

ITC Chronicles



30 Days with a Windows 8 Tablet

Samsung Ativ 500T Smart PC

(Clover Trail Atom Processor)



February 2013

The following is a compilation of blog posts from the ITC Chronicles blog that I posted over a 30 day period of time beginning in December of 2012. During this series I explored the capabilities of the Samsung Ativ 500T Windows 8 Tablet from a teaching and learning perspective. The Samsung Ativ 500T is a new class of device that is based on the Clover Trail Atom processor from Intel that offers excellent battery life in an 11.6 inch slate form factor.

The Ativ 500T is not a full-fledged replacement for a desktop or laptop computer but the combination of a USB 2.0 port, digital Pen for taking handwritten notes, and expandable storage offers new features not found on the iPad. Most notably the full-size USB 2.0 port allows for easy transfer of content on and off the device.

Over the past 30 days I have lived with the Ativ 500T as my main computing device and for the most part it met my daily computing needs. There were occasions where I yearned for more power than the Atom-based processor offered but for 90 percent of the use cases it met my needs. The advantage of the Atom processor is its compatibility with millions of x86 Windows applications including Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote.

Whether you are a teacher or a student, the Samsung Ativ 500T offers much for day-to-day educational activities in a lightweight and mobile slate form factor. Be sure to checkout my next blog series, "30 Days with a Surface Pro Windows 8 Tablet" where I will investigate Microsoft's new entry into the hybrid tablet space.

Keep on Learning,
Tom Grissom, Ph.D.
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Day 1 - A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day One

December 5, 2012

If you listened to the last episode of [TechTalk4Teachers](#) you know that I have been looking for a new tablet for some time. Yesterday I finally took the plunge. I purchased the Samsung Ativ Smart PC Tablet (XE500T1C-A04US) for my personal use. I am taking one for the team here as I try to figure out the best use of this new class of Windows 8 tablets for teachers and students wanting to have a more productive tablet experience for home and school use. The retail price for the 64GB Samsung Ativ tablet is \$649.00 fifty dollars less than the 64GB iPad. I hope to document a few of my first impressions of this Windows 8 tablet in the coming days and over Christmas break as I have a few more hours available for testing once students have gone on semester break.

Why the Samsung Ativ XE500T1C?

Probably the first question many will ask is why not the iPad? The iPad has its positives but there are also many negatives and room for improvement. There are several attractive features of the new Windows 8 tablets that make them worthy of further investigation for educational use. First the Ativ Smart PC Tablet has a full size USB 2.0 port AND a microSD card slot. This is HUGE for teachers and students as it provides an easy way to get content on and off the device. The Ativ Smart PC Tablet is a Windows 8 (x86 class) device that can run the full version of Microsoft Office 2010 Suite (and soon 2013) as well as hundreds of thousands of other Windows applications (not apps, full-blown Windows applications). Do not confuse this tablet with the Windows RT version of devices that are based on the ARM processor as the RT versions are not compatible with x86 programs. Another huge benefit for schools is that Windows 8 supports multi-user logins and does multitasking.

The Ativ tablet is advertised to have approximately 10 hour battery life and currently access to over 20,000 apps in the Windows Store. Add in the integration of Microsoft Skydrive and apps like OneNote and you have a formidable entry into the educational tablet marketplace. If you have a HDTV with HDMI you can connect your tablet to the HDTV with the included microHDMI port. Oh, and one more thing, did I mention it has a Wacom digitizer with Pen input! Perhaps teachers and students could find some uses for marking up PDF files or annotating ebooks with hand written notes on digital paper.

Frankly, I have been holding out for the Lenovo Tablet 2 for the past couple of months but the shipping date has continually slipped and the Tablet 2 is currently unavailable with no firm delivery date advertised. Both the Lenovo Tablet 2 and the Samsung Ativ 500T1C utilize the new "Clover Trail" Atom processor from Intel. What this means in plain English is that you can load most regular Windows 7 programs and they will work fine on the Samsung Ativ 500T1C. For highly processor intensive applications the Clover trail processor will fall short and if you plan on running demanding applications there are other devices available with the Intel i3/i5/i7 processors that are designed for more demanding applications. Atom processors are best known for their use in netbooks and have gotten a

reputation of slow performance over the years. Someone has to be the trail blazer for this new class of processors on Windows 8 devices so here I am. Good news "Clover Trail" is fast and snappy.

Out of the box experience

I purchased the Samsung Ativ 500T1 from Staples late in the evening yesterday, I brought it home and plugged the electric adapter into the Ativ overnight for charging. I did not turn it on until this morning when it was fully charged. You will want to have a wifi connection available the first time you turn it on as there will be plenty of updates that are highly recommended to install before using the device. I was up and running in less than ten minutes out of the box (before updates). When you first turn on the Ativ you get the initial setup screens to select your language (English), Accept the Terms of Use, select a Computer Name, and select the Userid that you want to use to login to the device.

Being a user of Skydrive I already had a Microsoft account and used it to login the first time. This is when the magic occurs with Windows 8 devices. Since I was using my Skydrive account all my documents and pictures saved on Skydrive were immediately available on the tablet. It is a pleasing experience to see "YOUR" pictures light up the Live Tiles of the Windows 8 Start screen. It makes for a completely customized user experience that is as simple as logging in with your Microsoft ID if you already have one.

For the next 40 minutes I went through the Windows Update process and had to download and install 12 updates. I did not do anything special to update the Samsung specific drivers and have not run into any driver problems that I have noticed on the first day.

Discovery of the Day

There is one physical button on the Samsung Ativ tablet that has the Windows logo on it and is meant to be an easy way to access the Start screen in Windows 8. This is similar to the Windows key on traditional keyboards. I was sure I would be constantly using that button like I do the Home button on the iPad. Every time you turn around you are pressing the Home button on the iPad so I was expecting the same for a Windows tablet. Nope, during the first day I found myself swiping in with my right thumb and pressing the windows flag in the Charms menu to quickly get to the Start screen. Completely "reimagined" and "fast and fluid" (inside MS joke).

Day One = Happy

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

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Day 2 - Windows 8 a new OS

December 6, 2012

At the end of day one I turned the WiFi connection off since I do not currently have a general wireless Internet connection at home. I do this out of habit as I did not want the battery to run down searching for a nonexistent WiFi connection. I do have a 3G USB modem that I could have installed in the provided USB port in a pinch, but I wanted to see how the Samsung Ativ 500T tablet performed with no network connections at all available. Good news – it worked very well with no network connection at all. Since I was using my Outlook.com account to login I wondered if the tablet would let me login without any network connection. It worked by using the cached password and I was up and running without skipping a beat at my networkless household. Of course many of the apps that required Internet did not work without a network connection but since this tablet has the dual personality of Windows 8 I was able to use most Desktop apps as well as many of the “metro-style” Windows 8 apps. Metro-style is the name given to describe the look and feel of Windows 8. Apparently there are some legal concerns of Microsoft using the term but some are still using the metro-style term to describe the new look and feel of Windows 8.

Windows 8 is a bit of an enigma for new users mainly because it is different and a departure from what Microsoft has done in the past. Plenty of users are screaming about the loss of the Start button on the Desktop and much ink has been spilled by tech bloggers lambasting Windows 8 new design. Once you get over the lack of the Start button and wrap your head around the fact that the Start button has basically become the Start screen you can adapt easily to this interface change.

I do believe that the average computer user will adjust easily to the new Windows 8 if they take 30 minutes to watch an introductory video on the basics of the Windows 8 interface. This is particularly true for touchscreen tablets as Windows 8 has been designed as a touch first operating system but can also be used effectively and efficiently using a keyboard and mouse. Below is a link to a YouTube video from a Twitter friend @winobs that provides a good video overview of Windows 8. It was recorded back in June 2012 using the release preview so some things may be a bit different. The overview is about ½ hour long and is packed full of the basics of using the Windows 8 interface.

Windows 8 Release Preview Walkthrough

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJUqX5avAi0

I have been using beta versions Windows 8 on a conventional PC for well over a year using just a keyboard and mouse. Having access to my new touchscreen tablet has given me a new appreciation for the thought that has gone into the dual nature of the Windows 8 interface. I have not found anything I cannot do using the touchscreen but touch sure is a lot more intuitive for many actions, and dare I say more fun. Swipes, flicks, and pinches add a new dimension to Windows 8. In many ways Windows 8 has been simplified but yet it still has all the power of a traditional operating system shrouded by the layer of “Live Tiles” that decorate the new Start screen. This dual nature of Windows 8 compliments the

Samsung Ativ 500T very well and switching back and forth between the Desktop and the Start screen is not as jarring as some have reported in the press.

First glitch?

When I went to wake up the Samsung Ativ tablet first thing the morning of day 2 it did not turn on. I held down the power button for a few seconds to turn it off completely then turned it back on and it booted normally in just a few seconds. Not sure if this had anything with turning on Airplane Mode the night before or not but I will be keeping an eye out to see if it is recurring. The WiFi did not turn on until I did a restart of the system. I still have not updated the Samsung drivers so I may give that a try tomorrow.

First round of Windows 8 apps I installed

Here is a list of Windows 8 apps I installed and used on Day One and Two from the Windows Store:

- Kindle (I have many of ebooks from Amazon and it worked great on this tablet)
- Skype
- OneNote (Windows 8 lite-version of OneNote)
- Khan Academy
- Epicurious
- TechAU
- SlapDash Podcast app (Subscribed to [TechTalk4Teachers podcast](#))

This just gives me a flavor of the capabilities of this new Windows 8 tablet but I am enjoying learning and discovering the new capabilities of this device has to offer educators.

At the end of the evening on day two the battery still had about 40% available, as I went to bed I plugged in the electric adapter to recharge the tablet for day 3.

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Dr. Grissom

Day 3 - A Bump in the Road

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 3

December 7, 2012

Good news, first thing this morning after charging all night I pressed the on button and the Samsung Ativ 500 Tablet immediately turned on. Not sure what the issue was yesterday (Airplane Mode?) but everything works fine today. When I got to the office I turned on the WiFi and decided to do the Samsung driver updates. On day one I did all the Windows 8 updates and was excited to use the tablet so I skipped the Samsung hardware driver updates as the tablet was working fine. I was thinking in the back of my mind that yesterdays on/off issue might have been driver related so I set out to do the driver updates today.

Mistake #1

Samsung has an app called SW Update that kind of bundles all the Samsung updates into this one app. I started the SW Update and it found twenty some updates including Windows Critical updates. I deselected two of the apps as I uninstalled Norton Internet Security and Norton Online Backup trial software on day one and did not want it re-installed during the update process. This is something OEMs have been doing for years, loading trial software on Windows PCs that just clogs up the system and slows things down running unnecessary processes. I was a bit surprised by the Windows critical updates as I did a complete Windows update on the day I got this device.

A list of some of the Samsung SW Updates installed included:

Chipset driver, Graphics driver, NFC Driver, Bluetooth Device, Touchscreen Driver, Digitizer Driver, Display Color Profile, Windows 8 Critical Updates, Allshare Play, Wireless LAN Driver, Settings, Touch Support, Easy File Share Adobe Reader, Mini S Note, System BIOS Update, and ironically a SW Update Patch.



The downloads took 2 or 3 hours and I was in and out of meetings all morning so I could not see everything that was going on. When I got back to the office I received the message, cannot do critical updates without plugging in the power adapter, or something to that effect. Ugh, after waiting all that time the updates did not install until I plugged in the power adapter. My Android tablet does something

similar and I probably should have known better but the tablet had a full charge and at ten hours of battery life. My Android updates remind me on the front-end to plug-in to the power adapter before beginning the update process. My bad, lesson learned.

A Bump in the Road

The updates did not finish correctly the first time and after 4 hours of waiting I chose to Restart the tablet. Once re-booted the SW Update process continued and concluded with a System BIOS update. Updating the BIOS is a serious process as this updates the firmware used to boot the system. If the BIOS gets messed up during the update you have a brick.

All in all the first Samsung SW Update process was not a pleasant experience as things did not go smoothly and took 5 to 6 hours to complete (again, I was in and out of meetings so it may have went faster if I was there to see when the downloads completed and start the installs). I am glad I did not do the Samsung SW Update on the first day I got the tablet as it would have given me a negative impression right away. I have also had similar experiences on Android and Apple iOS devices so this is not to be completely unexpected but obviously all manufacturers need to work on improving the update process out of the box. Downloading large files over wireless takes time and most people (me included) are impatient, especially when you have a new device you want to use right away.

The good thing is the Samsung SW updates are done and any future updates should be of much smaller size. The other thing I did not like about SW Update was that it left shortcuts on the Desktop after the updates completed (see screenshot below). I deleted the shortcuts as I did not want a cluttered Desktop. I am not sure if this is normal for the Samsung SW Update process or if it did not cleanup the shortcuts because I did a restart during the process.



Discovery of the Day

I have a fairly long password and I am not the worlds fastest typist using the onscreen keyboard. I setup the Picture Password using a picture of my grandson and made three secret gestures that now quickly logs me into the tablet. Cool!

Picture Password

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/picture-passwords#1TC=t1>

At the end of the evening the battery still had more than 50% available, I plugged in the electric adapter to recharge the tablet for day 4.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Day 4 – A Super Tablet for Educators

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 4

Saturday, December 8, 2012

The Samsung Ativ 500T Smart PC tablet is a new class of device that is not yet fully appreciated. Maybe it should be called a “Super Tablet”. It can boot up from a cold start in 10 seconds. Once booted it acts more like a mobile phone than a PC as it uses something called “connected standby” that allows the tablet to be put into a low power mode but still receive updates to conserve the battery. Battery life is approximately 10 hours but I have not come close to using all the battery-life in one day. Once on, it has instant on and instant off by pressing the on/off button located on the top of the tablet just like most modern mobile phones.

Features for educators include multi-user logins and a full-size USB port!!! The Ativ 500T comes standard with 64GB internal SSD storage and 2GB RAM. Other things to note include microHDMI output to connect to a HDTV or projector (adapter sold separately) and a microSD card slot for additional storage. I really appreciate expandable storage and it makes it easy for teachers and/or students to easily save and share work to USB thumb drives. The Ativ 500T also has a front-facing camera as well as a camera on the back. The cameras work very well with the new Windows 8 Skype app as you can easily switch from the front camera to the back camera when using Skype.

Most importantly for my decision to buy this particular tablet was that it comes with a digitizer that allows precise control and input with a Pen-type stylus. Throw in a free Skydrive account with 7GB of cloud storage along with the new Windows 8 operating system and you have a “Super Tablet” for educational use.

This tablet is definitely a production device, but is it a tablet or a PC? Is it a Tablet PC? Tablet PC's are so 2002. After the bumps from updating the system drivers yesterday the tablet is running very well and I am getting more and more comfortable with all that this tablet has to offer.

There is an ongoing debate in the educational community of whether the iPad is a consumption or a production device. So, it is natural to ask the same question of the Samsung Ativ 500T. I can say hands-down that no question that this tablet is capable of both. Because the brain of this tablet uses the Clover Trail x86 processor you can run most programs that run on Windows 7. I am not sure that it is a full-fledged PC replacement but I have been pleasantly surprised that it has handled everything I have thrown at it to date. It may fall short for processor intensive applications but there are also the beefier Intel i3/i5/i7 processors coming to market in tablet and other form factors for those that need higher performance.

There is something about this tablet and the new class of devices coming to market that I cannot quite put my finger on but it is different than anything that has come before and that is a good thing. I am not sure if this tablet will replace my regular PC but it could for users that do not do heavy, processor intensive applications. If you only browse the Internet, check your email, and logon to Facebook this tablet is more than adequate as your primary device when paired with a wireless keyboard.

The Samsung Ativ 500T also has an optional keyboard that snaps on to essentially make it a clamshell netbook/laptop. The keyboard was an extra \$100 so I did not buy it (I may at a later date) but I do have Bluetooth and 2.4GHz keyboards available to use. I used a Bluetooth to pair a BT keyboard/mouse to the tablet and the tablet became a PC with keyboard and mouse input. The same was true with the Logitech K400 2.4GHz keyboard that I tried out, because the K400 comes with a USB radio receiver all I had to do was plug in the receiver to the full-size USB port on the top of the tablet and I was ready to go. Both the Bluetooth keyboard/mouse and the K400 keyboard had a range of about 30 feet making it possible to connect the tablet to a projector using either the microHDMI port to a HDMI port on a HDTV or by using a \$40 microHDMI to VGA adapter sold separately. This allows a teacher to roam around the room and control the tablet from the wireless keyboard, or better yet hand it off to a student to control the tablet so that everyone in the room can see the screen on the projector.

Discovery of the Day

Today is Saturday, a bit more laid back, so I used the Windows 8 Kindle app to do some reading from my Amazon Library of ebooks. This tablet is 11.6 inches and is a bit wider than many other tablets on the market but I easily adapted to the long rectangle layout in the Kindle app. I almost always use this tablet in landscape orientation, I tried using the Kindle app in portrait mode but it seemed too tall to use this way. You can adjust from one column or two column reading in the Kindle app. I prefer one column so I set that as the default for reading my Kindle ebooks.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Day 5 – A Windows 8 Tablet that is definitely a production device and a lot of fun too

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning – Day 5

Sunday, December 9, 2012

This tablet is definitely a production device. A couple of days ago I installed the Microsoft Office 2010 suite of programs on the Samsung Ativ 500T tablet. I have had so much to share each day and I am just now getting around to even mentioning this. Microsoft sells a Teacher and Student Edition of Office 2010 at discounted educational pricing that includes the big four applications of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. These are the complete and full function applications that many businesses use, not lightweight apps that have been simplified and limited. Because they are the “real deal” there are no limitations other than the processing power of the tablet. Pair Microsoft Office with this tablet and a wireless keyboard/mouse and you have a formidable production device.

All four of the Office applications open quickly. The big four Microsoft applications are the same programs I regularly use on my desktop PC so everything is compatible between this tablet and my desktop. I am amazed at how quickly Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote open on this tablet, each one opens in less than 3 seconds! That is much faster than even my regular PC desktop. So much for the Clover Trail ATOM processor being labeled as slow (with a little help from the 64GB SSD hard drive). 3 seconds!

There is one more big surprise that I will have much more to say about in a future post. The OneNote application is absolutely amazing on this tablet. The Ativ 500T comes with what Samsung calls the S Pen that is basically a stylus that allows you to write digital notes using your own handwriting in digital ink using the S Pen. For educators OneNote is a “killer app” that few have discovered and is underutilized by most teachers and students. OneNote has a long legacy from the Tablet PC days and is now a mature product that I think every teacher and student should be aware of. Have you used OneNote on a tablet?

Updates, Updates, Updates

At the end of the day when I went to the Windows Store I noticed that I had 30 Updates to install. This notice appeared in the upper right hand corner of the Windows Store screen and said 30 updates. When you click that link you see the apps that are marked for updating. These updates were for the apps that were preinstalled on the Start screen as well as some of the apps I installed from the Windows Store. Having learned my lesson from a couple of days ago, I PLUGGED THE TABLET INTO AN ELECTRICAL ADAPTER before I started the update process. I was expecting the updates to take a while but they took less than a couple of minutes to install with the exception of 2 apps. One game app called Shark Dash failed to update and the Update for the Mail, Calendar, and People app said Pending for about five minutes so I went to the Settings Charm and Selected Power, this time there was a different option called UPDATE AND RESTART. I selected it and the tablet restarted and applied the updates except for the pending Mail, Calendar, and People app.

When I went back into the Windows Store the update for the Mail, Calendar, and People app began to download and installed with no problems. One thing about app stores to keep in mind, some will go crazy installing every free app under the Sun with no concept that each of those apps are computer programs and will be in need of future updates. Those updates require time and maintenance to keep in good working order. I recommend being conservative with app installs and I will often uninstall apps that I do not use on a regular basis.

Discovery of the Day

Being Sunday, I thought I would checkout some of the fun apps available in the Windows Store. I downloaded a couple of free apps including an astronomy constellation program called Sky Map and the free Cut the Rope game. Cut the Rope is a fun game for a touchscreen tablet. As the name implies you cut the rope and a ball swings to hit charms that you get points for hitting. There really is quite a bit of strategy to the Cut the Rope game and it gets progressively harder as you advance through the levels. It is a good thinking game as you have to reason out the Physics behind a swinging rope and gravity to hit your target.



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Dr. Grissom

Day 6 – The Audacity of a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 6

Monday, December 10, 2012

Today I continued exploring some of the apps that I regularly use on my desktop PC. Today's target was Audacity, a free open-source application that I regularly use to record the [TechTalk4Teachers podcast](#). I downloaded the latest version of the application, now at Version 2.0.2, and lucky for me it now works with 32 bit Windows 8 systems like the Samsung Ativ 500T Tablet. Once installed I opened Audacity, clicked on the red record button and began speaking. I pressed the Stop button to stop the recording and then the Play button to hear the playback of my first recording on the tablet. That was easy.

By default Audacity uses the onboard microphone of the Ativ 500T tablet and sound quality was acceptable but being a podcaster I knew I could do better. I grabbed a Logitech USB headset with a microphone boom and plugged it into the full size USB port located on the top of the tablet. Have I told you how much I love having a USB port on a tablet? Since Audacity is a Desktop PC application I went to the Desktop in Windows 8 and launched the Audacity program from the shortcut left over from the initial install. The Logitech USB headset was automatically recognized. Tip: When you use Audacity always plugin your microphone and headsets BEFORE you launch the Audacity program. This allows the Audacity program to find the hardware it needs before it is opened.

If you need to double check your playback and recording default settings in Audacity you can go into Edit > Preferences and use the pull-down menus on the Playback and Recording pull-downs to select the sound output and the recording microphone for input. I have not yet done any editing so I cannot speak to the performance of exporting out a typical 30 minute TechTalk4Teachers audio podcast but I had no problems with the recording.

The speakers on this tablet are located on the left and right sides on the front of the tablet and actually sound good compared to many laptop speakers that I have heard. Plugging in earbuds in the headphone jack provides for an even better auditory experience.

Uninstalling Apps

I tried updating the Shark Dash app again today with the same failed result. Shark Dash had to go if it was misbehaving. I also uninstalled the Norton Security app that I had no use for and heard reports from others that it slowed the tablet down. I did have a case where the tablet “froze” today and was unresponsive to touch. I held down the power button for a few seconds to shutdown then turned back on. Not sure if it was Shark Dash or the Norton Security program causing this problem but I decided to uninstall these two apps since I do not use them. To uninstall a Windows 8 app you press on the Live Tile of the app with your finger until it is selected (or right-click on the tile if you are using a mouse). You then swipe up from the bottom of the screen on the tablet and an app menu pops up with additional choices. One of those choices is Uninstall.

Discovery of the Day – Print Screen

I have been in need of some screenshots to share in this blog so here is the secret. To take a screenshot with this tablet press the Windows button AND the Volume-Down button simultaneously on the screen that you want to take the screenshot of.

If you are using a keyboard you can press the Windows Key and the Print Screen key together simultaneously on the keyboard to take a screenshot. Either method will store the screenshot in a subfolder called Screenshots in the Pictures Folder.

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Day 7 – BYOD: Windows 8 Tablet Playing Nice with Others

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 7

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

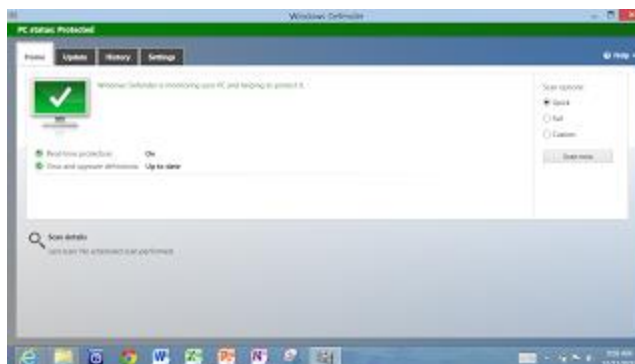
There were a couple of unintended consequences from my actions yesterday when I uninstalled a couple of the apps that were preinstalled on the Samsung Ativ 500T Tablet. I uninstalled a game app (Shark Dash) and also the Norton Internet Security Suite that came preinstalled. I did this after having issues with updating the Shark Dash app and also wanted to remove what some call unnecessary bloatware that sometimes can slow down the operating system.

This morning when I tried connecting to the university WiFi network I was not allowed on to the network. The university uses a system called “Safe Connect” that acts as a gatekeeper for users accessing the WiFi network. I provided a screenshot of the Safe Connect splash screen I received this morning below indicating I had been quarantined until I updated my antivirus program.



All computers accessing the university network (Mac or PC) must have up-to-date antivirus software installed. If not then the device is not allowed on the network until the issue is resolved. This is to protect the entire user community from computers/devices that might be infected with a virus and to keep it from spreading to other users. It is also used to authenticate active faculty, staff, and students to verify they are users in good standing at the university.

When I uninstalled the Norton program the included Windows 8 antivirus program (Windows Defender) was not turned back on. This is what tripped the Safe Connect program that prevented me from logging in to the university network. To fix this issue I clicked on the red flag icon in the lower right corner of the status bar on the Windows 8 Desktop. When I clicked on the red flag it gave me the option to turn back on Windows Defender and I was then able to connect to the university network. Problem solved.



There is a growing movement across the nation that has been labeled as BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) where employees and students bring their own electronic gadgets into the workplace or school for work/school related use. This presents many challenges for IT departments that provide networking services (often at no cost to individuals, but at large costs to businesses and schools). Because Windows 8 has a long tradition in the enterprise the Samsung Ativ 500T (and tablets like it) fit well into corporate and school environments and thus make it a natural BYOD device. Windows 8 tablets based on the Clover Trail processor are affordable, expandable, and compatible with many established business and school computing environments.

Since many mobile phones and laptops have WiFi capability many people expect network access for them at their place of employment or school. WiFi capability of gadgets has proliferated immensely over the years and now it is not uncommon for individuals to have more than one WiFi capable device. In a university setting many students have some combination of a mobile phone, iPod or other MP3 player, iPad, xBox, ebook reader, laptop, and/or desktop computer. In the past couple of years low cost tablets have hit the market including the Kindle, Nook, Nexus 7, and hundreds more. Believe it or not many students have multiple devices that they want to connect to available WiFi networks for free. This expectation has proven costly to businesses and schools as deploying campus wide WiFi is expensive. In the end someone has to pay for all of this “free” WiFi. In order to manage capacity and access many IT departments deploy special tools to monitor usage and aide in future capacity planning.

Discovery of the Day – Keyboard Choices

The Samsung Ativ 500T Tablet comes standard with a choice of 3 different styles of onscreen keyboard input. First there is the traditional QWERTY style keyboard that allows you to switch back and forth between letters of the alphabet and numbers and symbols. What I particularly like about the first keyboard style is that it has the Ctrl key next to the space bar. This is very handy for copy and paste (Ctrl-C and Ctrl-V) a very common action with word processing.

The second choice of keyboard style is what I call the thumb typing keyboard. The keyboard keys are cut in half with half on the left side and half on the right side of the screen. Because the Ativ tablet is a wide 16:9 screen this style allows for you to use your right and left thumbs to enter text.

The third type of keyboard style is actually a handwriting recognition input area that allows you to write using the S Pen stylus like you normally would using pencil and paper. As you write the tablet uses

handwriting recognition to change your handwriting into typed letters in whatever application you have open. This has been around for over a decade on Tablet PC's and is now a mature technology that is amazingly fast and accurate.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Day 8 – This Windows 8 Super Tablet is Great for Educational Use

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 8

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

What makes a great tablet for educational use? The Samsung Ativ 500T meets my list of desirable features for teachers and students.

The list of features that make this tablet desirable for educational use include:

- Full-size USB port
- MicroSD card slot
- MicroHDMI output (VGA adapter sold separately to connect to a projector)
- Wacom digitizer with S Pen Stylus for creating digital ink
- 720P (1366x768) wide-screen 16:9 format
- Front and Rear Cameras
- Built-in Microphone
- Front Facing SpeakersHeadphone Jack
- Bluetooth 4.0
- Dual-Core Atom z2760 processor (x86 compatible – it can run millions of Windows x86 applications in addition to the 20,000 plus Windows 8 apps in the Windows Store)
- 10 hour + battery life
- Instant on/off with connected standby
- WiFi b/g/n
- 64GB SSD hard drive
- 2 GB RAM

The engineers have done their jobs in creating a fast and responsive touchscreen device with expandable storage that provides more flexibility for educational use than any other tablet currently on the market.

Forget about the technical specifications for a moment and ponder what they average teacher or student can do with such a device?

This Super Tablet can run the full Office 2010/2013 Suite of programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote) along with millions of other x86 compatible Windows applications not to mention the now 20,000 + apps available in the Windows 8 Store.

Teachers/students can write papers using Word, create spreadsheets using Excel, and produce presentations using PowerPoint. You can easily connect a wireless keyboard if the onscreen keyboard is too confining. The OneNote application allows you to use the S Pen stylus to write handwritten notes. Word, Excel, and PowerPoint are also Pen capable which means you can use digital ink to make notes on a Word document and save the file that includes the handwritten annotations. You can then email the document to the student so they can see your handwritten digital notes. This is an absolutely wonderful

feature for teachers especially in higher education where more and more work is being turned in digitally.

Once content is created on this device a teacher or student has many options for saving and sharing their work easily. The full-size USB port is extremely convenient and gives you the freedom to save documents and other files to a USB thumb drive.

The two cameras allow for easy photo taking or creating videos on this device. Windows 8 comes with Live Movie Maker that is an easy to use program to create videos for educational school use.

The digital ink capabilities of this tablet can essentially replace an Interactive White Board as you can connect this tablet to a projector and project the screen to the entire class using a projector. You do have to buy the microHDMI to VGA adapter separately at a cost of approximately \$40 or if you have an HDTV with HDMI input you can get microHDMI to HDMI cable for around \$5.

With built-in WiFi you have complete access to the Internet (even Flash-based websites) using the Desktop browser. Imagine accessing the 3500 + videos available on the Khan Academy or listening to audio podcast or viewing educational video screencasts.

All in all a very flexible device with immense possibilities for educational use. What an amazing time to be a technology savvy educator!!!

Discovery of the Day – WiFi connections

The Samsung Ativ 500T Tablet comes with built-in WiFi and is working great. I take this tablet from home to work daily and it is really nice that the tablet automatically connects to my work network and automatically connects to my home network without any intervention from me. If there is a problem with the WiFi you can go to the Start screen, swipe in with your right thumb to bring up the Charms Screen select Settings and you will see the WiFi Bars symbol. You can click this symbol and it will display available WiFi networks in the immediate vicinity. I have read reports of problems with connection to WiFi but I have not experienced this. Best advice if you are experiencing WiFi problems is to make sure all the drivers are up-to-date as I have.

If you need to turn WiFi off and then back on to reconnect you can get there by selecting the Charms Menu > Settings > Change PC Settings > Wireless. You then have the option to turn Wireless on or off.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Day 9 – Working up a Sweat on a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 9

Thursday, December 13, 2012

Tonight I am editing my [TechTalk4Teachers podcast](#) that I will post tomorrow. Cindy Rich and I do a bi-monthly podcast about teaching and learning with technology. We are now on Episode 142 and I have the raw audio files that we recorded earlier today that I need to edit. Editing involves adding the music at the beginning and ending of the podcast along with the bumper music between segments. The segments need to be stitched together to make it a bit more seamless to make for a better listening experience.

I use a mixer where Cindy and I each have a microphone and the two mics go into the mixer where I can control the volume and then the output goes into a digital audio recorder. We typically record one segment at a time and each segment ends up as a .wav file that is stored on a SD card in the digital audio recorder we use.

Tonight it is time to push my Samsung Ativ tablet to its limits to see what it is really made of. Because the Ativ uses the Clover Trail x86 processor I can use the Audacity program that I normally use to edit the podcast on this Windows 8 tablet. Nice!

First challenge was how to get the .wav audio files off the SD card and into the tablet. No problem as I have a USB SD card reader that all I had to do was take the SD card out of the digital audio recorder, put it into the USB SD card reader and plug it into the full-size USB port on the Ativ tablet. Next I went to the Desktop, clicked on the file manager, created a folder under my documents called tt4t_142, then I copied all the .wav files from the SD card to the tt4t_142 folder. That was easy.

Next up, I launched Audacity from the Desktop and imported the largest audio file into Audacity for editing. The main feature of episode 142 was about the Ativ Super Tablet and it was approximately 30 minutes long before edits. The file size was 384 MB and it took the Ativ tablet 4 minutes and 47 seconds to import this very large audio file. For comparison sake I did the same thing using my Dell XPS 13 laptop that has an i5 processor, 4 GB RAM, and a 128GB SSD hard drive. The XPS 13 imported the same file into Audacity in approximately 45 seconds. Quite a bit of difference and it was the first time I witnessed the Clover Trail processor huffing and puffing.

Another thing that I have noticed about the Clover Trail processor is that this tablet never gets hot. It has a plastic back but I notice no heat coming from the processor like I can feel from some i5/i7 laptops.

Once the large .wav file was imported it was very easy to edit. In fact, I think I like editing the audio file on the tablet better than on my XPS 13. Why? Because I could use the Samsung S Pen Stylus to highlight areas on the timeline to delete. The S Pen gives fantastic control and was very precise in highlighting the edits. Much more precise than using the mouse and clicking and dragging to highlight the area I wanted to edit using the XPS 13 laptop. I noticed no performance issues while editing. Remember this was a 30 minute audio section so it really gave the tablet a real world workout.

I used my high quality headphones plugged into the headphone jack on the tablet so I could listen to what I was editing. It sounded great and I actually think I edited this section faster on the tablet than I could of on the XPS 13 laptop.

So the lesson learned today was that yes, the Clover Trail processor has its limits. Processor intensive activities will take longer on the Ativ tablet. I think the tradeoffs of instant on/off and fast task switching along with long battery life make for an acceptable tradeoff in performance.

If I was doing regular heavy processing activities I would want to take a look at the i5 Windows 8 tablets now on the market – just remember the battery life will be much less.

Discovery of the Day – SlapDASH Podcast app

Since I have been working on Episode 142 of TechTalk4Teachers you may be wondering what podcast app do I use? There are only a few podcast catcher apps in the Windows 8 Store right now and some are free (supported by advertising). The SlapDash podcast app was free and it is the one I use to Subscribe to my [TechTalk4Teachers podcast](#) to make sure my RSS feeds are working properly.

If you would like to subscribe to the TechTalk4Teachers podcast you can use the following RSS feed:

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/techtalk4teachers>

Be sure to listen to Episode 142 of TechTalk4Teachers as Cindy and I discuss my newly purchased Samsung Ativ Smart PC Tablet purchase on the show. We take a look at it from an educators perspective.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 10 – Connecting External Displays to a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 10

Friday, December 14, 2012

For classroom teachers often one of the first things we want to do is connect whatever device we are using to a projector so that we can share what is on our screen to a projected image at the front of the room. This allows for sharing what is on our screen so that all students can see what is going on. At EIU all of our classrooms are what we call Technology Enhanced Classrooms. What that means is that all classrooms are outfitted with a desktop computer with high-speed Internet connection, (Smart Boards in the College of Education & Professional Studies) , a document camera, a projector mounted on the ceiling, a sound amplifier with speakers, and a video switch box that allows for connecting a laptop using a VGA connection cable to switch between the desktop computer, laptop, and/or document camera. This equipment is located in a lockable podium and all of our classrooms are setup as similar as possible so that faculty and students need only learn one setup.

Our faculty float from room to room as they are not assigned one classroom as is typical in the K12 environment. Most faculty just use the provided desktop computer in the podium and plugin a USB thumb drive to access materials they want to share with the class. Some bring their own laptops and connect using the provided VGA cable and change the video switch box so that the laptop screen shows on the projector.

Herein begins the problem. Many PC based laptops come with VGA connection built-in but many of the newer ultrabooks and now tablets no longer have a VGA output as an option. As a consequence we have to enter the nightmare world of adapters. The VGA connection has been one of those standards that has stood the test of time over the past 20 plus years. Having this stability has been good for consumers but new devices are beginning to drop this standard in favor of display port, HDMI, or in the worst cases some other weird proprietary connector. This is where it becomes costly for faculty and students as you have to start buying “adapter converter cables” that change whatever output port the device manufacturer decides is the flavor of the day.

Thus is the case with my Samsung Ativ 500T Tablet. Thankfully, the Samsung Ativ tablet uses the microHDMI standard and at least a cable that goes from microHDMI to HDMI costs less than \$5 on Amazon. That is fine if all I want to do is connect to a HDTV (almost all HDTVs have HDMI inputs) The problem comes when I want to connect my Ativ tablet to any of the potential 200 plus Technology Enhanced Classrooms on campus.

So.... I broke down (as much as I hated to) and bought one of those expensive Samsung microHDMI to VGA connectors that probably costs less than \$1 to make but \$30 to \$40 to buy. Ugh. Some manufacturers are better than others and standardize on a connector type over a period of years. Others seem to change every other year and offer only proprietary cables that work only on "their" devices and are very expensive. They know you have no other choice but buy the costly proprietary version (not cool).

I bought the official Samsung microHDMI to VGA connector for about \$40. This will allow me to connect the Ativ Windows 8 Tablet to any of our 200 plus classrooms and display what is on the tablet to the projector so all students can see my tablet display.

Since I am using my tablet as a tablet 80 percent of the time the first challenge I had to figure out was how to switch the tablet into duplicate screen mode. On a Windows 7 or Windows 8 computer with a keyboard you can simply press the Windows Key and the P Key together if you are using a keyboard to change the display to the projector. Well, with this tablet I am not using a keyboard 80 percent of the time so how do I get to these settings without a keyboard?. Strangely the onscreen keyboard does not even have the Windows Key so the onscreen keyboard will not work.

So here is what I did. First connect the microHDMI to VGA adapter to the tablet and plugin the VGA cable coming from the projector. Once everything is plugged in go to the Charms menu (easiest way is to swipe in from the right side of the screen with your thumb). Next select the DEVICES choice from the Charms menu. Once you press DEVICES you will see a choice for SECOND SCREEN (you must plugin the adapter to the tablet and projector for this choice to display). Select DEVICES and then you will get the choices of PC SCREEN ONLY, DUPLICATE, EXTEND, and SECOND SCREEN ONLY. I almost always select DUPLICATE so that what I see on my tablet screen is what the students see on the projector. Make sure that your projector (or HDTV) is set to the proper input and you Voilà! You see your tablet screen on the projector screen when you select DUPLICATE. Mission accomplished.

Now you can zip around the touchscreen and the students see in real time the tablet screen on the projector. Even better you can use the S Pen stylus and the tablet can substitute for an Interactive White Board. Using the S Pen stylus with OneNote allows a teacher to make freehand notes and drawings to share with the students displayed on the projector. Even better when finished save the notes and post them to a website or email them to a student that missed class.

Discovery of the Day – 720P vs 1080P Can the average user tell the difference on a 10 inch tablet?

When I plugged in the Ativ 500T into my older 32 inch HDTV via a microHDMI to HDMI cable the screen did not expand to take up the entire screen. Instead it centered it on the screen and left a black area all the way around the tablet screen image. This is probably due to the fact that the tablet is a 1366x768 resolution and the HDTV is 1920x1080. Not sure how to get around this issue yet so I need some more time to play around and see if there is a work around solution.

I also used the Samsung microHDMI to VGA adapter cable and plugged the tablet into the VGA port on my HDTV and this time the display filled the entire screen and looked great. I still need to try this out on some different models of projectors at school but I think the older VGA handles the 1366x768 resolution better than the higher 1080P displays.

I have had several people look at the Ativ 500T tablet side-by-side the iPad 2 and the iPad 3 and most could not tell a difference in the screen appearance. Some even said the Ativ looked better than the Retina display of the iPad 3. Sometimes we get all wrapped up in the technical details and convince

ourselves there is a noticeable difference when average users cannot tell much of a difference if they are not told (marketing hype).

Not so long ago the advice was that 1080P displays did not make that much of a difference when buying a TV until you went above a 32 inch screen size. That is probably why 720P has stuck around so long on smaller displays. Today the bigger is better attitude is winning in the market speak but there is a price to pay in pixel density when files become larger that require more bandwidth and faster processors to move the pixels around. There is no such thing as a free lunch (or a free pixel).

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 11- Screencasting on a Windows 8 Tablet for the Flipped Classroom

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 11

Saturday, December 15, 2012

Today I did some preliminary screencast testing on the Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T Tablet with mixed results. One of the value added benefits for students watching educational videos is the ability to stop, rewind, and review a video as many times as necessary to understand the material being presented. With the advancements in technology the creation of sceencasts is now within reach of the average teacher.

Screencasting has made it to mainstream teachers largely due to the popularization of the flipped teaching model pioneered by Sal Khan of the [Khan Academy](#). In the [flipped classroom](#) students are assigned to watch videos outside of class for homework instead of working on problems. When they come to the classroom the next day the teacher uses the classroom time to work on projects/problems that would normally be homework. This allows the teacher to walk around the room and provide individual attention to students that may need some extra help. So essentially what used to be face-to-face lectures can be delivered in a screencast format viewed at home and the homework is done during class time thus “flipping” the classroom. It also allows for individual customization of the curriculum by letting students pace themselves as they master content.

It is an entirely different conversation whether the merits of the flipped classroom constitute an advancement in learning but teachers are experimenting with new pedagogies that require the production of online videos and screencasting is becoming increasingly popular among educators. Teacher created videos can be very time consuming to produce and thus my interests in using a tablet to create screencasts. Since the Ativ 500T has a digitizer, the S Pen Stylus will be very useful in annotating notes and illustrations and provide for more flexibility than using just a keyboard and mouse.

One of my favorite screencasting creation tools is [Camtasia by Techsmith, Inc.](#) Since the Ativ Tablet uses the Clover Trail processor it can run most x86 programs. Camtasia is fairly expensive, around \$200 educational price, but it has many high-end features that make it desirable for recording screencasts. I downloaded the free 30 day trial of Camtasia 8 Studio (242MB) and installed it on the Ativ tablet today.

To see an example screencast of a Smart Board Tips and Tricks video created with Camtasia visit the [ITC YouTube Channel](#).

I have been using version 7 of Camtasia on my Desktop computer so the interface was familiar to me. This is another benefit of being able to run familiar x86 applications on this tablet. I pinned the Camtasia program to the taskbar on the Desktop portion of the Ativ tablet. I double-clicked the Camtasia icon, selected record Full Screen and then pressed the Record button. It began counting down 3, 2, 1 and then said press F10 to stop recording. Oops, I do not have a keyboard connected at this point so there is no F10 to press to stop the recording. Thoughts of my hard drive filling up flashed through my head then I thought I would bring up the onscreen keyboard. Oops again, the onscreen keyboard does not have

function keys. In the end it was easy to stop the recording as I was able to click on the Camtasia Icon on the taskbar and press the Stop button. Whew.

Making a short 2 minute screencast was easy. I did not do any editing of the original screencast but if I were posting the screencast to YouTube I would most likely do some edits. The next step I chose was PRODUCE and I selected to produce a 720P HD video in MP4 format. After selecting the format I began the rendering process. Rendering took a very, very, long time. It took approximately 30 minutes to render the 2 minute screencast to a 720P MP4 format. Once rendering completed however the results looked great!!! The slower rendering time I am sure was due to the Z2760 Clover Trail Atom processor being a slower processor than I am typically use to on a full-size Desktop.

If all you were doing were short 5 minute or less videos then screencasting on this tablet might be tolerable. For anything longer than that the rendering times will become too excessive to be productive (patience is not one of my virtues). I will continue experimenting with some short 1 minute screencasts on this tablet as I want to use the S Pen to create some screencasts with digital ink. I wonder if I can save the initial recorded screencast as a Camtasia Project on a USB thumb drive and then transfer the files to a Desktop with a faster processor to do the heavy editing and rendering??? Worth a try I guess, has anyone successfully done this?

Another possibility is to buy the newer Windows 8 tablets on the market with the Intel Core i5 processors that will be much faster. A second version of the Microsoft Surface is coming out in January that will have an i5 processor. The new i5 Surface will also have a higher 1920x1080 screen resolution that will produce sharper videos so this class of device may be more suitable for producing screencasts. As I refresh some of my older equipment at home the i5 Surface may be worth a look as a laptop replacement for me.

Discovery of the Day – Sound output options when using external displays

Following up on yesterdays post about external displays I wanted to mention the two options for sound output when using an external display. First, if you are lucky enough to connect through the microHDMI into a HDMI port (like to a HDTV) then your sound problems are solved. HDMI transmits both video and audio so just one cable is needed to connect to a HDMI projector or HDTV to have picture and sound.

If you are using a VGA adapter you will need to also connect an external speaker of some sort to the tablet using the 3.5mm headphone jack located at the top left hand corner of the Ativ 500T tablet. VGA only carries the video signal so if you want to use a sound source other than your tablet speakers (which are not loud enough for classroom use) be sure to use the headphone jack as an output to a set of speakers that will be loud enough for all students in class to hear.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 12 - The Magic of an Always On Always Connected Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 12

Sunday, December 16, 2012

One of the new features receiving little notice by the technical press is the combination of the Windows 8 operating system on new hardware designs that support something called “connected standby”. The Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T Tablet is such a device. It may not be a flashy and exciting topic for the average user but the engineering behind this new technology is magical. The new Intel Clover Trail processor with the new SoC (System on a Chip) designs from Intel are changing the way devices manage power settings and thus extend battery life. In laymens terms Intel is bringing features of mobile phones to PC's and Tablets like instant on and off and connected standby.

What does this mean for the average user? First connected standby allows for fast task switching at reduced power levels on Windows 8 devices. On the Ativ Tablet I can actually start playing an audio podcast or a MP3 file from my music collection and it will continue to play in the background when I switch to other apps. That is very nice but even better, from a power management point of view, I can press the off button at the top of the Ativ tablet and the screen will turn off but the music or podcast will continue to play.

When in connected standby the tablet is in a very low power state and this allows for very long battery life. The other benefit of connected standby is that background tasks can continue receiving information so your email will update as well as other notifications and updates when you turn the tablet back on. Pretty Cool!

This is how the “Live Tiles” on the Windows 8 Start screen can stay up to date even when the tablet is “off”, magical.

In the not so magical department I have had a couple of occasions where the Ativ tablet has locked up and I have had to do a hard reset to turn it back on. If the tablet is locked up you can hold the power button down for 5 seconds and it will turn off (of course any unsaved work may be lost). Both times the tablet locked up on me was when working with playing an audio file and switching between apps so it may be a driver issue. This has also happened to me on iOS and Android devices where I have to end the task or turn the device on and off for a reset.

For a more detailed article on Windows 8 power efficiency I have provided a link to an article that does a good job explaining the improved power management.

Microsoft explains Windows 8's improved power efficiency

<http://www.techspot.com/news/47361-microsoft-explains-windows-8s-improved-power-efficiency.html>

I have talked quite a bit about the dual personality nature of this tablet, is it a PC or is it a tablet? The Windows 8 operating system has undertaken the task of unifying the “look and feel” of Windows 8 across device types including desktops, laptops, tablets, and mobile phones.

In order to meet the demands of disparate devices the dual personality of the Desktop for traditional PC use is there in Windows 8 as well as the Start screen for the new style of Windows 8 apps going forward.

This has been a monumental task but after using Windows 8 on all of the different form factors including Windows Phone and now this Ativ Tablet the benefits are definitely there for end users. Add a Microsoft account that can save and sync settings across devices plus access online Skydrive storage across device types and you have one of the best ecosystems out there, bar none.

Discovery of the Day – Personalize your Lock Screen

On the Ativ Tablet changing the Lock Screen (what you see when you turn on the device) is an easy way to personalize your tablet. To change the Lock Screen picture simply go to the Charms Menu, (swipe in with your right thumb, or Win + C on a Keyboard) select Settings, select Change PC Settings, select Personalize, then select Lock Screen. You can then browse for pictures in your Library and choose the picture you want for your lock screen. This picture is a statement about what is important to you and how you want to be noticed by others. For me I chose a picture of my family to remind me what is most important in my life every time I turn on this tablet.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 13 – Using the new Skype App on a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 13

Monday, December 17, 2012

Today, I had a scheduled Skype session with someone in California that is in my Personal Learning Network. One of the great benefits of having a PLN is that you get to meet some very smart and dedicated educators from all around the world and learn from them. Using Facebook and Twitter is great for keeping up-to-date with seeing what others are doing from snapshot postings but it is not the same as talking to someone in person. Enter Skype, with Skype you can have a face-to-face video call with anyone in the world at the click of a button, all using this tablet. Amazing!

I decided I would use the Samsung Ativ Smart PC Tablet 500T for the Skype session this morning as I wanted to see how it performed. The new Skype app has a very clean and minimalist look to it. Since I already had a Skype account all of my contacts were automatically displayed when I first logged into my Skype account, nice.

The Ativ 500T tablet has both a front and back facing camera to be used for taking still photographs, videos, and for Skype calls. I had downloaded the Windows 8 Skype app (it was free) from the Windows Store last week and tried it out with the help of one of my Graduate Assistants.

Last week when testing the app with my GA I took the tablet out in the hallway and placed the Skype call to my GA. The new Skype app allows you to change from the front to the back camera by simply pressing the camera video in the Skype call. I pressed the front facing camera display and it switched to using the back camera. I then walked down the hall so now the video my GA was seeing was from the back camera of the tablet and he was seeing what I was as seeing as I walked down the hall. Perhaps this could be of use in setting up some virtual field trips for my students in the future, hmmm.

Another scenario where this camera switching would be valuable for teachers is when we have a Skype call in the classroom and the remote caller would like to see the entire room of students. With this tablet and the new Skype app you can easily switch back and forth between the front and back camera as needed.

My Skype partner and I agreed upon a time last week and set the time for 10:30am CST today. I propped the tablet up against my desktop computer on my desk so that I would be in the field of view of the front camera. I need to find a better solution if I do much more Skyping in the future and find a case or some other type of holder. Since my Skype partner was in California it was 8:30am for him. When 10:30am CST approached I sent a Skype text message to see if my partner was ready and he was. He initiated the call and I answered it by clicking the green accept call button. I then clicked on the Video button to allow the front facing camera on the tablet to turn on for a video call. We talked about several educational technology related topics for about 20 minutes and agreed to get back in touch after the new year.

The tablet worked great for the Skype call!

The audio I heard was great and the video quality was also good. It was the next best thing to being in the same room. I did not use any extra microphones as I just used the tablets built-in microphone and front facing camera. The call was placed using only a WiFi connection and there was only one slight video stutter during the entire 20 minute call. Not bad for using a WiFi connection and having a video call half-way across the country in California on a wireless tablet that I can hold in my hand.

This tablet continues to impress. Now I can add video conferencing to the list of educational capabilities this tablet offers teachers and students that is very easy to use.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 14 – Skydrive and tablets, your link to cloud storage for multiple devices

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 14

Tuesday, December 18, 2012

I have been a user of Skydrive since its inception. When you sign up for a Microsoft account you now get 7GB of free Skydrive storage.

What is Skydrive? It is simply a storage place in the cloud that you can access anywhere there is an Internet connection. Long before Google Drive and iCloud there was Skydrive. In the past year or so, Microsoft has been improving Skydrive services and Skydrive now does many things beyond simply storing your documents in the cloud. You can now sync files from your PC or Tablet, share files with others, and use Microsoft Web Apps to access your documents even if you do not have the Office 2010 Suite installed on your computer/tablet.

One of the reasons we need solutions like Skydrive is that it is getting more and more common for individuals to have more than one device. Tablets are what some call companion devices in that they are an add-on and are not currently full-fledged replacements for laptops or desktop PCs. Because tablets are an “and” device you need to worry about how to access content from multiple devices.

It is now not uncommon for a professional to have a mobile phone, tablet, laptop, and/or desktop PC. Accessing and sharing content from device to device can be challenging and sometimes frustrating. Keeping track of different versions of the same file can be a royal pain. Microsoft Skydrive was designed to solve some of the problems of living in a multi-device world.

If you are a teacher or student you have no doubt ran into a situation where you have needed to access a file you left at school. You could have left your laptop at school or left that USB drive you use to store files you take back and forth.

Skydrive allows me to save a document that I am working on from my PC at the office to my Skydrive account that I can later access from my tablet. Since I have installed the full version of Microsoft Office on the Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T Tablet I have complete and full access to my Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote files on my tablet, just like my desktop PC. Once finished editing on the tablet I save the document back to Skydrive then I can access it from my office PC when I get back to my desk. If I get a call when I am away from the office and I do not have my tablet with me I can access the documents from my Windows 8 Phone. Since I have my Skydrive account accessible from my PC, tablet, and phone I have unprecedented flexibility in accessing my work files. I have grown to love this digital nomad lifestyle and my productivity has increased as a result of having access to my content anywhere and anytime.

One note of caution, do not store sensitive or confidential information on Skydrive. Be sure to follow your organizations policies on using Internet services.

Since this tablet has a dual personality there are actually two different ways to utilize Skydrive. Each way has its own strengths. I will begin with the easiest way to access Skydrive files. If I want fast and easy access to my files on my tablet there is a Skydrive app on the Windows 8 Start screen that I can use. Since I am using my Microsoft account to login to my tablet all of my Skydrive files are accessible to me from the Windows 8 Skydrive app. The benefit to this is that I have access to 7GB of files in the cloud and they are not stored on my device. This is particularly helpful for my mobile phone as it has limited storage. It is fantastic being able to access my pictures and other files from my Skydrive account from my phone, tablet, or PC. If 7GB of storage is not enough you can purchase additional storage at reasonable costs.

The Skydrive Windows 8 app is very simple. When I open the Skydrive app I see all of my files and folders that are stored "in the cloud". If I want to open a word document that I stored on Skydrive I simple double-tap the filename and it opens in Word (remember I installed the full Office 2010 Suite on my tablet). If I did not have Word installed it would have opened up the Word Web App and I could do some basic editing but edits would be limited. Once I edit the file I opened in Word I tap on Save and the document is saved back to the cloud. No more keeping track of filenames. When I get back to my PC I open up Skydrive and select the file to open it and continue editing where I left off.

To use the Skydrive app you need to have robust network connection as you are accessing and saving files over the network. If there is a problem with the network you will not be able to access files from Skydrive since it is a cloud service. Opening large files will take some time depending upon network speeds.

That is all I want to say today about Skydrive. The Skydrive app is very simple to use and essentially can be treated like a network share drive as long as you have a strong Internet connection. But, in my world, sometimes a strong Internet connection is an oxymoron. If you have a slow Internet connection then accessing cloud storage might be frustrating, especially if you are accessing large files. Tomorrow I will talk more about some workarounds I have found when using Skydrive from this tablet that gives you offline access to your files. More tomorrow....

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 15 – Skydrive application versus the Skydrive app

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 15

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Yesterday, I wrote about the Skydrive app that is included as part of Windows 8 and is available from the Windows 8 Start screen. What the Skydrive app allows you to do is access your Skydrive files but ONLY when connected to the Internet. Even given this limitation the Skydrive app is incredibly useful.

You will need a Microsoft account to utilize Skydrive. I signed up for my account at outlook.com and you also get other benefits including an email account, contacts, calendar, and access to Office Web Apps. Of course, policies need to be pre-approved for the use of Microsoft accounts with students, just like with Google and Apple accounts. Each school will need to come up with their own policies related to the use of external accounts with students.

The idea behind the Skydrive app is that you have access to your files online but none of these files are stored locally. This has the benefits of not taking up local storage so it is very useful for devices that do not have large hard drives like tablets and mobile phones. It also solves the problem of accessing content when using multiple devices like a smartphone, tablet, and PC. Store the files in the cloud and have access to the Skydrive files from all devices.

For schools, students having access to a shared device but keeping files stored in the cloud allows for a clean way of keeping student data in their own separate accounts. Another advantage is being able to share devices easily between students (a budget saving plus). When using the Internet connected Skydrive app you can open files directly from Skydrive, make editing changes, and then save the file directly back to Skydrive. It works similar to a network share drive except you are saving to the cloud. The problem is that if you do not have Internet access you cannot access any of the files on Skydrive with the “app”. No Connection = Out of Luck.

For many students this will work fine as long as there is an Internet connection but some users will want to have access to files when offline and that is where the Skydrive application comes in.

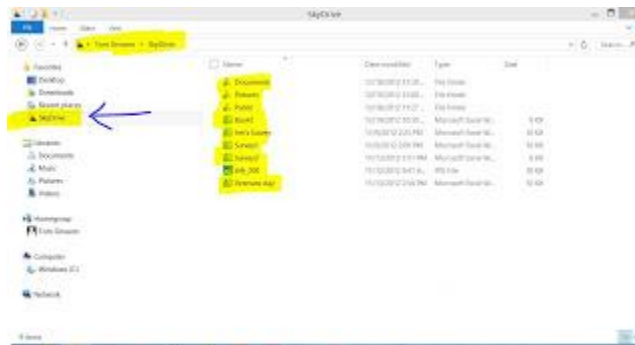
Wouldn't it be great if you could download your Skydrive files to your local computer/tablet so you could access and edit them anywhere? even if you do not have an Internet connection? The dream would be the next time you re-connect to the Internet the files you changed and saved locally could be “re-synced” back up to Skydrive. Well, time to wakeup, you're not dreaming, you can. This is exactly what the Skydrive application can do.

Because the x86 version of Windows 8 has the dual personality of being able to run both Windows 8 apps AND full x86 applications Microsoft has developed the Skydrive application that runs from the “Desktop side” of the Samsung Ativ 500T tablet. This is a benefit of the x86 compatible Clover Trail processor that my tablet uses.

Just a cautionary note, I do not believe that the Windows RT version of Windows 8, that runs on the ARM processor, can use the full Skydrive application. If you find out differently let me know as I do not have access to a Windows RT tablet to test this.

What is really exciting for me is that once I downloaded and installed the Skydrive application on my tablet I had access to all my Skydrive files. You are given the choice if you want to sync all files from Skydrive locally or be more selective and only sync certain folders. It took a few minutes to sync my files, the more you have the longer the initial sync will take.

Another benefit is that you can access the all local Skydrive files using the familiar File Explorer interface that has been a part of Windows for years.



Just like you can save a file to My Documents you can now save a file to Skydrive\Documents on the local tablet or PC. The benefit to this method is that you can access the files locally (even without Internet access) and the edit files then save it back to the Skydrive folder on the local drive. Once you get back to a location that has an Internet connection the changed files are automatically synced back up to Skydrive in the cloud. This only works for files saved to the local Skydrive folder.

Another benefit is that you essentially have a backup copy with you at all times (on the local Skydrive folder on the tablet or PC AND on Skydrive in the cloud).

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 16 – Using Skydrive with multiple devices including the new Windows Phone 8

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 16

Thursday, December 20, 2012

One of the benefits of storing files in the cloud is that the files can be accessed from multiple devices anywhere there is an Internet connection. When you use your Microsoft account to login to Skydrive you can have up to five different devices tied to a single account for free. I use Skydrive on my laptop, tablet, and now mobile phone. I have already spoken about using Skydrive on my laptop and tablet so now it is time to talk about how I use my tablet in combination with my new mobile phone.

I recently upgraded my mobile phone from Android to Windows Phone 8. In looking around at the current mobile phone landscape and comparing features between Apple, Android, and Windows Phone I chose Windows Phone 8. Why? Well I have used Apple and Android devices for the past three to four years and each has their strengths and weaknesses. I was ready for something different, something new and innovative, and something more than rows of static icons. Since I have been using the Samsung Ativ 500T tablet daily the integration between my tablet and Windows Phone 8 is a natural transition between the larger form factor tablet and the smaller mobile phone.

I received the Nokia Lumia 822 and called my carrier for activation about a week ago. I tied the Lumia 822 to my outlook.com account that I also use on my tablet. My new phone automatically linked to my contacts, calendar, and Skydrive content including documents and pictures. The “Live Tiles” on the Lumia 822 Windows Phone lit up with my Skydrive content. The Live Tiles on my phone are similar in look to the Live Tiles on my Windows 8 tablet but they are different. This provides a consistent look and feel that is constantly being updated so the look is constantly updated. Windows Phone 8 looks similar to Windows 8 for PC’s and tablets but the phone OS is a different OS than Windows 8.

The big payoff is that I can access any Word, Excel, PowerPoint, or OneNote file stored on Skydrive on my phone!!! I have been taking handwritten notes using my Ativ tablet regularly for the past couple of weeks. I have OneNote setup to automatically save to Skydrive as I am taking notes. At the end of the day or anytime I do not have my tablet with me I can access my Skydrive documents from my Lumia 822. This is working out very well as I almost always have my mobile phone with me at all times and therefore I have access to my entire library of documents saved on Skydrive 24/7. Stop and think about that for a minute, wouldn’t it be great as a teacher or student to have access to all of your class notes on your phone? Yes please, information at your fingertips. This has very practical benefits for teachers and students and provides for an amazing productivity boost that matches the Skydrive marketing slogan -

Skydrive: Any file, Anywhere

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 17 – Getting real work done with a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 17

Friday, December 21, 2012

Today was a long day. It was the last day at work before I get to take a few days off to enjoy the holidays. I had a ton of work to complete today before taking a few days off.

One of the projects I am now working on is updating inventory for technology replacements within our college. We use an aging inventory analysis to keep our equipment up-to-date and equipment is turned over on a routine basis. Each year we replace approximately 25% of our inventory to keep things fresh and also so we do not get hit in any one budget year with a huge dollar amount of replacement charges.

This proactive management of inventory keeps our faculty and students on the leading edge of technology use to improve the teaching and learning process. It also reduces maintenance costs and prevents end user frustration as older equipment is replaced before things begin to breakdown and equipment goes out of warranty.

To do this I have a large spreadsheet with computer numbers and room locations to check inventory. With over 500 devices to manage within our college this is no small task. One of the huge benefits of this tablet is that it runs the full version of Office 2010. This tablet is not limited, I use the same standard office applications that I routinely use on my regular PC. I had a co-worker help with some inventory tracking using an iPad but the iPad app could not read the larger spreadsheet files we were working with. Many apps are crippled, as was the case with this app that only allowed for up to 50 items in a spreadsheet. That is a limitation that is not practical to get routine office work done.

Being able to take the tablet with me from room to room made it easy to check and update inventory. The lightweight and long battery life gave the tablet an advantage over a laptop that I normally use. Because it is compatible with our business systems I can also login to access and edit reports needed to get the job done. The Samsung Ativ 500T tablet has easily handled the heavy office applications that I use in my day-to-day work.

There is a hidden and non-glamorous side of teaching where it is often necessary to buckle down and write that report using Word, or update that spreadsheet with Excel, or create that presentation with PowerPoint, or grade those papers using the digitizer Pen that comes with this tablet. Because the Ativ 500T uses an x86 processor it can run all of the major Office programs that have become de facto standards and does not suffer the limitations of the app world. The apps are there if you need them, but so are the full blown applications.

A long day, but a productive one.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 18 – Time off for some family time

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 18

Saturday, December 22, 2012

Today was a light day of use for the Ativ 500T tablet. Most of the day was spent in preparation for a family Christmas dinner. I did use the tablet to check in on my Twitter account throughout the day and browse the Internet but that was about it.

The other thing that I am doing tonight is uploading some photos to my Skydrive account from tonight's activities. I can save my photos taken from my mobile phone directly to Skydrive by simply selecting the photo on my phone and then selecting Save to Skydrive. This is very handy for sharing photographs (and other documents) with others.

Having access to my photos from my phone, tablet, PC, or any other computer that is connected to the Internet is one of the huge benefits of Skydrive: Any file, anytime. It makes it very convenient to have access to your files in the cloud.

Having my photos on Skydrive provides a backup of some of the better ones as well as providing the ability to share with other family members. To share a photo from my Skydrive account I simply go to the Pictures folder, navigate to the picture I want to share via Skydrive, and bring up the Charms menu (swipe in with my right thumb – select Share).

With the picture displayed select the SHARE from the Charms menu. One of the choices is MAIL so if you select MAIL you can type in the email address of the recipient you want to share the picture with and then press the SEND icon. You can type in a short message if you would like. A long URL is generated to the shared picture that the recipient can click on to get access and display the picture.

The recipient does not have to have a Microsoft account as the link is a URL that Android and Apple users can also access. This is of huge benefit as it is very unlikely that every member of your family will have only one type of mobile phone. Skydrive plays nice with others.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 19- Consumption or Production with a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 19

Sunday, December 23, 2012

I find myself picking up the Ativ 500T tablet as my first choice for checking emails, browsing the web, viewing my Twitter stream, and for watching videos or listening to audio podcasts. Why? I think mainly because of the instant on, long battery life, and the ease of holding the tablet in front of me in a nonintrusive way. As long as I do not need to type a lot of characters then I reach for this tablet.

The Ativ 500T tablet is also much larger than my mobile phone so I can see things more clearly. If I need to type longer documents I can connect a Bluetooth keyboard and this is not difficult to do BUT it is something additional to do to get into production mode. Since I already have an Ultrabook, a Dell XPS 13, the Ultrabook is my go to device for more intense work (I am typing this post on the XPS 13).

Perhaps this is just from years of habit and my own bias but I do not think so. Most of the people I know that use iPads have a case with a Bluetooth keyboard. From a fiscal perspective an iPad is just as costly as a laptop when you add the accessories like keyboards and cases. If we are going to accessorize tablets why don't we just go the Ultrabook route?

It is the battle between consumption and production and I find myself torn between device types based upon need. These things are still sorting themselves out and in the Windows 8 world there's a lot of experimenting going on with a variety of form factors. There is the Lenovo Yoga that is a laptop with a touchscreen that folds completely over to go into tablet mode. Lenovo also has the Thinkpad Twist that is more like a traditional Tablet PC of yesteryear but with an updated touchscreen to support the Windows 8 touch-first interface. There are also coming to market 7 inch and 10 inch touchscreen devices that will run Windows 8. These are just the hardware choices. There are also different levels of choices in software; Windows 8 or Windows RT and with processors; ARM, Clover Trail or Core i3/i5/i7.

Then there is the Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T Tablet that I have. I have been using this tablet for about three weeks now and I must admit it is mainly for consumption. The one exception is when I use OneNote to take handwritten notes that are very valuable in an electronic format. I did not purchase the snap-on keyboard that comes as an accessory with this tablet but I think I may based upon the number of times I reach for a keyboard. There are just too many times in my work life when I need to have a keyboard for data input. I am use to the transformer format as I have had an Asus Transformer Android tablet with keyboard for a couple of years now. The Asus Transformer is where I first realized that a touchscreen and a laptop form factor makes a lot of sense even though there are many naysayers out there (mostly the people that have never used such a device).

You know what is odd as I reflect back on the last three weeks of using this tablet?

I do not find myself wanting or needing many apps. I have downloaded a couple of game apps, the Skype app, Skydrive app, and Kindle app that are my go to apps that I feel I need and regularly use. I

have also downloaded a handful of educational apps but nothing I couldn't live without. So right now I feel this tablet is meeting my needs in the way that I am currently using it.

I think we will begin to see more combinations of Ultrabooks with touchscreens in the market to address the consumption/production dualopoly of use cases. Many devices will have detachable keyboards to give users the freedom of choice of how they want to use their tablet. If you do not want the keyboard then simply detach it while you are in consumption mode. The other benefit of a snap-on keyboard is that it makes for a clamshell type device that protects the tablets screen.

Well, those are my reasons for considering getting the Ativ 500T keyboard. We will see if I talk myself out of getting the keyboard in the next few days as I head to the stores for some after Christmas shopping.

Keep on Learning,Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 20 – Multiuser logon to the rescue with a Windows 8 Tablet during the Holidays

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 20

Monday, December 24, 2012

One of the inevitable circumstances of having a tablet around during the holidays is that more than likely a family member will want to use it. If you are like most tablet users you have your own customized way you like to have your apps setup and displayed. On the Windows 8 Start screen it is very easy to organize the Live Tiles to your preferred order. It is also very easy for someone else to mess it all up in just a few minutes. How can you protect your precious app setup, not to mention your personalized account settings, documents, and email? With a Windows 8 tablet it is easy as Windows 8 supports something called multiuser logon.

This situation is also extremely common in schools that routinely share devices among several different students each day. Using different accounts is one way to protect each individual users settings, documents, and email.

Some tablets do not have multiuser accounts and therefore anyone using the tablet can easily see all email accounts, apps, dropbox files, and other documents stored on the device. If you are one that checks the boxes to "Remember Passwords" then anyone you hand your tablet to also has access to these accounts.

Signing in with a different account other than the one you regularly use is one way to prevent others seeing your documents, settings and accounts. It is also very helpful if you have children in the family as you can setup a special account for a child and only give them access to the apps that you want them to have access to.

To setup a different account in Windows 8 simply go to the Charms bar and select Settings > Change PC Settings > Users > Other Users > + Add a User

You have a choice to setup a user with another Microsoft account or you can do what I did and setup a "local user" account. To use a local account you will have to select Sign-in Without a Microsoft Account.

There are on screen instructions that walk you through the process that do a nice job of explaining the different types of accounts. If you select a local account none of your settings will be synced from other devices as it is only "local" to this tablet. This works very well for a child account and Microsoft even adds a way to limit apps for children accounts with some family protection settings.

Setting up a new user was very easy to setup on my Samsung Ativ 500T tablet. Here is a link that explains more about how to create additional User accounts in Windows 8:

<http://www.howtogeek.com/121975/htg-explains-microsoft-accounts-vs.-local-accounts-in-windows-8/>

To switch accounts from one user to another all you need to do is go to the Start Screen and click on the user account picture that is currently logged in (located in the upper right hand corner of the Start screen). You can then either select Sign out or click on the name of the user account you want to switch to. You will be prompted for the password for the account you are switching to.

This is actually a fast way to change users and protect your working account from others that may want to also use your tablet. If you have a picture password setup as I do you can use picture password to log in.

As you can see multiuser logon has very practical applications for families as well as in school settings. Enjoy the Holidays and your new Windows 8 Tablet!

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 21- Easily Share Photos from Phone to Tablet to TV on a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 21

Tuesday, December 25, 2012

First of all Happy Holidays to everyone and I wish you all a happy and prosperous new year. Today is a very special day as many are celebrating Christmas Day.

Many pictures will be taken today to share with friends and family. There are many ways to take pictures including digital cameras, mobile phones, and now tablets with built-in cameras. I prefer to use my mobile phone as it is more portable (I almost always have it with me). I also do not like to look silly holding up a big 10+ inch slab of glass taking pictures and possibly blocking others view. If you have ever been to concerts where some people hold up their tablets to take a photo or video you know what I mean.

Mobile phones are great for portability but sometimes a 3.5 inch screen is just too small to do your pictures justice when showing them off to others. I found an easy way around this limitation as I use my Windows Phone to take pictures and upload them to my Skydrive account. It is possible to setup my Windows Phone to automatically upload every photo to Skydrive when I take a picture with my phone. I sometimes do set it up this way, but I prefer to be more selective in what I upload to my Skydrive account so I usually just upload only select photos on demand to Skydrive.

If you have been reading this blog you probably know where this is going. I can access my Skydrive account on my Ativ 500T tablet and have immediate access to my photos taken on my phone that were just uploaded to Skydrive. You do have to have an Internet connection to do this but once the photos are uploaded to Skydrive I can easily show them off on my tablet on a beautiful 11.6 inch screen.

The pictures look so much better than on a small smartphone screen. One better, because the Ativ 500T has a microHDMI out I can easily connect it to my HDTV and share my photos in near real-time (there is some delay for uploading the photos to Skydrive depending upon your Internet connection speed) but once uploaded the photos can be displayed on the TV for everyone to see.

I do not recommend uploading your photos to Skydrive unless you are connected to local WiFi connection. Uploading photos over a 3G or 4G connection may eat into your data cap and possibly result in overage fees. I have not tried the Skydrive app on Android or iOS but I would think this would also work on those devices.

You can later share your pictures on Facebook or Twitter if you so choose or send an email with a link to the picture you want to share from Skydrive via email.

To send a link via email on a Windows 8 Tablet do the following:

With the picture open in Skydrive, go to the Charms bar, select Share, then Email. Type in the email address of the recipient, type a short message and then press send. The email will be sent to the

recipient with a link to the picture on Skydrive. The advantage to this method is there is not an attachment so you do not have to worry about sending large file sizes through email systems as some have file size limitations.

So there you have it. Take a photo on your phone, upload to Skydrive and then access it on your Tablet connected to your TV for the entire family to enjoy. Now if there were just an easy way to make a movie out of all those photos, stay tuned.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 22–Family Safety Options on a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 22

Wednesday, December 26, 2012

I have been writing and thinking about the new Windows 8 tablets through the lens of an educator and also as a parent for the past three weeks. One thing that has been bouncing around in my head is how much, if any, control a parent/guardian should have regarding the use of a computer/tablet by their children inside the family home.

This is a question that often gets glossed over by gadget sellers but is an extremely important issue for educators and parents to at least give some consideration to.

As 1:1 programs are increasingly being considered across the country there should at least be a discussion about the potential side effects that introducing an always connected device into the lives of our students may have. Sure there are a lot of good things such a device can offer but there is also a darker side. There is evidence that symptoms of Internet addiction may occur in 8-12% of children using the Internet.

A couple of years ago the American Academy of Pediatrics posted some advice for parents regarding Internet use and warned about the possibility of Internet addiction. I have posted a link to the article below:

Internet addiction a real problem for U.S. kids

<http://aapnews.aappublications.org/content/31/5/26.5.full>

The article mentions some common sense advice to parents including monitoring and limiting Internet usage, not placing a computer in a child's bedroom, and being aware of mood swings or other compulsive behavior. It also mentions that you should seek professional help if you see warning signs of Internet addiction with your child.

Schools have been required to provide Internet safety protection measures for years based on state and federal laws including the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

<http://www.fcc.gov/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>

But what happens at home? Most likely there is little or no Internet filtering and every parent makes their own parenting decisions related to Internet use. As mobile smartphones and tablets become more parents will need to setup their own guidelines for use at home.

What tools are available (if so desired) by a parent wanting to limit Internet access at home?

Actually on the Samsung Ativ 500T tablet there are several tools built-in to Windows 8 to filter and/or limit Internet activity.

A couple of days ago I wrote about multiuser accounts and the value of setting up a separate account for children to use. This account does not have access to your own apps and account settings. It turns out there are additional things you can do from simply limiting time blocks that a child is allowed to use the tablet to white-listing Internet sites that are the only sites they are allowed to visit.

I have provided a link to a Microsoft post about the Family Safety features available in Windows 8 (x86 versions):

Keep your family safer

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/family-safety#1TC=t1>

The family safety article explains how to setup time limits of use, web filtering and monitoring. Some will say that kids can easily bypass some of these measures and that may be true. This is a family decision and some will choose not to, but it is good to know that there are options out there for parents that may want to have some method of adding an additional layer of protection other than just unfettered Internet access to the devices that end up in our childrens hands.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 23- Three Productivity Revelations about using a Windows 8 Tablet for Educational Use

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 23

Thursday, December 27, 2012

I am still experimenting with different workflow solutions to explore productive uses of my Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T Tablet in an educational setting. This is the first tablet that I have used that is capable of handling most of my day-to-day work activities with little compromise. I also use Apple and Android tablets but this Windows 8 tablet meets most of my daily needs better. This tablet is compatible with all the applications I use daily without the need for finding “workaround apps”. Add to this the flexibility of a USB port and compatibility with student management systems and you have a versatile tablet with few limitations.

I have had three big revelations about the production possibilities this Windows 8 tablet offers. The first revelation is that since this tablet can run x86 programs I can run the full version of Office 2010 and millions of other x86 programs in addition to thousands of new apps made available from the Windows Store. Having this dual personality is a huge benefit, not a hindrance.

The second revelation has been the extreme value of Skydrive and having access to Gigabytes of files stored in the cloud when working across multiple devices. I can easily move between my phone, PC/Laptop, and tablet and have my files accessible from anywhere there is an Internet connection. The ability to store files locally and sync back to the cloud using the Desktop Skydrive application is an added bonus for offline work when no Internet connection is available. Nice!

The third revelation has been the need for a keyboard to get real work done.

For everyday consumption tasks like browsing the web, checking email, keeping up with Twitter and Facebook postings, and taking handwritten notes using the S Pen with OneNote I am perfectly satisfied with using this tablet without a keyboard. With more than ten hours of battery life the Ativ 500T is my goto device, especially in the evenings as the tablet form factor makes it particularly useful on the couch for browsing and keeping up with emails.

I am getting closer to a workable solution for keyboard input as I have created homemade wooden stands that prop up the tablet on a desk so that I can easily use a full-size wireless keyboard to type with. I am writing this post with the Logitech K400 wireless keyboard and I do not feel the limitations as I do when I use the onscreen keyboard. Since this tablet has a full-size USB port I just plugin the USB wireless receiver, turn on the battery powered K400 keyboard and start typing away. Alternatively, I could use a Bluetooth keyboard as Bluetooth is built-in the Ativ 500T.

The two little wooden stands that I made have solved the problem of using the tablet with a wireless keyboard. It is now more convenient and therefore I use this setup more. The wooden stands were so handy I made another set for my Nexus 7. Since the stands are made in two pieces they are adjustable

to hold my 11.6 inch Windows Tablet and also work just as well on my 7 inch Android tablet. I have provided a picture below to show the setup I now use at home. Pretty handy and practical!



I am much faster at typing with a wireless keyboard and I do not feel the frustrations of a cramped onscreen keyboard. The trackpad on the right side of the Logitech K400 keyboard is also handy for using the mouse in “Desktop” mode and also with two-finger scrolling when browsing the Internet.

With the wireless keyboard I have all the keys available on the full-size keyboard that I have grown accustomed to over the years including CTRL, ALT, and the Windows Key that I so often use in combination with other keys as keyboard shortcuts. This is particularly helpful when in Microsoft Word where I have become very efficient using keyboard shortcuts. Common shortcuts I regularly use include: Ctrl+C Ctrl+V Ctrl+P Ctrl+S Ctrl+Z Ctrl+Y as well as the arrow keys, Alt+Tab, PageUp, PageDown, Print Screen, and all the Function keys.

Add to these the new Windows 8 shortcuts of using the Windows Key (the one with the Windows Flag between Ctrl and Alt on most Keyboards) press Win to go to the Start Screen, Win+C=Charms, Win+I=Settings, Win+X=Power Menu, Win+Q=Search Win+P=Second Screen, Alt+Tab or Win+Tab to cycle through open apps

More Windows 8 Shortcuts can be found here:

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/new-keyboard-shortcuts#1TC=t1>

It may seem like a little thing but it is really nice working with a full-size keyboard that I do not have to switch back-and-forth all the time between alpha-letter mode and the number and special character mode.

There is one more area in this grand experiment that I need to tryout as I did not buy the snap on keyboard that is an accessory for the Ativ 500T tablet. I need to do this so I can report my findings back to this blog. The Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T has a \$749 retail price including the keyboard and I thought I could save a hundred dollars and get by without one. But, now I want to explore the functionality of this tablet WITH the keyboard that was designed for it. I am getting along quite well with

my Logitech 400 keyboard setup at home but it is something else to carry with me if I think I would need it at a meeting.

Finding the right combination of accessories and setup options takes some time but is worth the effort as every addition is increasing my productivity to get more work done.

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 24–Listening to Podcasts with SlapDash and Xbox Music on a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 24

Friday, December 28, 2012

One of the activities that I try to make time for every day is listening to one of the many podcasts I subscribe to. What is a podcast? Think of it as a radio show that you can download and listen to at your convenience. There are podcasts available on almost any topic you can imagine and there are many created by fellow educators. I tend to favor audio podcasts as I can listen to them during my commute to and from work. It took me a while to find a Windows 8 podcast client but I recently found the SlapDash podcast app in the Windows 8 Store that meets my needs. It comes in a free version supported by advertising or a paid \$1.99 app that eliminates the ads.

What I like about the SlapDash app is that I can subscribe to podcasts manually as most are not listed in the Slapdash Catalog. Many of the podcasts I listen to are from “grass roots” producers by educators all around the world. Many of these producers have never gone to the trouble of submitting their podcast to directories like SlapDash, Zune, or iTunes. If you cannot find a particular podcast listed in a store catalog then you will need to subscribe to it manually using the RSS feed for the podcast.

Cindy Rich and I do a bi-monthly podcast called TechTalk4Teachers. We have added TechTalk4Teachers to the iTunes and Zune catalogs so you should be able to do a search and subscribe from there if you use one of those services.

If you do not you can still add our podcast manually by adding the following RSS feed to subscribe:

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/techtalk4teachers>

The SlapDash app provides an attractive display of our past episodes and I have included a screenshot of the TechTalk4Teachers feed below:

slapDASH PODCASTS

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4 Teachers
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- A PODCAST FOR
TEACHERS ABOUT
TEACHING, LEARNING,
AND TECHNOLOGY

TechTalk4Teachers podcast (blogcast, netcast, webcast, zunicast, educast, teachercast, tomcast - your choice of vocabulary) is for educators wanting to keep up with the latest advances in educational technologies and their practical applications in classroom.

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The other discovery I made is that the Xbox Music app also plays audio and video podcasts that you have stored locally on the tablet. Since a podcast is nothing more than a MP3 file with special tags the new Xbox Music app will play any non-DRM MP3 file. There is a secret in that you need to store the files in subfolders on the hard drive under the Music folder. This discovery makes it very easy for me to copy my vast catalog of podcasts to the Music folder and have all podcasts copied there available in Xbox Music on my Windows 8 tablet.

By the way Xbox music is a fantastic app and now provides 10 hours of streaming music for free each month. There is also a music pass that costs \$9.99 per month for unlimited streaming from a music catalog of millions of songs. The Xbox music service provides a very attractive user interface and plays photos of your favorite artist/band on the screen as you listen to the music. It really looks great connected to a large screen HDTV while playing your music. Of course, this being Windows 8, you also have your choice of other services like Pandora or Spotify if you prefer those services.

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Day 25–A Fun day exploring the Play To feature from a Windows 8 Tablet to a Xbox 360

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 25

Saturday, December 29, 2012

Part of the fun during the holidays is getting new gifts and being a little self-indulgent. Today is one of those days for me as I have been setting up a new Xbox 360. Those of us with older children will understand that a few of the family gadgets have a way of wandering out of the household once a son or daughter goes off to college or leaves the nest. Such was the case with “our” former Xbox.

So, today I purchased a new Xbox 360 to catch up on what all the youngins’ are doing. Since I am conducting “research” I needed to have the hardware to test some of the new features of Windows 8 both on Tablets and on PC’s.

The biggest useful feature for educators on the Xbox 360 is the new “Play To” feature that allows you to wirelessly share media content (music and videos) to the big screen.

I have only had my Xbox connected for a couple of hours so I am still trying to figure things out but “Play To” is very easy to use. I already have it working with my new Xbox connected to the HDTV. I am connected wirelessly to my home network with my tablet and also wirelessly to the Xbox. You must be on the same wireless subnet for the “Play To” feature to work.

I connected the Xbox 360 to my HDTV with a HDMI cable so both the video and the audio are carried by one HDMI cable out of the Xbox and into the HDTV. I opened up one of my TechTalk4Teachers podcast episodes on my Samsung Ativ 500T Tablet that is running Windows 8 and began to play the podcast on the tablet. I next swiped in with my right thumb to bring up the CHARMS bar and selected DEVICES. One of the choices under DEVICES was XBOX. When I selected XBOX the audio and video from my tablet was transferred to the HDTV and begin to play. I could still use my tablet to pause, rewind, and play the audio but the output was going to the HDTV. Pretty Cool!

I can think of all kinds of educational uses for the Play To feature. If you have a Xbox connected to a projector or HDTV in the front of the room you can easily share media to the big screen from yours, or your students, Windows 8 tablet. This is somewhat similar to airplay but only works with media, you cannot mirror the screen to the Xbox, yet.

All in all not a bad setup for a couple hours of time with a new Xbox and Windows 8 tablet. It looks pretty amazing seeing the screen from an 11.6 inch tablet up on a large screen HDTV. And the sound, the sound is phenomenal if you have a good set of stereo speakers as is common with many home theater setups.

Now I need to get to work on creating some videos to share some of the things I have been learning about how Windows 8 and the new Windows 8 Tablets benefit teachers and students. Once I have the videos on my Tablet I can use “Play To” for displaying on the big screen. Who brought the popcorn?

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Day 26–Practical choices for playback of flipped classroom videos on a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 26

Sunday, December 30, 2012

We are living in amazing times. It is now possible for anyone to have access to world-class educational materials at the click of the mouse, or in the case of the new Windows 8 tablets, at the touch of the screen. The educational materials delivered over the Internet now take many forms including web pages, ebooks, PDFs, audio, and increasingly video.

The flipped classroom is all the rage in many education circles right now and a large part of the flipped classroom is assigning videos for students to watch, but how will they watch them? How will you get the video content so it is accessible to all students, even those without Internet access at home?

I spent much of the day watching video training materials in the MP4 format on my tablet that I had previously downloaded to my Desktop PC. It is time for me to once again sing the praises of the full-size USB port that is available on the Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T.

The cloud is a great place when it works but you are often limited by the bandwidth capacity available to you. If the Internet is slow or not working at all, the shine quickly wears off cloud-based computing. I could have uploaded the videos to my Skydrive account and then downloaded them to the local storage on my Windows 8 Tablet but I probably would still be waiting for all of the uploads and downloads to finish sometime next week. There was a faster way.

Don't believe me? I live in the practical world of making technology work to improve the teaching and learning process for students. I am always thinking about scale, how to scale something up to make it work for a class or 30 students, or a university of 10,000 students. Sure, anyone can come up with a project that will work for an individual, but how will it scale? Let me provide an example.

Today I copied over six videos that were previously on my Desktop PC to a USB thumb drive. Each file was a MP4 video of about two hours in length. The average file size was 2GB each so I had about 12 GB in total for about 12 hours of video. Roughly about 1GB in file size for each hour of video content. Do you see the problem?

Many families have data plans that have a bandwidth cap of 5GB per month. So today, if I had downloaded the files over a metered network connection I would have gone over my data cap by a factor of 2 in just one day, not good, and potentially expensive as there are overage charges. And that was just me, multiply that by 30 and you can see the network tubes clogging before your very eyes. USB thumb drives are inexpensive, a 16GB USB drive now costs approximately \$10 each. For about \$300 you could have one for each student in the class. A USB thumb drive gives the student the flexibility to use the USB drive on their computer/laptop at home, or on a tablet if it has a USB port like the Ativ 500T.

To get around some of the long download times many videos are available via streaming services like YouTube and TeacherTube that deliver the files on an as needed basis bit by bit. This prevents the delay of downloading the entire file before you can watch it. You still need to be aware of bandwidth caps and the fact that the more users you have watching a video over the network at any one time the slower the experience will become for everyone. If you watch a video multiple times, every time you re-watch it, it will continue to add to your total data usage for the month.

I think we will be living in the hybrid world in the near future of using both online cloud resources where it makes sense and using local storage and processing as a necessary fall back in cases where the “way of the cloud” is slow or not available. The Skydrive application is a great example of this allowing for files to be stored locally and synced up to the cloud so that multiple devices can have access to cloud storage.

But there is also a major flaw in the hype around cloud-based computing and storage, bandwidth caps. The cloud is often times limited by bandwidth caps here in America and even as we make great progress with new computer hardware and software the network is becoming the weak link. This is particular true in rural areas of Illinois where many families lack affordable broadband access. Watching flipped videos is simply not an option to many students in our local area due to lack of affordable broadband access at home.

My Ativ 500T tablet uses USB 2.0 which has a transfer rate of 480Mbps. This is great as it provides me the capability of copying large files to a USB thumb drive and plugging it into my Windows 8 Tablet and play directly off the USB drive. More improvements are on the way in the Windows 8 Tablet space. The new Microsoft Surface Pro Tablet coming out in January uses USB 3.0 which is capable of copying files at 5Gbps. That is approximately a 10 fold increase in performance. If you are doing a lot of content transfer of large file sizes you might want to consider the new USB 3.0 capability on new 64bit Windows 8 tablets now available. I do not mean to bore you with the details but just want to make you aware that from a practical perspective you need to be thinking about the logistics of moving large files around for students to access.

Watching the videos from the USB thumb drive worked great and I have watched two of the six videos today. Using a USB thumb drive is very convenient and I can constantly copy new content onto the removable USB drive or get multiple drives to save content different types to each USB stick.

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Day 27 – IE 10 The best of both worlds on a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 27

Monday, December 31, 2012

This may come as a surprise to some, but the new Internet Explorer 10 is the best browser for use on a Windows 8 tablet. I say a surprise because Internet Explorer has been losing marketshare to the Google Chrome browser for the past couple of years but that trend may now be reversing with the introduction of IE 10 on Windows 8. One of the strengths of Windows has always been end user choice of using best of breed applications that best fit the job. In recent years Internet Explorer has become maligned as the browser that is old and behind the times but the new IE 10 has been modernized with a redesigned interface for Windows 8.

Like many things on this Windows 8 tablet Microsoft has taken the hybrid approach of introducing new elements while maintaining backward compatibility.

Internet Explorer 10 in Windows 8 is no exception, IE 10 also has this dual personality.

First, if you access IE 10 from the Start Screen you will be using the metro-style version of IE 10. The metro-style version provides a new interface for the browser that is “chromeless”. Chrome, (not the Google Browser), in this case means getting rid of all the menu and address bars that you normally see at the top of your browser. This presents a very clean look that gets the ugly interface controls out of the way. If you want to see the controls again simply swipe down from the top (or swipe up from the bottom) of the tablet and you will see the address bar at the bottom of the screen. At the top of the screen you will see a thumbnail of each browser window you have open. There is a + sign in the upper right hand corner if you want to open another “tab”. Tabs appear as thumbnails in the metro-style version of IE 10.

There is also the traditional “Desktop” version of IE 10 that you can get to by going to the Desktop of the Windows 8 tablet and tapping the Internet Explorer icon located in the lower left hand corner of the Desktop.

Remember, the Desktop on Windows 8 does not have the Start button, it uses the Start Screen in its place. This is one of those “who moved my cheese” moments that some have a hard time adjusting to and lament its removal. Get over it, the Start button is gone in Windows 8 and once you realize that and get on with your life you will find the Start screen much more efficient and customizable.

In the past I have split my browser time about 50/50 between Internet Explorer and Chrome. Since using the Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T tablet I have changed that percentage to about 90/10 using Internet Explorer about 90% of the time. For the 10% of the time I use Chrome it is for some of the Chrome apps that I use. The great thing is I have a choice and I am now finding IE 10 to be the better solution for me on a Windows 8 tablet.

The biggest reason I favor IE 10 ninety percent of the time is that I like the new clean “chromeless” (no pun intended) look. IE 10 also supports pinch and zoom when using either the metro-style version or

Desktop version of IE 10. Google Chrome on the Windows 8 Desktop does NOT currently support pinch and zoom.

The second biggest reason that I like to use IE 10 as my primary browser is that I still run into a lot of websites that use Adobe Flash. The metro-style version of IE 10 does not support Flash but the “Desktop” version does.

Tip: There is a nice shortcut when you run into a website that needs Adobe Flash. You can swipe up from the bottom of the screen, click on the “Wrench” icon and select “View on Desktop”. This opens the website you are currently on in the metro-style version of IE 10 into the “Desktop” version of IE 10 that DOES support Adobe Flash. I use this little shortcut a lot when I need to view Flash content. Many educational videos and screencasts are still delivered via Flash.

Confusing? Not really, don’t make it any harder than it is. You have two styles of the IE 10 browser for use in Windows 8. The metro-style version is available from the Start Screen and has a clean “chromeless” look. The “Desktop” version of IE 10 is available from.... wait for it, the Desktop. Use whatever style of IE 10 you like, again it is great to have a choice. Instead of ignoring the millions of websites that STILL use Adobe Flash you have an alternative to view the content if you need to. This is another case of the hybrid approach Microsoft is taking to maintain backward compatibility until the new technologies meant to replace Flash catch up with new software capabilities like HTML 5.

The best of both worlds, old and new.

Because the Samsung Ativ 500T tablet uses the x86 processor I can also install and use Firefox and/or Chrome browsers in addition to IE 10 if I would like.

Choice is good, so is this tablet.

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Day 28 – The Snipping Tool, a Pen, and a Windows 8 Tablet walk into a classroom

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 28

Tuesday, January 1, 2013

Sometimes it is the simple things in teaching that can make a big difference with a student understanding a point or concept you are trying to get across.

The Snipping tool is one of those tools that often goes underappreciated and overlooked by teachers. Many probably have never heard of the snipping tool but for teachers it is definitely worth knowing about. A common task for teachers is to draw the attention of the learner to specific items on the computer screen. One way to do this is to isolate an area of the screen so that you can draw attention to a specific area.

The Snipping Tool is available in both Windows 7 and Windows 8 but it is with the combination of the snipping tool along with Pen input and a Window 8 Tablet that makes for a very powerful and easy to use illustration device for teachers. The Snipping Tool is only available on the Desktop side of Windows 8 but I often use this tool to take a screenshot of an area on the screen and then illustrate on top of the screenshot using digital ink. This is particularly effective in real-time when students can watch what I annotate on the screen.

I particularly like the Free-form Snip where I can use the S-Pen that comes with the Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T Tablet to make a free-form snip. I use the S-Pen to draw an irregular shape around the objects on the screen I want to emphasize.

I now use the snipping tool so much that I have pinned it to the Task Bar on my Desktop in Windows 8. You can also make a Rectangular Snip, a Window Snip, and a Full-screen Snip. Once you have made the snip you can use digital ink to annotate and label it. You can also save the Snip to a file and post it to a webpage or email it to students if you would like to. I have provided a screen shot of the Snipping Tool below:



One of the best features of this Windows 8 Tablet is the digitizing Pen that it comes with. The S-Pen provides a precise and controlled method of input that is lacking with many other tablets. Using your

fingers to draw and annotate is not the same and seems very primitive once you have used a digitizing Pen. If you do not know about the snipping tool I encourage you to give it a try.

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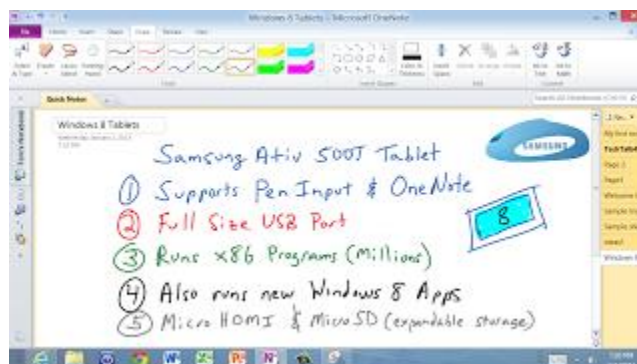
Day 29 – OneNote for Teachers and Students on a Windows 8 Tablet with Pen Input

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 29

Wednesday, January 2, 2013

I am nearing the end of my self-imposed goal of blogging about my first 30 days with a Windows 8 Tablet. I have learned many things along the way and this has been a valuable experience for me and I hope for you too. The first thing that I have learned is that preliminary reviews of tech gadgets are rushed and often draw incorrect conclusions. The tech blogosphere has been declining with respect to in-depth reviews as many go for attention getting headlines rather than substance. I will pay more attention to review types that are in the form of “Spending 30 days with....” as this format I believe provides for a reasonable amount of time to get familiar with a product and give a fair review.

In this review I am talking about the full version of OneNote 2010. OneNote is one of those applications that seems to be a secret as many teachers and students are not aware of how much it can help with taking daily notes. There is also a OneNote app that is available in the Windows Store but the OneNote app is severely limited in its functionality. The full version of OneNote comes standard with most versions of Microsoft Office including the teacher and student editions. I have provided a screenshot below to give you a look at the interface and some notes I took using different colors of digital ink.



Perhaps it is my generation but I still rely upon handwritten notes and the OneNote application is a perfect match with a Pen enabled Windows 8 Tablet like the Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T. The Ativ 500T has a Wacom digitizer that allows for use with what Samsung calls the S-Pen. The S-Pen is simply a stylus that writes much like a regular pen on paper except you are now using digital ink on a glass touchscreen. A digitizer Pen is much different than a capacitive stylus that are often sold for use with an iPad. The S-Pen is pressure sensitive with 1024 different pressure points that provides for much more control and accuracy. This design is meant to replicate the way a real Pen works in that if you start drawing a line with a light touch and gradually apply pressure the line will get thicker as you apply more pressure. This makes for a much more realistic and natural writing experience.

The S-Pen is not perfect as it is rather small (the size of a pencil broke in half) but it is tolerable for everyday use. There are better options on the market and I have read where the digitizer Pens that

come with other Samsung Tablets with a Wacom digitizer are larger in size and also have an eraser on the end. The (digital) eraser would be very handy for use with OneNote in that you could be writing along, make a mistake, and then turn the Pen over to erase the mistake. Not an absolutely necessary feature but a luxury that would be worth consideration if you use OneNote frequently. I will be looking into purchasing such a Pen that is full-sized with an eraser that will work with this Ativ 500T tablet, they cost around \$25.

A Smart Board Substitute

Because the Samsung Ativ 500T has a microHDMI port you can easily connect it to a HDTV with a \$3 HDMI to microHDMI cable. If you need to connect to a VGA projector Samsung sells a MicroHDMI to VGA adapter for \$39. With OneNote you can project what you are doing on the screen to the front of the room making the Windows 8 Tablet a substitute for a Smart Board. Add the wireless Logitech K400 keyboard with trackpad and you are free to walk about the room controlling the Ativ tablet from anywhere in the room even while the connected to the projector.

OneNote for Teachers and Students

I find it much more natural taking notes with digital ink rather than typing on a laptop. A tablet with Pen is also more unobtrusive like the pen and paper of the past. In a classroom setting if you are the teacher it is not the best feeling being at the front of the room with a group of 30 or more students all with their laptop screens up as if to shield you from seeing what they are really working on. In colleges, large lecture halls are notorious for students bringing in laptops and banging away on the keyboard as they frantically take notes on their laptop. Are they taking notes, or checking their Facebook accounts?

Another reason I like OneNote is its versatility. This is not the place to explain all of OneNotes virtues but here are some possibilities, with OneNote you can:

Add images along with handwritten notes, change the background rulers to have guides to help keep your writing straight, record audio and take notes at the same time, record video, convert handwritten notes to text, use different colors of ink and highlighters, use Ink to Math to insert mathematical equations, OneNote also has a library of mathematical symbols, freehand sketching for illustrating concepts, and if you are using Outlook you have the ability to email the OneNote page to others.

And, one more thing...

Because OneNote pages can be synced to Skydrive you have access to your notes from another PC or Tablet. And even more remarkable, if you have Windows Phone 8 you have access to all notes right from your phone along with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files. Talk about having the world in the palm of your hand, well at least your files.

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Day 30 – Lessons Learned, 30 Days with a Windows 8 Tablet

A Windows 8 Tablet for Teaching and Learning - Day 30

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Well, I made it. Over the past 30 days I have documented my experience each day with using a Windows 8 tablet for education purposes. Perhaps the best test of any new device is if you want to go back to what you had used previously. After 30 days with a Windows 8 tablet I do not want to go back to my iPad or Android tablet. In fact, when I use my iPad, I now find myself swiping in from the top, bottom, and sides expecting to get to the shortcut menus I have grown accustomed to using over the past 30 days. The Windows 8 tablet interface seems so much more efficient and I would dearly miss the Wacom digitizer with S-Pen input that comes standard with the Samsung Ativ Smart PC 500T.

If I had to go back to the iPad I would be giving up many things. I would lose the ability to work with the full version of the Microsoft Office programs including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. I would lose the digitizer S-Pen and the OneNote application that I now use daily. I would miss the ability to snap two windows side-by-side. I would miss the cross-device workflow that Skydrive provides me for access to all my files stored in the cloud. I would miss the ability to automatically have my OneNote files synced to Skydrive and accessed on my Windows Phone 8. I would miss having access to the millions of flash-based websites that I still regularly come across. I would miss the Snipping Tool. I would miss the microHDMI port that allows me to easily connect to a HDTV, or to a projector with a special adapter. I would miss the Xbox streaming music service that plays in the background as I use other applications.

I would miss the multi-user logon that comes in very handy when someone else in my family wants to use my tablet.

Probably one of the most used features that I would miss is access to the expandable storage available on the Ativ 500T via the microSD card slot and full-size USB port. If you have a brand new iPad one of the first realizations you have is that there is not an easy way to get content off of the iPad without setting up a special account like Dropbox, iCloud, or email. This all requires advanced setup tied to an AppleID. With the Ativ 500T it is easy, just copy the file from the Ativ tablet to a USB thumb drive no matter if you are using a local account or a Microsoft account.

I produce multimedia files regularly and having access to audio and video files from a USB thumb drive is incredibly useful when sharing or reviewing content. Yes, I could access them from the Cloud but it is much faster to do a file copy to a USB drive than it is to upload and then download files in the cloud.

Another plus, I do not have to plug in a cable to sync content, courtesy of a full-size independent USB port. This is particularly noteworthy for teachers that may be exploring the flipped classroom approach to learning as you will need to grapple with how to get video content to and from large numbers of students, potentially without Internet access. It may be old fashioned but the USB approach to sharing is extremely flexible in solving distribution problems of large multimedia files, particularly if you have slow or no Internet access. If you have ever had a classroom full of students all going to the same video on the Internet you know what I mean.

There has been a lot of debate about whether tablets are consumption or production devices. I think my posts over the past 30 days clearly demonstrate that the Ativ 500T is capable of producing content using full-blown Windows applications, not just apps.

There are a couple of areas that the Ativ 500T falls short of being a complete laptop replacement for me. The Ativ 500T uses the Clover Trail processor that I have grown a deep respect for over the past 30 days. Clover Trail is x86 compatible giving me the capability to run the millions of programs developed for Windows 7 and Windows 8 devices. The one chink in the armor of the Clover Trail processor is when you need raw processing power. Processor intensive applications will struggle on the Ativ 500T. If you are doing much video editing or screencasting you may want to consider a different choice with a more powerful processor. Luckily you have choices, Windows 8 tablets come in a variety of form factors and processor capabilities.

One option would be to select the Intel i5/i7 processors that are now available on some models of Windows 8 tablets. Most notably the Microsoft Surface Pro (not the RT model) will be coming out later this month that features an Intel i5 processor and digitizer Pen. There are tradeoffs as the i5/i7 processors will get about half the battery life of Clover Trail but that is the price you pay for a more powerful processor. For everyday tasks like checking email, browsing, and word processing the Clover Trail processor is more than adequate and you get to enjoy 10 plus hours of battery life. If however you need more processing power, you may want to consider the Intel i3/i5/i7 series of processors just now coming to market on new Windows 8 tablets. Choice is good.

This wraps up my first 30 days with a Windows 8 Tablet blog series but I have much more to explore. I have not had a chance to use the Remote Desktop Client. I also have not had the chance to explore some VDI connections that we are implementing in another ITC Lab this semester. It could be that either a RDP or VDI may be a solution for the weaker Clover Trail processor. Perhaps I could login to a VDI session on the Ativ 500T and access a more powerful virtual computer on the network, do my video editing there with more processing power available then copy the finished file back to the Ativ tablet. I also need to use the Windows 8 Pro and Windows 8 Enterprise editions on a tablet to get the benefits of Active Directory, shared network drives, Group Policies, new software installation over the network, and system updates.

I also need to explore the mass deployment options available for Windows 8 tablets on a larger scale. The good news is that since this is Windows 8, Microsoft has a whole Suite of tools for mass deployment and management tasks including Windows Server 2012, SCCM, and the new Intune web-based service for managing and deploying apps remotely. These are standard enterprise tools that most IT departments are familiar with.

The Intune service is new and consists of a monthly service subscription but as many iPad deployments have found out not having access to deployment and management tools make for a support nightmare as time goes by. How do you provide system updates and install apps over time? Sure it is easy if you have one tablet but what about 100 or 1000? Windows 8 should be able to easily scale for larger

deployments and the benefits of having management tools and a plan for ongoing support cannot be overestimated.

That's it, my final post for day 30 of this series. I still have not produced any videos, perhaps someday, but school starts back Monday, Yikes!

I may add some additional posts here as I learn more about some of the outstanding questions I still have. Please drop me a note and let me know how your tablet deployments are going or if you have any questions about my experiences of using a Windows 8 tablet for educational use. You can email me at techtalk@eiu.edu or I invite you to subscribe to our TechTalk4Teachers podcast about teaching and learning with technology.

Visit the following websites for more information about other projects I am working on:

<http://techtalk4teachers.blogspot.com/>

<http://eiu.edu/itc/>

Until next time...

Keep on Learning,

Dr. Grissom

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

Day 60 with a Windows 8 Tablet - Get the Keyboard

Saturday, February 2, 2013

I finally purchased the keyboard that was designed to work with the Samsung Ativ 500T Smart PC Tablet. My advice for potential new users of hybrid Windows 8 tablet devices, like the Ativ 500T, is to get the keyboard as part of the initial purchase. I purchased the Ativ keyboard at Staples on sale for \$99 (regularly \$129) a couple of weeks ago and I have no regrets. It has made some of my initial workarounds unnecessary and has essentially turned my tablet into a touch-screen Ultrabook. I remain very satisfied with my purchase of the both the Ativ 500T Tablet and the snap-on keyboard.

Snapping the keyboard on and off is much better than having to “pair” the tablet to a Bluetooth or other wireless keyboard. I do however still use my wireless keyboard when I have my tablet connected to a HDTV or projector as it allows me to walk around (or lay on the couch) and control the tablet from anywhere in the room. But, I have recently found a new wireless display technology that may make even that unnecessary.

I read several reviews that gave the Ativ 500T keyboard mixed results and this is what stopped me from purchasing the keyboard originally. Many complained that it was not easy to snap the keyboard on and off but I have not had any trouble in this regard. There are two plastic covers that cover the slots used to connect the tablet to the keyboard. Remove the plastic covers on the tablet and you will have no problem snapping the keyboard on and off the tablet. Turns out this was a common complaint that brought the overall review score down, but this was the result of some end users not reading the instructions to remove the plastic tabs and thus caused them problems, duh.

I have nothing but praise for this keyboard. It is a full-size island style keyboard with an excellent feel. It is very easy to type with over long periods of time, as a keyboard should be.

My Windows 8 tablet is often with me in the evenings as I watch TV and allows me to get caught up on my Twitter feed, emails, and play a game or two. The snap-on / snap-off keyboard style has made this device a true production machine and I can now type long Word documents (and blog posts) with ease as well as reply to emails without resorting to onscreen keyboards that I just do not get along with. Onscreen keyboards work in a pinch but it is a joy to use this full-size keyboard snapped to the touchscreen tablet.

I often use the touchscreen even when the keyboard is attached as many screen gestures are just natural to touch the screen in the Windows 8 interface. Again, I ignore many of the technorati bloggers and others that say end users do not want a touchscreen in a laptop form factor. I DO want a touchscreen, and a touchscreen will be a requirement on all my future devices, even laptop and desktop form factors. It makes that much of a difference.

There are also some extremely useful keyboard shortcuts that I use to maneuver around the Windows 8 interface when the keyboard is attached to my tablet. The “Windows” (Win) key by itself immediately brings you to the “Start Screen”, press Windows key again and you return to whatever app you were in. Win+C brings up the Charms bar, Win+I brings you to Settings, Win+X brings up the “Power Users”

menu, Win+S brings up the screen clipping tool to save selected regions of the screen to OneNote (I love OneNote!!!) Win+D switches to Desktop mode, Win+H Share, Win+K Devices, Win+F Files, Win+Q takes you to Search.

On the Desktop side of Windows 8 all the normal keyboard shortcuts that I have learned over the years still work in Windows 8 using the snap-on keyboard. Alt+F4 closes the current window (also a very easy way to close metro-style apps) Ctrl-C for copy, Ctrl-V for Paste, Win+Tab cycles through your open apps (Alt+Tab also works this way), Shift+arrow keys allow you to highlight text on the screen in Word. Ctrl++ Zoom in, Ctrl+ - Zoom out

Learn these shortcuts and you will be able to fly around the interface and become much more productive in your day to day work with a Windows 8 Tablet. Use the touchscreen whenever it is more natural for you. Having a choice of user inputs puts you in control of your workflow. Blogging this experience has taught me a lot over the past 60 days. I think what I learned most is that getting hands-on experience trumps all the reading of reviews and opinions of others. In the end it is your experience and opinion that matters most, do your homework ,but also make informed decisions based on real-world use.

Did I say, get the keyboard.

Keep on Learning,

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

You can follow me on Twitter [@tomgrissom](https://twitter.com/tomgrissom)

P.S.

My iPad and Android tablets are still gathering dust since I have purchased this Windows 8 tablet two months ago. This tablet meets my needs better than anything else I have ever used. With a 10 hour battery life, instant on/off, connected standby, full-size USB port, expandable microSD storage, microHDMI out for connecting to a HDTV or projector, choice of touch or keyboard input, hybrid laptop or slate form factor, full version of Office 2010 with OneNote, and digitizer with Pen input this device is the most flexible device for all around use.

This is a great device for teachers and students and worthy of consideration, especially if you leverage the use of OneNote with Skydrive cloud storage. The only thing I would mention for improvement would be for a more robust processor (Surface Pro, coming next week) but that will increase the costs, both in money and battery life. At a price of \$750 retail (with keyboard), this tablet offers a lot of flexibility for the money.

If you missed my previous posts about [30 Days with a Windows 8 Tablet](#) please see the archive section of the ITC Chronicles. Thank you for taking the time to read my posts.

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Tom Grissom, PhD

Wirelessly Display Windows 8 to the Big Screen

Wirelessly Display your Windows 8 PC/Laptop screen to a Projector or HDTV for Classroom Presentations

Tuesday, February 12, 2013

Teachers have long sought an easy-to-use and affordable wireless display technology that can free them from the bondage of long cables running from computers to projectors and HDTVs. I think I may have finally cracked it.

WiDi, Airplay, Miracast, DIAL, and DLNA are just a few of the wireless display standards currently making up the alphabet soup of wireless display technologies. It can all get very confusing and these standards are still evolving. To make matters worse some solutions are proprietary causing vendor lock-in and duplication among vendors. Many solutions require buying the “right” device and connecting it to the “right” app to display your screen wirelessly to the front of the room. We need a universal standard so that all these devices can get along with each other. There may be hope as this fall many HDTV manufacturers are building in miracast and DIAL capability into many new models. Until that happens I have found a workable and affordable solution for wirelessly connecting a Dell XPS 13 Laptop to a 50 inch HDTV.

To be fair I was able to do this 3 or 4 years ago using some WiDi equipment but at that time it would only work well with static images like PowerPoint slides, wirelessly displaying video was too demanding at that time. In addition you had to have the “right” combination of processor and wireless chips to get everything to work properly. We are getting closer to more broadly available wireless standard but we still have a ways to go.

I recently purchased the Actiontec ScreenBeam device that connects to any HDMI-capable HDTV that can mirror your PC’s display to the big screen. It is advertised to work with Windows 7 and Windows 8 computers but in my experience you will need a fast processor for it to work well.

Actiontec ScreenBeam

<http://www.amazon.com/ACTIONTEC-SBWD100KIT01-ScreenBeam-Universal-Wireless/dp/B009Z8T3K6>



This is how it works for me as I have this working on a Dell XPS 13 laptop that is about one-year old and has a 128 GB SSD hard drive. This device requires an HDMI input on the projector or HDTV you are connecting to.

First, there is software that must be loaded on the PC/Laptop. Once the software is installed on your PC/Laptop you next connect the ScreenBeam receiver unit into an open HDMI port on the HDTV (there is also a small power-brick that you must plug-in so that the receiver unit has power) you then select the correct HDMI port to display on the HDTV. Once the receiver unit is connected and you are on the correct HDMI input you will see the ScreenBeam instructions displayed on the HDTV screen waiting to be paired to your PC/Laptop.

On the PC/Laptop side of the equation you insert the ScreenBeam USB transmitter into an open USB port on your PC/Laptop and wait for it to be recognized by your computer. Once recognized, double-click on the ScreenBeam software shortcut that is on the Desktop. The ScreenBeam software will open and scan the area for a receiver to connect to (the range is about 30 feet). The first time you use it you will need to follow the on-screen instructions and enter a security code to match the transmitter to the receiver. We don't want to have any rouge PC's connecting to your big screen display ;)

The pairing process works similar to the familiar Bluetooth pairing except this time we are pairing video to the HDTV wirelessly. Using the ScreenBeam software you select the receiver (it is identified by a unique number) and then click on Connect.

In my experience the pairing process takes less than a minute and once connected you are "mirroring" your computer display on the big screen! What you see and do on the PC/Laptop is displayed on the big screen in real time. There is very little lag (even with YouTube videos) and I have been impressed so far with the performance using the Dell XPS 13 Laptop. The video streaming is of high-quality and the sound

is great. Unlike some other solutions this method does not require an 802.11 type network so you do not have to worry about bogging down bandwidth for other network users.

Remaining Big Questions

Because of the variety of Intel and AMD chip-sets available on PC's and laptops I do not know what chip-sets will provide acceptable performance. I did try ScreenBeam on my Clover Trail Windows 8 Tablet and the new ATOM processor struggled to keep up with delivering the video to the HDTV. It worked but was slow and choppy (unacceptable). I have not had time to try older processors like the Intel Dual Core series but my Dell XPS has a Core i5 and it is working smoothly. I am not sure if AMD chips are even supported.

Finally, for those of you reading this that may have the new Microsoft Surface Pro, my big question is will this work on the Surface Pro?

If this will work with Surface Pro then teachers will be thrilled because we would finally have an enterprise class machine with digital Pen input that can be used with OneNote to essentially become a roaming wireless interactive white board for classroom presentations. In addition, you could display any of the millions of x86 applications available on Windows to the big screen.

I am very interested if this would work on the new Surface Pro. If you have a Surface Pro and are able to test the Actiontec ScreenBeam wireless display adapter please let me know your experiences so we can share with others. You can email me at techtalk@eiu.edu

Keep on Learning,

Tom Grissom, Ph.D.

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Update 2/13/2013: I also have this working on a five year old Dell Core 2 Duo desktop computer (it does not have a wireless card in it, just a regular ethernet card). It is working with Windows 7 display (1280x720) mirrored to the HDTV with sound. #winning

END