



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0

by Alan German

If you run Windows, and need to modify the partitions on your hard disk, for example to create a separate partition on which to store all your data files, the Disk Director Suite from Acronis may provide a very cost-effective solution. Even more so since, as a member of our user group, you can purchase this product at a discount – but more on this later.

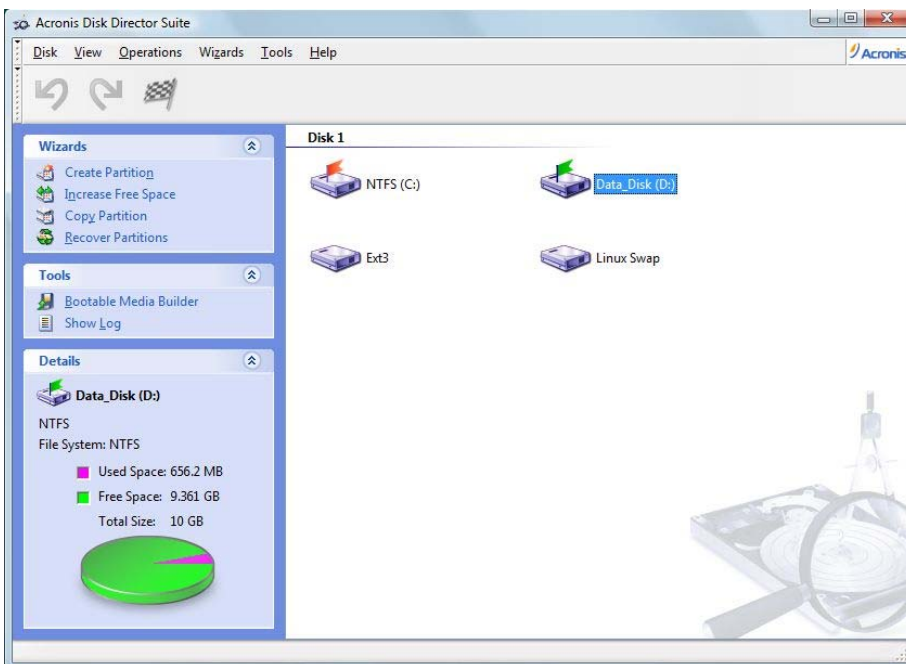
Disk Director has a rather interesting modus operandi. By default, the program opens in “automatic mode” and provides wizards to create a new partition, increase free space on an existing partition, copy or recover a partition. Advanced users can switch the program into “manual mode” where many more features become available.

The first two options in automatic mode – creating or resizing partitions – are likely the most common tasks that users of the program wish to undertake. With the other two tasks, copying a partition provides a duplicate of all the data on the drive and can be used for backup, while the Acronis Recovery Expert will let you recover hard disk partitions accidentally deleted or damaged due to a hardware or software failure.

Because of the limited number of options, the user interface in manual mode is clean and simple. The main window displays icons for the partitions present on the hard disk, with details of the used and free space on a selected partition. Wizards for the four available tasks are provided in a menu in the sidebar on the left of the main program window. There are also options to create a bootable CD-ROM for use as a rescue disk (in the event that your system won't boot normally), and to view a log of disk management activities.

Each of the wizards is easy to use, with a series of clearly defined steps. For example, to create a new partition, the first step is to select if unallocated disk space or free space from an existing partition is to be used. A graphical display shows the various areas of the disk in different colours. To select the desired location for your new partition, you simply click in one of the areas.

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, April 8th, 2009**

April Raffle

At the April general meeting, we will be raffling off a copy of **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0** (see review on page 1). If you need to modify the partitions on your hard disk, for example to create a separate partition on which to store all your data files, or to change the size of any existing partitions, the Disk Director Suite will be your friend. The program has a dual persona, working in “automatic mode” to provide easy-to-use wizards for frequently used tasks, while advanced users can switch into “manual mode” where many more features become available. In addition to creating and resizing partitions, the program will let you copy partitions to create backups, change disk labels, and even completely remove deleted files by securely wiping unallocated disk space. There are many other options for a variety of disk operations, all of which make Disk Director a very versatile utility. You will find complete details about this package at: <http://www.acronis.com/homecomputing/products/diskdirector/>

As usual, raffle tickets are just \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

Coming Up...

► April 8th, 2009

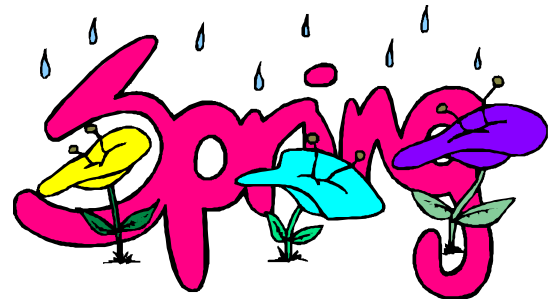
Speaker: Steven Totolo / tvcAutomation, Ottawa
 Website: <http://www.tvcAutomation.com>
 Topic: The Future of Home Automation: What's in-store for 2009

Steven will present an up-to-date view of the home automation industry. A lot has changed since his last presentation to OPCUG in September 2003, in whole-house audio, intelligent lighting, security systems, home theatre and networks. tvcAutomation specializes in working with homeowners and homebuilders to find personalised home automation solutions.

March Prize Winners

Bob Walker won the OPCUG clock/calendar door prize and **Jeff Dubois** took home a copy of Microsoft Office Ultimate 2007 which was the raffle prize of the evening!!

Thanks to Microsoft for the great raffle prize and congratulations to our prize winners.



May 13

Speaker: Don Chiasson (OPCUG)
 Topic: Virtualization Software

June 10

Pizza night and speaker Roger Wambolt, Corel Corporation
 Topic: Video Editing

2009 CALENDAR

| Meetings | Date | Time and Venue |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| OPCUG General Meeting | Wednesday, April 8 th | 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 |
| Beginners' SIG | Wednesday, April 8 th | Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. |
| Linux SIG | Wednesday, April 8 th | Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. |
| PIG SIG (Wing SIG West) | Wednesday, April 8 th | 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, April 8 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).

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2008/2009

Board Members

The Board of Directors was announced on February 13, 2008 at the Annual General Meeting. The Board selected positions at its first Board meeting on February 19, 2008.

The following was the slate of officers:

Chris Taylor, President
Don Chiasson, Director without Portfolio, later changed to
Special Events Coordinator
Gail Eagen, Secretary
Alan German, Treasurer
Bob Gowan, Program
Wayne Houston, Privacy
Brigitte Lord, Webmaster and Newsletter
Morris Turpin, Publicity
Bob Walker, Facilities

Board Meetings

The Board met 12 times on Feb 19, Mar 18, Apr 15, May 20, June 17, Aug 12, Sept 9, Oct 14, Nov 18, Dec 16, 2008 and Jan 20 and Feb 17, 2009.

Topics discussed included:

Meeting Co-ordinator
Program
Raffle and door prizes
Facilities Co-ordinator
Treasurer's Report
System Administrator
Webmaster
Newsletter
Reviews
Membership
Public Relations
Secretary
President
Privacy
Special Events Coordinator
New Business

Major decisions made:

- To purchase flasks for speaker gifts and sales
- To purchase a printer for membership and newsletter labels
- To produce a brochure advertising the OPCUG
- To give presentations at various Ottawa Public Libraries
- Not to have a day long fall workshop
- To create a position of Special Events Coordinator

Other Discussions

- Review of constitution to ensure consistency on web
- End of year BBQ – proposal to membership to have pizza
- Review forms for provincial government

Election

Bob Herres agreed for a second year to be Election Chair. Calls for nominations were done in the Newsletter and at meetings through the fall. Nine nominations were received by the due date of December 31, 2008. Since there were only nine nominations, no election was required. Thanks again to Bob Herres for taking on this role.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on February 11, 2009.

1. The President's report was published in the February newsletter.
2. The newly elected Board was announced.
Board Members are:

Don Chiasson
Gail Eagen
Alan German
Bob Gowan
Wayne Houston
Brigitte Lord
Chris Taylor
Morris Turpin
Bob Walker

3. The Treasurer's Report was published in the February newsletter and was also presented at the meeting. It was well received.

There were no questions or other issues raised.

*Submitted by Gail Eagen,
Secretary, OPCUG*

Review of 2008 OPCUG Accounts

by Andrew MacLeod

I have reviewed in detail the 2008 OPCUG accounts presented to me by Alan German, and I believe that the figures reported in the Income Statement and Balance Sheet accurately reflect all of the revenues and expenses incurred during calendar year 2008.

As a side note, postage continues to be a fairly significant recurring expenditure for the club, so I encourage any member who still receives their newsletters by postal mail to consider the email alternative. Copies of past newsletters are always brought to the monthly club meetings for the past several months, so those who wish to keep paper copies for posterity (without having to print them directly) can still pick them up at the meetings without further charge.

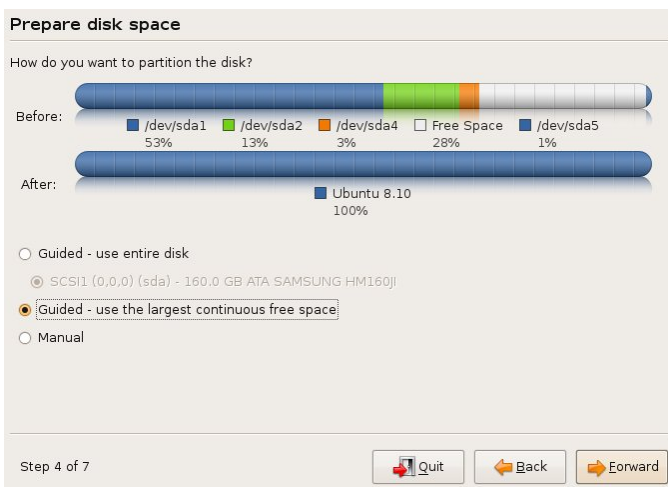
In closing, it is not my desire to alienate the other Board members who work hard and unselfishly for the club, but a review of the financial accounts obviously acquaints me quite substantially with the work done by Alan in his role as Treasurer. I certainly thank him for his excellent performance in both managing and organizing the finances and financial information for OPCUG. We are fortunate to have him.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Exploring Linux—Part 12 *by Alan German*

In the previous article in this series I gave my first impressions of Version 8.10 of Ubuntu Linux. I have now been using this distro for several months and have resolved all of my initial concerns. I have also found some great tips and techniques for making the package more useful. So, it's time to share my findings with all of you...

Firstly, as advertised, Ubuntu 8.10 has a shiny new disk partitioner, with a brightly-coloured graphical display. But, in certain situations, the display seems to suggest something different than what is desired. In particular, the partitioner can suggest a default installation using the entire hard drive, which may not be what the end user wants. But, clicking on “Guided – use largest continuous free space”, doesn’t change the “After” display, so that it still looks like the partitioner will use 100% of the available hard drive (see figure). Not to worry, the partitioner does indeed set up the Linux ext3 and swap partitions in the free space on the disk. These designations are confirmed on the final “Ready to install” screen before the installation commences. Still, hopefully someone will have marked this strange behaviour for updating in the up-coming 9.04 release.



I have been modifying – read deleting – some of the disk partitions on my hard drive for various purposes. As usual (!), this has resulted in my destroying the master boot record (MBR) and making the computer unable to boot – with the infamous GRUB Error 22. My normal practice has been to reload a backup disk image but, this time, I decided to try to learn a bit more about GRUB, and how I might fix the problem more directly. A Google search identified the “Super Grub Disk” that promised to restore the MBR, but also to provide “...a teaching tool to help you learn more about bootloaders...” The automatic restoration process worked so well, I haven't yet got around to learning about GRUB, but my Linux system now once again boots perfectly!

The Super Grub Disk (<http://stmaarten.globat.com/~supergrubdisk.org/>) provides a bootable CD that can be used to fix boot-up problems. The “Choose Language and HELP” menu option provides basic instructions on how to use the Super Grub Disk (SGD). The display format is a little strange. Rather than just providing a help file, the program's authors seem to have chosen to display a text file with a “more” option. As a result, the information flows onto the screen in chunks, making it hard to know where you left off on the previous page. But, if you bear with the output, the necessary information is available. Basically, there are just two steps – choose the Gnu/Linux option from the first menu, and Fix Boot of GNU/Linux (GRUB) on the second menu. The next screen allows a selection from all of the existing Linux installations. In my case, there was just a single choice – 4 hda4 sda4 (hd0,3) Ubuntu 8.10 – so the selection wasn't too difficult! Seconds later there was a message that “SGD has succeeded” and an indication to reboot the computer. Performing a normal reboot of the computer shows that the program had indeed done its job. Quite remarkable!

Another minor complaint I had about the initial release of Ubuntu 8.10 was that it came with OpenOffice 2.4 rather than the more current Version 3.0 of the latter. Unfortunately, the Ubuntu developers didn't have time to thoroughly test the new version of OpenOffice for the Imperial Ibex distro, and so opted to include the earlier release. But, fortunately, some OpenOffice users, the “OpenOffice.org Scribblers” team, have developed a personal package archive (PPA) that allows OpenOffice 3.0 to be easily added to Ubuntu 8.10. The follow-the-bouncing-ball instructions are posted at: <http://news.softpedia.com/news/How-To-Install-OpenOffice-org-3-0-in-Ubuntu-8-10-96449.shtml>. The process requires just a few steps. First you need to add the OpenOffice.org 3.0 repositories to your Software Sources options and then add an authentication key. Finally, you are presented with the option to update OpenOffice to Version 3 which then proceeds automatically.

The success in finding a way to easily upgrade the copy of OpenOffice on my Linux system, spurred me on to try to solve another irritant with the program. I use a dual-boot, Linux-Vista, system on my computer, largely because I have a couple of Windows' programs that I use regularly. In one case, it's an HTML editor that I like using and haven't found a Linux equivalent that works as well. The other program is a GPS mapping program that has no Linux equivalent. The consequence of using both operating systems is that I also run both the Linux and Windows' version of OpenOffice. While, generally, the two versions are quite compatible, there is a minor problem in that the Linux program uses different fonts than the Windows' version. In particular, my Linux OpenOffice doesn't have access to the Times New Roman and Comic Sans MS fonts and, consequently, certain documents don't display nor print in precisely the desired manner under Linux.

(Continued on page 5)

Exploring Linux (Continued from page 4)

So, I wondered if I could install additional fonts into the Linux version of OpenOffice, and if there were equivalents for my favourite fonts under Windows. Well, the answers were yes, and more-or-less yes. Even more surprising, not only could I find fonts that would do what I wanted, I could actually use the specific Microsoft fonts! All that is necessary is to install the “Microsoft fonts (msttcorefonts)” package using the “sudo apt-get install msttcorefonts” command in a terminal window. The Linux version of OpenOffice then has access to a number of Microsoft fonts including: Arial, Comic Sans MS, Courier, Times New Roman, and Webdings. And, as a result, my documents now look the same in either Linux or Windows!

Information provided on the Internet suggests that “msttcorefonts has an amusing history”. If the details are accurate, this is certainly the case. The story goes as follows: “Microsoft licensed the fonts for anyone to freely use (regardless of OS) to help boost the market share of IE. When they won the first browser wars, they removed the files from their site... but the license says you can freely redistribute them so that’s how we can legally use them :)”

The final glitches I mentioned previously related to Version 2.6 of The GIMP that came with Ubuntu 8.10. Firstly, the Acquire menu option, used to grab screen images and to drive my scanner, had completely disappeared. A little searching through the menu structures of the program revealed that these options can now be found under File – Create – Screenshot (or Xsane for the scanner). The second “feature” that I wasn’t keen on was that the two GIMP toolbars were docked (fixed) on the left and right sides of the screen. It turns out that you can change this default behaviour, and produce the earlier floating windows. However, the procedure is not very intuitive. You need to go to Edit – Preferences – Window Management and change the options for both “Hint for the toolbar” and “Hint for other docks” from “Utility Window” to “Normal Window”. Strange, but true!

Bottom Line

Ubuntu 8.10
Canonical Ltd.
<http://www.ubuntu.com/>

Super Grub Disk
<http://stmaarten.globat.com/~supergrubdisk.org/>

How to Install OpenOffice.org 3.0 on Ubuntu 8.10
<http://news.softpedia.com/news/How-To-Install-OpenOffice-org-3-0-in-Ubuntu-8-10-96449.shtml>

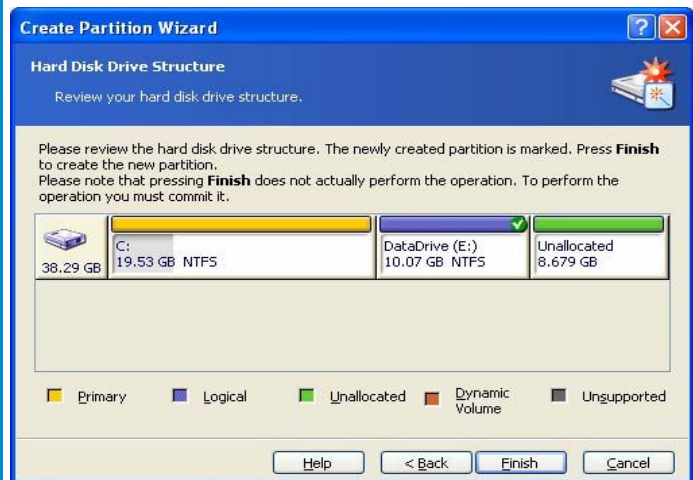
Possible to install Times New Roman?
<http://ubuntuforums.org/archive/index.php/t-589588.html>

GIMP 2.6 - GNU Image Manipulation Program
<http://www.gimp.org/>

Disk Director (Continued from page 1)

The next step is to specify the size of the new partition. This can be done with a slider running along a line between the minimum and maximum available sizes, by using up and down “spinners” to change the numerical size (in which case the slider moves automatically in the appropriate direction), or by simply typing a number of gigabytes.

Next, you specify if the new partition is to be active (the bootable partition of the disk), primary (to contain an operating system that can be booted from a boot manager), or logical (simply for data files). The subsequent wizard provides a drop-down menu where you must specify the file type for the partition. Options include NTFS and FAT32 (Windows), Ext 2, Ext3 and Linux swap (Linux). On the next two screens you can select a drive letter for the logical drive, the next available letter being provided as a default value, and type the entry for a disk label into a text box.



The final screen of the wizard re-displays the graphic of the disk structure, now showing the new partition (indicated by a check mark) with its drive letter, file system and size. Note however, that this does not mean that the new partition has been created. Rather you have defined a task for the program to create the desired partition. The actual partition is not created until you commit the changes to disk by clicking on the chequered flag icon on the menu bar. Note that, for the faint of heart, the left arrow on the menu bar is the “undo last action” command which at this stage will remove the new partition creation task.

You may need to increase the size of a partition if you don't have enough free space in which to create data files or install new applications. The wizard for this process is much more succinct than that for creating a new partition. You simply need to select the partition that is to be given more space, the partition from which space is to be taken, specify the new size for the partition, and review the modified disk structure, prior to committing the changes.

(Continued on page 6)

Disk Director *(Continued from page 5)*

At least the process is just that simple if you have suitable partitions available with which to exchange disk space. The wizard helps in this process by greying out any partitions that cannot be used for such purposes. But, in certain situations the wizard continues with strange options such as the ability to extend a Windows' data partition into a Linux operating system partition, but only for sizes between 10 GB and 10.01 GB, i.e. no real size increase. Another odd result, after selecting the partition to be extended and the partition with the space to be used, is the production of an error message indicating that the program is unable to increase the free space on the selected partition since the current size is the maximum possible. However, I should note that these "problems" resulted from pushing the program to modify combinations of Windows and Linux partitions on a dual-boot machine. At least Disk Director is smart enough to indicate what it can't do – or doesn't want to!

So, as we have seen, Disk Director will let you easily create a new partition or resize an existing partition. But, it will also perform a multitude of other tasks on your hard disk. Some of the program's options are to resize or move existing partitions, and to split or merge partitions. You can even copy an entire partition to another partition or hard disk on your computer system. This provides a comprehensive backup system for any given logical drive (such as a dedicated data partition). Similarly, there is an option to back up the disk's master boot record (MBR).

There is also a whole host of disk management tools including menu items to modify the disk label, change the drive letter, check the file system for errors, and defragment the files on the disk. The security conscious can wipe unallocated disk space in order to completely destroy deleted files, or you clear data from an entire drive.

More advanced users can access tools to reformat a partition; change the partition type, file system, and cluster size; hide or unhide a partition; and set a partition to active. Such brave folks can also format or delete a partition. However, a note of caution is in order here. If you wish to remove an existing partition, please be very sure that the partition is no longer required. There is a partition recovery tool available, but this may not help you if your machine will no longer boot! (Did we tell you about the partition and MBR backup capabilities of Disk Director, and the ability to create a rescue disk?)

Advanced users may also like to know that, included with Disk Director, is Acronis OS Selector (look for the file C:\Program Files\Acronis\Acronis Disk Director\OSSelector-Setup.exe once you have completed a standard installation of the main suite). OS Selector is a boot manager that will allow

you to install and use multiple operating systems on one computer. You can boot an OS from any partition, on any hard disk, or have several multi-boot systems on the same partition.

And, for the really advanced users – you can use Disk Director to change the root size of existing partitions, and resize the i-node table. Now if you know what these latter two options actually do, please write a follow-up article 'cos these are definitely out of my league!

However, the point is that Disk Director Suite is very simple to use on one level, and yet extremely powerful for users who can take full advantage of the feature that the package offers. For most users, changing the size of a partition, or creating a new partition from the available unallocated space, will probably be all that is required. And, for these latter tasks, the suite will readily direct you to take good care of your disk.

Finally, as a member of the Ottawa PC Users' Group, you can purchase a copy of Disk Director Suite from the web site of our friends at User Group Relations (<http://www.ugr.com/DiskDirector.html>). The discounted user group price is just US \$29. For this price (use the special price code UGEVAL07), you can download the software and obtain an authorized serial number (required for installation) or, by paying a small additional charge for shipping and handling, you can receive the package on a CD-ROM by mail.

Bottom Line

Disk Director Suite 10.0
US \$29 with User Group Discount
Acronis, Inc., Burlington, MA
<http://www.acronis.com>



OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 5

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. If you try one of the listed items, you are encouraged to share your experience, good or bad, by providing a brief review of the program for a future issue of the newsletter.

ObjectDock

Do you have Mac-envy? Would you like a Mac-like animated toolbar to replace the Windows' Task Manager and Quick Launch? ObjectDock will let you organize your shortcuts, programs and running tasks into an attractive and fun animated "dock".

Current Release: Version 1.9

Web Site: <http://www.stardock.com/products/objectdock/>



Firefox

Version 3 of the award-winning Firefox browser has security, speed and new features that will change the way you use the web. Single clicks will let you create a new bookmark, check the identity of a web site, or clear your private data. And, there are more than 5000 add-ons so that you can browse in precisely the way that you wish.

Current Release: Version 3.0.6

Web Site: <http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/>

Know Your Stuff

This software will help you create a room-by-room inventory of your personal possessions that will help you to purchase the right amount of insurance, substantiate any losses, and get insurance claims settled faster. Know Your Stuff is free to download and use. Your inventory is stored on your computer but you are encouraged to keep a back-up on a CD-ROM or memory stick, or as hard copy.

Current Release: Version 3.06

Web Site: <http://www.knowyourstuff.org>

PhotoPerfect Express

PhotoPerfect Express is a professional quality, yet easy-to-use photo editor. Enhance your digital photos in just three simple steps, and obtain stunning results without any technical knowledge. PhotoPerfect Express is freeware and runs under Windows XP and Vista.

Current Release: Version 1.0 build 78

Web Site: <http://www.arcadiasoftware.com/photoperfect-express.html>



foobar2000

This freeware program is an advanced audio player for Windows. The program supports many popular audio formats, including MP1 through MP4, Ogg, WAV and WMA.

Current Release: Version 0.9.6.3

Web Site: <http://www.foobar2000.org>

Copernic Desktop Search

Copernic Desktop Search Home is free for non-commercial use and allows individuals to instantly search files, e-mails, and e-mail attachments stored anywhere on their PC's hard drive. The application executes sub-second searching of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files, Acrobat PDF's, and multi-media files.

Current Release: Version 3.1

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



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 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.

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|--------------------------------------|---|---------------|
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| Bulletin board — PUB II (BBS) | http://opcug.ca/default.htm | |

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Reduce, Re-use, Recycle

Bring your old computer books, software, hardware, and paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the General Meetings, and leave them at the table near the auditorium's entrance. Please limit magazines to publication dates of less than two years old.

You may TAKE AWAY any items of use to you. Stuff left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to... the recycle bin.

