



OTTAWA

# PC NEWS

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## ARTICLE

### Security while traveling

by Chris Taylor

I frequently write about information technology security. This time, I want to look at some of the less technical aspects of safeguarding technology while travelling; a hodgepodge of things to think about.

**Scenario 1:** At airport security you separate your laptop from your carry-on luggage, as required. You step into the metal detector line. The person in front of you “just happens” to have some metal on his person and holds up the line. Meanwhile your laptop has gone through the x-ray machine. His accomplice, who has already gone through the metal detector, grabs your laptop before you get through.

**Solution:** Don’t put your articles on the conveyor belt until the path ahead of you for the metal detector is empty.

**Scenario 2:** You’re having lunch and tuck your laptop bag between you and the back of your chair. Your lunch companion is facing you and can see what is going on behind you. Think your laptop is safe? Maybe not. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_7Lg\\_7DSLyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7Lg_7DSLyk)

**Solution:** Keep your valuables very close, preferably where you can both see and feel them at all times. Make it very apparent that you are all over your things.

**Scenario 3:** On entering a foreign country, officials demand to see the contents of your phone. Knowing you will be denied entry if you refuse (don’t count on them having to justify their actions), you

unlock it and hand it over. They find an email critical of the local government. You are refused entry, or worse, arrested because it’s a crime there to criticize the government.

**Solution:** Clean your electronic devices before travelling or leave them at home. I know this is a hard one for many people. The risk may be low, but it’s really the best mitigation.

**Scenario 4:** You leave your hotel to go sight seeing. You place your laptop in the room safe with a combination you created. You come back to find your laptop gone; an inside theft by an employee. You didn’t think your combination isn’t easily bypassed by the hotel’s master code, did you? Or perhaps the master code was not even required. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mN90RTwXX5E>

**Solution:** While better to use a room safe than leave your valuables lying around the room, it is not a panacea. When the risk of mugging is low, keep valuables and important documents like your passport with you. In theft-prone cities such as London, New York, Paris, Rome, Prague, etc., it may be wiser to use the hotel safe.

**Scenario 5:** You park your rental car, leaving your bags in the car while you go to a meeting or shopping. You return to find a smashed window and all your valuables gone.

**Solution:** Don’t leave valuables in the car. Rental cars (often easily identified)

are especially high value targets because thieves know that people travel with phones, cameras, tablets and laptops. If you must leave valuables in the car, make sure they are not visible.

**Scenario 6:** Despite your best efforts, your phone is stolen. You don’t like having to do more than swipe your phone’s screen to access it, so you have no password on your phone. All your social media and email accounts auto-logon from your phone. The thief quickly takes over all your accounts, changes passwords to lock you out, and steals your personal information.

**Solution:** Have a strong password on all your devices. Make sure contents on all devices are encrypted.

**Scenario 7:** You use a public WiFi hotspot to stay connected. A bad actor on the hotspot picks up data on the air as it is transmitted back and forth. While many services automatically encrypt traffic, you might be surprised at how many don’t.

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

# May Raffle

The May raffle prize is an **X-Dragon Solar Power Bank with Cigarette Lighter**.

This nifty gadget is a USB power pack that you can charge up with any USB charger or leave in the sun (e.g. on a picnic table) and the sun will charge it. It will power any USB toy including smart phones, tablets, notebooks, etc. for hours. While NOT being waterproof (i.e. submersible) it can be left out in the rain.

It has a flashlight with three modes: steady light, SOS and strobe. There is a cigarette lighter that can ignite paper, leaves or grass.



Tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

## Coming Up...

→ May 8, 2019

**Topic:** Effective backup strategies  
**Speakers:** Alan German and Chris Taylor

Think about everything that is on your computer; videos of the grandkids playing in a park, photos of your trip to Patagonia (lucky you!), tax records, emails... Now think about whether those files exist anywhere else. If the answer is no, you really should think about backup.

There are many ways you could lose data including viruses, fire, theft, hard disk failure, making an unintended change to a file, and a wayward finger deleting a file rather than copying it. In this presentation, we will discuss various ways you can ensure your important data survives any catastrophe.

Alan and Chris have been involved for many years in helping people use technology more effectively. Both are passionate believers in making sure all important data is backed up and recoverable.

For meeting updates and additional details, visit <http://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm>. There are no meetings in July and August.

### April Prize Winners

**Rob Murray** was the winner of our raffle prize. I'm sure you will put your new 256GB USB stick to good use Rob.

And just in time for BBQ season **Don Gilmore** took home our door prize of a "low Tech" BBQ Cleaner!!

**June 12, 2019**

Annual eWaste event (5-7 pm) and Pizza Night (6-7:30 pm) followed by our speaker at 7:30 pm

**Speaker:** Cameron Bell, CEO CANImmunize  
**Topic:** Vaccination Tracking App

**October 9, 2019**

**Topic:** Members' Favourites

**Speakers:**  
 Lawrence Patterson (video editing),  
 Bob Walker and Bob Herres (blue tooth hearing aids),  
 Alan German (free Software),  
 Chris Taylor (Wacom tablet)

*Time permitting:*  
 Bob Walker (Online and Cross-Border Shopping)

## 2019 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, May 8 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 p.m. at the Riverside United Church, 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Parking is free. OC Transpo bus #87 stops nearby. Visit <a href="http://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm">http://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm</a> for directions.
Q&A Session	Wednesday, May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, May 8 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 p.m. (after the Q&A) at the Riverside Pub, 3673 Riverside Drive. Turn left onto Riverside Dr. from the Church.

# Secretary's Report for 2018/2019

## Board Members

The Board of Directors for 2018/19 was announced on February 19, 2018 at the Annual General Meeting. The Board selected positions at their next meeting resulting in the following slate of officers:

Chris Taylor, President and Systems Administrator  
Jocelyn Doire, Special Events Coordinator  
Jeff Dubois, Program and Publicity Coordinator  
Gail Eagen, Secretary  
Alan German, Treasurer  
Wayne Houston, Privacy  
Brigitte Lord, Webmaster and Newsletter  
Bob Walker, Facilities

Bob Herres was later selected by the Board as the ninth member as Member at large. He assisted Jeff Dubois with Program and Bob Walker with Facilities.

Jeff Dubois resigned from the Board in September.

Lawrence Patterson joined the Board in October and took over the Program and Publicity Coordinator roles.

## Board Meetings

The Board met 12 times on

(2018) Feb 19, Mar 19, Apr 16, May 14, Jun 18, Aug 13, Sep 17, Oct 15, Nov 12, Dec 17 and (2019) Jan 14, Feb 18

Most of the discussion at meetings related to creating the program, choosing speaker gifts, ensuring raffle and door prizes for the meetings, ensuring articles for the Newsletter, and planning the closing June Pizza-Q and associated e-waste event. This year, the Board also planned two workshops and gave many presentations at the Ottawa Public Library. The Board discussed publicity of events and ways to improve membership. Discussions also included the financial situation.

Major discussions and decisions made:

To accept Richard Aylesworth's comments and recommendations on the review of the financial records for 2017;

- To stop distribution of the Newsletter by mail;
- To continue giving presentations at various branches of the Ottawa Public Library;
- To give presentations on request from other organizations such as National Capital Freenet;
- To run a Spring 2018 workshop on Understanding Email held on April 21, 2018 with 18 participants;
- To run a Fall Workshop on Digital Photography November 3, 2018 with 11 participants;
- To purchase a projector and sound system for presentations;
- To facilitate donations to the Ottawa Food bank at the December 2018 meeting;
- To update the web site with content corrections and updates, with a new look and feel;
- To continue to provide a budget to the Publicity Coordinator;
- To continue publicity through Facebook, Twitter and community papers;
- To adopt the following as an accessibility policy: "The Ottawa PC Users' Group recognizes and respects diversity in our membership and our community. The OPCUG will strive to ensure its events and programs are in accessible facilities.";
- To move the Announcements, Newsletter and Member Forum to Google groups starting in June 2018;
- To move the OPCUG email to Gmail in September 2018;
- To move the OPCUG website to Toonie hosting in September 2018;
- To close down the PUB in September 2018;
- To submit an Ontario Community Award which was successful and six OPCUG members were recognized for their years of service:

*(Continued on page 4)*

# Secretary's Report for 2018/2019

(Continued from page 3)

- Chris Taylor (33 years of service since 1985)
- Mark Cayer (25 years of service since 1993)
- Robert Walker (21 years of service since 1997)
- Jocelyn Doire (19 years of service since 1999)
- Brigitte Lord (15 years of service since 2003)
- Alan German (14 years of service since 2004);
- To change the meeting location to the Riverside United/Anglican Church for the 2018-2019 season;
- To purchase a “portable” 136-inch screen to be used in OPCUG meetings.;
- To auction off the PUB replacement server at the December 2018 meeting with earnings given to the Ottawa Food Bank;
- To ask Richard Aylesworth to review the Treasurer’s financial records for 2018;
- To review the financial situation. A motion was made that, “recognizing the projected annual increase in capital assets that the group would accrue in future years as a result of a recent net decrease in annual expenditures, the Board authorize a reduction in membership dues from the current level of \$25.00 to \$20.00 with effect from January 1, 2019, and the provision of a gift for any speaker who is not an OPCUG member up to \$100.00 in value, this to be in addition to any token gift of an item such as an OPCUG coffee mug.”;
- To review the financial situation. The Board approved in principle the adoption of a further programme of fiscal management designed to decrease the club’s capital assets from the current level of around \$19,000.00 to approximately \$10,000.00 over the next 5-10 years, where any such programme would conform to the club’s objective to promote unpaid, mutual learning and support in fields related to personal microcomputers.;
- To provide coffee and Timbits for general OPCUG meetings through to June 2019 and that a charge of \$1 for coffee and donuts be levied and that the situation be evaluated as part of the financial plan
- To provide complimentary memberships for one year to incoming Board members, Mark Cayer for Membership, and to Richard Aylesworth for his financial review and to Bob Herres for his assistance with Facilities;
- To provide name badges for members and different badges for Board members.

## Election

Mike Pereira agreed to be Election Chair. Calls for nominations were done in the Newsletter and at meetings through the fall. Eight nominations were received by the due date of December 31, 2017. Since there were only eight nominations, Board members were acclaimed and no election was required.

## Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on March 13, 2019. Minutes were taken by Secretary, Gail Eagen. The meeting was called to order at 7:35.

1. **Election Results** - Chris Taylor, President, announced that they were eight nominations received by the deadline of December 31, 2018 and thus the Board was acclaimed. The newly elected Board for 2018/19 was announced as follows:

Jocelyn Doire  
 Gail Eagen  
 Alan German  
 Wayne Houston  
 Brigitte Lord  
 Lawrence Patterson  
 Chris Taylor  
 Bob Walker

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# Secretary's Report 2018/2019

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Chris said the Board would need to appoint a ninth Board member and asked anyone interested in joining the Board to talk to anyone on the Board. He thanked the outgoing Board for their contributions and thanked them for agreeing to continue. Chris also thanked Mike Pereira for carrying out the duties of Election Chair.

2. Chris said that his **President's Report** was published in the February 2018 News letter.
3. The **Treasurer's Report** for the calendar year 2018 was prepared by Alan German. Chris stated that the Treasurer's Report was published in the February 2018 newsletter.

Chris provided highlights of the report since Alan was away. Chris said income was mainly for memberships, raffle prizes and the workshop. Expenses were for the PUB, office supplies, meeting location, Workshop, merchandise (Speaker and raffle prizes) and PayPal. The meeting location was more expensive than before but costs had been reduced by not printing and mailing the Newsletter. Graphs shown demonstrated increased capital. The Board was concerned about this growth for a not for profit organization and had agreed to lower membership fees, increase speaker gifts and prepare a financial plan to reduce capital from \$19,000 to \$10,000 over 10 years. The financial books had been reviewed by Richard Aylesworth who made a couple of suggestions and provided a positive review.

Chris asked if there were any questions. No questions were asked about the Treasurer's Report. Chris stated that Alan could bring the books to a meeting in members had any detailed questions.

Chris thanked Alan for his efforts.

4. Chris said the **Secretary's Report** including a report on this AGM would be published in an upcoming Newsletter.
5. Questions and Answers

Chris asked if members had any questions or issues to raise.

1. A member asked if there were plans to link up with CompuCorps, who had provided a presentation earlier in the year. Chris responded that the OPCUG had reached out to them and were waiting for a reply.
  2. A member thanked the people who give the Ottawa Public Library presentations.
6. Notes of thanks - Chris thanked Mark Cayer for his membership work, Richard Aylesworth for performing the financial review. He again thanked the Board and the membership for their support.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.

Submitted by

Gail Eagen,  
Secretary, OPCUG

## Security (Continued from page 1)

**Solution:** Use a VPN to ensure all your traffic is encrypted.

Some other quick thoughts and considerations:

- Disable Bluetooth and WiFi except when you need them. Set WiFi so it does not auto-connect.
- Avoid using public or untrusted computers to log into any of your services. A keystroke logger could be present, capturing all your credentials.
- Assume all networks and devices other than your own are insecure, compromised and malicious.
- Set a short timeout before your device automatically locks. Include contact information on the lock screen so a finder can contact you if you lose it.
- An RFID-blocking wallet can keep an attacker from capturing sensitive info from chipped cards in your wallet or passport.
- Don't charge your devices by plugging them into USB ports of untrusted computers.
- Backup your devices before you travel. If you suspect a device has been compromised while travelling, reset it to factory defaults and restore data from your backup.
- Make sure your anti-virus and other software have all available updates.
- Be aware of your surroundings when entering your username/password. Someone may be shoulder surfing.
- Consider bringing a Chromebook rather than your regular laptop. With your data stored in the cloud, if the device is lost or stolen, your data remains safe. Log off and shut it down when not using it.
- If you have an encrypted vault stored on the web (see my November article in the OPCUG newsletter; <http://opcug.ca/Articles/1811NEWS.pdf>), put important information in it such as passport details, itinerary, booking references, prescription details, etc. You can always find another computer to access the information.



## ARTICLE

## Power off or not *by Chris Taylor*

I am asked periodically if I think computers should be turned off when not being used. My first response is to ask why they are concerned or what they hope to achieve by leaving it on or turning it off. The main reasons I hear for leaving a computer on all the time is convenience (no waiting before you can use it again), to allow automated backups to run, or permit unattended remote access. But usually, people are looking to validate reasons they have heard to turn the computer off.

### Saving power

While you will save the most power by turning off your computer, monitor, router, printer, etc. when you are not using them, there are other ways to reduce power consumption. My monitor goes to sleep after 5 minutes of idle time and my computer goes into sleep mode after an hour. My laptops sleep after 10 minutes and switch to hibernation mode after an hour to maximize battery conservation. My printer goes into sleep mode after 5 minutes idle time and deep sleep after 30 minutes. With these settings, power consumption is dramatically reduced. My devices resume from sleep mode quickly with minimal disruption in my work.

### Hardware longevity

In the stone age (1980's), computers had lots of chips in sockets and they could experience "chip creep" due to thermal changes as the computer warmed up and cooled down. The chips could lift out of the sockets over time and cause the computer to fail. But that is no longer an issue.

With spinning hard drives, some people advocate turning the computer off when not in use to extend longevity. Personally, I don't think this is a significant issue and I don't turn computers off to extend component life.

### Security

Some people opine that computers should be shut down when not in use to prevent them from being compromised in a cyber attack. I don't do this for a very simple reason – my computers' security must be robust enough to survive an attack. Period. Properly protected, it should not matter whether I am at the keyboard or not.

You have to take care of the basics of computer security; anti-malware, anti-spyware, firewall, patch management, and identity/password management. These are all required in order to minimize the chances of your computer being compromised whether you are not in front of them or not.

Having said all that, there is nothing inherently wrong with taking extra steps. I just don't think they will really help your security a lot as long as you have your basics down. But if you want to take extra steps, you can consider some things, as long as you don't need remote access;

- Disconnecting from the network when you are leaving the computer unattended.
- Using a firewall management program such as [GlassWire](#). A couple of clicks can block all traffic, eliminating the possibility of an attack across the network. When you come back to your computer, you can reverse the setting to allow normal network access. I reviewed GlassWire in June, 2018 (<http://opcug.ca/Reviews/GlassWire.html>). With the generosity of the company, we've had a couple of raffles for copies of GlassWire and will have a couple of more in the future.
- Turning the computer off when not using it, as long as you don't need automated processes such as backups to run.

### Solid State Drives (SSD)

When I upgraded my main computer to use an SSD, I gained an unexpected benefit – it was suddenly much less of an ordeal to boot up my computer. Start times were cut by two thirds and I don't mind (as much) shutting down my computer when I am not using it.

I will be giving a presentation at the September meeting of the OPCUG on my experiences upgrading to an SSD.



# OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 89

Compiled by Alan German

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.

## Launchy

This free cross-platform utility is designed to help you forget about your start menu, the icons on your desktop, and even your file manager. It indexes the programs in your start menu and can launch your documents, project files, folders, and bookmarks with just a few keystrokes!

Current Release: Version 2.5

Web Site: <http://www.launchy.net>



## Gizmo Drive

Don't have a CD/DVD drive built into your computer any more? No problem. Use Gizmo Drive and mount any ISO, BIN, CUE, or NRG file to a virtual CD-ROM drive. You can also mount VHD files for use with Microsoft Virtual PC.

Current Release: Version 2.7.9

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/4p2u8x>

## FastCopy

The developer claims that this is the fastest copy/backup software for Windows. It uses multi-threading for reading, writing, verifying, and other file-related tasks. It supports include and exclude filters so that you can specify precisely the files that need to be copied. It retains a history of the most recent tasks to facilitate repeating frequently-used procedures.

Current Release: Version 3.61

Web Site: <https://fastcopy.jp/en/>

## Qlock

Show times for any city in world directly on your desktop with the free edition of Qlock. The first time the program runs you will see an introduction and examples of world clocks. Use the icon in the system tray to hide or show all Qlock windows. Right-click on this icon to pop up a menu of options and use this to create new Qlocks.

Current Release: Version 1.91

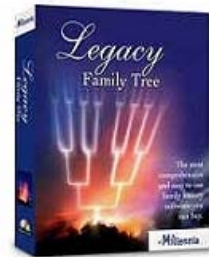
Web Site: <http://www.qlock.com>

## Legacy Family Tree

Need some help researching your family tree? Legacy 9.0 will search through billions of records from key websites such as FindMyPast, FamilySearch, GenealogyBank, and MyHeritage. Preserve the stories of your ancestors or your own. Create unlimited hashtags to describe your ancestors for easy lookup.

Current Release: Version 9.0

Web Site: <https://legacyfamilytree.com/Index.asp>



## EagleGet

Speed up your file downloads! EagleGet uses advanced multi-threaded technology to accelerate downloads by splitting files into several parts and then transferring them simultaneously. Increase download speed by up to six times.

Current Release: Version 2.0.5.0

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

## Luminance HDR

Create an HDR file from a set of images (JPEG, TIFF 8/16-bit, or RAW) of the same scene taken at different exposure settings. Save, load, rotate, resize and crop HDR images, perform tone mapping, and copy exif data between sets of images. Luminance HDR is an open-source program that is available for Linux, Windows and Mac OS X.

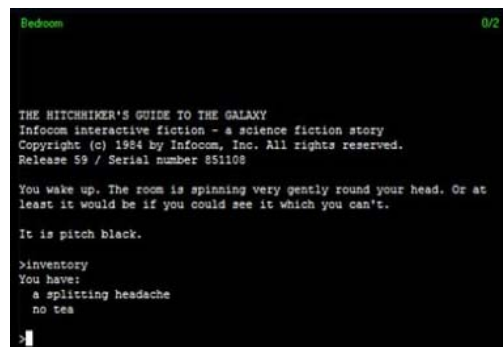
Current Release: Version 2.5.1

Web Site: [http://qtpfsgui.sourceforge.net/?page\\_id=2](http://qtpfsgui.sourceforge.net/?page_id=2)

## The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Remember this classic book by Douglas Adams? BBC Radio 4 offers an on-line, text-based, adventure game to recognize Hitchhiker's 30th Anniversary. But - "A word of warning. The game will kill you frequently. It's a bit mean like that."

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/yd558ksz>



# 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 Riverside United Church, 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Parking is free at the church. OC Transpo bus #87 stops nearby. Details at <http://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm>.

Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. followed by a Q&A Session until 10 p.m.

<b>OPCUG Membership Fees:</b>	\$20 per year	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6	
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## How to get the OTTAWA PC NEWS by e-mail



**H**ere's how to get the OPCUG newsletter by email:

### Create a Google Account

Any valid email address can be used as a Google Account. Pick an email address you want to use and browse to <https://accounts.google.com>. Click *Create account* and follow the instructions.

Make sure your new Google Account is functioning properly by going to <https://accounts.google.com> and signing in.

### Sign up for the OPCUG Google Groups

Browse to <https://groups.google.com>. If you are not signed into your Google Account, click the *Sign in* button at the top.

1. In *Search for groups or messages*, type *OPCUG*. The top of the search results will show Groups matching OPCUG. Click on *See all 3*.

2. Click on *OPCUG-Newsletter*, then click the *Join group* button. In the resulting dialog box, you can opt to change some preferences, such as;

- If *My display name* shows as your email address you can change this to something like *firstname lastname*
- Email preferences can be changed to only send daily summaries or not email you at all when new postings are made (meaning you must manually check at the web site to see if there are any new postings)

3. Click the *Join this group* button.

4. You will then see the list of postings that have been made to the group. Click on any entry to see the actual posting.

More detailed instructions on how to join this and other OPCUG Google Groups are found here:

<http://opcug.ca/GoogleGroups.html>

There are no issues of the newsletter published in July or August.