

OTTAWA PC NEWS

December 1996

The Newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG)

Vol. 13 No. 8

Club news

Seminars at the National Museum of Science and Technology

by Bob Herres

The National Museum of Science and Technology and the Ottawa PC Users Group have pooled resources to offer the following educational computer-related seminars:

- ◆ Buying a computer from the guts out
- ◆ Windows 95 (introduction and advanced)
- ◆ Kids and the Internet

These one-day seminar will enhance the knowledge of both home and business users. Since some of the most energetic PC users are children there will even be a special seminar offered during the March break for children and their parent(s).

Buying a computer from the guts out

Many people are easily intimidated when discussing the contents of the mysterious box. This introductory level seminar will focus on the major components of a computer. You will gain specific knowledge, understanding, and (especially) the terminology and industry buzzwords. This seminar may prove indispensable when purchasing your first computer, considering upgrade options or buying your next PC.

- ◆ Cost: \$25.00 (taxes included)
- ◆ Date and time: Saturday, Nov. 30, 1996; 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- ◆ Presenter: **Harald Freise**, Chairperson of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

Windows 95 (introduction and advanced)

The introduction seminar will be devoted to Windows 95 basics and is aimed at those new to Windows 95 or anyone who feels they may be missing some of the basics. Get on the right track to a smoother computing experience.

The advanced seminar is devoted to optimizing Windows 95 and is aimed at the person who is never satisfied with the "out-of-the-box" solution. Find out the tricks Microsoft never

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Overheard at the OPCUG swap meet:
"But ye've got to haggle, man!"

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Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4** See page 2

Calendar

| OPCUG general meetings | SIGs |
|--|--|
| December 4: U.S. Robotics (see below) | <i>Desktop Publishing</i> — December 3: Tektronix |
| January 8: Epson* | <i>Internet</i> — December 12: VivaTEXTE |
| February 5: Corel* | <i>Paradox</i> — December 19: topic to be announced |

Please note:

The January general meeting will be on the SECOND Wednesday of the month, due to the New Year's holiday.

* subject to change

Coming up

Modulation with U.S. Robotics

by Julie Dustin

Getting electronically connected to the world has been getting easier and easier over the last 10 years. And U.S. Robotics has been providing the modems for those connections for a long time (since 1976). At December's meeting, you can meet the Eastern Canada representative for U.S. Robotics, **Eric Albert**. He is an account manager for Keating Technologies. Keating Technologies, whose head office is in Markham, Ontario, provides marketing and technical support for U.S. Robotics and other manufacturers including QuarterDeck and Xircom.

Albert will be providing more information to us on U.S. Robotics, concentrating on three products:

- ◆ Classic 33.6 kbps
- ◆ Sportster 28.8 Voice
- ◆ Sportster Winmodem



He explains, "The Sportster 28.8 Voice provides voice mail capabilities, caller ID, distinctive ring, and remote message retrieval. It can even page you if you get a message. The Winmodem is the entry level product that works with all versions of Windows (except NT). I think everyone will be interested in hearing about the newest Robotics modems which allow you to download at 56 kbps over your regular phone line."

X2 technology

These newest modems have 'x2' technology. This technology is 'asymmetrical', meaning the request you type in at your PC travels at ordinary modem speeds up to 28.8 kbps, and the information comes back to you at 56 kbps. But, you can still communicate with all other slower speeds of modems.

U.S. Robotics is also developing for the future. Albert says, "U.S. Robotics is exploring other markets all the time. They are already providing the fastest analog solution of 56 kbps and offer an ISDN modem. At the same time, they are developing for the ADSL (asymmetrical digital subscriber line) market."



Pause for an explanation

What about that reported problem with the pause? Albert explains, "This problem is actually a more isolated and intermittent problem than previously reported. It does not normally affect those that are connecting to the Internet. However, U.S. Robotics are responding to the problem." For those who have experienced the problem (and this writer is one of them), call 1-800-565-3284 for help. U.S. Robotics is offering a choice between a full modem exchange or will send you the chip upgrade.

For more information on U.S. Robotics, you can call 1-800-525-USR1 or access their WEB site at <http://www.usr.com>.

The next OPCUG meeting should provide lots of up-to-date information on communication technologies. Now, if only we were capable of learning different languages overnight so we could really communicate around the world!

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OPUG: Ottawa Paradox Users Group

Reviews and news _____ by Larry Chop

Well, quite the surprise after our meeting on October 17th when we discovered a week later that Corel had obtained the license for Paradox. Needless to say, we are excited about these events.

For the November meeting on Thursday 21st November [*while this newsletter is being printed - Ed*] Corel will have been represented by **Karen Gauthier** who will discuss:

- ◆ Directions for Version 8 of Paradox
- ◆ The impact on Corel and the National Capital Region of Corel obtaining the licensing for Paradox
- ◆ Other items raised by the audience in a Question and Answer period

The other topic for the meeting will cover table repair utilities in Paradox. Unfortunately, we live in an imperfect world with users turning off their computers in the middle of editing a record, or the LAN crashing while three users are viewing a record, a fourth is preparing a report, and the fifth is in the middle of posting changes. These realities occur far too often, no matter what package you are using. We will cover various methods of identifying corrupted data and recovering that data.

October in review

In the October meeting, **John Ladds** presented the rich set of end-user tools available in Paradox 7. He showed how the end-user interface has been significantly enriched in Paradox 7 by building a fairly complex application from scratch using the Experts without writing one line of code. Paradox did it all from the design of the tables, to the preparation of screens, to the formatting of reports, to the linking of all the pieces into an application. In addition, John showed how the Experts are available at any time throughout the development process.

Our next meeting is on the third Thursday of December, the 19th, at Inly Systems, 1221a Cyrville Road from 6:15–8:00 p.m.

The topic will be announced on the Club PUB and our homepage at

<http://magi.com/~chopla/opug.html>.

Looking forward to seeing you all there.

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NMS&T Seminars

continued from page 1

told you to wring extra performance out of Windows 95. This seminar is loaded with tips and tricks that will make you feel more in control of Windows 95. You will learn how to tune your system for smooth operation and handle problems with increased confidence.

- ◆ Cost: Introduction \$25.00
Advanced \$25.00, Both for \$40.00
(taxes included)
- ◆ Date and time: Sat., Jan. 25, 1996:
Introduction 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.;
Advanced 1:30– 4:30 p.m.
- ◆ Presenter: **Chris Taylor**,
BBS System Operator of Ottawa
PC Users' Group

Kids and the Internet

The Internet can be a fascinating place for children to explore! Children along with their parents will have fun learning useful internet skills. System requirements, techniques for searching for URLs, security issues and navigating the Net will greatly influence experiences. The internet is here to stay, this enjoyable seminar may make the difference between time well spent and time wasted.

- ◆ Cost: \$25.00 pair (adult/child) (taxes included)
- ◆ Date and time: Sat., March 22, 1996
10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
- ◆ Presenter: **Harald Freise**,
Chairperson of the Ottawa PC
Users' Group

These special seminars will be held within the excellent facilities of the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.

For registration & further information, please call the museum at 991-3044, or contact **Bob Herres** at 836-7532 (days 822-7400) or on the PUB.

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I-SIG November presentation

by Jean Stalker

Lindsay Fraser-Fazakas on "Building Successful Web Sites"

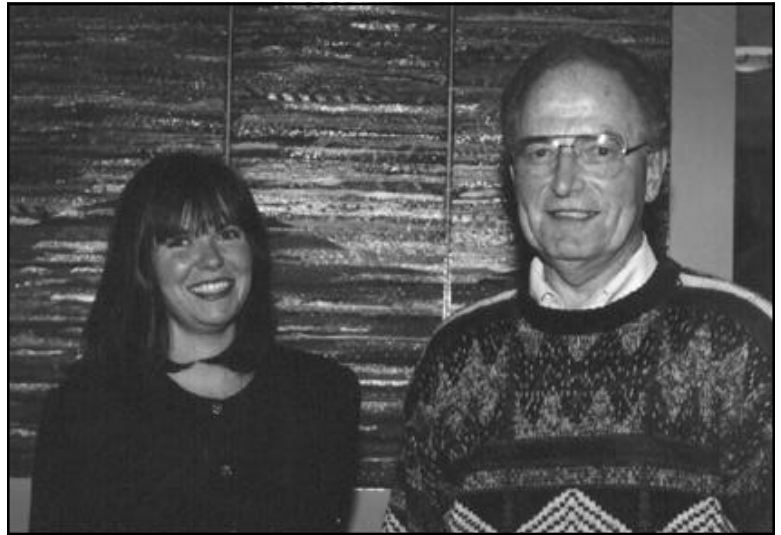
On November 14, the I-SIG enjoyed a lively presentation by **Lindsay Fraser-Fazakas**, Director of the Internet Training Company, formerly a division of Strangelove Internet Enterprises.

Lindsay outlined some of the ways in which Websites fail: poor design; unfocused, poorly-structured information; unprofessional treatment of information; little real opportunity for feedback; inefficient search tools; far too much "gee whiz" stuff.

She pointed out that a fundamental problem lying behind the poor Websites we see today is a lack of understanding of the medium. Throughout history it has taken people a long time to adapt to new technologies and learn to take full advantage of them. For example:

- ◆ The original Gutenberg Bible was an exact replica of a handwritten manuscript. It took many years before a font suited to the medium was devised.
- ◆ The early television programs were nothing more than radio with a view; actors stood around a microphone and read from a script;
- ◆ Many Web sites are nothing more than brochures marked up in HTML or unfocused miscellany.

Many Websites speak of a lack of solid planning, strategy, and vision. A Website is not just a technology project; it should be a vital tool in the communications/publishing strategy of the organization.



Lindsay Fraser-Fazakas (Internet Training Company)
with I-SIG coordinator David Curling

Lindsay suggested that an easily understood model for management of a Website is a publication. There is a need for strong management, a strong editorial team, an adequate budget, fixed publication schedules, a style manual, and on-going attention to the terms of reference.

You can review the content of this meaty presentation as on-line text at:

<http://www.strangelove.com/titc/articles/success.html>

To read the Meta-Tagging article discussed during the presentation go to:

<http://strangelove.com/ibjonline/strategy/meta.html>

For information about the training opportunities offered by the Internet Training Company, visit:

<http://www.strangelove.com/titc>

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December I-SIG meeting: VivaTEXTE

by Jean Stalker

Four years ago JBL, an Ottawa consulting firm specializing in training strategies, saw a need for a multi-media authoring tool for people without a lot of technical expertise. The result was VivaTexte, a tool for writing hypertext for stand-alone Windows applications and for the World Wide Web. VivaTexte has recently entered into an agreement with Connect.IT, granting it world-wide rights to market and sell VivaTexte software.

Documents produced in VivaTexte can be distributed on diskette, on CD-ROM, by email, or posted in a network or in the Internet; they can be read on any system running Windows.

Users of WordPerfect or Word will immediately be at ease with VivaTEXTE; there is no need for familiarity with HTML codes. It supports the creation of topics, pop-ups and a rich variety of hypertext jump options, all presented in simple point-and-click operations. VivaTEXTE includes an extensive range of formatting features, including forms, and supports access to sound, video and graphics files. It comes with a comprehensive library of embeddable graphics and graphic bullets.

For a preview of some of the VivaTEXTE features, you are invited to visit the VivaTEXTE Web site

<http://www.vivatexte.com>.

The presentation takes place at the Ottawa-Carleton Centre, 111 Lisgar, on Thursday, December 12, 1996 from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. For further information about the I-SIG or about the VivaTEXTE presentation, please contact David Curling, I-SIG Coordinator, on 731-5381 or e-mail curlingd@loday.com

The presenters

Tara Shaver is Director of Marketing and an experienced electronic author and trainer with VivaTexte. She has been responsible for the production of numerous electronic catalogues, brochures, training/reference documents, and Web sites.

David Skinner is the JBL associate originally responsible for the design and development of VivaTexte. Mr. Skinner brought an eclectic background in the Canadian military, senior management, education, and software design and development to the VivaTexte project.



November's winners

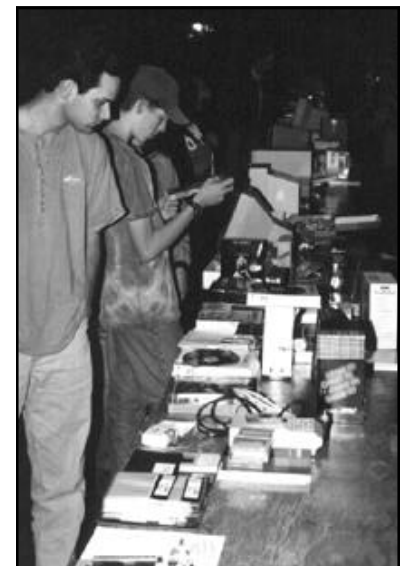
by Mark Cayer

The Ottawa PC Users Group thanks Microsoft Canada for donating the following door prizes at the general meeting of November 6.

- ◆ **John Archibald** and **David Cushing** each chose a copy of Flight Simulator for Windows 95.
- ◆ **Christopher Porter** selected The Human Body from the Magic School Bus Collection.
- ◆ **Kevin Kavanagh** won a copy of Office 97 (which he will receive as soon as it becomes available).

As well, thanks to **Randy Brown** from Microsoft for the 60 or so Microsoft Internet Explorer CD's that were snapped up pretty fast. Randy reminds anyone not able to get one of those CD's that the Internet Explorer software is available for download from the Microsoft site on the web at

<http://www.microsoft.com>



Checking out PC stuff for sale at the swapmeet.

Desktop publishing SIG news

by Bert Schopf

November review: Adobe tools for web and document design

Paul Thériault of Adobe Systems Inc. put on a stunning presentation for the Desktop Publishing SIG November 5th. He demonstrated the strengths of Adobe Type Manager 4.0, Acrobat 3.0, and the all-new PageMill for the PC, including:

- ◆ easy-to-use WYSIWYG web page authoring
- ◆ simplified form, table, radio button, and pop-up list creation
- ◆ painless frame and table formatting
- ◆ HTML-compliant text tagging and formatting
- ◆ drag-and-drop links
- ◆ click-and-drag image sizing
- ◆ easy image map creation
- ◆ built-in background transparency/interlacing option for GIF images
- ◆ attributes inspector for setting page colour/background tile, text colour, and so on.

Adobe expects the Windows version of PageMill to ship by Christmas (just in time to put one under the tree of your favourite webmeister).

December meeting: Demystifying colour desktop printer technology

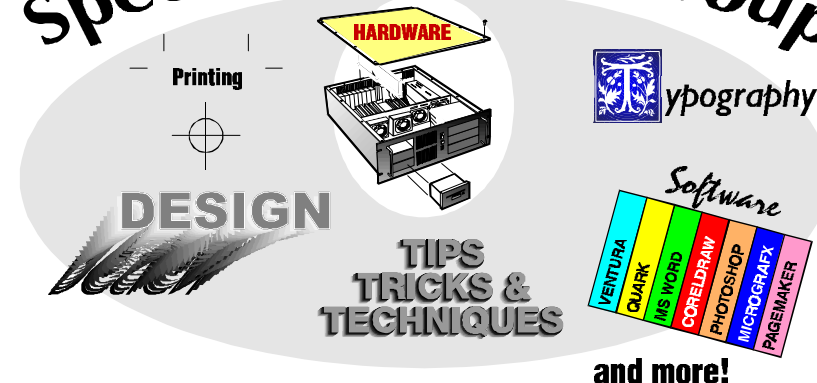
Thinking about getting a colour printer for the home or office? The price of colour has dropped dramatically over the last year, bringing it within reach of most serious desktop publishers and hobbyists.

However, you should look before you leap into a purchase decision – know what the differences in technologies are and what will get you the best quality for your hard-earned dollar.

There are many things to consider besides the sticker price: cost of consumables, image quality, resolution, colour fidelity, and *HOW* the colour is made.

Marc Beauchamp of Tektronix Canada Inc. will address these and other issues at the DTP SIG on December 3rd. He will also review the technical differences between ink and bubble jets, solid ink, dye sublimation, and other colour printer technologies.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING Special Interest Group



The DTP SIG meets the first Tuesday of the month at Lemmex Computer Training Centre, 275 Slater Street, Suite 340 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Bert Schopf at 232-8427 or by email at blackbird@cyberus.ca.

Mark your 1997 calendar NOW!

- ◆ January 7 — Members' Show & Tell
- ◆ February 4 — CorelDraw and Ventura 7

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CorelDRAW 5.0: obsolete or a 16-bit classic?

by Tony Frith

As with all Corel products you seem to get more software (than you really need?) for less money. This 16-bit version may be the most value ever. With 90% of the world's PC computers still working on a 16-bit platform, this is the draw program of choice for those who do it for a living. Sure Windows 95 and OS/2 are gaining ground, but like many, I still use Windows 3.1, and all of my software is 16 bit. I tried CorelDRAW version 6, but unless you use Windows 95 every day, it was not worth the upgrade.

With CorelDRAW 5 you get three one-inch thick books that contain clearly-written, easily-accessed documentation to the software, and an illustrated collection of thousands of clipart vector and bitmap drawings, catalogued in an easy-to-retrieve manner. If you are like many users, you will not use all of the products, but even if you use one or two, the street price is right.

It is beyond the scope of this review to cover all the software included in the package. The complete package covers:

- ◆ making your product (DRAW, TRACE, PHOTO-PAINT)
- ◆ presenting your product with a "slide show" (SHOW) or animation (MOVE)
- ◆ handling your files (MOSAIC)
- ◆ data (CHART, QUERY)
- ◆ publishing it (VENTURA).

To an illustrator the DRAW and TRACE programs are the most useful. TRACE can rough out an image quickly by scanning existing drawings or photos to bitmaps and vectorizing by hand or by the autoline feature.

Having moved through all the versions as they became available, it is easy to upgrade as all the versions follow the same kind of intuitive manipulation that becomes second



nature with a bit of practice. Despite this, it is worthwhile taking the introduction through advanced courses offered by Corel and third party instructors. Even the experts can pick up tips that can not be mastered using only practice.

All this software fills a sizable chunk of your hard disk, but the installation menu installs only the programs you stipulate. If you have a CD (highly recommended), the best idea is to leave it all there except for the programs that are core to your needs and more quickly accessed from hard disk.

In conclusion, you do not get what you pay for with Corel 5, you get more... and then some. For those of us, who are blissfully stuck in a Windows 3.1 time-warp, and need good sound, illustration software and the tools to display it, you will find ongoing satisfaction with this product that may indeed become a 16 bit classic.



Don't forget to recycle!

Got any hardware, software, or computer books that you no longer need? Don't trash them — recycle them. There are probably many club members who could benefit from your altruism!

The OPCUG designates a recycling area at every general meeting for the passing on of unwanted computer goods. Bring us your tired, your outdated, your dog-eared. Someone may be glad you did.



Ottawa PC News

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members. Deadline for submissions is four Saturdays before the general meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG normally meets on the first Wednesday in the month, except in July and August, at the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meeting times are 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Fees

Membership: \$25 per year.

Disk-of-the Month: \$25 for either 5.25-in or 3.5-inch diskettes (10 diskettes).

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Up to 28.8 kbps v.34 228-0665 (6 lines)

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OS/2 SIG coordinator

Jocelyn Doire (Mr.) Please contact via PUB

Paradox SIG coordinator

Larry Chop 236-8761 (days)

Windows SIG coordinator

Chris Taylor 723-1329



Shopping for bargains
at the swapmeet
November 12.

Directions to the new
home base of OPCUG:
the National Museum
of Science and
Technology at 1867 St.
Laurent Blvd

