



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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ARTICLE

My Life with a Handheld—Part 4 (2007) Convergence

by Bob Thomas

Happy 2008 folks! Good to see you back reading about pocket PC computing in 2007. Enjoy!

I used my Dell Axim predominantly in GPS mode this year (I travelled back and forth across the US and Canada a few times). The Axim continued perfectly in its role as my field genealogy database. The Axim X50v series with their sharp, crisp VGA display still remains the best handheld for viewing photos, videos and TV.

Dell removed itself from selling Dell branded pocket PC's. Then they chose to enter the mobile phone market by selling other branded products such as the Treo, a big indicator of shifting market emphasis in the handheld field.

2007 saw me accept my carrier's promotion to upgrade my PPC6600 to a PPC6700. Both are produced by HTC, but branded differently, the former as Audiovox, the latter as UT Starcom. With the rebates offered it was a zero cost upgrade requiring only a one year extension to my existing North America-wide contract.

The PPC6700 switches automatically to landscape mode when the landscape-oriented QWERTY keyboard is slid open. It automatically returns to portrait mode when it's closed. The landscape oriented keyboard is nicer to use than the portrait mode that its 6600 predecessor employed. It's so much nicer that you'll find yourself writing

less abbreviated cryptic-worded emails and documents.

Since the major applications I use are in the larger VGA screened Axim, I find that I use the PPC6700 more as a phone and for the PIM (Personal Information Manager – Email, Contacts, Calendar, Notes, Tasks) applications than as a PC. Windows Mobile 2005, the device's Operating System, includes these Microsoft Mobile Office applications (Outlook, Excel, Word, Tasks, Notes, Calendar).

ActiveSync permits you to update and synchronize the pocket PC with your desktop, by phone or wireless, by Bluetooth or Infrared. Unfortunately Mobile 2005 does not provide a backup application, unlike its predecessors. So a 3rd party product is required. While UT Starcom has provided a Zip utility, it relies on the user to determine the files to be backed up. Definitely not as user-friendly!

The built-in 1.3MB camera adds a 2X zoom capability not present on previous models. Having video is useful. I found that it's best to use a large capacity mini-SD sized card for storing all the videos and photos you'll be taking. My 2 GB memory card sufficed for the casual use I made of the camera this year. I had taken about a half-hour of videos and a couple thousand photos this year. Half-way through the year I transferred the photo and video files to

DVD to make room for the 2nd half of the year's visual memories.

This year I made more extensive use of RSS feeds to get my chosen news services delivered to the PPC for offline reading. It also delivered my travel itineraries. Some carriers installed the itineraries directly into Calendar where they are easily referenced. This is quite enjoyable for those times when you're travelling on planes, trains, etc.

Manufacturers have been transitioning away from the handheld pocket PC market and moving more into special purpose handhelds. Mobile phones are the most common, typically employing the Symbian or Windows Mobile operating system platforms. GPS items are another (the pocket PC component is treated as a 'feature' of the GPS).

The good news for we consumers is that the costs of these devices are still coming down while the features incor-

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, Month 12th, 2008**

March Raffle

At the March general meeting, thanks to the generosity of McAfee Canada, we will be raffling off five – that's right – five copies of **McAfee Internet Security Suite with Site Advisor**. This comprehensive, ten-in-one suite of desktop security tools can stop viruses, stop hackers, block spyware, improve the health of your PC, secure your identity, prevent spam & email scams, protect children while online, back up & restores files, rate web sites so you can avoid online dangers, and manage your updates. Valued at \$70. May be installed on three PCs.

We will be drawing five tickets, so for the same inexpensive price, you will quintuple your chance of winning!

Tickets are still only \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten. What a bargain!

Coming Up...

March 12, 2008

Topic: One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) <http://laptop.org>

Speaker: Andrew Clunis, Ottawa

The One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) association states that it's mission is to develop a low-cost laptop, popularly known as the "\$100 Laptop", to revolutionize how we educate the world's children. They note that there are nearly two billion children in the developing world and most are inadequately educated, or receive no education at all.

One in three does not complete the fifth grade. Some background on the project is available on Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Laptop_per_Child).

The One Laptop Per Child initiative is an ambitious project to put a low-cost yet powerful laptop computer into the hands of every child in the world, using only Free Software.

OLPC also brings forward some unique technical challenges, from the kernel (power management and mesh networking), to user space (collaborative activities, UI design, and performance). This presentation will provide an overview of the OLPC initiative and some of the challenges in developing and implementing this ambitious project.

Andrew Clunis describes himself as "an aspiring hacker (and occasional nuisance)" from Ottawa, Canada. His current interests and projects include One Laptop Per Child, Python, Ruby on Rails, C#/Mono and Free Software in general.

February Prize Winners

Jacques Cadieux won the door prize, a book on MS Office while **Michael Gibson** won the raffle prize, a copy of Corel Paint Shop Pro X2.

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to Microsoft and Corel for the prizes.

2008 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, March 12 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, March 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, March 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, March 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, March 12 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (College Square Shopping Centre)
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, March 12 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.
Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).		

ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with a heavy heart that I forward the news of the passing of Tim Mahoney.

Twenty six years ago, Tim was one of the founding members of the Ottawa PC Users' Group. He contributed greatly to its success over the years. Tim was instrumental in the shaping of the Group in the early years. He and his brother Terry made computing life a lot less expensive in those days through their efforts to provide bulk purchasing. Tim also ensured we had interesting meeting topics when he was the Meeting Coordinator.

Tim always brought a gentle humour and kindness to those around him.

Tim, you will be missed.

On behalf of the Ottawa PC Users' Group, I would like to extend my condolences to his family.

Following is the obituary that appeared in the Citizen:

MAHONEY, Timothy

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden death of Timothy Mahoney at home Wednesday January 30, 2008. Loving husband, partner and best friend of Suzanne Mahoney, nee Blain, cherished son of Viola Mahoney, nee Murphy and devoted and beloved father of Elyssa and Thomas. Tim will also be dearly missed by numerous other family members, friends and business associates. Proud founder and president of Synergys, Tim cherished every opportunity to teach his children everything he knew. Car enthusiast, skier, cyclist and music lover Tim will be fondly remembered as fun loving and caring. Tim is preceded in death by his father Beltran Mahoney and his brother Terance (Terry) Mahoney. Friends may pay respects at the Kelly Funeral Home, 2313 Carling Avenue (west of Carlingwood) Monday, February 4 from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. A Mass in Memory of Tim will be held Tuesday Feb. 5 in St. John the Apostle Church at 11 a.m.

Interment at Notre-Dame Cemetery. Friends and family are invited to help celebrate Tim's life at St. John's the Apostle Church Hall immediately following interment. Memoriam donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation appreciated.

*Chris Taylor
OPCUG President*

Tim's name appears in the very first entry of the OPCUG's history web page, in April 1982

(<http://opcug.ca/public/history/index.htm>).

Tim and his brother, Terry, were part of the BOD multiple times, as shown at <http://opcug.ca/public/history/bod.htm>.



ARTICLE

Upgrade Envy—Part 6 *by Peter Hawkins*

That last little break gave me a wee bit of time to organise my thoughts so that I could more fully explain to my readers (all 3 of them, well 2 really, since my Significant Other or Spousal Unit as I sometimes think of her is my editor/proof-reader) just what the next steps were and the unintended consequences of less-than-fully-informed choices that I made. I know that in part five I asked you to remind me about OCZ Gold, but now is not quite the time. Please be patient!

Partition Magic is truly a wonderful program. I just fired it up and it went right to work, presenting me with a beautiful, detailed, even elegant graphic of the two drives in my system. Since I had defragged my main drive, there was lots of free space available with which to do things. I felt quite confident that I would be able to "adjust the distribution" of all those files and folders to maximise the speed that my computer processed at.

The first step in my plan required Windows to reside on the outside edge of the main hard drive. That drive is not particularly large at 40 gigs, but more than adequate for any tasks that I could think of doing. If Windows was to reside at the outside edge, then I would have to create new partitions on the drive, then move stuff into them, then defrag the old section, move stuff again. This is a boring repetitive, iterative, and thankless task. The only reason I was able to stay at it was that I was sincerely focused on my goal of maximum (note here that a more reasonable goal might have been "optimal" but such is the grip of Upgrade Envy that "optimal" would only be second best) performance from all the components of my system. Suffice it to say that after a reasonable interval of time, measured in some unfathomable way, my main disk was partitioned into 4 parts, and only Windows and a few programs were located in the out-

side partition. Since it is the first partition on the drive, it is called C.

As a small aside here, you would think that I was stating the obvious...that the first partition always has to be C. Not so! It is quite possible to call the first partition D, and as I have read, there are some individuals who have chosen to do this as a way to lessen the impact of virus attacks, since many of them often seem to be written to look for a C drive. I am not one of these proponents, but in the interests of full disclosure I thought that little gem might be of interest to 1 of the other 2 remaining readers! Onwards!

Did you know that when you move programs they become unhappy! Well, not all programs, but the vast majority do seem to exhibit that symptom. And the only cure is to re-install them. However, this should be looked upon as an opportunity to rid your drive of programs that you rarely, if ever, use. And so I did, thus freeing up more space into which over the next medium time interval I will once again load up with "use-once" programs which I can't seem to resist. I feel that this is only a modest side effect of UE and is tolerable.

The end result of all this diligent attention to goal attainment, achieved over several days of activity, is a system of two drives with a total of 6 partitions. A little detail here would not be amiss. The main drive has 4 partitions, the most important one being my C partition which is just 9 gigs in size, or slightly less than one-fourth of that drive's capacity. The other 3 partitions, in order, are E for my data files, F for almost all the programs I want to use that I felt did not need to reside in close proximity to Windows, and G for "odds-n-sods" that I somehow was reluctant to part with. The second drive, 13 gigs in size, has only two partitions: H of 3 gigs, right at the outside of the drive, and the balance called D which I use to back up my data files fairly regularly.

The reason that there is a tiny partition on the outside of the second hard drive is that that is the location where I want Windows to put the Swap File. You will remember that the outside part of a hard drive spins the fastest under the read/write heads and so should maximise the performance I get out of my system. To make these changes follow these steps:

1. Open System in Control Panel
2. On the Advanced tab, under Performance, click Settings
3. On the Advanced tab, under Virtual Memory, click Change
4. Under Drive (Volume Label) click the drive that contains the Paging File you want to change
5. Under Paging file size for selected drive, click Custom size, then type in the size you want in megabytes. I do suggest that you select the maximum you are offered. That is why I made the drive size 3 gigs because I select 1534 Megs for my swap file.

It seemed simple enough, and the procedure is easy enough that even I could do it. There is however a tiny little wrinkle here that I discovered. If you don't create a 2 Mb page file on the partition where Windows resides, then it will simply ignore your desire to place the Swap File where you want it to go and instead just put it at the slow end of the first partition. That sux!

One more thing...I'll be brief. All that partitioning and moving stuff around seemed to give Windows a severe headache. It responded in the usual fashion! You know the drill. Got it in 1! BSOD! A full re-install complete with authentication! Made easier because I now had an authenticated 25 digit alphanumeric key which was accepted the very first time I was asked

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Upgrade Envy

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for it. Miracles will hardly ever cease! And the very best part of this last step was that the only partition on the primary hard drive to be affected was the one that held windows! It goes without saying that most, if not all the programs I use had to be re-installed because all the .dll files they need disappeared during the re-install.

I'm making real progress here, but will have to defer OCZ Gold until the next installment.



Handheld (Continued from page 1)

porated into the devices continue to grow! 4 GB flash memory cards are available for less than \$100, high speed 2GB cards are less than \$40, and 6 GB cards are under \$300. 32 GB cards are being made available for this year's new HD video cameras! Capacity continues to grow while the sizes of the cards continue to shrink. It might make you wonder whether that grain of silicon stuck in your sandal might be housing hordes of memories!

In the application upgrades I received this year (including AvantGo, Pocket Informant, Streets and Trips 2007 and Adobe Reader) significant noteworthy improvements evaded my eyes. The Windows Mobile 2006 operating system is out and appears in products now on the market. I haven't heard yet from my vendors whether it will be

made available as an upgrade for mine.

If your preference is for a mobile phone first, and a pocket PC second, then consider the new mobile phone products – there's a ton of them out there for you to choose from! The market and products are stable. They come in all flavours of locally designed 'berries'. Try them; they'll excite your taste buds!

On this note, I bid adieu to the My Life with a Handheld series of articles. I hope you have enjoyed them.

Happy Computing!

Bob Thomas, OPCUG
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Humour

"Who's on First" for the 21st Century
Part 2 (continued from January)

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO: I need money to track my money?

ABBOTT: No, not really. It comes bundled with your computer.

COSTELLO: What comes bundled with my computer?

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO: Money comes bundled with my computer?

ABBOTT: Exactly. No extra charge.

COSTELLO: I get a bundle of money with my computer at no extra charge? How much money do I get?

ABBOTT: Just one copy.

COSTELLO: I get a copy of money. Isn't that illegal?

ABBOTT: No. We have a license from Microsoft to make copies of Money.

COSTELLO: Microsoft can license you to make money?

ABBOTT: Of course! They own it.

COSTELLO: Well, it's great that I'm going to get free money, but I'll still need to track it. Do you have anything for managing your money?

ABBOTT: Managing Your Money? That program disappeared years ago.

COSTELLO: Well, what do you sell in its place?

ABBOTT: Money.

COSTELLO: You sell money?

ABBOTT: Of course. But if you buy a computer from us, you get it for free.

COSTELLO: That's all very wonderful, but I'll be running a business. Do you have any software for, you know, accounting?

ABBOTT: Simply Accounting.

COSTELLO: Probably, but it might get a little complicated.

ABBOTT: If you don't want Simply Accounting, you might try M.Y.O.B.

COSTELLO: M.Y.O.B.? What does that stand for?

ABBOTT: Mind Your Own Business.

COSTELLO: I beg your pardon?

ABBOTT: No, that would be I.B.Y.P. I said M.Y.O.B.

COSTELLO: Look, I just need to do some accounting for my home business. You know--accounting? You do it with money.

ABBOTT: Of course you can do accounting with Money. But you may need more.

COSTELLO: More money?

ABBOTT: More than Money. Money can't do everything.

COSTELLO: I don't need a sermon! Okay, let's forget about money for the moment. I'm worried that my computer might... what's the word? Crash. And if my computer crashes, what can I use to restore my data?

ABBOTT: GoBack.

COSTELLO: Okay. I'm worried about my computer smashing and I need something to restore my data. What do you recommend?

ABBOTT: GoBack.

COSTELLO: How many times do I have to repeat myself?

ABBOTT: I've never asked you to repeat yourself. All I said was GoBack.

COSTELLO: How can I go back if I haven't even been anywhere? Okay, I'll go back. What do I need to write a proposal?

ABBOTT: Word.

COSTELLO: But I'll need lots of words to write a proposal.

ABBOTT: No, you only need one Word--the Word in Office for Windows.

COSTELLO: But there's three words in...Oh, never mind. (click)

ABBOTT: Hello? Hello? Customers! Why do they always hang up on me? Oh, well. Ultimate SuperDuper Computer Store. Can I help you?

OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members.

Member participation is encouraged. If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups go until 10 p.m.

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