



The PULP

HUGE this month:

General Meeting: Dec. 18th

Gift suggestions for the late shopping Geek

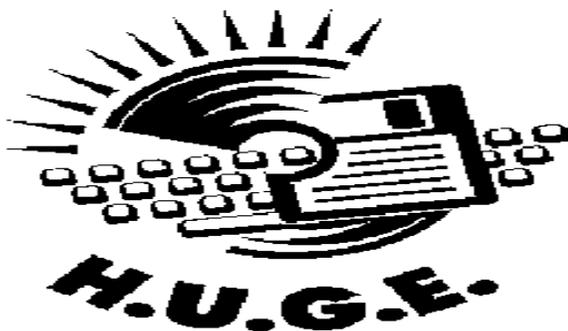
See you there!

East Hartford Public Library
Main St. & Central Ave., E. Hartford, CT.

Q&A Session: 7:00PM–7:30PM
Meeting starts at: 7:30PM

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MEETING LOCATIONS
East Hartford Public
Library
Main & Central Avenue
in the Lion's Room
(downstairs)

Editor's Corner

It's that time of year, the annual geek gift guide. For January we need a volunteer to lead the meeting, I have a conflict. February will be based on a suggestion by Bob Bonato, a guide to quick selection of software to try out. The source could be the App store, CNet, Mac/PCworld or a simple web search.

There is a new movie based on (non-real) video game character. "Wreck-it Ralph" pays homage to video games much like "Toy Story" & "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?". To make the movie more interesting, the challenge is to find & name the real video game references in the film.

In the news: Duke University researchers have created an invisibility cloak, a la Harry Potter. Actually it can only hide centimeter sized objects in the microwave portion of the spectrum.

If you have a spare \$20,000 to spend, LG has an Ultra HD 84" TV with a resolution of at least 3840 pixels by 2160 pixels.

Intel is working on a 48-core chip for smartphones & tablets. They are also working on boosting performance of SSDs.

In the June, 2011 PULP I noted that PCMag was conducting a speedtest of the internet in conjunction with Speedtest.net. The results are in and published. The good news is that internet access speed in the US has improved from the prior survey, the bad news is that we have the 27th fastest service in the world.

PCWorld recently published the results of a survey of 63,000 people on the reliability, satisfaction, and service with their laptops. The winner in all three categories; Apple MacBook.

NASA has been modeling/simulating/researching the possibility of a warp drive spaceship. It appears to be possible and at a reasonable requirement. On the other hand, the research also shows an ability to devastate an entire star system upon arrival.

Have you ever had the feeling that the store mannequin was watching you as you walked through the store. Well you may be right. An Italian company sells a mannequin called the EyeSee that has a camera built into one of its eyes that sends the data into facial recognition software that can tell the age, gender and race of people walking by.

Still in the area of paranoia, Samsung (and some Dell) printers sold before 10/31/2012, contain a hardcoded backdoor account.

Stuart Rabinowitz, Editor-in-Chief

Here is the appropriate copyright citation and a link to the full text. articles from "Tidbits"

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A Little Computer Quiz

by Stuart Rabinowitz

The trivia and minutiae of the computer related world. The answers will appear next month or you can submit an answer sheet at the General Meeting. Good Luck.

- 1 At one time there was a floppy disk drive (code) named after Lesley Hornby, can you name the computer that used them?
- 2 What was the official name and capacity?
- 3 What was unusual about the design?
- 4 What was the original storage device for the Apple II?
- 5 Believe it or not, there is a company that tracks text messaging in the US. Based on their research they have determined how many text messages the average user sends in a month. Want to guess what the monthly average was in the second and third quarters of this year (2012)?

Answers to November, 2012 Quiz

- 1 Wendy Southgate holds a Google record, what is it?
A She has appeared in Google Street View 43 (documented) times. BTW, she is from Suffolk, UK and was walking her dog in 2010
- 2 Want to take a guess as to the record for the most people assembling the most computers at the same time?
A In 2003 1912 people assembled 961 PCs in about an hour
- 3 Can you name the world's largest video arcade?
A Fairly closely you can go to FunSport in Weirs Beach, NH, which has over 500 different machines
- 4 Can you name the largest (working) cell phone?
A There is an oversized Samsung SCH-r450. It measures 15x13x3 feet and weighs 350 lbs.
- 5 While not technically computer related, can you name the world's most expensive camera?
A A Leica Series-0 from 1923 recently sold at auction for \$2.8 million. It's one of only 12 left.





“And the Oscar Goes To . . .” - Making a Good Video
By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood
User Group, CA
April 2012 issue, Drive Light
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I've discovered it is a lot harder to make a good video than it is to take a good photograph. It is definitely a lot more work.

For the most part, the majority of the effort involved in taking a good photograph occurs before the picture is taken. While some augmentation and enhancement can occur after the exposure, through the marvels of digital photo editing, much of the merit of a photo comes from basics like subject, composition, focus and lighting. While photo editing software can enhance a photo, perhaps making a good picture great, it can only go so far in fixing a poor photograph.

In making a great video, once you have captured the action, your work typically has only begun. In spite of all the star-centric hoopla surrounding the Academy Awards, have you ever noticed that the majority of the awards don't go to performers, but to creators.

There are only a few categories of awards given to actors and actresses. The majority go to writers, directors, film editors, cinematographers and designers of sound, sets, costumes and effects. In a lot of movies made today, most of the work is done after the filming is over. The difference between raw footage and polished final product is much greater for video than for still photography, indicative of the amount of post processing work usually required. As with photography, however, it is still hard to turn poor exposures into a good final product.

I got my first still camera in 3rd grade, taking black and white film photos. In the 40-something years since, I learned to take decent photos (at least by my standards) using mostly slide film, where there was no chance for corrections after the exposure. I've had a digital camera for eleven years, but still don't typically edit or enhance my pictures after taking them. I've spent more time making digital corrections on the slides I have digitized, to fix the effects of film aging and imperfections, than on any of my recent digital photos.

Growing up, my family never had a movie camera. A neighbor friend my age got access to their family's old 8

mm movie camera, and he and I made a two-reel epic titled “The History of Aviation”. Through careful planning and filming, we came up with a pretty impressive movie for a couple of grade school kids, though we probably destroyed most of our collections of model airplanes in the process (in addition to scorching the underside of his family's metal patio cover during our “reenactment” of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima). I'd love to see that film again, if it still exists.

When my wife and I had kids of our own, my in-laws gave us one of the early shoulder-mounted video cameras (it was so big and heavy, you had to rest it on your shoulder), which recorded directly on VHS tape cartridges.

It recorded some of the early moments in our children's lives, but being analog tape, the results were of mixed quality and could not be edited. We still have some of those 20-year-old tapes around (we should digitize them), but unfortunately I think a few were taped over at some time in the past. Later, we bought a smaller handheld camcorder, which used the smaller VHS-C tapes and was more convenient to take on family outings. These too would not be editable unless digitized.

My very first digital camera had a primitive video capture capability of 320 x 240 with no audio, which was about half the 704 x 480 equivalent resolution of the camcorder NTSC video, but was much more convenient to carry. It still resulted in only video snippets of our lives being captured. Even after graduating in 2007 to a new digital camera with 640 x 480 video and sound, I only shot occasional video clips, and never tried to find a way to edit and combine them into a coherent video feature.

For my birthday late last year, my wife surprised me with a Panasonic SD40 HD video camcorder. It records HD video (1920 x 1080) in the AVCHD (Advanced Video Coding High Definition) file format. Depending on the card size, it can store hours of video on an internal SDHC memory card.

One of the first things I learned about shooting



HD video with this camcorder is that I'm going to need more hard drives. I think I shoot a lot of digital photos, sometimes hundreds per month. Using my 12 Megapixel camera, this averages 5 MB per photo, I'm generating around 0.5 GB of new photos per month (assuming 100 photos), or 6 GB per year. I first used my new camcorder in earnest during family festivities on Christmas Day, and managed to fill up the 8 GB SD card that came with the camcorder that day.

If I hold my filming down to 16 GB of video per month, that means I'll generate nearly 200 GB of video data every year. How am I going to store it all?

The second thing I learned about shooting HD video is that not every computer can easily play it. I normally use my XP laptop PC to copy my still photos from memory cards to hard drive and to view them, so I plugged in the SDHC card from the camcorder. Unfortunately, I could not view the .MTS AVCHD video files with any program on that computer. When I put the SD card in my wife's new Windows 7 laptop, I was able to play the files with Media Player. Score another one for Windows 7.

To make the 45 minute video on computer upgrading that was shown at our meeting last month, I started by shooting 51 video segments, totaling 5.7 GB. These included the introductions and descriptions I gave, the scenes of dis-assembly and modification of the computer, and the screen shots of the computer showing the results. A tripod proved essential in filming the scenes where I was talking, as I had to work with a film crew of only one (me). The camcorder's display can be flipped around to allow the subject of the video to see how they look onscreen. The tripod was also used in most of the shots where I was working on the computer, since it usually took two hands to do the work. I would set up the tripod and camcorder to give a good view of the hardware, and then start filming. I was not watching what was being filmed, but just made sure my activities stayed within what I understood was the field of view.

One of the filming mistakes I made was in sometimes not allowing enough "lead in" and "lead out" time at the beginning and end of the scenes. Excess footage can be trimmed, but you can't easily make

more footage after filming is done.

I started shooting scenes before determining what program I would be using to edit the video, so I was not sure what editing capabilities I could count on. I was not sure the program I would use could add titles, so I printed titles on paper and held them up in front of the camcorder. I later found titles could be added using software, but not with the flexibility of my paper signs.

Although I had a couple of commercial video editing software packages available to install, I decided to initially try the editing software that came with the camcorder, Panasonic's HD Writer LE 1.0. I installed it on my wife's laptop to make sure I'd have enough horsepower to do the video editing quickly.

I found the software would not recognize the raw video files I had copied from the SD memory card to the computer's hard drive. To use the captured video with this program, I had to connect the camcorder to the PC with the provided USB adapter cable and download the files from the camcorder through the program. The program had all the basic features I had seen in other video editing software. It allowed clips to be combined on a timeline, with a number of choices for transitions between scenes. Scenes could be edited for length, and basic titles could be added.

I chose the least flashy transitions and put the video segments together one by one. Because of the brief lead-ins I had shot, I could not add much in the way of additional titles, but fortunately the signs I had filmed worked well. I was concerned that 45 minutes might be too long without a break, so I split the video into two 22 minute segments, allowing an intermission in between.

The program could convert the finished video to several different resolutions on DVD or Blu-Ray discs for playing on home players or computers.

I'll try using one of my fancier video editing programs with this camcorder one day, but I found the Panasonic-provided software could turn out a good video.

cont. on pg. 8



The Gadget Corner
Shopping Web Site Experiences
By Steve Baer, Featured Writer, Hilton Head
Island Computer Club, SC
February 2012 issue, Island Computing
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There is still no new tablet at gadget central. I'm still waiting for a good ice cream Sandwich device like the new Asus Transformer Prime. But, with the holidays over, I had a chance to reflect with Mrs. Gadget about our recent web shopping experiences.

This was stimulated by a frustrating session with hotels.com, where I searched for things, made a selection, entered credit card data and then received an email back from them first saying the location was sold out at that date, and then a few minutes later saying there had been a computer error.

I contrast that with my amazon.com experiences where they know who I am, offer reviews of products, show what others bought that looked at this type of product, and execute flawlessly. Even a recent event in buying an old book (from a sub-merchant) that arrived smelling of cigarette smoke, resulted in an immediate refund.

Based on the above, there seem to clearly be rankings in the quality of web shopping sites, just as there re for everything else. Below are a few of our family experiences and approximate ratings. Hopefully, others will pass along their experiences.

A - Very Good (Favorites I would use again)
Amazon.com - The standard to which all should aspire. Good in all aspects: search, reviews, pricing, execution, problem resolution.

Shoemall.com - Quite good in search, selection and execution.

Buy.com - Quite good in execution and price. But sometimes the price is not as low as the competition.

Target.com - Good execution.

Partsexpress.com - Good for electronics and home theater parts, including the obscure. Good search, review, and return policy. Shipping may be a bit high at times.

Nordstroms.com - Good for clothing. Free shipping and returns. No minimum purchase required. Should prices go down after purchase of an item, a simple phone call to customer service and a credit for the difference is issued to the customer.

Potterybarn.com - Good for home accessories. Items arrive well boxed and in a timely fashion.

Crateandbarrel.com - Excellent site for kitchen utensils, dishes, cookware and bake ware. Items arrive well boxed and in a timely fashion.

Talbots.com - Good for women's clothing. Approximately once a month they have free shipping with no minimum purchase required for 24 hours but it is never advertised. One must visit the website to find out.

Belks.com - Complete department store. A gift for someone else was ordered. Item was lost and never received by recipient. Customer Service refunded money, no questions asked. They have come a long way in the past few years.

Kayak.com - I use this site only to get an idea of the range of airline prices and schedules. Usually going directly to the airline site provides slightly lower prices.

B - Medium (Worth a try, if nothing better around)

Bedbathandbeyond.com - Interesting website for home accessories. During "check out" an error was made but unfortunately the software was not specific enough to explain the problem. Purchase had to be completed via phone.

C - Needs Improvement (Not worth another visit, unless I have no other choices)

Hotels.com - Posted inventory not as good as that of individual hotel sites.

Homedepot.com and Lowes.com - Both seem designed

cont. on pg. 8



Is there such a thing as streaming video on an iPad?

Story by Linda Gonse, Editor / Webmaster, Orange County PC Users' Group, CA
Research by Jon Jones, Newsletter, North Coast Mac User Group, CA
September 2011 issue, nibbles & bits
www.orcopug.org / www.ncmug.org
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Recently an iPhone Life blog touted Boxee for the iPad. The headline read, "Boxee for iPad — free app lets you watch free streaming."

For people who wonder what streaming actually is, a definition from UnifiedCommunications.com, <http://bit.ly/nXSsul>, explains it simply. "Streaming video is content sent in compressed form over the Internet and displayed by the viewer in real time. With streaming video or streaming media, a Web user does not have to wait to download a file to play it. Instead, the media is sent in a continuous stream of data and is played as it arrives."

The iPhone Life blogger, Jim Karpen, said "I really enjoy Boxee's free streaming video service. I have a laptop connected to my HDTV and pretty much exclusively watch streaming video from Boxee: The Daily Show, CNET videos, TV shows, movies. There's a lot of free content, as well as on-demand HD movies from Vudu. And Boxee apps give you access to even more content. Plus, it works with the remote that came with my Mac. Now there's Boxee for iPad (free). It gives you access to featured videos and to any videos that you've saved for later in your regular Boxee account. And it also gives access to videos posted by your friends in Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. In addition, you can use the app to stream any videos to your iPad that

are on your Mac or PC. I highly recommend Boxee service and app."

The headline pointed to the iPad as having the ability to stream video. But, toward the middle of the review a different description of the iPad app is given. It doesn't sound like the streaming video I had in mind from the headline. I don't have an iPad, though.

So, I asked Jon Jones, a member of NCMUG and president of a digital media production facility, what he thought of this new app's claim and the iPad's capability.

Jon is also the proud, happy owner of a new iPad.

Jon said he went through the FAQ on the Boxee site, <http://www.boxee.tv/>, to learn things that weren't indicated in the app's description. "Evidently, the app can operate as a standalone streamer, and while it was intended as an option to stream from your PC content, apparently that part isn't working right," he said.

"Additionally, the current version is getting a ton of 1 star reviews (at iTunes) stating that the audio is not functioning."

Jon downloaded the app from Boxee and set up an account to take a closer look at it on his iPad. He also sent a link to me of a Youtube video demo by its developer, Cord Cutters, so I could see what the app has to offer. (Take a look for yourself at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7OVz84IPS1>)

Jon said, "It works as a standalone app, but is limited on its own. It definitely doesn't let you stream live TV — and I admit, the very basic info from iPhone Life



seemed to indicate that maybe it could...but it can't. When they say 'watching tv on your iPad,' well...it's not really that," he added.

"Basically, the app shows you three rows of aggregation.

"Row 1 lets you set up your app with your social media feeds (Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr). When your feed references a video, they show up in that row.

"Row 2 syncs to your desktop machine, and shows vids tagged in your desktop browser to 'watch later' via the app. They will then show up in the 2nd row.

"Row 3 shows a limited selection of generic content aggregated by the staff at Boxee. I saw a two-minute clip of a Sagan series from NASA TV. The footage looked beautiful. I'm glad it was free.

"Evidently, you can download the Boxee software on your desktop, and although this app cannot sync with it, you can also download something called the Boxee Media Manager that lets you download content to your desktop, and then stream it to your iPad through the Boxee iPad app. In this instance, the iPad is no longer a standalone device, and it still is not playing 'live TV' — which is so far mostly a non-starter in the 'Cord Cuttersphere.'"

With this information, the gleam left my eyes and I realized that this was a "not even ready for Prime Time" app and use for the iPad. But, these answers should be useful to anyone who reads this, because you are bound to see more headlines and apps about streaming video that can, purportedly, be viewed on your iPad.

Don't rush to get this or similar apps, yet.

But, don't lose hope for live streaming on your iPad, either. Jon predicts that changes and innovation by cable companies are coming.

"One of the larger cable carriers in the country recently started porting live TV over mobile networks in recent weeks as a test to see if the infrastructure can handle it," Jon said.

"My guess is that if it retains viability, other carriers will start porting such functionality through their own dedicated apps within the next two years. Then we will start enjoying REAL live TV on our mobile devices. Until then, I think we're limited to 'almost live' streaming content bursts from specific news and entertainment outlets—not quite live tv, but close."

The blog headline that started the questioning! <http://bit.ly/nasKvp>

from pg. 5

Since making a coherent video out of the filmed segments I made was not too difficult, I'll probably try to make similar edited videos for all the events I film.

from pg. 6

to steer you to their local stores as opposed to providing a central place from which to order online.

Remember, these comments are based only on a small sample. Your experience may vary. I thank Mrs. Gadget for her input to this article.



The Trouble with Terabytes

By Diane Fahlbusch, President, ICON PC User Group, NY

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Editor (at) iconpcug.org

Technological advances, different materials and cost efficient manufacturing have made it possible for computers to leap from standard 20 GB hard drives of a decade ago and the 200+ GB drives of yesterday to breaking through the gigabyte ceiling affordably in a relatively short period of time. Now having a 1 terabyte drive is passé as 2 TB, 3 TB and even 4 TB drives are becoming commonplace. However, there are some things to be aware of before making the leap.

No, I will NOT wax poetic about my personal opinion of larger drives, including the “Scarlet O’Hara” mindset of maintenance, indiscriminate saving of files and the time for security scans. (For that you can read “*The Lurking Dangers of Larger Hard Drives*” in the June, 2010 issue of **The ICON Graphic**.) Instead, you will need to consider whether your current computer actually knows what to do with all that storage space.

Not so long ago almost all computer operating systems used the partitioning scheme called the “Master Boot Record” (MBR). Unfortunately, the computer will not be able to recognize anything over 2.2 TB. So that larger drive can be installed, but the additional storage space will be useless. The MBR scheme is common on all Windows operating systems through Windows XP, as well as other operating systems from that time period. Windows Vista and the Mac OS X Leopard ushered in the new GUID partition table (GPT) which allows them to recognize the larger

drives. Windows 7 and Vista users can use the larger drives as SECONDARY drive without worrying about whether it is a 32 bit or 64 bit version. But for anything larger than a 2 TB drive to be used as the PRIMARY drive, the computer MUST be running the 64 bit version of Windows 7 or Vista.

The systems boot-up firmware must be checked as well. There are many computers using a newer operating system and the GPT partition system, but still using the BIOS firmware. This will need to be updated to the new UEFI firmware, which has become the new industry standard. Check with the terabyte drive manufacturer to see if they offer a firmware update. Of course that updated firmware is useless if the motherboard cannot run the firmware, so again, check with the manufacturer’s specifications. Some will work, but you must use a different connection, such as the PCI-Express card slot.

Most newly manufactured computers ARE equipped with 64 bit operating systems, the GPT partition system AND UEFI boot-up firmware. So if you are thinking about running amok in terabyte land, these are some things to know about before upgrading, or buying that new computer. Remember *new* just means that it has not been used by anyone – it does not necessarily mean that it has the latest technology.



PULP Staff	
Editor	Stuart Rabinowitz
Distribution	George Carbonell

Membership: Anyone may become a member. Dues are \$12 per year and include a one-year subscription to The Pulp as well as access to the HUGE Public Domain disk libraries. Meeting topics, times and places can be found on page 1 of this issue.

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December

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