



OTTAWA

# PC NEWS

Volume 24, Number 9

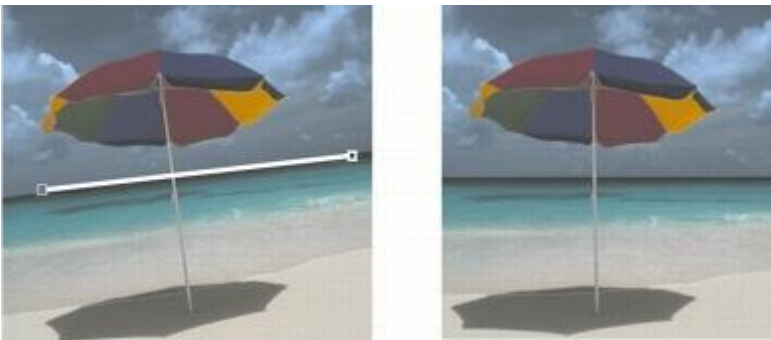
November 2007

## PRODUCT REVIEW

### Corel Snapfire Plus *by Morris Turpin*

Let me say right up front that I do not own a digital camera so I don't have a need for a heavy-duty photo manipulation program, but having said that, I do regularly handle images that I scan myself or receive via email.

When Evelyn Watts of Corel demonstrated Snapfire Plus at our March meeting she hit on one feature that I knew would be incredibly useful: the ability to easily straighten up images. Anyone who has worked on a scanned image knows that it doesn't always come out straight no matter how much care you take to position the original. In my experience, scanned images coming from other people only tend to be worse. Watching Evelyn's demo I was intrigued, very intrigued.



So, how does it work? In short, very well. Clicking on "Straighten" in the Menu Bar puts a horizontal line on the image you're working on with "grab-bars" on the each end. Grab and drag these bars so that the line between them is on what you want to be the horizontal plane, click on the Apply button and bang, it's done. The image rotates so that the line you set is horizontal. You can also drag the line to the vertical plane if your image has vertical references that you prefer to use. Believe me; it takes less time to do it than to explain the process.

Of course Snapfire offers more than just an automatic straightening feature. Quick Fix analyzes and adjusts a number of parameters to optimize your image. In my experience I found that it worked well about 7 or 8 times out of 10. By that I mean that I couldn't do a better job manually than Quick Fix did. For those times it didn't work the Undo button quickly restored the original image.

The Photo Fix menu allows manual control of brightness, contrast, warmth, saturation and focus. I've found that the focus setting is particularly useful with jpeg images which can tend to get a little blurry.

Fixing red eye is pretty straightforward. Selecting this option from the menu changes the cursor to a circle. You must adjust the size of this circle to suit your image, then it's as simple as point and click.



The Makeover menu allows you to make cosmetic changes to your subject. You can fix blemishes, whiten teeth and even add a suntan. Other features let you embellish your images with the Picture Tube tool, choose a picture frame from dozens of different styles,

*(Continued on page 5)*

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

# November Raffle

For the raffle this month, thanks to Microsoft, we have **Office Publisher 2007**. Alan German presented this product at the September meeting.

Microsoft Office Publisher 2007 is a desktop publishing package that provides professional design tools to small businesses that wish to create printed material and/or electronic publications in-house. But, the home user can adapt these same tools to a host of applications with the vast array of professionally-designed templates that are available in Publisher, and the ease with which these can be modified using the software's toolbox. (Part of this is the magic behind the production of "Ottawa PC News".) The final result can be printed, converted to an electronic file or web page, and sent by E-mail to a group of individuals. If your word processor isn't up to the task of developing the documents in the really cool format that you have in mind, perhaps you should consider stepping up to a desktop publisher!

For details, visit: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/publisher/FX100487821033.aspx> and <http://office.microsoft.com>.

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

## October Prize Winners

**John Archibald** won the Vista for Starters book, **Gerald Larocque** took home a copy of a Word 2007 book, and the raffle winner of a copy of Microsoft Digital Image Suite Anniversary Edition was **Harald Freise!!**

## Coming Up...

- **November 14:** Rick Claus, IT Pro Advisor, Microsoft Canada  
**Topic:** Windows Home Server

**December 12:** Harley Bloom of Bloom MicroTech  
(<http://www.bmtnet.com/>)

**Topic:** Annual Christmas Gift Show

The date for the following speaker has not been determined, but he will present between January and June 2008.

The date will be posted on the OPCUG website and in Ottawa PC News when it becomes known.

**Speaker:** Andrew Clunis

**Topic:** OLPC - the One Laptop Per Child Pro-

## 2007 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the <b>Canada Museum of Science and Technology</b> , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. <a href="http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm">http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm</a>
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (College Square Shopping Centre)
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>	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).

# 2007 OPCUG BEGINNERS' WORKSHOP

The Ottawa PC Users' Group's motto is "Users Helping Users" and, this fall, we are going back to our roots in offering a Beginners' Workshop. A group of knowledgeable and experienced members of the club will provide sessions on a number of topics that will be of interest to the new computer user, and even those not-so-new users who need to know a little more about their hardware and software.

Our Beginners' Workshop is scheduled to run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 17th, at the Heron Road Community Centre (1480 Heron Road), and will consist of four sessions:

## Hardware Solutions

Our hardware expert will discuss the latest technologies in chips and what you may wish to consider if purchasing a new computer or are thinking about upgrading an existing machine. Topics included will be memory choices, hard disks and optical drives (DVD's), monitors and video cards, input devices (keyboard, mouse, etc.) and networking options.

## Operating Systems

There is lots of buzz these days about Vista and Linux, two choices for your computer's operating system. But, do you need to choose between them? Is your current operating system good enough? In this session, we will find out what Vista has to offer over and above Windows XP. We will also take a look at Ubuntu Linux and see how it can be dual-booted with Vista – to give the best of both worlds?

## Open Source Applications

Another hot-button topic – open source software. A "believer" will discuss the concept of the open-source movement, and provide examples of applications that look-and-feel pretty much like the "other guy's" software. Open-source software provides the same functionality, but at zero cost! What more could you ask for?

## Security Issues

Computer life just keeps getting more complex and the black-hat guys are trying to take advantage of you at every turn. Viruses, worms, Spam, phishing schemes seem to be everywhere. Are you protected? Our expert will discuss the various security concerns and offer a wide range of easy-to-implement solutions.

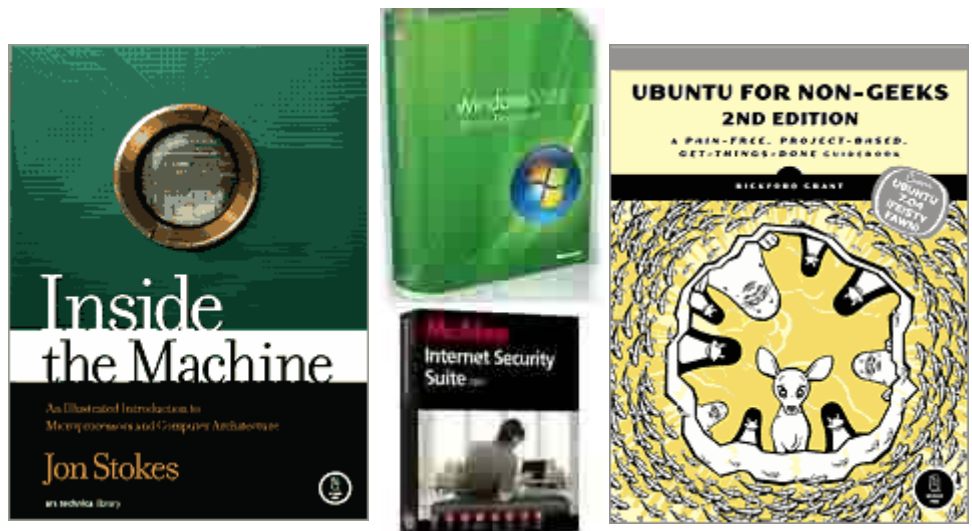
The cost to attend the entire day's workshop sessions is just \$50.00. This includes a catered lunch and coffee breaks; a complimentary one-year membership in OPCUG (a \$25.00 value by itself); a CD-ROM containing all of the presentations, speakers' notes, and associated information.

Plus, we will be holding a draw amongst workshop participants for various prizes including computer software and books on workshop-related topics. We have over \$2000 in giveaways!

Tell all your friends - who are not yet OPCUG members – about our workshop. This is a not-to-be-missed event. Not only will they obtain lots of great information, and become members of the club, for just \$50, they will also have a great chance to walk away with one of our fabulous door prizes. Check the web site for details. And, don't forget that, if you are already an OPCUG member, your workshop registration will extend your membership for a further year.

Space at the workshop venue is limited and participation will be limited to the first 60 registrants. So, register today by visiting <http://opcug.ca> and clicking on the "Workshop" link.

*A registration form can be found on the website and on page 6 of this issue.*



# PRODUCT REVIEW

## Exploring Linux – Part 7 *by Alan German*

**H**aving recently purchased a new computer, I have been introduced to the wonderful world of Microsoft Vista. Now, while Vista works reasonably well, I still keep wondering about a complete switch over to Linux. In fact, this question comes to the fore every time I discover that Vista won't let me do exactly what I want, or more particularly, when I find a way to break something in Vista. This was especially the case when I restored a disk image of my Vista operating system and found that the machine would no longer boot! – but, that's another story.

But, while I keep pondering the question of Vista vs. Linux, I need to be able to run both operating systems, Vista because I paid for it, Linux because it's free, and both of these because they are neat systems to play with! Clearly, what I need is a dual-boot system, with both Vista and Linux residing (and booting) happily on the new machine.

Surfing the web for information on dual-booting Vista and Linux initially seemed to suggest that this would be fraught with difficulties. Vista, I was told, uses a new boot loader, and BCD (Boot Configuration Data) doesn't like Linux.

Furthermore, the BCD editing tool is a command line program that has zero user-friendliness built in. But, I was going to have to use the new bootloader because Vista doesn't like being installed on a machine that already has an operating system (i.e. Linux installed first); it overwrites the master boot record (MBR) in the blink of an eye; and provides absolutely no consideration to the presence of other operating systems. So far, this didn't sound very promising.

Then I hit upon an item in Ubuntu Forums, entitled How To: Dual Boot Vista and Linux, by “molly\_001”. Molly was as good as her word and, in conjunction with the work of some

associates, provided links to instructions on how to: dual boot Vista and Ubuntu 6.06; dual boot XP and Ubuntu 6.06; triple boot XP, Vista, and Ubuntu 6.06; dual boot Vista or XP and Ubuntu over a previous Ubuntu install, without the need to reinstall Ubuntu; and dual boot over two physical hard drives.

The simple solution is to install Linux (Ubuntu Version 6.06) on a separate disk partition. Rebooting the machine brings up Linux - without a trace of Vista! But, all that is necessary is to edit grub's menu.lst file (see “Exploring Linux – Part 4”, [http://www.opcug.ca/public/Reviews/linux\\_part4.htm](http://www.opcug.ca/public/Reviews/linux_part4.htm)) and include the following command sequence in the menu of available operating systems:

```
title Windows Vista
root (hd0,1)
makeactive
chainloader +1
```

Effectively, this tells grub that Vista is already installed on the first hard-drive partition and, in addition, makes Vista the default operating system. So, just like that, you have a dual-boot, Vista and Ubuntu Linux system. Thanks molly\_001 !

### Bottom Line

How To: Dual Boot Vista and Linux (molly\_001)  
<http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=212469>

### Stop Press!

Now, while the above text may be sufficient for you to create a dual-boot system, there may be an even better mousetrap. Since Molly laid out her instructions on how to create a dual-boot system with a beta version of Vista and Ubuntu 6.06, an article in apcmag.com has provided some newer information. The author, James Bannan, discusses the use of Ubuntu Version 7.04, that reportedly coordinates better with Vista than its earlier sibling. It also provides a graphical, step-by-step tutorial, covering the entire process of installing Linux, including partitioning the hard drive, and modifying grub to set up the dual-boot system. What could be easier?

How to dual-boot Vista with Linux (James Bannan)

[http://apcmag.com/5046/how\\_to\\_dual\\_boot\\_vista\\_with\\_linux\\_vista\\_installed\\_first](http://apcmag.com/5046/how_to_dual_boot_vista_with_linux_vista_installed_first)

## Snapfire Plus *(Continued from page 1)*

add text to your pictures or change your photos to either black and white or sepia.



The cropping tool has a nice feature; in addition to allowing “free form” that I’m used to, it allows you to set the final size you want with several fixed sizes ranging from 3x4 in. to 8x10 in. Selecting the cropping tool creates a box over your image that you drag around until you get the result you’re looking for. Click on Apply and you’re done.

Other Snapfire features that I haven’t used are the ability to create slideshows and share these via email. It can also create videos from your pictures and video clips through the use of a downloadable add-on called the “muvvee autoProducer” and includes a link for a free trial. Owners of digital video cameras may want to give this a try.



There is no printed documentation provided with Snapfire Plus, but it does come with an extensive help file. In fact, all the images in this article were copied from the help file. The only complaint I have with the program is that the font used in the help file is difficult to read with my 1280x1024 screen resolution. Changing my screen resolution to 1024x768 didn’t help. The option is provided to print the entire file, the selected topic or the selected heading and all subtopics. Checking the Corel website I see that Snapfire version 2.0 has been released (I’m reviewing version 1.2). Looking at the Snapfire 2.0 Release Notes I see that all the comments I’ve made here will refer to rev 2.0 as well.

So, what do I like best about this program? Well, certainly the straighten tool but I also like and use Quick Fix and Photo Fix; specifically the Focus tool. These tools are invaluable with either scanned images or cell-phone photos. I also like its ability to add text to an image.

### Bottom Line

Snapfire is available as a free download from Corel (<http://www.snapfire.com>). Snapfire is a “reduced feature set” of Snapfire Plus and leaves out a number of the more desirable functions (like the straighten feature) but it does allow you to try out many of its features for free

Snapfire Plus (the commercial version) sells for \$60 locally but for some reason sells for \$40 at FutureShop. It is also available directly from Corel for the club price of US \$40 plus shipping.

## 2008 OPCUG Elections

by Gail Eagen,  
Secretary, OPCUG

**E**ach year, a 9-member Board of Directors is elected to ensure we continue to have a vibrant and active user group.

I would like to encourage all members to consider running for the Board of Directors for the 2008 year.

Long-time member, Bob Herres, has accepted the job of Election Chair this year. His first duty is to collect nominations. The rules for nominations are simple;

- All nominations must be received by 11:59 PM on December 31, 2007.
- Only members in good standing may be nominated for the Board.
- You may nominate yourself or another member. If you nominate someone else, please ensure they are willing to accept the nomination.
- Nominations should include the member's name, address & phone number of record with the OPCUG, and membership number (if known). If an email address is included, you will receive an email confirming the nomination has been accepted.

Nominations may be given in person to Bob at a general meeting, by email at [bobherres@rogers.com](mailto:bobherres@rogers.com), or by postal mail at:

Bob Herres,  
52 Goulbourn St.,  
Stittsville, ON, K2S 1P6

If you need to know more about the duties of Board of Directors, please speak with any of the existing board members. Their contact information is available in the masthead of the newsletter, or you can see them at a general meeting.

# OTTAWA PC NEWS

## OPCUG Workshop 2007

Saturday, November 17, 2007  
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Heron Road Community Centre  
1480 Heron Road, Ottawa, ON

### Registration Form (Please print neatly)

Name:

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Address  
(complete address, please):

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Tel :

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E-mail:

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I wish to register for this workshop which includes lunch, the presentations and associated material on a CD-ROM, and a one-year membership in OPCUG.

Please find enclosed my cheque in the amount of \$50.00, made payable to: OPCUG.

Mail the completed registration form and your cheque to:

OPCUG Workshop 2007  
3 Thatcher Street  
Ottawa, ON, K2G 1S6

*The OPCUG has established a Privacy Policy in compliance with government legislation. The purpose of the policy is to safeguard your personal information. Your workshop application constitutes your acceptance of this policy:*  
<http://opcug.ca/public/privacy.htm>.

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 Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30-9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups go until 10 p.m.

**Fees:** OPCUG membership: \$25 per year

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