



# Computer Newsletter

Newsletter of The Titusville Computer Club Inc., Titusville FL

October 2011

Volume 26, Issue 10

## From the Prez' Lips ... By Metro Arden, President



**A**lmost every month I reveal some new threat or problem affecting your computer. This month, I would like to talk about some of the fun things you can do with it.

One is playing games, right on the web or downloading and installing them. There are many sites with trial versions that let you get a taste of the action, then, you can purchase the full version if you like it. If you have a short attention span, by the time you finish the trial version, you are ready to move on to something else. So, just remove the game through the Add and Remove program, or most times, they will include a Un-install right in the game.

WildTangentGames.com has a large variety of game types. *RollerCoaster Tycoon 3: Categories: Tycoon, Family, Simulation, Strategy* is a great game if you like to build things. It is a little complicated to get started, but is a great mind exercise in figuring out how it works.

I especially liked the "SIMS CITY" game. As you build a city, you have to plan for electrical and water needs, and a balance of industrial, social, and living space. You also need to put in the proper type of streets and rail and subways. If you plan properly, the city will grow and prosper, but build a lopsided city and it will begin to decay.

"APEZONE.COM" has 'Loco Mogul' where you build and run a Railroad. You mold the land, build the tracks and cities and then operate the train. Here are some of the steps in the game:

- Explore the map and decide where to lay your tracks
- Blow tunnels through mountains
- Chop down trees to bridge rivers
- Flatten hills for hidden surprises
- Buy more powerful locomotives to increase your profits
- Keep the cars moving to their destinations
- Unlock the bonus levels and sandbox mode
- 60-day, No-Questions-Asked, Money-Back Guarantee
- Free access to the latest versions
- And like all ApeZone games ... Endlessly Re-playable

"SMASHINGGAMES.COM" has online 8-Ball Pool, Chess and Checkers. On this site, you play against other people, not the computer, so you pick your level, then challenge others. The last time I

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Titusville Computer Club Web Site - [www.tccweb.us](http://www.tccweb.us)

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# TCC Newsletter

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(No later than night of 1st club meeting of month)

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Club members may advertise computer related items for sale in the club newsletter, without charge. Send info to newsletter editor Terry Tesdall at email: [TerryTesdallSr@yahoo.com](mailto:TerryTesdallSr@yahoo.com)

## From the Prez' Lips ...

(Continued from page 1)

looked, there were 4,022 people online playing Chess. 'Light-Bot' is a neat little game where you plan the steps a Robot takes to turn on lights, about the 10<sup>th</sup> step, it gets really challenging.

"DAILYGAMES.COM" has 27 categories of games, racing, shooting, cards, and logic, are just some of them. You need to sign up for a free membership, usually to be able to remember your score for the next time you play.

Even Aldi, the grocery store, has a game page at "ALDI.US.COM". They have Mah Jong, MarbleMaster, a disappearing marble game, which is very addictive, and the great number game Sudoku. And if you feels a little nuts, you can try Squirrel Nut Game, where you race through the store collecting ( guess what?) nuts.....

There are also all the free sites with books, which can be downloaded and read whenever you get the chance.

Come TAX time, there are free sites to either help you or get the forms done and e-filed.

Basically, using Google, you can find nearly anything your heart desires on the WORLD WIDE WEB.....!

## Demo Meeting Schedule

- October 27, 2011 — Terry Tesdall demos Facebook and xxxxx
- November 24, 2011 — Happy Thanksgiving — NO DEMO MEETING
- December 22, 2011 — Merry Christmas — NO DEMO MEETING

What do YOU want to see?

# Brevard libraries now offer eBooks

Reprinted from Star Advocate, FLORIDA TODAY, August 31, 2011

**B**revard County Library-System's services have expanded, with the addition of eBooks and audiobooks available to download for free from the library-system's website.

Brevard County library cardholders may check out and download digital media 24 hours a day, seven days a week from anywhere, by visiting [www.brev.org](http://www.brev.org).

Users may browse the library's website, check out with a valid library card, and download to PC, Mac, and many mobile devices. Users will need to install free software, depending on their device.

Titles can be enjoyed immediately via iPhone or iPad, or transferred to a variety of devices, including, iPod, Sony Reader and many others.

Some audio titles also can be burned to CD to listen on-the-go. Titles will expire automatically at the end of the 14-day lending period, so there are no late fees.

Library Services Director Cathy Schweinsberg said, "eBooks are becoming more and more popular, as people transition to smartphones and other mobile devices, and it's a great way to always have a book with you."

When a patron visits the website, they log in to the system with their library card number, and then can browse

by category and subcategory, or search for specific books.

Categories include eBook fiction, eBook nonfiction, audiobook fiction, audio book nonfiction, teen eBooks, teen audiobooks, children's eBooks, and children's audiobooks.

Clicking on a book's title brings up a short description of its content, as well as a brief excerpt and reviews.

Upon selecting a book, the patron clicks "Add to Cart" and then is offered the choice of continuing to browse or proceeding to checkout.

A patron may check out only three eBooks at a time. When all selections are added to the cart, the patron then clicks on "Confirm check out" and is taken to the download page. Each eBook is then downloaded separately.



**Shoe**  
By Jeff MacNelly  
By Chris Cassatt, Gary Brookins and Susie MacNelly

Movie Review:  
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This latest science fiction thriller from Hollywood...

is an imaginative mix of several classic sci-fi genres.

It's set on a world in the near future where everyone has mind melded with their iPod, iPhone or iPad.

Even the family pets aren't immune. Dogs get automatically walked by iLeashes...

and cats have their litter boxes continuously cleaned by iScoops.

The Treetops Tattler gives this blockbuster a resounding Five Stars! So, don't miss...

Planet of the Apps.

SHOECOMICS.COM

9/4

## Pimp My Password

By Joel Stein Monday, reprinted from *TIME Magazine*, August 29, 2011

I'm not coming up with a new password. It will not contain a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. My password will be the same one I've always used — with, if you demand it, a number after it. And that number will be zero. Because as important as it is to your website that my password be able to impress other passwords at a password cocktail party, it is more important to me that I be able to remember it. If I were good at memorizing random snippets of information, I would go on *Jeopardy*. I would buy stuff for my wife in the right size.

I use the same password for every web-site, and when I typed it into Gibson Research Corp.'s website to test its strength, I was informed that in a "massive cracking array scenario" my password could be decoded in 37.61 seconds, though probably significantly less time now that I've told Gibson Research my password.

I know there have been a rash of cyberattacks in which passwords have been stolen. In June, the hacking group LulzSec (motto: "Laughing at your security since 2011"; suggested motto: "Laffing © *sp3<sup>llll</sup>9* sinz 4eva") published the names, e-mail addresses, passwords, birthdays and mailing addresses of more than 37,000 Sony customers. In December, a group called Gnosis posted more than 200,000 e-mail addresses and passwords of registered users of the Gawker websites. In apparently every year, Rupert Murdoch's employees broke into everyone's cell phones.

Every time a breach happens, security experts blame the victims. They say we have the passwords of Neanderthals, using only lowercase letters and numbers, idiotically ignoring the language Q\*Bert screamed as he plummeted to his death. People who do security for websites believe it's reasonable for everyone to memorize a different password for each site, change it every few months and make sure it contains Greek letters and in no way relates to our lives or the way humans think. That's because people who do security for websites are nerds. They memorize the names of Tatooine's moons for fun. They don't think about how they're going to feel after their mother dies and every website keeps cheerily asking for her maiden name.

The other problem is that most of the stuff that requires a password is not worth memorizing one for. There's no point

in keeping a random string of symbols in our heads just to listen to alt-country on Pandora or read Justin Bieber's tweets. The only way we're going to spit "\$f8<sup>0</sup>foTg\*5" out of our mouths is if a guy with greasy hair behind a heavy door asks—and the government has made alcohol illegal again.

I took my complaints to Diana Smetters, a software engineer on Google's security team. Smetters has a simple system for her own passwords, which involves writing down the ones she doesn't use regularly and locking them in a fireproof safe in her house. Though I'm guessing there might be nothing sadder than watching your home and all your possessions go up in flames while thinking, At least my Internet passwords are safe. Smetters, who got a Ph.D. at MIT in computational neuroscience—which are two words that are impressive but don't make sense together—chooses her passwords with her own algorithm. She suggested I pick a word, like *baseball*, capitalize a letter (as in "baseBall"), shove an exclamation point at the end ("baseBall!") and add the first word or phrase I think of when I log on to that particular website. So for my Google accounts, my password might be "baseBall!...ThePlacéWhereThatOCDWomanDianaWorks."

But that seemed too easy to guess. So I called Kevin Mitnick, who runs a security-consulting firm and spent five years in prison for hacking. He said I should create a password by writing down a series of four random consonants separated by four random vowels. I could then easily memorize the result, "kulexosi," except that I'm not a Klingon. The only thing this system is useful for is coming up with names for prescription drugs. Mitnick also said that a lot of people use their initials followed by a word that describes them, to which I suggested "jasAwesome!" We talked for five more minutes, after which, without my having told him any of these things, he casually worked the following into conversation: my birthday, my Social Security number, my address and my mom's maiden name. I had the feeling that he also knew how many women I've slept with and that he was not impressed.



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## Secretary's Report

**T**he Titusville Computer Club **general meeting** was held **September 8, 2011**, at St. Gabriel's Church, Titusville, Florida. President Metro Arden opened the meeting at 7:02 PM with an introduction of officers. There were 16 persons attending including one new member.



### Treasurer Report

Treasurer Richard Clark reported expenses of \$45.58 (printing) for August. The treasurers report was read and approved.

### Minutes of Last Meeting

Vice President Rod Iwan read his minutes of the meeting held August 11, 2011. They were approved as read. (This secretary was unable to attend)

### Old Business

Business Cards There are plenty of cards left, members please take some to hand out. Suggestion was made to place a card with the newsletters we distribute.

Computer Problems Are you are having trouble with your laptop? Bring it with you to our next meeting so someone can help you!

Someone had a computer problem in a previous meeting. Keith McAllister reported the gentleman had been out of town. They weren't able to get together as today.

### New Business

October Demo Meeting Terry Tesdall is putting together a Facebook demo for the October 27 meeting.

Smart Computing Magazine is the best buy you can make according to President Metro. Once you subscribe their website also makes available PC Today, First Glimpse, Guide , and Full Circle Magazines. Articles cover a range of information for a wide variety of computer users in easy to understand language.

A Demo on Avast Programs for 2012 A letter has been received from Space Coast PC Users Club. Charles Prince is offering free programs to groups of new and intermediate users of Avast. Avast is an antivirus security program and a free download off the internet. Our last 3 demo meetings are already scheduled so it was decided to schedule this demo for 2012.

### Q&A

- Download speed for streaming video without a pause must be 5 to 6 KB or more.
- Brighthouse seems to be best for the \$50 per month cost.
- Old Computers, what to do with them. There are recycling places available; be sure to remove the hard drive.
- How can I transfer everything on the hard drive to a back up drive. A) use Acronis.
- I'm having external speaker problems with my Toshiba laptop. A) Bring your laptop to a meeting or Google [howstuffworks.com](http://howstuffworks.com) and click How to Fix Toshiba speaker problems. There are manuals available for many brands of all kinds (i.e.Craftsman).
- Someone hacked into my email. A) Change your password often; use both letters and numbers, i.e.sug54ar; use unusual names or word combinations.

This meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Winnie Woods, Secretary*

### Pimp My Password ....

*(Continued from page 4)*

On Mitnick's recommendation, I signed up for Google's two-step verification process, which I can use in place of a password at lots of other sites and which required taking a photo of a bar code on my screen with my phone. I know it's excellent security because, even after watching a tutorial video about it, I don't understand it at all. Sure, I feel safer. But I fear I've started down a long path that ends with my buying a very expensive fireproof safe.

What's a simple guy to do in the age of sophisticated hackers?

## A Little More of This and That

By Bob Murray

**A**s found on the web and other sources.



As the saying goes (You should live so long) your data will outlive you, so watch what you say for posterity!

### Firm offers 1,000 year discs that use a special optical drive

By Lawrence Latif in *theinquirer.net* on Aug 10 2011

Data archiving outfit Milleniata has started to take pre-orders for its "1,000 year" optical discs.

*Rekindles the memory of Laserdisc*

Milleniata claims that its proprietary media can withstand severe shock and temperature differences and is a "new line of Optical Disc technology to last the next 1000 years". In order to have this almost everlasting media all you have to do is buy a special optical drive that currently will only be produced by LG and hope that in 1,000 years time the drive will still be available.

While Milleniata's claims regarding the physical capabilities of its media might well be true, there is far more to data archiving than the media itself. The fact that Milleniata's discs need a special drive is an obvious problem, but beyond that there is the matter of the interpretation of data once formats are long gone.

For instance, a century from now there will be no guarantee that Microsoft will be using the Word Document format, or even exist as a company, so what happens to the Word Document format? The issue of archiving data for reading in future centuries is a non-trivial research area and it includes not just the metadata required to 're-create' the data but also a universal computer to access it.

The universal computer is in effect a virtual machine that is based on widely agreed standards. The goal is

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint."  
-- Mark Twain*

to have a virtual machine that can access data that is being generated today, years from now. Where Milleniata's product falls down is that once the proprietary drives become obsolete there will be a chance that data stored on those discs will be lost forever because nothing will be able to access it.

The problem is highlighted by the BBC's Doomsday project, a digital time capsule that was stored on Laserdisc. Even a few decades after it was created, Laserdisc players are almost impossible to find and the BBC has taken the sensible step of putting the content of the Doomsday discs online as a means to archive the data.

So while Milleniata might improve on the durability of DVDs, to believe that it is the way to store data for 1,000 years is simply naive and will, most likely, end with disappointment for future generations.

### Most Mobile Apps Unsafe, Risk ID Theft

By Brandon Dimmel in *infopackets.com*

One of the primary reasons people buy a smartphone is for the ability to download all kinds of different mobile applications, otherwise known as "apps."

*Keep an eye on the guy in the next booth the next time you go wireless!*

However, a new study finds that many of these programs inevitably lead to the loss of personal data.

The study comes to us from ViaForensics, a digital forensics and security firm. It tested 100 different applications found on both the Google Android and Apple iOS platforms, and gave each app a rating of either a pass [safe], warn [not-so-safe], or fail

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## A Little More of This and That ....

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[dangerous]. (Source: betanews.com)

### Failed Apps Neglect to Protect User Information

A "pass" was awarded if ViaForensics was unable to access personal user data or found that information to be encrypted.

A "warn" was awarded where data was accessed, but was deemed not potentially damaging. It's unclear what kind of data ViaForensics felt did not pose an immediate threat.

Those apps receiving a "fail" grade were those where the personal user data could be easily accessed and obtained. This type of information could be used to propagate identity theft or to initiate a breach of financial information.

About 10 per cent of all the apps tested used no encryption method to store user data, including user passwords. (Source: ibtimes.com)

### Less Than 1 in 5 Apps Pass Test

Here's the worrying part: only 17 of the 100 apps tested received a pass. A total of 44 received a "warn" rating, while 39 outright failed.

The kinds of apps tested varied in type -- from those involving financial institutions to social networking platforms and online retail outlets. Although it's uncertain if the social networking platforms tested included Facebook and Twitter, ViaForensics reported that these kinds of apps were the greatest offenders.

Not a single social networking app in the study (for a total of 19) received a passing grade.

### Confirmed: Windows 8 to Get App Store

*By John Lister in Infopackets.com*

Microsoft has confirmed that Windows 8 will include support for a smartphone-like "app store". But it's not yet clear what the implications will be for app developers.

The app store is simply a central marketplace through which users can purchase software and then have it automatically installed on a device like a PC. The term app store was made popular on smartphones, most notably the Apple iPhone. (Source: sfgate.com)

Although leaked screenshots of Windows 8 suggested such a feature was on the way, Microsoft has now all but made that certain. It's published a list of the teams it has working on the new operating system (OS) and their specific areas of work, which include App Compatibility and Device Compatibility, App Store, Applications and Media Experience and App Experience. (Source: msdn.com)

### Smoother Installation a Possibility

The most interesting element of a Microsoft app store will be how it affects the way software is installed and uninstalled.

One of the main benefits of the app store model on mobile devices is that it's simple to add an application to the phone or tablet, then delete it later if it's not to your taste, without any lasting effects on performance.

With traditional Windows installations, things aren't always so smooth. Because developers have few restrictions, it's common for a program to leave traces of itself behind on a machine even after being "uninstalled," hence the need for a Windows Registry Cleaner.

### Microsoft App Store Could Represent Major Changes

A Microsoft app store may require developers to follow much tighter restrictions about the way the software interacts with Windows. That could mean more work for app makers, but a less troublesome experience for users.

If the app feature proves successful, it could represent major changes to the way customers choose and use software.

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## Understanding music & audio file formats ....

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There's where the MP3 format came in. MP3 is a standard of file compression. Compression is used to decrease file size. But, the MP3 format is "lossy." That means that data is lost in compression. This data loss reduces audio quality.



Lossy formats can introduce artifacts into the music. For example, high-end and low-end frequencies disappear. This makes the music sound less complete. Also, instruments can sound "tinny," especially percussion.

Other popular lossy formats are Windows Media Audio (WMA) and Advanced Audio Coding (AAC). AAC is Apple's format of choice for the iTunes store.

The WAV format, on the other hand, is a lossless format. It keeps all the audio information intact. The files sound just like the original. However, the format takes up a lot of storage space.

Like videos and Internet connections, audio files have a bit rate. Reducing the bit rate makes the file size smaller. It also reduces the quality.

In 1999, most downloaded MP3 files were encoded at 56 kilobits per second. That's considered radio quality. Larger, better-quality files were 96kbps or 128kbps. In contrast, audio CDs and WAV files are 1411.2kbps. That's quite a difference.

These days, large hard drives are cheap, and Internet connections are faster. So, download sites are selling MP3s with higher bit rates. For example, MP3s from Amazon.com are 320kbps. iTunes AAC files are 256kbps.

That's still a lower bit rate than a CD. However, you probably won't notice. That's thanks to advances in encoding techniques, like variable bit rate (VBR) encoding.

VBR encoding intelligently changes the bit rate based on music content. A song's quiet opening can have a low bit rate. The loud chorus can have a high bit rate. This maximizes quality while minimizing file size.

Modern lossy file formats work well for most people. That's because they use inexpensive, low-quality headphones or speakers anyway. File format is only an issue for serious audiophiles with high-end equipment.

Audiophiles usually don't download music. Rather, they buy CDs and rip the files in their preferred lossless format.

Lossless formats lightly compress audio files, but don't affect quality. They also allow file tagging, which WAV does not. Tagging is adding information to a file. It's what tells your music player the artist, song title, and so forth.

Both AAC and WMA have lossless versions, for example. These can be created in iTunes and Windows Media Player, respectively. A popular open-source choice is Free Lossless Audio Codec (FLAC).

To create FLAC files you will need a compatible CD ripper. You also need a computer music player that plays FLAC files. Songbird or Foobar2000 are good choices.

A few portable MP3 players also offer FLAC support. Look at iRiver, Creative, and SanDisk products. The iPod and Zune don't offer FLAC support at this time.

Lossless formats are great for audio quality. But, again, the file sizes are very large. And they aren't supported by many media players. That's why they are rarely sold online.

One site that sells high-quality files is HDTracks. Tracks can be downloaded in MP3, FLAC, or AIFF. However, prices are more expensive than other services. Each track is more than \$2.

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### Understanding audio file formats ....

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The site is still building its catalog. Most of the music is jazz or classical at this point. However, more music is being added all the time.

I suggest doing your own comparisons. Select some reference songs in different styles that you have on CD. Rip those files in a lossless format.

Then download those same files in a lossy format. Compare the two versions using your audio gear. Set it up so you don't know which version is playing. See if you can tell the difference. In most cases, you probably won't be able to tell.



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### A Little More of This and That ....

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At the moment there are numerous sources of both free and paid applications, but it can be tricky deciding which sources are reliable. If an official app store makes people more confident about trying new software, it could be a major boost to developers, particularly those without marketing budgets.

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Visitors Welcome

### Club Meetings

Club meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. We meet at St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church at 414 Pine St., Titusville. Setup starts at 6:50 PM, and meetings start at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall (located on Palm Ave between Pine and Julia Streets). Everyone is welcome.

### Article Contribution

If you wish to contribute an article for publication in this newsletter, please submit the article no later than the 1st club meeting of the month. Articles may be given to the editor at any club meeting or e-mailed to the editor ([TerryTesdaalSr@yahoo.com](mailto:TerryTesdaalSr@yahoo.com)). Articles are subject to editing.

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## Understanding music & audio file formats

*Kim Komando Tip of the Day for 10/3/2010*

**Q**I want to download music legally online. However, there doesn't seem to be any high-quality music available. All I see are MP3 files. Are there any sites that offer WAV files instead?



**A** Many people aren't too fussy about the quality of their music files. But, I am. So, I can understand why you are, too. However, your concerns are based on old information. MP3 files are now perfectly capable of producing high-quality music.

Your view of MP3 files as low quality goes back to 1999. In the earlier days of digital downloads, Internet bandwidth and hard drive space were limited. Audio files are very large. So, they had to be made smaller.

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