

The Newsletter of the Kennebec Valley Computer Society



AUGUST 2011

The Geeks on Wheels tour to Boston this month found us gathered around the growing display of tablets at MicroCenter.

There was a number of other people also gathered there checking things out. The desktop display area was quite lightly populated. The tablets were positioned next to the generous laptop and netbook display area which also had brisk traffic.

There have been news stories written lately discussing the decline of desktop sales in favor of laptops and tablets. What we saw confirmed what we have been reading. Will tablets take over? The thinking is not likely. There is a place for desktops and laptops. The tablets have appeal in that they are light, easy to carry, have Internet and e-mail functionality, will store a movie or two along with many songs for those long cross country airplane rides. However, they will not supplant the heavy processing duties of their big cousins. Storage space is limited on the tablets so large numbers of photographs and other data will not comfortably reside there.

We were impressed with the new Toshiba 'Thrive.' It has full size USB and HDMI ports along with a mini USB port. It is thicker than most of the others but it does have an easy to access battery compartment which

all the others do not have. It also has a textured rubberized grip on the back of the tablet to help keep it from falling off your lap or table. It has a full size SD card slot and a micro SD slot. Very versatile. It has dual core processor and is very speedy.

There was temptation to buy but cooler heads prevailed this time. Maybe next time....

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING TOPIC FOR AUGUST

This month's membership meeting will be a reprise of member's favorite web sites. I am tempted to steal some of Tim True's favorites for the newsletter but I will contain myself. You'll just have to come to the meeting to see what he has lined up.

I discovered one that I like. I first discovered this while looking for a radio app for the Smartphone. It is Tune In, <http://tunein.com> a world wide radio service. All manner of music is available from hip hop to classical. It works well on desktops, laptops, netbooks and tablets as well. There are some buffering problems with the limited Smartphone memory but it is not a limiting factor.

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KVCS MEETINGS **General Membership**

The program for this months meeting will be members sharing their favorite web sites.

Thursday, August 11, 7:00 PM
Buker Community Center on

Armory Street, just off
Western Avenue near the
National Guard Armory in
Augusta.

Board of Directors Meeting

The next meeting will be **prior to the August 11 meeting at the Buker Center. NOTE change in meeting location this month only.**

**The Newsletter of the
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You may upload copy via E-Mail or bring to the KVCS general membership meeting. **Deadline for submission of copy for the newsletter is the 15th day of the month preceding the month of issue and will be run on a space available basis.** Copy is subject to editing.

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KVCS WEB SITE

www.kvcs.org

Click the link for more information about KVCS.

Bob Wells, our webmaster is suggesting you make it the opening page for your web browser so you get the latest announcements.

KVCS

**Since 1984 - Central Maine's
First Computer User Group**



**Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups**

**Tech Terms
By Sandy Berger,
CompuKISS Newsletter
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If you want to be knowledgeable in today's world, you have to understand some high tech terms. Here are few of popular terms for 2011.

Terabyte

For the last few years, we have talked about the amount of storage that a computer has in terms of gigabytes. Now we are starting to see computers offering terabyte drives. A terabyte is 1,024 gigabytes. Or to test your mathematical abilities, it is equivalent to 2 to the 40th power or 1,099,511,627,776 bytes. You don't need to know the details, just know that a terabyte hard drive can store thousands and thousands of documents, songs, and other data.

SSD

SSD stands for Solid State Disk. This is a storage device like a hard drive. Unlike a hard drive, however, it contains no moving parts. SSDs are much faster than hard drives and so they improve the performance of a computer or other device.

Cloud-Computing

In terms like "cloud computing," "cloud storage," and "cloud services," the cloud simply means the Internet. In cloud computing, applications that run on the Internet replace desktop programs that are usually stored and run locally on

your own computer. When working "in the cloud," your computer or your mobile device is simply the conduit that connects with your data and with a program that accesses your data.

Bing

Bing is a search engine that was developed and is run by Microsoft. It is a Google search engine competitor and performs a very similar function. Note the name. This may well be the first decent name that Microsoft has chosen since it put out Microsoft Office and Microsoft Word. You can check out Bing's search capabilities by going to www.bing.com.

Video Streaming

Streaming is a technique for transferring data so that it can be processed as a steady and continuous stream. It is commonly used for video and movies. With streaming, the device you are using to view the videos can start displaying the video before the entire file has been transmitted. That means that you get to enjoy the video or movie more quickly. Today's streaming techniques also play movies more smoothly than previous technologies.

Land Line

A land line is an old-fashioned telephone line that gets service from a telephone company and allows you to talk via telephones that are attached to the wall. People are giving up their land lines in droves to take advantage of cell phones and Internet telephone services.

FarmVille

FarmVille is a Facebook game by Zynga. Millions of people play

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Choosing a Mouse
By Sandy Berger,
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The mouse is a useful computer tool. Here's a little history combined with information on the many different types of mice available today.

Many people seem to be curious how the mouse got its name. In the early 1960's, a man named Douglas Engelbart was fascinated with a theory he called "human augmentation technology," an idea that the computer should be used to enhance human performance. Up to that time, computers were useful only to military and scientific communities. In 1968, Engelbart made an input device to help people interact with the computer. The original mouse was a small rectangular wooden box with a cable running to the computer. Since the cord looked like a tail and mice are known for scurrying along a surface, this new device quickly became known as a mouse. The mouse turned out to be one of Englebart's most ingenious ideas. Yet, Englebart's original ideas were rejected, only to be resurrected later by others who took both the credit and the financial rewards. Because it frees the user from having to exclusively use the keyboard, the mouse is recognized as one of the great breakthroughs in computing.

The basic functionality and size of the mouse that we use today has changed little since 1968, but there have been changes in the technology behind the mouse. Older mice worked by a tracking ball on the bottom of the device. If you are still

using this type of roller ball mouse, it is time for an upgrade.

The newer type of mouse is the optical mouse. The optical mouse uses a tiny camera to take thousands of pictures every second. It employs a light-emitting diode (LED) that bounces light off the surface on to a CMOS sensor that is similar to the sensors used in some digital cameras.

Optical mice have several advantages over the traditional roller ball mice:

- They have better tracking and a smoother response.
- There are no moving parts to wear out.
- While dirt gathered inside of the ball and roller bars of traditional mice interfering with the tracking, the optical mouse is sealed and there is no way for dirt to get inside the mouse.
- They can be used on most surfaces without a mouse pad. The only exception is a mirror, glass, or extremely shiny surface.

Most optical mice have a red light that shines through the bottom of the mouse. The light can actually be any color. I have even seen a few that cycle through various colors, although I don't really see the point in that because the bottom of the mouse is usually not seen.

One of the newest types of mice is the laser mouse. This is a type of optical mouse that uses a laser beam instead of an LED light. The laser beam is invisible, or nearly invisible, to the human eye. The laser mouse is more precise and accurate, but also more expensive. It's great for

professional graphic designers and some gamers might find them useful, but the average computer user won't see enough difference to warrant the increased cost.

So if you are still using a mouse with a roller ball on the bottom, you might want to upgrade to an optical mouse. Or buy a new computer, most of which now come with optical mice. You will see a difference.

Oh, and when you get to the store, be prepared to spend a little time in making a decision. You will find designer mice in red, green, blue, purple, and other colors. You will also see mice in many different sizes with a large variety of finishes. The most important thing, however, may be for you to choose a mouse that fits your hand and feels comfortable.

Also remember that there are other input devices that can be substituted for a mouse. There are trackballs, joy sticks, and touch pads that can be used if you don't find a mouse comfortable. There are also specialized devices that can be used for people with disabilities. Some of these devices can even adjust for shaky hands and other dexterity problems. I use a specialized mouse called an [Aerobic Mouse \(www.aerobicmouse.com\)](http://www.aerobicmouse.com) that is especially designed for people with arthritis and carpal tunnel syndrome. It's a big, ugly mouse, but I love it. It keeps your hand in a hand-shake position that alleviates the twist in your wrist that can cause pain if you use the computer a lot or have carpal tunnel syndrome. It also steadies the hand, making using the mouse easier.

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Batch Image Converting with FastStone

**By Constance Brown, President,
Canton/Alliance/Massillon
Computer User Group, Ohio
June 2011 issue,
The Memory Map
www.camug.com
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Last week I started a new blog where I am posting articles for quick reference with a special emphasis on free software. Our 6:00 special interest groups, also known as SIGS, are focusing on a range of free software this year. In May we discussed information on how to use FastStone to prepare a picture for print. Some of you may wish to review that information. Visit www.stepcotraining.Wordpress.com and look at the May archives. As we discussed in the SIG and on the blog, commercial prints must be 300 dpi or more. However, email and websites present pictures entirely differently. In both cases you will want the smallest size picture possible that shows up attractively on a screen. Using 72 dpi is perfectly acceptable in these cases. A small picture size is also desirable. Let us take a look at some ways FastStone gives us the capability of resizing to smaller print sizes.

Often I wish to send or post several pictures at the same time. In order to do this quickly, I use “batch image convert” in FastStone. First I select all the pictures I wish to post to my web site, Facebook, or send via email. I like to copy all of these to one folder which, for sake of illustration, we shall name Web Selections May 2011. Then I create a folder inside the one I just created

which, in this example, I will name Web Ready May 2011.

In this case there are three things I wish to accomplish: 1) Renaming each picture so that I lose no data from my original picture, 2) Resizing my picture for the purpose I wish to use it, and 3) Placing the re-sized pictures into their own folder. All three things can be accomplished quickly with FastStone. I will highlight all the pictures inside the folder titled Web Selections May 2011. Now I will click on Tools in the menu or on F3 and select Batch Convert Selected Images. The right half of the window that opens shows the images I have selected. Underneath this listing I can select the output format. When I am posting to the web I always use jpeg, not jpeg 2000. Underneath the output format, I can choose the output folder by browsing to the folder I have already created—Web Ready May 2011.

Next I check the box titled, Use Advanced Options and click on the Advanced Options button. I check the box titled Resize and select a size. Using the drop down menu, I can pick a standard size. Usually 640 x 480 pixels is very good for email or Facebook.

Sometimes I have the need to resize based on a predefined side. To do that, click on the radio button titled Resize Based on One Side. Using the drop down menu, you can choose to have the long side or the short side of the picture resized to whatever you choose. This is really convenient when you are working with both portrait and landscape pictures. You can choose for the long side to be 640 pixels. That makes all the prints

the same size regardless of which way they present.

Several other options are also available as you click the tabs across the top. Remember that whatever you select will be applied to all the pictures in the batch. If you choose to add text, all the pictures will have the same text applied to them. If you choose to rotate, all the pictures will rotate. The same thing applies to borders and watermarks. Once you have made your selections, click OK.

Now you are ready to rename the pictures. Underneath the box you checked to Use Advanced Options is a box to check to Rename. This feature is great. It allows you to name the new pictures so that nothing happens to the originals, which in this case, are larger files with much more captured information that you will need when you decide to make prints and enlargements. When you check Rename, the first option is Image#####. I usually replace the word Image with something else but leave the # signs so that the images will be numbered. Suppose I were posting pictures from a trip to Canada. I could rename as CANweb##### or Canada#####.

Now I am ready to click on Convert. My pictures will be renamed, resized, and placed in the folder that I have selected. What a time saver! I used to go through this process on each individual picture. When I needed many pictures for a web site, the process took hours!

Let me point out a few more of many really great features in FastStone.

-continued on next page-

-FastStone - continued -

Printing contact sheets has always been a bit of a challenge. Not anymore! Suppose you just finished a photo shoot for your grandparents' 50th anniversary. The family wants to order photos and you need a contact sheet so they can select the photos they want. Voila!

Click on Create in your tool bar and select Contact Sheet Builder. You need to pay attention to all three tabs. The first one lets you select pictures from multiple folders. FYI, the name that is automatically assigned to the contact sheet is the name of the first folder that you select from which to pull pictures.

The second tab lets you determine background color, how many thumbnails you want to place on the page, and whether you wish to start a new page when you pull from a separate folder.

The third tab lets you preview the sheet you created. By the way, the output format is PDF, one of the file types that anyone can open if they have a free PDF reader.

Another option you will discover when you click on Create is the Slide Show builder. This is probably the easiest builder you will find anywhere. Just select the pictures by clicking Add File or Add Folder (perfect if you have your pictures organized), select a background color, select Loop if you want the slide show to play over and over again, choose to stretch small images if you wish—probably a good idea, either show or not show text (depends on how you have named the files), select from 156 transition

effects or click on the three little dots and select ALL so that the effects change from pictures to picture, browse to the music file you wish to play while the slide show runs, and select the quality and size of the pictures. Standard sizes are available at the click of the button and should be the same, if possible, as the screen you will use to view the show. Remember that projectors have size limits. If your projector has only an 800 x 600 and you will be presenting to a group using it, make the pictures for the slide show that same size.

Much more is available in this program, including cloning (copying from one part of a picture to another), shadow and highlight adjustments, as well as color, general lighting, and histogram adjustments, adding text to pictures, shrinking pictures to extremely small sizes or enlarging them beyond the size the camera actually took while maintaining excellent quality, special effects, and more.

I am pleased to tell you that you can download an excellent tutorial by visiting <http://www.faststone.org/FSIVTutorial.htm>.

The folks at faststone.org who continually improve this software are doing a fabulous job. I believe that this one piece of software will accomplish 85% of what the average user wants. Oh yes, it is also available as a portable program that operates from a flash drive. Now you can take the program on vacation and use it from the computer in your favorite hotel without installing it on any computer!

This article furnished by Articles2Go

-Tech Terms - continued -

FarmVille. They raise flowers and crops, feed the animals, and organize and decorate their farms. It is a truly incredible game and judging by the numbers of players, it is also quite addictive. Ask around. If any of your friends are playing this game, have them show you their farms. I guarantee that you will be amazed.

Netflix

Netflix is the leading subscription service for renting DVDs and streaming movies and television episodes over the Internet. It currently has more than 20 million members who pay \$8.95 or more a month for this service.

Tablets

If you haven't heard of a Tablet or a Tablet PC, you have been living under a rock. Tablets are a very easy way to work with email and to browse the Internet. Tablets have touch screens and run small Apps that perform tasks like playing games, getting the weather, sports scores, and other information. Currently Apple's iPad is the most popular tablet, but competitors are starting to appear. Blackberry has a tablet called the Playbook. Motorola has the Xoom. Samsung has one caked the Tab. HP recently introduced a tablet called the TouchPad.

Now that you are up-to-date on some of the technologies out there, it won't be long before you buy a tablet to view your Netflix movies and buy a computer with a terabyte hard disk to tend to your FarmVille farm while doing most of your computing in the cloud. Technology is moving fast. Jump aboard and join the fun!

This article furnished by Articles2Go

KENNEBEC VALLEY COMPUTER SOCIETY

Presents

**Show us
Your Favorite
Web Sites**

**Our occasional look at
favorite web sites**

Presented by

Group presentation

Thursday August 11 th 2011 - 7 PM

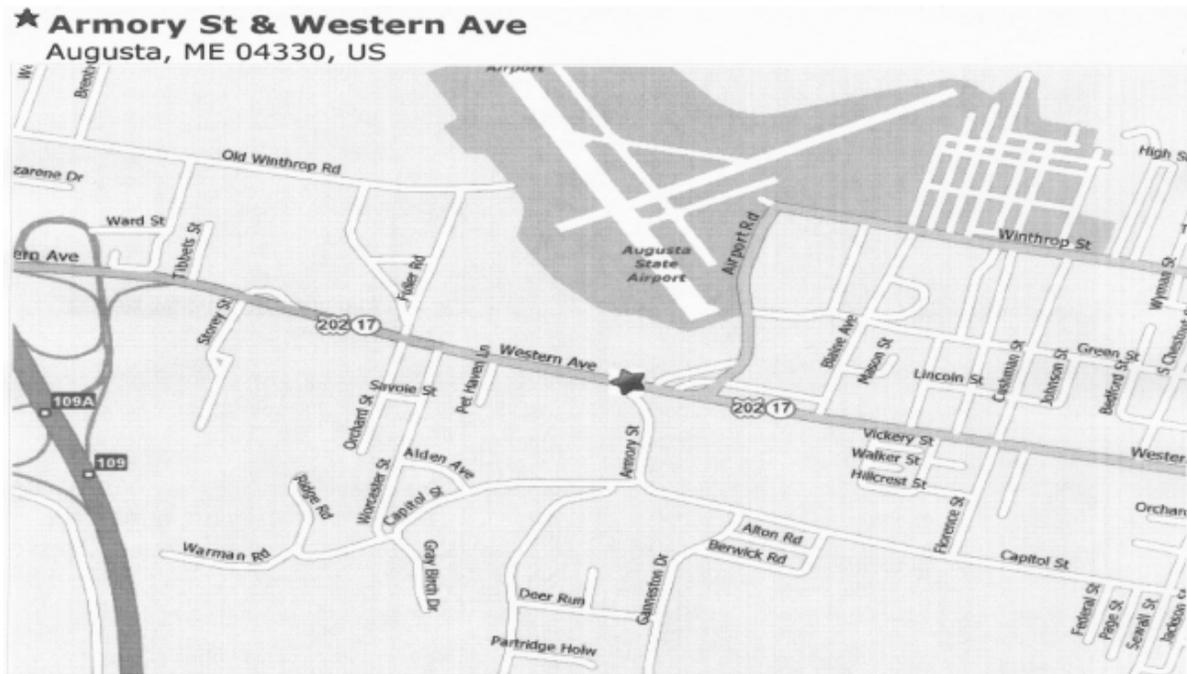
Social Time 6:30 to 7 PM

**Lou Buker Community Center
Armory Street
Augusta, Maine**

The Public is Cordially Invited

Bring a friend, meet a friend

KVCS MEETING LOCATION



MELUG-Central Maine Linux Users Group Meeting

The Next MELUG-Central Meeting - To Be Announced. For more information www.melug-central.org

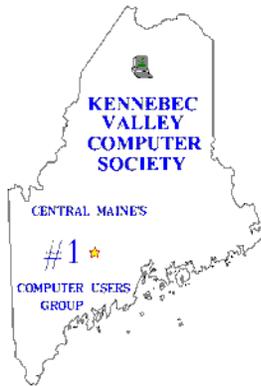
- Choosing A Mouse - continued -

So take your time and find the mouse or input device that is right for you. Today, most mice attach to your computer through the USB port. This is a nice feature since it means that if you and your honey want to use different mice, they can both be plugged in at the same time and each person can have constant access to the mouse of their choice.



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Post Office Box 2791, Augusta, Maine 04338-2791

Change of address

I would like to see more. Please send me a complimentary issue of the Newsletter.

I would like to join KVCS / renew my membership.

Annual Renewal (Dues waived for 2011 membership year)

FOR KVCS USE

New Member (Dues waived for 2011 membership year)

DP _____

Family (Dues waived for 2011 membership year)

CH _____

Student (Full time status - Dues waived for 2011 membership year)

CA _____

Name: _____ E-Mail address: _____

Address: _____ City/State _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Your Interest in Joining KVCS? _____

Referred by: _____

11/08 Signature: _____