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PRODUCT REVIEW

ACDSee – A Canadian Image Management System *by Alan German*

Does the world need yet another image manager? Well, maybe not, but ACD-See is worthy of note in the category, not only because of its Canadian origins (the company is based in Victoria, BC), but also because it is a fully-featured package available at relatively low cost.

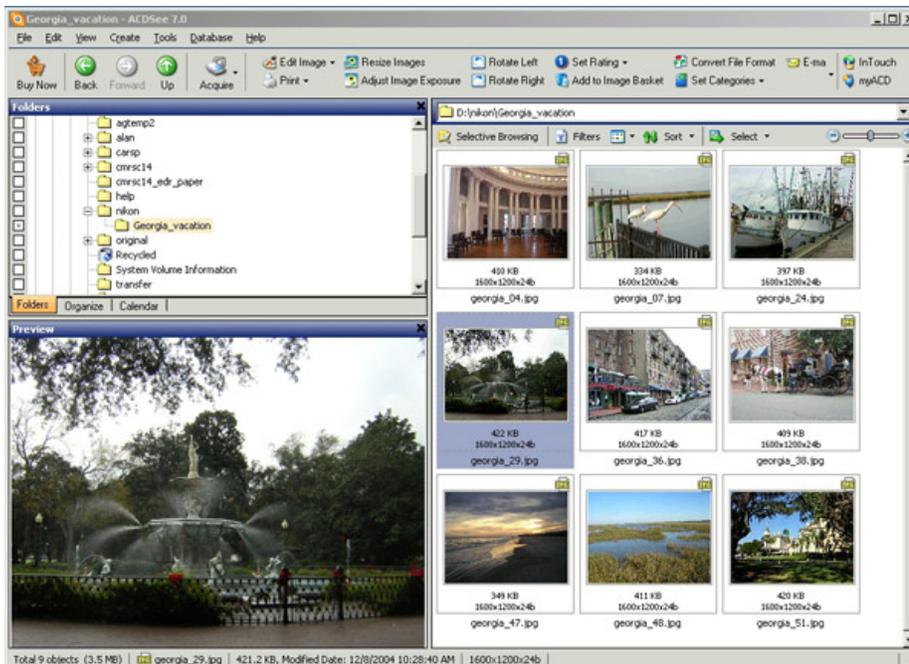
The basic screen layout is a three-panel display, one showing the directory tree of a selected disk, one displaying thumbnail images of the files in a selected directory, and the third for a larger preview of a selected image. Clicking on any thumbnail image causes the newly selected image to be displayed in the preview window. Double clicking on the thumbnail or the preview pops up a window to display the image at a pre-defined magnification, including full-screen display. Once an image is displayed in this window, other images in the same directory can be viewed by clicking on “Next” or “Previous” icons or, even more conveniently, by scrolling a mouse wheel. One very nice feature of the program is that it caches the thumbnail images that have been previously viewed so that, while first time around thumbnails in a directory may load only moderately quickly, the next time one selects the directory the thumbnails are available almost instantly. So, the basic image viewing system is a snap.

The recently released version of ACD-See is 7.0. Users of earlier versions should be aware that while the basic features of the program are still available, the user interface has been modified considerably and certain commands are now in different locations.

The newly designed graphic interface is very colourful and quite intuitive. A multitude of options are available to customize the way in which items are displayed, and there are many tools available to process images in various ways.

Graphic icons, drop-down and tabbed menus provide quick access to the extensive series of features. For example, there are seven basic ways in which the files in a directory can be displayed, including the default of a thumbnail image of each file, a “filmstrip” view

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Next Meeting: (third) Wednesday, February 16th, 2005

February Raffle

Thanks to the folks at Microsoft MindShare – the area within Microsoft that officially supports user groups – we have a copy of **Microsoft Street & Trips 2005**. This handy program has maps of 8.7 million kilometres of local, city and highway road across Canada and the U.S. It maps out 1.8 million points of interest such as restaurants, gas stations, museums, schools, hotels, and more. It can plan a route for you and print out strip maps with written directions. Whether you are going across town or across the continent, Streets & Trips can help you get there.

More information about Streets & Trips may be found at <http://www.microsoft.com/streets>

Raffle tickets at \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

Coming Up...

February 16, 2005 (**third** Wednesday in February)

In February, we welcome back Michel Daw of Corel Corporation. <http://www.corel.com>

This time, Michel will be presenting Corel's new "Paint Shop" family (formerly Jasc).

March Speaker

Date: March 9, 2005

Speaker: Don Chiasson (Don C++), OPCUG Member

Topic: Emulators

Abstract:

The digital computers we know are universal computing machines: any machine can do any computation. Usually this means numbers, text or graphics, but it also means one computer can act as another, often called emulation. Emulation may be hardware or software, though we focus on hardware; it may be done for research, for historical reasons, to replace legacy systems, for cross compiling, or just for fun. This talk covers a number of emulators that model minicomputers, mainframes and games. To provide details on the challenges of emulators, details are given on two systems: a Honeywell H316 minicomputer and a 36 bit mainframe, the DECsystem-20. For those who are interested, references are provided to resources available on the internet.

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, February 16 th (third Wednesday in February)	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm
Internet SIG (I-SIG)	Wednesday, February 16 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. Come and join our discussions!
Developers SIG	TBA	TBA (see article page 7)
Orphans' SIG	Wednesday, February 16 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Digital Imaging SIG	Wednesday, February 16 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT Pro SIG	Wednesday, February 16 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Delphi User Group	TBA	TBA
PIG SIG (Wing SIG)	Wednesday, February 16 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (formerly Shoppers' City West)

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Once a year, it is the President's duty and pleasure to write a report on the activities of the OPCUG. I always find it interesting to reflect on the past year and what we have accomplished.

For main presentations, Hemera Technologies led off with their Photo-Objects; high quality images for use in publications. They donated a huge collection to the OPCUG and Brigitte has been putting them to great use over the past year. Michel Daw from Corel gave us a lively and entertaining presentation on CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 12. Josh McPherson of the Microsoft Office 2003 Team came out to in March to showcase new features of Office on Tablet PCs. I gave a demo of Microsoft Digital Image Pro 9. This program has made it possible for even me to improve pictures taken with my digital camera. Tom Camps from Ottawa's BOLDstreet Inc. showed us in May how you can connect for free to their wireless hot-spots in various Ottawa locations. The first half of the year wrapped up with our 3rd annual BBQ and Michel Daw from Corel returned to show us the newly released WordPerfect.

After the summer hiatus, Bob Gowan entertained us with a presentation on digital topographic maps. In October, a former president of the OPCUG, Gord Hopkins, showed us how to use masks and selections in Adobe Photoshop to improve digital images. In November, a number of present and former board members gave mini-demos of some of their favourite software packages. It was a lively evening and everyone got to see a variety of free and low-cost software. To finish up the year, Harley Bloom from Bloom MicroTech came out in December for his 6th annual "Christmas Wish List" presentation.

Harley is a true believer in the OPCUG and for the second year, he chose tickets for the numerous door prizes from the raffle tickets, ensuring very brisk sales of raffle tickets. Thanks Harley!

Thanks to all the presenters who gave generously of their time to come out and inform and entertain.

In the spring, the computer running our on-line presence – PUB II – was replaced with new hardware. The 6-year old hardware that used to operate PUB II was turned over to Vince to use in hardware demos.

The OPCUG was invited by Microsoft to have a table at Tech-Net in June. Jocelyn and I accepted the offer. Lots of information was given out, but unfortunately it does not seem to have translated into many memberships.

There were a few adjustments to Special Interest Groups with the formation of the IT Pro SIG early in September and the combining of the Beginner's, Orphans, and Windows SIGs into a single SIG that will deal with basics.

In November, we held the second annual Beginners' Workshop. While attendance was a little lower than last year, the comments from attendees show that it was very well received and we will be looking to have our third annual Beginners' Workshop next fall.

Thanks for your support throughout the year. It has been my pleasure and a privilege to serve as President in 2004.

Chris Taylor

ACDSee *(Continued from page 1)*

of the images, and tiles that contain both the thumbnail image and the details of the image file (name, file size, date, type and image size in pixels). One neat feature is that the thumbnail display size can easily be changed using an on-screen slider.

One can easily convert an image to a different file format, resize or rotate the image, and change the exposure with various controls. ACDSee features a built-in editor; however, if the range of editing control offered is insufficient for your purposes, or if you prefer to use a specific image editor, the program allows you to specify which available editor should be called up to get the job done.

A very useful feature offered by ACDSee is the ability to batch process a range of images. This is especially effective when one wishes to rotate a number of photographs from a digital camera that are shown in landscape format but need to be viewed in portrait mode. Similarly, one can easily rename a whole directory of images from the ubiquitous DSCN0697.JPG format to the perhaps more meaningful georgia_vacation_dec04_001.jpg. It's a simple matter of selecting all the images, using Rename, and setting the template to georgia_vacation_dec04_###.jpg and your images are instantly

renamed from number 001 through 176 (or whatever).

A few other features that I will mention briefly here are the ability to acquire images through a TWAIN compatible scanner; printing a "contact sheet" with multiple thumbnail images on a single page; creating a slide show of selected images with a range of transition effects; and producing a web page (HTML file) to display selected images in a browser. The latter is quite slick for those who don't know anything about creating web pages but wish to share images with friends without sending multiple files by E-mail or on a CD-ROM. A Wizard is used to produce the code to display the selected images with an option to launch the default web browser to show the resulting page. One can customize the page to some extent by specifying such items as the number of rows and columns for the images, title and captions, and the colours to be used on the page. The images are displayed as a series of thumbnails but clicking on one of the images pops up the image full size in the browser. ACDSee also has a powerful search utility that will locate and display images according to various criteria. For the users of digital cameras, the program also has a neat feature where two similar images can be displayed side by side so that the user can pick out the best shot.

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FINANCIAL REPORT

Balance Sheet, 2004

Assets

Current Assets

1000	Cash Account (RBC)	2,413.46
1100	Investment Account (ING)	14,765.13
1200	Membership float	40.00
	Total Assets	17,218.59

Equity

Owner Equity

	OPCUG, Capital December 31, 2003	17,618.42
	Total revenue	6,690.46
	Total expenses	7,090.29
	Net income	-399.83
	OPCUG, Capital December 31, 2004	17,218.59
	Total Equity	17,218.59

Alan German
OPCUG Treasurer

FINANCIAL REPORT

Income Statement, 2004

Revenue		2004 (\$)	2003 (\$)
2100	Bank Interest (ING)	336.41	341.79
2200	Membership Income	3,950.00	5,650.00
2300	Raffle Income	1,403.05	1,097.00
2400	Merchandise Income	135.00	65.00
2500	Workshop Income	840.00	462.46
2900	Miscellaneous Income	26.00	663.17
Total revenue		6,690.46	8,279.42
Expenses			
3100	PUB II Expense	2,071.04	1,061.95
3200	Newsletter Expense	2,833.02	2,704.77
3300	Office Supplies Expense	17.09	0.00
3400	Bank Charges (RBC)	83.51	84.15
3500	Barbecue Expense	257.51	220.15
3600	Facility Rental	150.00	0.00
3700	Workshop Expense	544.12	377.32
3800	Merchandise Expense	967.81	0.00
3900	Miscellaneous Expense	166.19	345.99
Total operating expenses		7,090.29	4,794.33
Net income		-399.83	3,485.09

Alan German
OPCUG Treasurer

ARTICLE

PC evolution or revolution? *by Vince Pizzamiglio*

Hardware performance has now outstripped the needs of most consumer level software with the exception of high-end 3D games. The PC is now looking for a new purpose and different applications where it can shine. In the past 24 months a number of changes have occurred to PC hardware that will shape the future of PCs for years to come.

The easy CPU speed advances through fabrication refinement that brought faster computers into stores have now stopped. Intel has cancelled their Pentium 4 4GHz CPU due to extreme heat dissipation problems. There seem to be a search for qualitative advances rather than the usual "faster is better" solution that has pushed PC sales for the past decade. Intel's competitor AMD has taken a different path and with it the lead in bringing innovations and performance to PCs. AMD has brought new life to the X86 instruction set by expanding it from 32 to 64 bit blocks. It allows, depending upon the application, up to a 25% gain in performance and removes roadblocks in memory alloca-

tion. AMD has also brought a hardware solution to virus protection by producing CPU technology that removes memory overflow weaknesses. Intel is now following AMD's lead in enabling these technologies. Intel and AMD will also produce dual core CPUs in the near future to enhance performance (and sell more CPUs).

Enclosures, motherboards and expansion cards have developed to allow a smaller footprint and the ability to interface with digital "gadgets". PDAs and cell phones are always with us, digital cameras are outselling film cameras, HTPC (home theatre PC), and PVR (personal video recorders) computers are taking the place of the trusty VCR.

Windows' dominance of the PC is being challenged by the ever-improving open source applications (Open Office, Firefox) and operating systems (Linux, FreeBSD) that remove the hefty cost associated with Microsoft PC software.

The future will probably bring segmentation of the PC products that reflect

the various markets; from home media center to office use to enterprise server. The PC will be able to leverage the large installed base and commodity pricing to take over different parts of the market. From enterprise applications that were the domain of IBM, HP and Sun proprietary technology only a few years ago, to a purpose built sleek entertainment and media PC placed beside the TV in our living room.

Portability is seen as indispensable; our modern society requires an always-on connection, an instantaneous response to any demand, (the rat race should be considered animal-human abuse). The PC is adapting and soon we'll be wearing, not carrying, the gadgets that make our life so

The Personal Computer has come a long way from the 1979 IBM introduction of Intel based PCs. It has changed our way of life in a substantial measure but if the past quarter century is anything to go by, we ain't seen nothing yet.

Vince Pizzamiglio

AVG Anti-Virus Free Edition - Announcement *by Brigitte Lord*

For those of you using AVG Anti-Virus Free Edition, Grisoft announced to its users last November that Version 6 would no longer be supported after January 31, 2005. After this date, users would no longer be protected from emerging viruses. In order to give their customers more time to download the upgrade, Grisoft announced in January that Version 6 would be extended to February 15, 2005. A free edition of Version 7 (for personal use only) is available for download from the Grisoft web site. It is a hefty 10.3 MB download (<http://www.grisoft.com>).

AVG anti-virus is a fully featured program that uses minimal system resources. It features heuristic analysis to detect virus-like activity and references a virus database that can be updated manually or set to check for updates daily. The handy e-mail plug-in alerts you before you open an infected attachment, overwrites it and quarantines the virus in a virus vault before it can cause havoc on your system.

You may have heard one of our recent speakers say that AVG didn't work. According to the Grisoft website, "100% detection rate of AVG Free System is continuously certified by independent ICSA laboratories." I have used it for several years now on three different home systems and have not had a virus infect any of them (just so you know it works, AVG alerted me on a couple of occasions that there was an infected e-mail attachment and successfully contained the virus in the virus vault). Grisoft also offers two commercial versions for personal and corporate use that provide more flexibility in terms of configuration. I trust AVG and will continue to use it. Heck, I would even pay for it if I had to. I've used McAfee and Norton in the past and I prefer AVG. And lets face it, it's free and we're all less likely to let our anti-virus program lapse if we don't have to pay yearly to renew a subscription.

NOTE: The OPCUG does not endorse any particular anti-virus program.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Internet for Beginners: So you want to know what's really going on in the world ... *by Eric Clyde, Coordinator, Internet SIG*

If you are interested in getting more information about, or even alternative versions of, events, or in finding what people in other parts of the country or the world are thinking, one of the best places to look is on the Internet. You probably know about online newspapers and may be aware that many radio stations from all parts can be listened to online but, if you have a high speed connection, television broadcasts are available to you as well. The picture, though, is either small and sharp, or full screen and fuzzy, probably due to bandwidth considerations.

A comprehensive list of URLs for directories of newspapers worldwide can be found at <http://directory.google.com/Top/News/Newspapers/Directories/>

I haven't tried them all, but some that I have found useful are:

Online newspapers: <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/>
 Internet Public Library <http://www.ipl.org/div/news/>
 Refdesk <http://www.refdesk.com/paper.html>

Of course, most newspapers are available only in the native language(s) and script of each country, but there are frequently English language papers or editions available. It's often very interesting to compare the different slants on the

news in different places, but you can also get lots of local information if you are planning a trip abroad.

There are also many lists of URLs for online radio and television stations. I use <http://www.vtuner.com/> That site tries to encourage you to buy some software B V-Tuner, and also Replay Radio B but these are not necessary if you only want to listen to the radio or view a TV show. Listings of the stations can be by genre (Adult contemporary, ..., Classical, ... , World Tropical, ...) or by country of origin. Within each country, there is a listing of the radio and TV stations broadcasting. The order is not alphabetic, and changes from time to time, perhaps based on the number of times that station is listened to by V-tuner users.

Most stations require that you have the free program, RealAudio, installed, but some use Windows Media Player. If you don't have Read Audio, you will be given the chance to download and install it. Some TV stations broadcast live, others give taped programmes (TV on demand).

In many countries, though, the media is not free to be openly critical, and has to toe an official line. "Blogs" can be another source of information (or misinformation!), but these will have to the topic of a later article.



Developers SIG Hibernation

by Bob Thomas

As announced at the January OPCUG meeting, the Developers SIG is into winter hibernation. The group hasn't met for a few months now. Current planning is for the SIG to cease functioning this June, unless someone steps forward to lead the SIG because I am now involved in the IT-Pro SIG.

If you're interested in leading the group or require more information, feel free to send me an email at:

Bob.Thomas@opcug.ca.

Bob Thomas

IT-Pro SIG – January, 2005

Following January's presentation to the club, Rick Claus continued discussing a wide variety of IT-Pro related topics during the SIG's meeting hour.

Interested individuals who wish to pick up the AntiSpyware beta that Rick demonstrated can get it from Microsoft's TechNet site:

<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.mspx> .

The beta is valid until next July (earlier, if the product is released in a subsequent format).

<http://support.microsoft.com/?id=890830> is a link to the Malicious Software Removal Tool that Microsoft introduced to protect computers running Windows Server 2003, Windows XP or Windows 2000.

The Virtual Server products Rick demonstrated are of particular interest to those who wish to test the effect of different products using a virtual testing environment on their PC's.

You can get more information at the Microsoft Virtual Lab site:

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/traincert/virtuallab/default.mspx> .

Thanks for the interesting evening, Rick!

Bob Thomas

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 Saturdays 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
Mailing Address:	3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6	
Web address:	http://opcug.ca	
Bulletin board — PUB II (BBS)	http://opcug.ca/default.htm	

President and System Administrator

	Chris Taylor	chris.taylor@opcug.ca	727-5453
Meeting Coordinator	Bob Gowan	bob.gowan@opcug.ca	
Treasurer	Alan German	alan.german@opcug.ca	
Secretary	(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire	jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca	
Membership Chairman	Mark Cayer	mark.cayer@opcug.ca	823-0354
Newsletter	Brigitte Lord (editor/layout)	brigitte.lord@opcug.ca	
	(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire (e-mail distribution)	jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca	
Public Relations	Morris Turpin	morris.turpin@opcug.ca	729-6955
Facilities	Bob Walker		489-2084
Webmaster	Brigitte Lord	opcug-webmaster@opcug.ca	
Privacy Director	Bob Thomas	bob.thomas@opcug.ca	820-6835
Historian	Ted May	tamay@rogers.com	
Internet SIG coordinator	Eric Clyde	eclyde@rogers.com	749-2387
Delphi SIG coordinator	Martin Pagnan	mpagnan@cyberus.ca	
Orphans' SIG coordinator	Ted May	tamay@rogers.com	
Developers' SIG coordinator	Vacant applicants contact:	bob.thomas@opcug.ca	820-6835
Digital Imaging SIG coordinator	Duncan Petrie	gdpetr@hotmail.com	841-6119
IT Pro SIG	Bob Thomas	bob.thomas@opcug.ca	820-6835

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ACDSee (Continued from page 3)

Some of the new features listed that I didn't try are the ability to view over 100 file formats, including photographs, graphics, PDF, RAW, audio, video and playlist formats; obtain images from a cellular telephone, and send images to such a 'phone; managing a digital camera's memory card from within ACDSee; automatically synchronizing local folders with an external hard drive, network location, or remote computer; support for burning images to CD or DVD; and serving images over the Web using peer-to-peer functionality.

If you need a powerful image management system, ACDSee may be the package for you. A trial version of the software is available as a free download. Once you install the trial version, be prepared to activate it by letting it connect to ACDSee's web site. If you do this within seven days, your trial period is extended to 30 days and, in addition, you will be offered an option to extend the trial period for a further 15 days, for a total of 45 days. Now, that should let you give the package a good workout!

Bottom Line

ACDSee 7.0

Proprietary (US\$ 44.99)

ACD Systems International Inc.

<http://www.acdsystems.com/English/index.htm>

