

Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for July 16, 2009

Carl Bulger presided.

Presentation:

Bob Rapczynski demonstrated How to Replace a Power Supply. The June 2009 issue of Smart Computing magazine provides the details on pages 57-59, so I won't describe what he did.

Ordering the power supply is probably harder than installing it. You need to buy a high quality power supply with enough capacity to provide your computer and its peripherals with sufficient power. See Smart Computing's article for recommendations of reputable, high quality vendors. Connectors for the power leads must match those of your motherboard, hard drive(s), and CD/DVD burners/players. Make sure the long dimension will allow enough room between the power supply and the CD/DVD drives. Bob managed to find a power supply that was slightly smaller than the original yet had slightly more power.

Replacement power supplies for Dell computers must be ordered from Dell. Otherwise, you may burn out your motherboard. Dell reverses the polarity of its leads. The rest of us can order a power supply online or from a computer parts vendor. If you think your power supply may need to be replaced, it can be tested with a power supply tester that costs \$15 to \$25.

Computer Problems:

Dick Henthorn's computer was damaged by a lightning power surge. The two optical drives don't work, so he can't burn anything to media or boot from them instead of the hard drive. Someone suggested plugging in a thumb drive to a USB port, even if he has to plug it into the back. If it is a USB 1.0 port, it will be slow, but it will work.

Open Office.org's database is inferior to Microsoft's ACCESS relational database.

Eric Hein is still working on hooking up his computer with his TV to display and record free over the air TV as well as subscription Netflix movies from their 10,000 movie library. One disadvantage with the free over the air TV content is that he can't skip over the commercials if he records it for later viewing.

Eric asked a couple of meetings ago if Windows Media Center provides any additional benefits. According to Smart Computing magazine's September issue on p. 27, if you have Vista Home Premium or Ultimate, you can watch Netflix movies from what they refer to as "the more video- and remote control-friendly Windows Media Center."

In the same issue, Marty Sems has an article on pp. 35-37 on using a laptop computer as "The Ultimate Set-Top Box".

We talked until 2:15 pm although the length of the minutes don't reflect that. I was late; Vic Kiviat read the first part of the previous meeting's minutes. The remaining minutes brought up much discussion (for example Eric Hein's TV/Computer project) but I wasn't sitting down so I couldn't take notes. Finally, the excellent article in Smart Computing describes the process that Bob Rapczynski so capably demonstrated of Upgrading a Power Supply.

We promote Smart Computing magazine because it is aimed at people like us who speak English, not jargon. The magazine is not loaded with advertisements. They provide free trouble-shooting service via telephone (to Lincoln, Nebraska, not Mumbai, India.) And, they will give a free subscription to the Bowie Seniors Computer Club for every five members who subscribe or renew as long as they identify themselves as club members.