Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for Sept. 16, 2010

Carl Bulger presided.

Presentation:

This was a continuation of Eric Hein's August 5th demonstration of VideoSpin, a video editing program. It is a free program developed by Pinnacle to attract people to its premier video editing program called Studio which sells for about $100.

For those of us who are not sure they want to make the commitment to Studio, Eric demonstrated four free utilities that will fill in some of the gaps in VideoSpin. In his words, "This freeware video editor has many nice features, but some significant limitations. Some of those limitations will be addressed using other freeware from the Club's Web Page.

Since Eric has excellently described each program or tool, I'll copy those links and descriptions:

Video Editors:

- VideoSpin from Pinnacle. This is a simplified version of their *Studio* product, and is far superior to Windows M*ovie_Maker*. Much of the *Studio* functionality left out of VideoSpin can be achieved using the WinFF, DVDStyler & Virtual Clone Drive tools below.

- Tools / Converters:

- WinFF: a GUI for the command line video converter, FFMPEG. WinFF does multiple files in multiple formats at one time. You can for example convert mpeg's, flv's, and mov's, all into avi's all at once. It is also useful as a multimedia player and for extracting just the audio from a video file.
- DVDStyler: a DVD "authoring application" that is similar to Windows *DVD_Maker*, but has more features. It accepts audio/video input in a variety of file formats (e.g. VOB, MPEG2, MPEG4, DivX, Xvid, AVI, MOV,...), optionally adds a menu, and then previews and/or writes the "DVD" to a *.iso file. It can also burn it to an actual DVD disk. This is a good complement to *VideoSpin*, since it can take that output (a *.avi or *.mpg file) and create a DVD. The menu creation appears to be very flexible but has little-to-no documentation. Other features have adequate documentation.
- Virtual Clone Drive: a Windows file system extension that "mounts" a *.iso file as a virtual drive. A *.iso file contains all the data of a DVD in a single file. Although many burners can create an actual DVD from it,

players (such as Windows Media Player) cannot play it! After Virtual Clone Drive mounts the *.iso file, it appears as a virtual disk with the "VOB directory structure" of an actual DVD - which Windows Media Player can play.
- GSpot: a multimedia tool that establishes what codecs (audio and video) are required to play a file, determines whether these codecs are installed on your system, and isolates problems associated with these codecs. GSpot is distributed along with the K-Lite Codec Pack.

For convenient video editing you need a fast computer with at least 2GB of RAM and, preferably, a video card with lots of RAM. If you don't already have Window Media Player, that is also a free download:

  Windows Media Player 11 for Windows XP offers new ways to store and enjoy your digital media. It's easier than ever to access all of your music, videos, pictures, and recorded TV on your computer. Play it, view it, organize it, or sync it to a portable device for enjoying on the go, or share with devices around your home—all from one place. It is included in most editions of Windows Vista and 7, although the version included with Windows 7 is version 12.

BSCC Meeting Minutes submitted by Barry Hammond, Secretary