still face the gas increase excuses and we are well aware of the price of a liter of gasoline today. In that regard, nothing has really changed, only the numbers and the fact that we are all buckled into our seats. Although, one thing that has changed for travelers in 2008: “tech toys,” they have now become a

“must have” for every family that does ground travel on vacations.

Our kids have been replaced by grandkids and the Volkswagen homemade camper van is long gone. People today are now hauling RVs of all sorts that host most of the comforts of home.

The CAA maps and my son's tricycle have been replaced by the latest technical and computer gadgets. Let's have a peek at how technology has changed road travel, some 34 years later.

Kids today are buckled tightly into the back seats as airbag protection in the front restricts them to the back seats only. While in the back seat they have the option of viewing DVD movies through a DVD player onto 2 separate monitors that attach to the head rests of both front seats. They listen to the movies via the vehicle stereo system or individual headphones. When they tire of the movies they can play video games by switching over to their PSP or a PS2 that plugs through the inverter. Of course there is always travel bingo if the tech stuff gets boring, but we won't hold our breath on that one.

For the driver and co-pilot there is a GPS display with voice directions, saving the hassle of trying to read the fine print on wrinkled and torn maps. Many travelers bring along laptops while traveling, as their uses are many. For example, you can record your trip's information, download pictures and videos from digital cameras. The big thing these days with computers is reading digital books, or listening to audio books that have been previously downloaded from the Internet. Of course, when a live Internet connection

becomes available (most RV parks have free Wi-Fi) you can check email, use Skype to call home, and research the places to see, all from your laptop.

The days of praying that there will be a pay phone nearby if we break down are long gone as many people have both a Canadian and American cell phone. For instance, one can purchase a Motorola TracFone that works only in the USA for under \$10 and buy a “pay-as-you-go” card, making long distant calls back home cheaper and giving one more security on the highways in the USA.

Don't leave without your MP3 player. Podcasts of your favorite shows and lectures can be easily downloaded from the Internet. All MP3 players come with headphones that make for easy listening and do not disturb the other passengers or driver.

Walkie talkies are not a new item while on vacation, but the price certainly has come down and the range has expanded greatly. A quick stop in the grocery store for supplies will help you utilize your group to ensure precision targeted shopping whereby we all search out different items and meet at the same cashier, thus saving time. The walkie talkie is also used in many other scenarios for security and locating purposes. These units are a must have for anyone traveling with children.

The Instamatic camera has been replaced by the digital camera, thus allowing people to take hundreds of pictures during a trip without any real cost. If some of the pictures are not that great they are easily deleted and forgotten without the worry of paying for more film.

(see *Traveling* on page 10)

*(IObit—continued from page 4)*

feature rich compared to the competition. To be fair, some of the products listed have features and capabilities not included with Advanced System Care Free V3, but comparing system utilities and clean up programs, this program compares very well.

It is inevitable that users will ask why IObit would give away software this powerful; the reason is that IObit clearly wants the satisfied user to upgrade to the Pro version, which has more features and capabilities, and is currently on sale online for \$19.95 (regularly \$29.95) directly from IObit. The Pro version has additional performance improving features, a deep registry scan that roots out many more useless registry entries (the Pro version detected over 3000 useless registry entries on my computer, compared to only 66 in the free version), additional tune-up features to both improve hardware performance and web speed, and free technical support.

The excellence of Advanced System Care Free V3 has been recognized in the media with several awards, including high ratings from ZDnet, Tucows, Softpedia, Download.com, PC World, PC Magazine, and other publications. Download.com claims that Advanced System Care Free V3 is its number one most downloaded system utility, with about 9.5 million downloads, even though it has only been available for the past several weeks.

For those wanting a powerful and feature rich utility to improve computer performance, the free version of Advanced System Care Free V3 would be a very good choice. For those who want additional features and capability, the Pro version, currently on sale for \$19.95, would be a very good choice.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at iwilsker (at) apcug.net.

*(Linux—continued from page 5)*

7. Many distributions of Linux are as easy, or easier to install than Microsoft Windows.

8. A person can customize and/or build a Linux operating system to meet individual needs.

9. Many distributions of Linux include such primary applications as the Firefox web browser, OpenOffice (an office suite similar to Microsoft Office including word processor, spreadsheet, presentations, etc.), and a number of other "name brand" applications.

10. Linux can be cost free. There are hundreds (or more) of applications written for Linux and there is a growing library of applications.

Microsoft Windows was the new kid on the block at the time I switched to Linux from my point of view and it did *not* do many ordinary things well.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at n0wiq (at) comcast.net.

*(Traveling—continued from page 9)*

An inverter will allow the truck battery to convert power from DC to AC so you can run the laptop while traveling to edit photos, read books, watch movies and connect to Wi-Fi hotspots. This also allows for the use of a PS2 plugged into the truck battery power as if you were at home plugging into a wall outlet. You can even plug in a refrigerated cooler with this inverter, making life just that much easier.

We can only imagine what traveling 34 years from now will be like and what 2042 will offer its road travelers.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at prospector16 (at) gmail.com.

*(Deals Guy—continued from page 6)*

DVD Disk directly without storing them on a hard disc.

ZC DVD Creator Platinum has a friendly and easy to use interface that allows the user to create a DVD movie just by one click. The new version of ZC DVD Creator Platinum has an upgraded video clip edit feature.

ZC DVD Creator Platinum is compatible with all versions of Windows. Ordering the software on a CD-ROM is \$15 USD extra for shipping. Special offers are: ZC DVD Creator Platinum and ZC Video Converter at \$60, ZC DVD Creator Platinum and QR Photo DVD Slideshow at \$60, ZC DVD Ripper and ZC Video Converter at \$65.

By purchasing ZC DVD Creator Platinum, the user gets lifetime FREE Technical Support and FREE upgrades. For firsthand appraisal, a free trial version is available. The user has a 30-day money back guarantee. [www.videoxdvd.com/product.htm](http://www.videoxdvd.com/product.htm).

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my website (most not offering a discount). [www.dealsguy.com](http://www.dealsguy.com). Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, [bobclick@bellsouth.net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net). Editor's note: This column has been edited for space and content considerations.

---

## Directory Updates

See the printed edition.

---

**CDBurnerXP** is a *free* application for burning CDs and DVDs, including Blu-Ray DVDs. Get it from [tinyurl.com/8boxen](http://tinyurl.com/8boxen), or read more about it at [tinyurl.com/9dlz6d](http://tinyurl.com/9dlz6d).

*(Vista—continued from page 7)*

But suppose you can't see your desktop icons and shortcuts because they're hidden by something else? Maybe your Internet browser or email program is running and completely covers your desktop. Let's go back and look at the shortcut on your desktop. Right-click on it. In the window that opens, notice the four tabs at the top. Click on the tab marked "Shortcut." In the middle of the Shortcut menu you'll find something marked "Shortcut key." You'll probably see "None" entered in the box next to it. Click on the box and press and hold down your Ctrl key. In the box you'll now see "Ctrl + Alt + ." While still holding down the Ctrl key, press the the key you want to use to access the shortcut. Now click on the Apply button and then the OK button. Your shortcut key is now set. Just press the three key combination to instantly access your spreadsheet or genealogy file.

Before we leave the topic of shortcuts, I'll just mention that when you open a shortcut's properties window, the first tab is marked "General." If you click on "General," one of the first entries is "Type of File" and "Open with." If you click on the adjacent "Change" button, you'll see a list of possible application programs to access the file. You can select from this list or click on "Browse" to locate another program.

I'm hearing more rumors about Windows 7, but at this point, they are still rumors. One thing seems certain, Windows 7 will have more in common with Windows Vista than Windows XP. Whatever you learn about Windows Vista should help you when you upgrade to the next version of Windows.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at [nctahfest\(at\)msn.com](mailto:nctahfest(at)msn.com).

*(Wacom—continued from page 8)*

one big surface. The only problem I had with this was that my main monitor sits directly in front of me with the second monitor off to my left and up against the main monitor. This meant the tablet area that I mostly worked on was furthest from me when I worked with the tablet to the side of the keyboard. I found it easier to switch the tablet to work with just one monitor when I was doing quick photo fixes. The tablet comes with two sets of programmable hot keys to make the switch from one monitor to two relatively easy. When I wanted to work in-depth with the tablet, I found the extra sized tablet came in handy and made editing easier. The tablet is also light and sturdy enough to sit comfortably in your lap for those long editing sessions.

The tablet's installation is mostly plug and play, easy and quick. I say mostly because of the learning curve on the bundled software. The tablet itself is almost instantly understandable and useable. The software bundle is where the learning curve comes in. You'll have to do a lot of experimenting and manual reading to get the most out of the tablet software.

You will also want to experiment with the 1024 levels of tip and erasure pressure sensitivity that you get in the Intuos Grip Pen. As mentioned before, the Intuos pen is battery free. That lightens the pen and avoids problems with using a pen with weak batteries. I found the pen easy to hold and maneuver around the tablet. The pen comes with a holder that allows you to keep track of where you put it between uses. It also includes a handy electronic eraser for easy fixes. I have not used the pen long enough to notice, but other reviews I read indicate that the nibs on the pen do wear down with use. The pen nibs are replaceable. The pen is so sensitive that it has tilt sensitivity like a real pen or brush.

A nice touch to the tablet are the 2 touch strips placed strategically on the tablets. They made it easy to scroll and zoom the work for easier editing. The tablet also comes with a five button scrolling mouse that is ball and optics free. It works off the tablet's surface so no additional USB plugs are used for the mouse base. I did find it somewhat annoying using the tablet mouse as my sole mouse. You are restricted to the active tablet surface with the tablet mouse. I often found myself with a mouse that was not reacting to my motions when I went outside the tablet sensitivity surface. The tablet surface has a large non-sensitive area that provides a great hand rest when working, but no mouse control. It was distracting when doing general computer work, like writing this article, and using the tablet's mouse. For this reason I keep my old mouse handy for non-tablet work.

When buying an Intuos level writing tablet, you may find it necessary to go to the store's website to find your tablet. Retailers cannot afford to stock a wide variety of tablets in each of its stores. You probably won't even find a store display tablet for you to try out before you buy. Your research is going to be mostly based on the reviews you find, of which there are many.

All in all, I found the Wacom Intuos3 tablet to be a great addition to my computer repertoire. As regular readers know, I love making home videos and mixing up photos with my PowerPoint presentations. The tablet makes my prep work easier and more comfortable. I definitely recommend the Wacom Intuos tablet as part of your photo editing or graphic work solution.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at [attygoldstein.com](mailto:attygoldstein.com).

# Macon Users Group

93 Geneva Circle  
Franklin, NC 28734

Affix  
First Class  
Postage

FIRST CLASS • DATED MATERIAL



## December's Door Prize Winners



If you have an idea for a program or are willing to give one, contact any member of the Board. Your input and help are always appreciated.



Go to our website to download the *MUG Monitor* as a PDF file.

For even more great computer articles, download this month's *MUG Monitor Extra!*