



PRODUCT REVIEW

Optimizing Your Router's WiFi Channel

by Jeff Dubois

Recently, I found myself immersed in a discussion on the reliability of WiFi. Inasmuch as a wireless network connection may provide convenient connectivity, my networking preference remains a wired ethernet connection, both for security and reliability. Notwithstanding my druthers towards copper, there are occasions, sometimes not by choice, where I must rely on a wireless connection to gain Internet access. My use of the Rikomagic MK802 IV is such an instance.



Figure 1

The RMK802IV (Figure 1) is a small form factor Android device which attaches to the HDMI port on your television. Featuring both Bluetooth and USB support, a remote and/or keyboard are easily attached to the device making the RKM802IV a robust, ultrathin, multi-purpose Android device. Though WiFi connectivity is provided through the device's internal NIC, if its primary function is to serve as a media streaming device, it is important to minimize any connectivity challenges that are a consequence of its modest 802N internal interface card. Selecting the optimum WiFi channel in your particular wireless environment is one step you

can take to ensure the maximum performance from your wireless devices.

A recent How-To Geek article [http://www.howtogeek.com/197268/how-to-find-the-best-wi-fi-channel-for-your-router-on-any-operating-system/] entitled "How to Find the Best WiFi Channel for Your Router on Any Operating System", a number of software alternatives are recommended for the task. Such recommendations include WiFi Analyzer for Android, NirSoft WiFiInfoView for Windows or using the iwlist command (sudo iwlist wlan0 scan | grep \ (Channel)) in Linux.

In any effort to optimize my wireless environment and maximize its performance, I opted to use an Android app called WiFi Analyzer [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.farproc.wifi.analyzer] which, available from Google Play Store, I easily installed on my Huawei P6 smart phone.

The above-noted article asserted that "Channels 1, 6 and 11 are the most frequently used for 2.4 Ghz WiFi", an assertion which would seem to be substantiated by my first run of WiFi Analyzer. (Figure 2)

To my surprise, WiFi Analyzer not only revealed that there was a significant amount of wireless traffic in my vicinity using channels 1, 6 and 11 but, more importantly, that my router (a

(Continued on page 5)

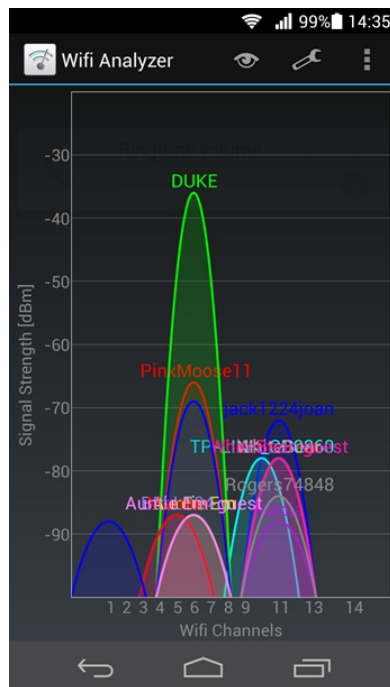


Figure 2

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March Raffle

The March raffle prize is an iCAN 15.6" Grey Nylon Laptop Trolley Case.

Tickets are, as always, a good deal at \$1 for one, a great deal at \$2 for three or the unbelievable bargain of \$5 for ten.



February Prize Winners

The raffle prize of a Delux Q12 Wireless Bluetooth Speaker went to our newest member of the OPCUG ...

Dave Ward.

The evenings door prize of a USB Hub went home with **Raymond Martineau.**

Coming Up...

→ Wednesday March 9th, 2016

Speaker: Jeff Dubois, Chris Taylor, and Jocelyn Doire, OPCUG

Topic: Members' Favourites

For the March meeting of the OPCUG, we will feature the ever-popular Members' Favourites theme, an opportunity of members to share their favourite technologies with other members.

Jeff Dubois will present VMware Player & Wearable Technologies. Chris Taylor will explore remote desktop options. And Jocelyn Doire will discuss computer-aided design (CAD) options.

Members are encouraged to share their wisdom with the rest of the group on their favourite software or service. If there's something you'd like to share with the group as a part of the Members' Favourites night this month, please send the Meeting Coordinator an email to members@opcug.ca so your name can be added to the list of this month's presenters.

Wednesday June 8th, 2016

Speaker: Chris Taylor, OPCUG President and Microsoft MVP

Topic: Windows 10: One Year Out

Now that Windows 10 has been out for almost a year, this is an opportunity to look at how it has matured. Chris will look at the changes that have taken place since the Windows 10 release last July. Microsoft's new web browser - Edge - will be examined to see how it stacks up against the competition. As time runs short for the free upgrade from Windows 7 and 8.1, Chris will look at how people should decide if Windows 10 is right for them.

(Information about the April and May meetings will be posted at <http://opcug.ca/public/regmtg.htm> when available.)

Wednesday, November 9th, 2016

Speaker: Doug Gray, Ottawa Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society

Topic: An Introduction to Genealogy - Exploring Current Techniques, Key Tools, and Resources

Genealogy is the study of families by establishing a Pedigree from the extraction and weighing of evidence from valid sources, tracing their lineages and history. Doug Gray, Chair of the Ottawa Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society, will briefly discuss the basics of Genealogy, the key software tools, techniques, and will outline the vast resources available on the internet and in the Ottawa area in pursuit of this popular hobby. This is a hobby in which one could just consider the basics or could get quite involved identifying numerous generations, finding and corresponding with distant living relations in the process.

2016 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, March 9 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Aviation and Space Museum, 11 Aviation Parkway.
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, March 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, March 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, March 9 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

CLUB LIFE

Upcoming Workshop

Understanding E-mail (Everything you need to know - and some things you don't!) : In this upcoming half-day workshop scheduled for April 23rd, two members of the Ottawa PC Users' group will explain the basics of how email works. The differences between using webmail and an email clients, the features of POP and IMAP mail systems, and their suitability for multiple devices (notably smartphones and tablets), will be explored. Today's email systems are constantly under threat from hackers, so we will take a look at some vulnerabilities and see how best to protect personal mail systems. We will see how managing email can be achieved efficiently and automatically using a combination of folders and filters. The basic processes for moving between webmail and email clients by transferring address books and messages will be outlined. And, for those who wish to have the personal touch for their mail system (or who don't want to be locked in to a specific service provider's email systems) we will examine how to create and use portable email addresses.

The workshop will be held on Saturday, April 23rd, 2016 (12:30 – 16:30) at the Alta Vista branch of the Ottawa Public Library

The cost to attend the afternoon workshop is only \$10.00 and will include coffee, donuts and the chance to win a one-year OPCUG membership (\$25.00 value) certificate. Space is limited to the first 40 registrants. Click on the WORKSHOP button at <http://opcug.ca> to register online.

EaseUS Todo Backup

Due to some technical problems at EaseUS, the license give-away that was scheduled for February had to be delayed.

All members of the Ottawa PC Users' Group who go to <http://www.easeus.com/giveaways/opcug-specials.html> between March 14 and March 18, 2016 will be able to get a free license for EaseUS Todo Backup Home, valued at US\$29.

Note that you must install and activate the software by March 20, 2016.

Review of 2015 Financial Records

by Richard Aylesworth

I reviewed the Treasurer's financial records for the year 2015, and found them to be in good shape. The dollar amounts agree with those in the Treasurer's financial report submitted to the board.

There were a few minor errors with the reporting of some transactions. These were dealt with to my satisfaction by the Treasurer.

Thanks to Alan German for a job well done.

*Richard Aylesworth,
February 2016*

The Board of Directors would like to thank Richard for his thorough review of the club's accounts.

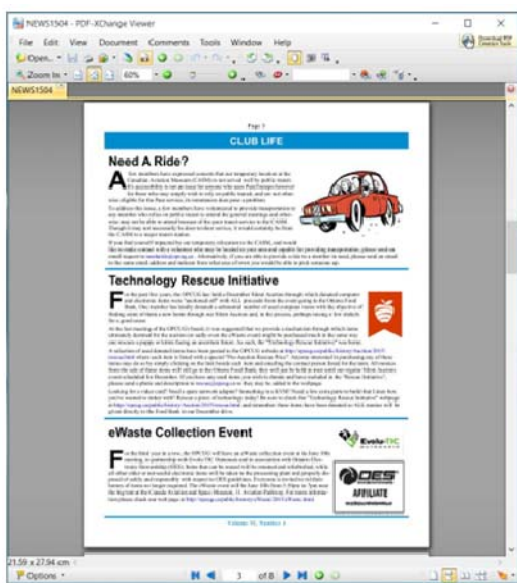
PRODUCT REVIEW

Another View of PDF Files *by Alan German*

Ever since 2005, when Doug Poulter reviewed FoxReader ([FoxReader vs. Adobe Reader](#)), I have been using this utility program (now Foxit Reader). Well, that is until recently when Foxit, in its wisdom, decided that I also needed Foxit Cloud – whether I asked for it or not.

I always found the update procedure for Foxit to be somewhat cumbersome/confusing and so opted to simply install the latest version when I received notification of an available update. Recently, the installation process has resulted in Foxit Cloud also being installed. It really bugs me when software developers install stuff without asking, and – even worse – when they don't give any inkling of what “benefit” the new addition offers. It would appear that Foxit Cloud is a cloud storage system. Since I have no use for such an application, my choice has been to uninstall the additional program. But, it always reappears with every new installation of Foxit Reader. Time to find a new PDF reader!

One possibility that gets good reviews is PDF-XChange Viewer which hails from Tracker Software Products (Canada) Ltd of Chemainus, BC. Wow! - a home-grown, freeware, PDF reader – we just have to give this one a whirl!



Downloading and installing the software is relatively straightforward. In my case, since I want PDF files to open in the external viewer rather than in a browser window, I unchecked the options for “Add-in for Internet Explorer” and “Add-in for Mozilla Firefox, Opera and Chrome”. The only other thing to check was the option for the “Free Version” rather than “Pro”.

As shown in the screenshot, PDF-XChange Viewer provides a wide range of controls using colourful icons and a regular File-Edit-View type menu. The graphic controls are really convenient. For example, there are icons to display an entire page of a document, the page by its width, or the page at full size, in the program's window. There is also a slider control that provides fine control over the page size display.

Buttons at the bottom of the page allow scrolling forwards and backwards through the document, a page at a time, or jumping immediately to the first or last page. The functions of these controls are also duplicated through the use of

the side-scroll bar and keyboard shortcuts such as PgUp/PgDn. There are also controls to display multiple pages of the current document, such as two pages side-by-side in the program window.

There are multiple find and search options. Find will search for a word or phrase in the current document. Buttons for find next and find previous are available to simplify searching through the document. Options allow finding the whole word or case-sensitive searches. An “Ask” button will search for the target word or phrase on the web. While, as the name suggests, the default is to use the Ask search engine, a drop-down arrow provides access to alternative search providers, including Google. And, if you opt to search using Google, this becomes the default for any future on-line search.

The program has a number of other features, including being able to double click on the blank program window area to allow browsing for a file in the last-used folder. Alternatively, one can drag a PDF file into this area to open it in the viewer. Multiple files are opened in individual tabs which makes reviewing a number of related documents really easy.

There are several other features built into the program such as sending a PDF file by E-mail in ZIP format and optical character recognition. For those with even more complex needs, there is also a Pro version available for purchase. However, for my purposes, the basic ability of the freeware viewer to open PDF files and just read them suits me fine.

Bottom Line

PDFXchangeViewer (Freeware)

Version 2.5.313.1

Tracker Software Products (Canada) Ltd

<http://www.tracker-software.com/product/pdf-xchange-viewer>



PRODUCT REVIEW

Multi-Boot for UEFI *by Alan German*

In a previous article ([Yumi - A Workhorse of a Different Colour](#)), I discussed the creation of a bootable USB drive that would provide a platform from which to boot multiple operating systems. This makes efficient use of today's high capacity drives since several Linux distros and utilities can be loaded and run from a single USB flash drive. However, one problem with Yumi is that it doesn't support UEFI (Unified Extensible Firmware Interface) so, if you have a relatively new computer, creating multi-boot USB drives may not be possible for you. At least, it won't be possible unless you are prepared to switch horses and use some different software. This is where Easy2Boot comes in!

The setup procedures for Easy2Boot are a little convoluted but, once the software is configured, loading multiple Linux distros and utilities onto the bootable USB flash drive is pretty simple – albeit with one final twist in the tail! The required steps are outlined in the following text.

You will need three things – (1) a large capacity (let's say 8 GB or bigger) USB flash drive, (2) the Easy2Boot software (download Easy2Boot_v1.64DPMS.zip from <http://www.easy2boot.com/>), and (3) the installer for the RMPrepUSB software (download Install_RMPrepUSB_Full_v2.1.725.zip from <http://www.rmprepusb.com/>).

Unpack the RMPrepUSB zip file and install the software on your computer. This program is used to prepare the USB flash drive for use with Easy2Boot. However, you don't need to run RMPrepUSB program manually since the drive preparation process is part of a batch file that first calls up RMPrepUSB, and then runs Easy2Boot, to create the bootable USB drive.

Now unpack the Easy2Boot zip file into a new folder on your hard disk. Let's name this folder Easy2Boot. This time, no software installation is required. The batch file to create a bootable USB drive will be run directly from your Easy2Boot folder. However, just before we go ahead with this, note that any files on the USB drive will be lost in the initial formatting proc-

ess so make sure that either the drive is empty or you have nothing on the drive that you wish to keep.

Navigate to Easy2Boot\ISO\docs\Make_E2B_USB_Drive. Right-click on the file MAKE_E2B_USB_DRIVE.cmd and select Run as administrator. The make window will display a list of available USB drives. The target disk is likely to be listed as DRIVE 1. If so, in response to the prompt, enter 1 as the drive number that you wish to erase and format. A warning that any information (partitions) on the selected drive will be destroyed will now be displayed. Enter Y to authorize the disk format.

The choice is now to format the USB drive as NTFS (for boot files over 4 GB), or FAT32 (for smaller boot files). Entering F (for FAT32) will usually be sufficient. Press OK in response to the final option to continue the disk format. The batch file will format the drive and then indicate that the Easy2Boot files are being copied. This latter process can take some time, so be patient.

We now need to set up Easy2Boot's configuration file with choices for language and keyboard type. The defaults are for English (US) which will normally be desired so simply press Return for the various prompts in order to accept the default values. The next option asks if we wish to show file name extensions in the menus. Press Y to allow this.

Finally, we are asked if we wish to write the configuration file (MyE2B.cfg). Enter Y to this prompt also. The make window's background changes to green – success! Press any key to close the batch file.

We now have a bootable USB drive. To test the system, let's see if we can set up Ubuntu Linux to boot from the USB. The instructions say to load Linux ISO files into the _ISO\LINUX folder. However, what they don't tell you is that you should rename such files with a .isodefault extension rather than the original .iso extension. (If this step is not taken, the boot process will stall briefly and require that you type Y to authorize the use of the isodefault extension.)

So, for our current purposes we will copy the (previously-downloaded) file ubuntu-14.04.2-desktop-amd64.iso, a 64-bit Ubuntu distro, to the folder _ISO\LINUX on the bootable USB drive, and rename this file to ubuntu-14.04.2-desktop-amd64.isodefault. Finally, we are ready to boot into Ubuntu from the USB flash drive.

Rebooting the machine and selecting the option to use the USB flash drive (using F12 = Boot Options in my case) leads to the display of Easy2Boot's main menu. We now select Option 4 - the LINUX menu. A sub-menu is displayed with the first option – numbered as 0 – showing ubuntu-14.04.2-desktop-amd64.isodefault. Selecting this option boots the machine into the live-USB version of Ubuntu 14.04.

Providing other Linux distros as optional boot targets is as simple as copying the distro files (ISO's) into the _ISO\LINUX folder of the bootable USB drive (and renaming them with a .isodefault extension). Similarly, including bootable utilities, such as Gparted and Clonezilla, is achieved by copying their ISO files into the _ISO\UTILITIES folder of the bootable USB drive. The individual Linux distros may be selected from the LINUX option of Easy2Boot's main menu, while the utility programs may be similarly selected from the UTILITIES option.

So, there you have it, a somewhat complex setup process, but a decidedly simple means of booting one of a number of Linux distros or utilities from a single USB drive on a modern computer system.

Bottom Line

Easy2Boot (Freeware)
Version 1.71
Steve Si
<http://www.easy2boot.com/>

RMPrepUSB (Freeware)
Version 2.1.728
Steve Si
<http://www.rmprepusb.com/>

OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 62 Compiled by Alan German and Jeff Dubois

This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available software is provided for the information of our members who may find one or more of the programs useful.

Fatpaint

The developer claims this on-line utility to be the world's most advanced graphic design software, photo and graphics editor. It has more tools and resources than any other on-line graphics program, while still being super lightweight. It contains a vector image editor, a photo editor and advanced page layout functionality that glues everything together.

Web Site: <http://www.fatpaint.com/>



Mp3tag

Use this powerful but easy-to-use tool to edit audio file meta-data. Perform batch tag-editing of multiple files in a variety of audio formats. Use on-line databases to gather tags and download cover art. Rename files from tags, import/export tag information, create playlists, and more.

Current Release: Version 2.70

Web Site: <http://www.mp3tag.de/en/>

Ketarin

This small, open-source application will automatically update all your application setup packages. It isn't meant to keep your system up-to-date, but rather to maintain a compilation of all important setup packages which can then be burned to a CD or put on a USB stick.

Current Release: Version 1.7.1

Web Site: <http://ketarin.canneverbe.com/>

Sync

This tiny utility from Mark Russinovich of Sysinternals is used to flush file data from cache to disk. Use the program whenever you want to know that modified file data is safely stored on your hard drive. Otherwise, in the event a system failure, any data present in the cache would be lost.

Current Release: Version 2.0

Web Site: <http://tinyurl.com/p8lbzrj>

Checkvist

Keep the flow of your thoughts. Capture ideas fast, brainstorm, or re-structure your plans. Export and import your data to any other editor, and integrate with anything that connects to the web.

Web Site: <https://checkvist.com>



PuTTY

Use this free implementation of Telnet and SSH for either a Windows or Unix platform to establish secure connections over the Internet.

Current Release: Version 0.65

Web Site: <http://tinyurl.com/p2r>

Partition Manager 14 Free Edition

Disk partitioning is not usually for amateurs. But, you can use Partition Manager 14 Free Edition to manage disk partitions, optimize the use of disk space, and improve the performance of your hard disk – all very easily!

Web Site: <http://tinyurl.com/msk2ec>

Fraps

Want to know the frame rate per second for your graphics system, take a screenshot, or record video while playing your favourite game? Fraps is the utility that you need!

Current Release: Version 3.5.99

Web Site: <http://www.fraps.com/>

Lord of the Rings Online

An on-going series of adventures and quests involving intrigue and action begin the moment you start playing this game. Join characters such as Bilbo Baggins and Gandalf the Grey in the fabulous worlds of the Epic Story.

Web Site: <http://www.lotro.com/en>



Color Seizer

A colour picker for programmers that allows capturing a colour from anywhere on the screen and displaying the corresponding code for RGB, HSL, HTML, Delphi, Visual Basic and C++.

Current Release: Version 2.07

Web Site: <http://www.alexnolan.net/software/colorseizer.htm>

OTTAWA PC NEWS

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

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

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the **Canada Aviation and Space Museum**, 11 Aviation Parkway, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) go until 10 p.m.

Parking is available at the museum for a flat fee of \$3 after 5pm. Limited street parking is available for free. Details at <http://opcug.ca/public/regmtg.htm>

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Mailing Address:	3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6
Web address:	http://opcug.ca
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President and System Administrator	Chris Taylor	chris.taylor@opcug.ca	613-727-5453
Meeting Coordinator	Jeff Dubois	jeff.dubois@opcug.ca	
Meeting Coordinator Co-chair & Pub Assistant	Mike Pereira	mike.pereira@opcug.ca	
Treasurer	Alan German	alan.german@opcug.ca	
Secretary	Gail Eagen	gail.eagen@opcug.ca	
Membership Chairman	Mark Cayer	mark.cayer@opcug.ca	613-823-0354
Newsletter	Brigitte Lord (editor/layout)	brigitte.lord@opcug.ca	
	(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire (e-mail distribution)	jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca	
Public Relations	Jeff Dubois	PR@opcug.ca	613-366-7936
Facilities	Bob Walker		613-489-2084
Webmaster	Brigitte Lord	opcug-webmaster2@opcug.ca	
Privacy Director	Wayne Houston	privacy2@opcug.ca	
Special Events Coordinator	(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire	jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca	

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Within a couple of minutes you will receive a confirmation message from the listserver.

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