

Using Tablets and Faith

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The TabletPC and the PDA have changed the way that many people use computers and technology to get their work done, whether that work is as a doctor, a pastor, a teacher or a student. Along with some unique resources like OneNote or Evernote, writing on a computer or PDA is not only possible but enjoyable and functional.

One person who is a leader in informing and educating people in the use of mobile devices is Rob Bushway of GottaBeMobile.com (<http://www.gottabemobile.com>) and Zoe

Technologies (<http://www.zoeinc.com>). If you are looking for news and information about the TabletPC, Ultra Mobile PC, or PDAs, then GottaBeMobile.com might be the best place to start. The site is dedicated to informing readers, via more than a half a dozen articles per day, all about mobile computing. They also produce a number of video reviews and podcasts on subjects ranging from how to use software for mobile devices to the functionality of new computers from the leading vendors.

I recently interviewed Rob regarding GottaBeMobile and his company Zoe Technologies. The reason I thought he would be of interest to our readers is that besides being a leader in the mobile tech arena, Rob is also a believer, living out his faith in the public tech square.

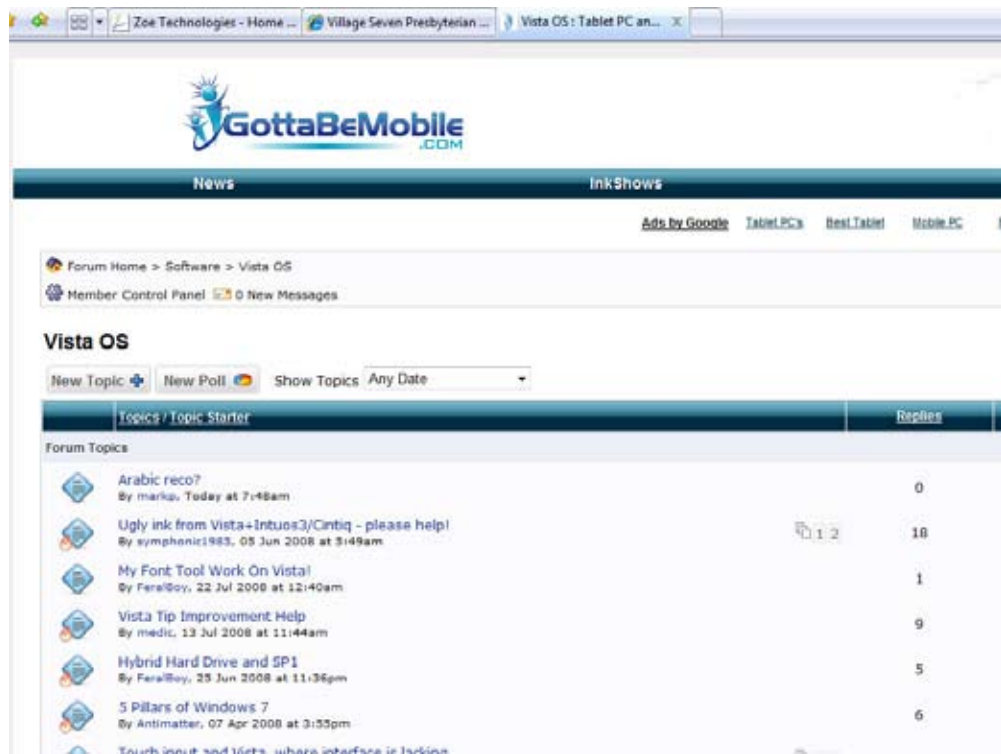
Rob Bushway started out working in the computer field as a programmer when he was eighteen years old. In 2001 he started Zoe Technologies, which caters to companies needing custom, database-driven, web sites. Sites he has worked on include Focus on the Family

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Family's site <http://www.WhitsEnd.org>, which centered around their Adventures In Odyssey franchise as well as FOF's Radio Theater site <http://www.radiotheatre.org>. Other examples of sites produced by Zoe Technologies are the home page for Village Seven Presbyterian Church (<http://www.v7pc.org>) and for the National Junior College Athletic Association (<http://www.njcaa.org>). If you visit these sites you will see that Bushway's work is feature rich and attractive.

Rob moved into the mobile computing platform when a friend, fellow GottaBeMobile founder Dennis Rice, told him about a new platform that would "totally change how everyone used computers." It was the Tablet PC. He said he was at first quite skeptical but as he looked into it further his curiosity was piqued and he ordered an HP TC1000 Tablet PC. His arrived before his friend's and together they were hooked. "The ability to write on the screen and have those handwritten notes searchable and always available was quite attractive," he said.

In 2006 just five years later Rob Bushway and Dennis Rice started GottaBeMobile.com. They saw a "huge void in news and community forums covering tablet PCs, mobile PCs, and ultra-mobiles." Since its beginning Bushway has become the sole owner and the Editor-in-Chief. Along with seven others, the site produces quite a lot of content related to the mobile platforms. Added to their blog, video podcasts, and reviews, they have an active forum for discussion. That is how I got involved with Bushway. He is very active in the forums answering questions, criticisms and asking questions. One of the things you will



see as you read his posts is that no matter how people might treat him he is always kind, considerate and patient. The forums at GottaBeMobile have a wonderfully congenial atmosphere, especially when you consider that people seem to become brazenly critical and sometimes mean when they interact on the Internet. He told me that the forums are "remarkably polite." When I asked him how he handles people who misbehave he said it happens very little, but when he does he confronts them as if they were face to face. Sounds to me very much like the command of Christ in Matthew 18 which requires that we confront those who have a problem with us before going on. We can all learn

a lesson from this passage and the application of it by the GottaBeMobile team.

At this point Tablet PCs are not in the mainstream. But they could be of great help to users. Many believers find themselves involved in meetings, classes and lectures, or on the go. For ministers they can be of help whether their area of focus is music, preaching, counseling, teaching or just administration. I asked Rob how he saw them as a benefit in the Christian computing arena.

“Tablets have tremendous potential in the church. Just last year, I helped our music minister choose his Tablet PC, which he wanted to use to mark up music, as well as take notes while in staff meetings or in counseling sessions. The right mobile computer, coupled with the right software, can really free up a pastor to do what God called him to do: minister to those who are hurting and in need. Good technology gets out of the way, and that is what Tablet PC technology thrives at. In addition, tablets in particular can bring another dimension to presenting

Sunday school lessons – writing on the screen to make a point, drawing out diagrams, etc. The key to successful use of a tablet is good software. Fortunately, we have a good choice of software available to us, but it can certainly improve.”



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 Bryan McGee

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There are many good examples of Tablet friendly software. If you are a musician, you can print to PDF and then use PDF Annotator (available at <http://www.ograhl.com/en/pdfannotator>) or Bluebeam's PDF Revu (available at <http://www.bluebeam.com>). PDF Annotator or PDF Revu let you ink on top of PDF files. You could use them for anything that you can make into a PDF file. Musicians can use it to write music on PDF Music paper (you can find some at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/yry2qj>). Or you could use any eBooks you have in PDF format.

Bushway also suggested that if you use Bible Study software you could simply use the Print to PDF feature and use your resources in those programs allowing you to write in the margins again, just like you can with regular books and a pen, pencil and/or highlighter.

One new genre of software that is available is note taking software like Microsoft OneNote, EverNote, and GoBinder (see my article from the May issue http://www.ccmag2.com/2008_05/ccmag2008_05higherpower.pdf). These are all designed to help people take notes and collect information. Using OneNote or GoBinder as a platform, Bushway created what he calls the TabletBible (<http://www.tabletbible.com>). This is a free downloadable Bible that can be used inside OneNote or GoBinder. The Tablet Bible consists of bibles that can be used inside note taking applications. They have very wide margins and are double spaced to make it easy to ink notes on the screen of a Tablet or Ultra-Mobile PC. They are free to download and use.

I asked Bushway why he created TabletBible and he said he grew weary of waiting for other Bible software companies to make their products ink friendly. At this point there is not a Bible study program that is able to accept on-screen ink as a form of input natively. You can use the Vista or XP Tablet Input Panel, but I think it would be great to have a program designed for use on a computer with inking capabilities. You could highlight text, write notes in the margins, or create links between works just by drawing a line from one spot in one book to another spot in another book. Instead of waiting for the popular companies to include some of this functionality, he created Tablet Bible.

Currently the New King James Version is available in OneNote and GoBinder formats. The ESV is available for OneNote only. The King James Version and Young's Literal Translation are both available only for GoBinder. He also has some other resources available like dictionaries, confessions or catechisms, and a long list of books from authors like E.M. Bounds, John Cal-

vin, Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, to name just a few. There is also a Word Macro code available to let you create your own books for OneNote or GoBinder. I have used the ESV in OneNote and love it for just reading and personal note taking. If I had a smaller tablet I might use it even in preaching and teaching situations.

Bushway does not have immediate plans to release others. But if the Bible study publishers are reading this, maybe they'd like to contribute to the effort. The real difficulty is time and copyright issues. So you are not likely to see an NIV or NASB version any time soon. But you might be able to create them for yourself.

Just as you can Print to PDF from your Bible software, if you have Microsoft OneNote, you can also Print to OneNote and mark up your books using ink there as well. This may seem like a lot of work just to make notations on a book. But I find that reading in OneNote is much easier than in the Bible programs. And since no Bible study programs offer inking features, this lets you not only ink but search your notes just as you could in Bible study programs. The difference is that your notes will be in your handwriting instead of having to use the Tablet PC Input Panel, which works great (Vista is a big improvement in this area over XP) but is not as quick as direct inking in OneNote or other note taking software. I've been doing my personal Bible study in the ESV TabletBible for a little while and I enjoy it. I've also exported a book I am reading that I have in Logos but not physical form. I've enjoyed reading in this way. I will export many others and read them in OneNote.

If you want to create a OneNote Notebook from a public domain work, a work you own the copyright rights to because you wrote it or are a publisher, or if you have permission from the publisher, then Bushway would be happy to host the files on his TabletBible site. As mentioned he has a macro available that helps to automate the process. But if you like to do things the hard way he explained that you create OneNote notebooks as follows:

1. Set the OneNote 2007 printer as the default printer by going into the control panel and clicking on printers. Right click the OneNote 2007 printer and choose "set as default". Repeat these steps when you are done to set your old printer back to the default.
2. Go into OneNote 2007 and create a new notebook. Each chapter of the book will be a page in OneNote with a tab along the right side. For Bible books he recommends creating a section tab for each book of the bible (at the top of OneNote) and then each chapter of the book will be a page (along the right).
3. Now setup Word by creating a new document with very wide margins, like 1.75 inches on the right and left and 1 inch on the top and 3 inches on the bottom. This allows for plenty of room for inking in OneNote. Set line spacing to 2 lines.
4. Select the source text and paste it into Word. You may want to do a Paste Special and select unformatted text. Now format

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- it as you wish including fonts, spacing, page breaks, etc.
5. Print and it will go to an empty page in OneNote.
 6. Create a new page and repeat steps 4 and 5 for each chapter of the book.

If you would like to have the book posted on the www.TabletBible.com page, send an email to Rob Bushway at rob@zoeinc.com.

Bushway does not use his computer in church that much. He prefers the old fashioned method of reading a paper bible as he listens to his pastor preach. I can understand that. However, he does use his iPhone and Tablet in other settings to do Bible Study. He also uses OneNote for taking notes. And of course, in doing his job with Zoe Technologies and GottaBeMobile, he uses his computer all the time.

I asked Rob about his Christian walk in the world of technology. He said, "I try to live my life as transparently as possible." I have seen that in his activities online. From the way he responds to people in his forums to the picture he uses to identify himself there with a huge smile, he tries to live his Christian life. He also uses his personal web site to help show how God is working in his life. He said:

I love to write about what God has been showing me about people, my own sin, struggles and trials He is bringing our family through, and more. I really enjoy observing people and imagining their stories, then writing about what God has shown me. I find that by writing transparently and sharing that via my personal blog, I've been able to point many people to God's goodness in ways that would be much more difficult.

If you visit his personal site (<http://www.robbushway.com>) you will also learn of the struggles his family has had as their daughter Maggie faces health problems. She is a cancer survivor, but because her cancer was in the brain, it has caused some difficult consequences with seizures and cognitive learning problems. While many people are private about such issues Rob says that writing about them publicly on his web site is not only personally therapeutic, but it is also a way to minister to others who might have to face similar struggles. In his own words:

Living on this side of Heaven is very difficult. There is so much pain and hurt in everyone's life - it just shows itself differently. For some, it is health related. For others, it is disappointment with a spouse. Out of that pain and hurt, there are real conversations taking place between the person and God. I write in a very open manner because to do otherwise would falsely set a bar for what it means to walk with Christ. I want people to know that the conversations they have with God, whether praising Him for how He has provided or lashing out in anger for losing their little girl, is true prayer. God wants us to pour our hearts out to Him, and often times, that doesn't look pretty. A walk with God doesn't look pretty. We shouldn't try to pretty it up for the public's sake.

We can all learn a lesson from Rob Bushway's struggles and his transparency as he tries to help support others in God's kingdom struggling with life on this side of heaven and inside the technology community.

If you know of people doing unique things in the tech community while they live out their Christian faith, I'd love to know about it and maybe share it with readers. Send me an email at kevin@keivnpurcell.org or visit my site at www.keivnpurcell.org.

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