

The Bytes of Las Vegas

Las Vegas PC Users Group

OCTOBER 2007

Notes from the 2007 APCUG Annual Meeting

By Geof Goodrum, GNU/Linux SIG, Washington Area Computer Users Group

Bob Rott and I paid our own way to attend the 2007 Annual Conference of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG) in Las Vegas along with 219 other registered attendees from 91 computer user groups. The conference was a success thanks to the sponsors, APCUG conference committee, volunteers and Riviera Hotel and Casino staff.

The conference, which ran January 4th through 7th, included social events, education sessions, contests and sponsored meals with vendor presentations. It's worth noting that each meal cost its sponsor over \$10,000, and their financial support kept registration costs affordable. Microsoft provided a lounge where attendees could use desktop PCs equipped with the new Windows Vista operating system and access the Internet. Microsoft also provided wireless Internet access to attendees and presenters during the conference. Corel sponsored a Photo Gallery and contest with many excellent entries (<http://www.apcug.net/events/conference07/winners/apcug2006photowinners.html>).

Grisoft, Inc. (<http://www.grisoft.com/>), a Czech company founded in 1991 and publisher of AVG Internet Security software, sponsored breakfast on January 5th. Jim Gildea, Vice President for the North American Market, gave a sobering presentation on the growth of Internet crime as a lucrative underground profession. Mr. Gildea said that Microsoft Windows Vista is a security improvement, but still needs additional protection. Grisoft will have Vista versions of its products available by the end of January. The free home edition of AVG antivirus is limited to one daily update and online forum support only. Professional editions have two full years of support for under \$40, include spyware and firewall protection, and take advantage of 64-bit processors.

Cheryl Wester, Program Chair for the Temecula Valley Computer User Group, hosted an education session "When Things Go Wrong." Cheryl shared tips on how to prepare for the unexpected (presenters failing to show, equipment failures, etc.) at user group meetings.

Ira Wilsker, member of Golden Triangle PC Club, host of radio and TV shows and author of a newspaper column on personal technology, presented an education session on "User Groups and the News Media." The topic addressed how to get greater visibility for user groups by developing and maintaining contacts within the local news media.

Panda Software (<http://www.pandasoftware.com/>), publisher of computer security software, sponsored lunch. Product Technology Officer Ryan Sherstobitoff gave a presentation on crimeware trends from 2000 to 2007, again hitting on the theme that "Crimeware" has become a silent epidemic and a profitable business for criminals.

Although I was aware of the practice, a new term for me was "Spear Phishing," targeted attacks against a specific person or organization. Panda has developed "TruPrevent" technology that incorporates artificial intelligence to detect malware, as they find the traditional approach of antivirus signatures are useless against new attacks.

The Vendor Forum is a regular event that gives the group of vendor representatives a chance to exchange ideas with the user group attendees. Vendors want to see user group members review their products and distribute the reviews as widely as possible. The vendors want to hear honest opinions about their products so they can improve them. User groups like to have vendors visit and demonstrate their products at meetings, but this is not always possible given limited budgets. However, several vendors are willing to give live presentations over the telephone or Internet video.

CompUSA's National Sales Manager Michael Johnson provided a business assessment. Although 2005 was the best year in ten, 2006 missed expectations. CompUSA is launching a new customer loyalty program and TechPro on-site support services. Store personnel are also being trained in the latest technologies to better assist customers.

CompUSA (<http://www.compusa.com>) also sponsored that evening's Vendor Fair, where all vendors have tables to meet and greet the user group members and discuss their products and services. This is also an opportunity to request products to review, win door prizes and socialize over a casual buffet dinner.

On January 6th, Corel (<http://www.corel.com>) treated attendees to a breakfast presentation about current user group support and new products. Corel is in the top 10 global packaged software companies with 21 years in the industry. With the acquisition of WinZip (version 11 just released), InterVideo, and Ulead, Corel has the largest portfolio of digital editing and DVD authoring software in the world. Paint Shop Pro Photo XI includes most features in Adobe PhotoShop for under \$100, and includes a 2 hour video tutorial in the box. Corel supports high definition video and Bluray Disc playback and recording in their current products.

Former APCUG President Larry Shaw led an education session "'User Groups are Needed More than Ever,'" summarized the changing role of User Groups, and

dispelled the premise that User Groups are obsolete. There are new technical support issues, and many users need hands-on help and appreciate the socialization that user groups provide.

Steve Peyrot, APCUG Treasurer and East Tennessee Computer Society member, hosted an education session "Finding & Retaining Volunteers" that produced many excellent ideas on how User Groups can get help on essential tasks and recognize those who give it.

APCUG sponsored a lunch during which user group members from designated regions (WAC is Region 2; DC, DE, MD, NJ, VA) sat together and conferred with their APCUG Regional Advisor (Gabe Goldberg, in our case).

Bob Rott and I both attended Jay Ferron's presentation on securing wireless networks (a late education session addition). I was pleased that Jay's advice was consistent with a similar presentation I gave in September 2004 (<http://www.wacug.org/recmtgs.html>), though Jay is a more dynamic speaker.

I was recruited to videotape the "30 Years of User Groups: Memories and Lessons" session for APCUG's use (I am supposed to receive a DVD). This session included a slide show that covered the earliest years of APCUG and allowed the "old timers" to reminisce about conferences and hair styles of the past. It was particularly interesting to see founders of Microsoft, Lotus Development Corporation and Intel at APCUG meetings. Some of these photos may show up on the APCUG web site and attendees were asked to submit their own digital photos from this conference and those past.

Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com/>) hosted dinner and a surprisingly brief discussion of Windows Vista features, such as SideShow (a mini-display for applications built into some laptops and peripherals), ReadyBoost and SuperFetch for convenience and performance enhancements. The main thrust of the evening's presentation was how Microsoft made a commitment to support games on the Windows Vista platform through a branded "Games for Windows" quality control process, built-in support for parental access controls based upon schedule and a game's ESRB rating (<http://www.esrb.org/>), and an easier system for rating a game's system requirements. A demo of LucasArts Lego Star Wars II was impressive, but the game crashed using the beta graphics drivers. Microsoft cited driver immaturity as a reason for delaying the release of the personal versions of Windows Vista. Windows Vista also supports Xbox 360 controllers and accessories, but Vista games won't run on Xbox 360 and vice versa.

AMD (<http://www.amd.com/>) provided breakfast on January 7th and provided a peek into their business strategy and technological developments. AMD seeks to eliminate Front Side Bus performance bottlenecks with their Direct Connect Architecture (DCA), which connects processors, memory controller and I/O directly to the CPU at CPU speed. AMD also mentioned "4x4" motherboards for computer enthusiasts that combines two high performance

dual-core AMD processors with twin graphics processing pipes. AMD claimed 34-40% performance increases over generic Intel solutions and noted Intel failed to run several 3D benchmarks. Although AMD recently acquired graphics processor unit (GPU) company ATI, AMD will keep an open platform and work with ATI competitor nVidia. However, AMD also mentioned "Fusion," a plan to merge CPU and GPU on a single piece of silicon.

The conference closed with the APCUG Annual Meeting, but due to absences of the Board members due to illness or schedule conflicts, could not reach quorum. Secretary Jim Evans reported that 311 User Groups were members of APCUG in 2006. Advisor Vice Chair David Steward repeated a request for User Groups to provide feedback to APCUG through their advisors.

I am pleased to report that my name was the second drawn for a door prize after the Annual Meeting, and I was able to select a new D-Link DWA-645 RangeBooster N 650 Notebook wireless network adapter for use with WAC's Dell Inspiron 1100 laptop PC (itself a donation from WAC VP Jim Brueggeman). I will submit a review of this PC Card network adapter in an upcoming issue of The Cursor.

Internet security and the growth of CrimeWare was the dominant theme for education sessions and vendor presentations this year. This reinforced my computer security training and experience that there is no such thing as paranoia in computer security – they really are out to get you. Keep your antivirus and antispyware software updated (daily, if possible) and be diligent about applying software patches to your operating system and applications, regardless of whether you use dialup or high-speed Internet access.

In total, I attended five of the twenty-four scheduled education sessions and wish I could have attended more (four sessions were held in parallel over six scheduled periods). However, I divided up the schedule with Bob Rott and other friends so we could share notes later. I will also share useful websites and management practices with the WAC membership and Board at future meetings. The conference proceedings and presentations used at some of the sessions are posted online at <http://www.apcug.net/events/conference07/conf07files.htm>. Jay Ferron's presentation on securing wireless networks is on his website at <http://www.mir.net/>.

Other sponsors of the conference not previously mentioned include:

- Acoustica, Inc. (<http://www.acoustica.com/>);
- Answers.com (<http://www.answers.com/>);
- Applian Technologies (<http://www.applian.com/>);
- The Association of Shareware Professionals (<http://www.asp-shareware.org/>);
- D-Link (<http://www.dlink.com/>);
- Firetrust Limited (<http://www.firetrust.com/>);
- GEAR Software, Inc (<http://www.gearsoftware.com/>);
- Laplinc (<http://www.laplinc.com/>);
- Migo Software (<http://www.migosoftware.com/>);

O'Reilly Media (<http://ug.oreilly.com/>);
 Pearson Education (<http://www.pearsoned.com/>);
 Smart Computing (<http://www.smartcomputing.com/>);
 TechSmith (<http://www.techsmith.com/>);
 Trend Micro (<http://www.trendmicro.com/>);
 User Group Relations (<http://www.ugr.com/>); and
 Verbatim (<http://www.verbatim.com/>).

These sponsors not only helped fund the conference activities, but provided door prizes, product samples and

other support to the attendees. Please visit their websites and review their products for this newsletter!

I encourage you to attend the APCUG 2008 Conference, which will be held in early January in Las Vegas. Watch for announcements this summer in The Cursor and on the APCUG web page (<http://www.apcug.net/>).

Extracted from:

The Cursor — February 17, 2007 www.wacug.org

October 2007

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	Sep	1	Oct	2	3	4	5	6
					6:15p -8:30p General Meeting at West Charleston Library with George Yocum and Gene Barlow			11:00a -3:00p Systems / Applications Review.
7		8		9	10	11	12	13
		Columbus Day (Fed)				6:30p -8:30p Windows Developers		9:30a -11:30a Genealogy 1:00p -3:00p Office Suites 3:30p -5:30p Systems/Applications Review
14		15		16	17	18	19	20
12:00p -2:00p Digital Imaging Techniques		7:00p -9:00p Internet Sig		6:30p -8:30p Databases at New Horizons				
21		22		23	24	25	26	27
1:00p -3:00p Linux/Open Source 4:00p -6:00p Novice (new Users)								9:30a -2:30p How To Workshop 3:00p -5:00p Wi-Fi
28		29		30	31	1	Nov	2
					Halloween			11:00a -3:00p Systems / Applications Review.



Las Vegas PC Users Group, Inc.

www.lvpcug.org

1350 E. Flamingo Road #188
Las Vegas, NV 89119



NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LAS VEGAS NV
PERMIT NO. 1125

Time Value Mail

Membership expiration date appears above address

The Bytes of Las Vegas

Las Vegas PC Users Group

October 2007

*Join us for our next **General Meeting***

Wednesday, October 3rd 2007 at 6:15 pm

at the West Charleston Library

6301 W Charleston (East of Torrey Pines)

Our special guest presenter will be **Gene Barlow** of **User Group Relations**, St George, Utah. Mr. Barlow is widely recognized for his skill in presenting technical information in interesting and understandable ways that can benefit all. He will discuss the **Top 10 Ways To Protect Your Computer**, identifying the most important things that all of us should be doing to protect our equipment and precious data from damage and loss. Learn how a few preventive measures can help avoid major problems later.

"Fix-it" **George Yocum** has again graciously agreed to dazzle us with another insightful and informative question/answer session about current computer products and problems. George will open the meeting at 6:15PM and Gene will follow at 7PM. The meeting will conclude around 8:30PM with a door prize drawing for members.