



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Give Your Machine a Boost *by Alan German*

BoostSpeed 5 is a new product from Auslogics, the makers of Disk Defrag, that offers a software suite with more than eighteen power tools promising to clean up, speed up and repair your system to make it run as fast and stable as new. The various components are designed to clean your system, free up disk space, fix and defragment the Windows' registry, optimize your file system, maximize hard drive performance, and tweak numerous settings on your Internet connection.

The program's main screen shows three tabs: System Scan, System Advisor and Advanced Tools. Running the program, brings up the first of these tabs and offers a "1-Click Scan" to erase the browser and Windows' history, clean up temporary files, and optimize memory. A drop-down menu provides combinations of further options to scan and/or repair, and set the machine to sleep or shutdown on completion of the specified task.

The one-click scan checks for errors in the registry, looks for files considered to be junk, checks the disks for errors and for file fragmentation. The first scan on my system identified 605 registry errors of moderate severity, 268 junk files (moderate-high), one disk error, and no disk fragmentation. The resulting message, "A total of 874 problems were detected on your computer and need to be fixed now", seemed to strongly suggest hitting the Repair Now button. But first, a quick

look at the Show Details option just to check what is going to be repaired.

Everything looked fine. The registry errors were the usual mix of file does not exist, invalid application path, and empty/unused registry key, that one normally sees with a registry cleaner (but never have a clue what they actually are!) Similarly, the junk files were indeed junk, these being temporary files from Windows, media player and Sun Java, MS Office installation files, and the recent file history. The one unusual problem noted was "Errors found on system disk drive". Unfortunately, there was no further information on the latter so it was a toss-up whether or not to leave the check mark for repair in place.

Well, we're testing the program, so let 'er rip! The results indicated that 874 problems were indeed repaired. The detailed report included the note: "Local Disk (C:) Repaired", but once again provided no clue as to the specific nature of the problem. But, lots of items were repaired, including the disk error – so that's good – isn't it?

Interestingly, I ran the one-click scan a second time, a day later. And, guess what? A total of 12 errors including one error found on system disk drive! This was "repaired" a second time, but the re-appearance of the issue doesn't inspire me with a huge amount of confidence in this disk. An item for further research...

Going to the Smart Advisor tab results in a somewhat different scan of the computer being performed. The results are displayed as a series of headings for recommended actions, a brief description of each, and an empty check box waiting for user input. Some of the recommendations sounded very reasonable, such as "Disable Certificate Propagation service". Also, since there are no smart card devices attached to my computer, the program indicated that I could free up memory by disabling this service. In fact, there were three separate items relating to smart card services that could readily be disabled. I wonder why Windows isn't smart enough to figure this out?

One or two of the recommendation were surprising, such as I should disable Autorun (I thought I had!), and my machine's memory needed upgrading

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, May 11th, 2011**

May Raffle

Our friends from down-under (at **Auslogics Software Pty Ltd**) have provided three copies of their new **BoostSpeed 5** software for this month's raffle.

BoostSpeed 5 is a one-stop computer maintenance and optimization solution, providing everything you need to keep your PC running fast. The program is packed with useful and powerful tools to clean, speed up and repair your system, tweak Windows settings, optimize your Internet connection, and much, much more.

The program got the thumbs-up from our reviewer (see the article "[Give Your Machine a Boost](#)" in this issue). Each copy of the software is valued at US \$49.95, but our versions have non-expiring licenses, so they are even better than what you can buy from Auslogics's web site at that price.

As usual, raffle tickets may be purchased at the door; \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

Help keep your membership dues low by buying raffle tickets and you just might take home one of these powerhouse packages from Australia!

Coming Up...

► May 11, 2011

Speaker: Google

Topic: At our meeting in May, one of the members of Google's team will present how emerging trends around mobile, social and cloud computing are changing the IT landscape.

June 8: Annual Pizza Night

Speaker: TBA

Prize Winners

Thanks to the generosity of member **John Archibald** we had a wireless keyboard & mouse combo as our door prize at the April 13th general meeting of the OPCUG. Member **Genadi Gunther** went home a happy man!

And right there with Genadi was **Paul Louisseize** who took home our raffle prize, Corel Draw Graphics Suite X4, courtesy of the good folks at Corel.

Congratulations to our winners and thanks to our suppliers for the donations of the prizes for the evening.

2011 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, May 11 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, May 11 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, May 11 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, May 11 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).

ARTICLE

Cleaning Up After Windows 7 SP1 by Chris Taylor

Last month, I wrote about installing Service Pack 1 for Windows 7. So far, I have not heard of major problems and I am generally encouraging people to go ahead and install it.

After you have installed Service Pack 1, try all your programs and look for any anomalies – things that worked before and now have problems, etc.

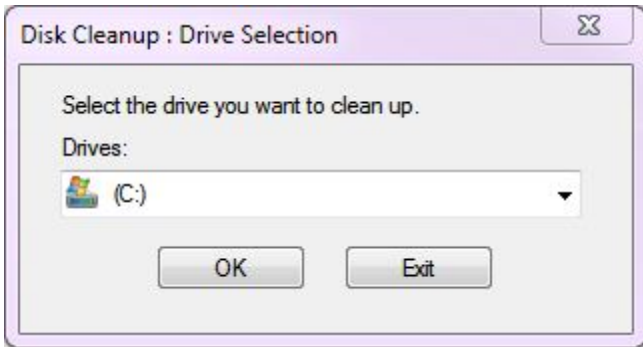
If you are experiencing problems, you can uninstall Service Pack 1 by going to *Control Panel, Programs and Features*. In the left-hand panel, click on *View installed updates*. On the right side, click on *Service Pack for Microsoft Windows* and finally click on *Uninstall* at the top of the window.

It is nice to be able to uninstall a service pack, but once you are sure you don't ever want to uninstall Service Pack 1, you can save a huge chunk of disk space by removing the files that allow you to uninstall the service pack.

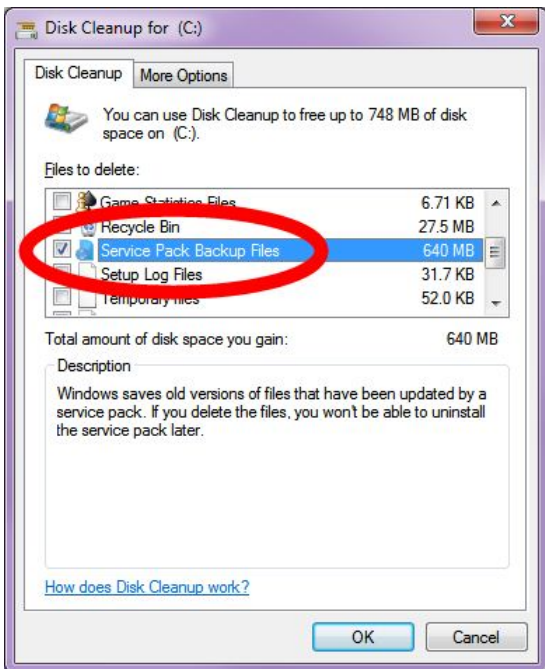
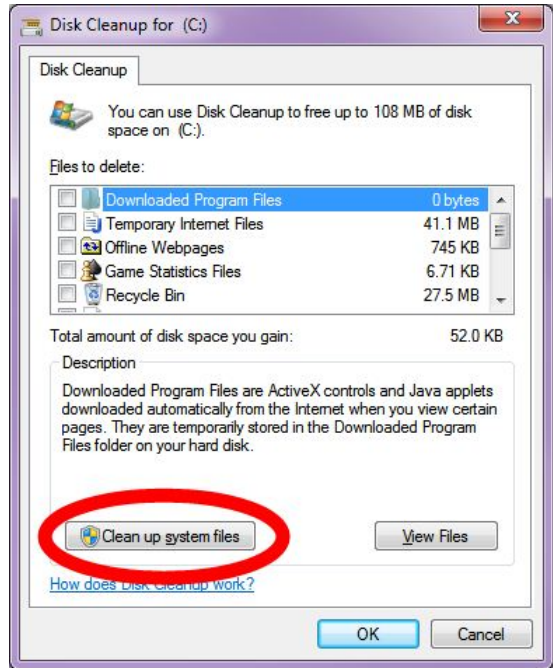
Click on the Start button and type in *disk cleanup*. At the top of the start menu you will see the following



Click it and the Disk Cleanup program will load. You will be prompted to select the drive for cleaning. Select the drive where Windows is installed (probably C:)



Click on the *Clean up system files* button.



The program will reload and this time, if you scroll down the list of *Files to delete*;, *Service Pack Backup Files* will be listed. Place a check mark in the box to the left of it, select any other categories of files you want to clean up and click the *OK* button.

On my system, this freed up 640 MB of disk space.



Mini-Review—HDClone 4 by Alan German

As it says in the OPCUG Free Software Guide, “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.” So, here’s my experience with HDClone 4 Free Edition from Miray Software.

A friend was given an old Compaq desktop machine but found that it ran really slowly. Could I do anything to help? Well, I could remove all the bloatware, patch the OS and the security applications, defrag the disk, clean out the registry, and see what effect all of those steps might have. But first, I wanted to make a backup of the entire disk – just in case things went south.

I wanted to use a free disk imaging program, and recalled the listing for HDClone that appeared in Part 19 of the OPCUG Free Software Guide (Ottawa PC News; p.6; March 2011), so I thought I would give this program a try.

One and a half hours later, I had a 38 GB disk image of the 38 GB hard drive, that had only 8GB being used. The free version of HDClone has a few small limitations. It doesn’t ignore empty disk sectors, it runs slower than the paid version(s), and it will only restore the image to a bigger hard disk. Three strikes – it’s out!

To be fair, the program’s description indicates the major limitation, i.e. that the program “clones an entire hard disk to another, larger medium”. (Note that this means that the free version is useless for normal backup purposes since the image can’t be restored to the original disk.)

Also, the version overview indicates that the free edition doesn’t produce compressed images, doesn’t have a fast copy mode, and has the slowest copy rate of any of the available (for purchase) versions.

It beats me why a developer would provide an obviously crippled version of a program hoping that, after a trial – that is evidently going to be a less than stellar experience – a user would upgrade to a paid version.

So, sorry guys. There are better options in the free and open-source software world. And, for me, it’s on to the next!

Bottom Line

HDClone 4 Free Edition (Freeware)

Miray Software

<http://www.miray.de/products/sat.hdcclone.html>

True Image Home 2011 – Another Perspective

The following E-mail was sent to me by Gene Barlow of User Group Relations who provided the review copy of Acronis True Image Home 2011. Users, and would-be purchasers of the product, should take note of Gene’s comments. - Alan German

Alan,

I am sorry that you had problems using the new True Image 2011 interface. Users who are experienced in how the old interface worked, seem to have the most problem shifting their mindset to the new interface. New users on the other hand, who are not bogged down with old perceptions, seem to find the new interface much easier to use. Because of this, I completely re-wrote a new Starter Guide and included it with the product. Had you printed this out and followed it step by step as you first started to use the product, the new interface would not have caught you so far off guard.

The fact that you had your backups show up with a notice that they have not been backed up, and with a 0 size of the backup, tell me that you may have used Windows Explorer to move backup images around on your external hard drive and got them out of synch with the contents of the True Image tables of available backups. The recovery box is missing from the backups you show because there are no longer any backup files actually pointed to. To fix this problem, you need to delete the backup box (Operations, Delete Backup) and then run the Browse for Backup link to find and recreate the boxes again at the new locations.

One last comment, you list the discount user group price at the end of \$25, but you point to the Acronis web site. Your members will not find this discount there. The user group discount is only available at www.ugr.com.

*Gene Barlow
User Group Relations
<http://www.ugr.com>*



Linda and Gene Barlow

ARTICLE

Format Painter - A Cousin To “Copy-And-Paste”

by Nancy DeMarte (ndemarte@verizon.net)

Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

When you begin to use the programs that are part of Microsoft Office, it is easy to overlook some of the tools which could make your life easier. I found that to be the case with Format Painter, a command which appears in several versions of Office programs, yet is greatly underused. Once you know what it can do and how easy it is to use, you will wonder why you never got to know it before.

In Word 2007, Format Painter is located on the Home tab in the Clipboard group. In Word 2003, it's on the Standard toolbar. It provides a quick way to copy formats from one place to another in the Office programs: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, even Access. It doesn't change any content like its cousins, Cut, Copy, and Paste, but it can reproduce even the most complex formats in seconds.

For example, let's say you have created a long document with headings and sub-headings. You want to give it a little pizzazz by changing the sub-headings to a different font, font color, and size from the rest of the document. All you have to do is make your format changes manually to the first sub-heading and use Format Painter to replicate those changes on all the others.

Another instance where Format Painter is a lifesaver is when you are creating a document or outline where certain lines are indented. Occasionally, you will find that the amount of indentation becomes inconsistent as you work your way through the document. Rather than dragging the indentation marks on the ruler to the correct positions, you can use Format Painter to copy the exact indentation from the last correct area to any others that need to be fixed.

Making the tool work for you

This tool works with text formats, like fonts, italics, and font colors. It also works with paragraph formatting, such as indents, alignment, bulleting, and line spacing. And it is available in all the popular Office Programs. When creating a custom PowerPoint presentation, for example, Format Painter can help overcome the challenge of keeping your custom headings formatted the same on all slides. Excel users can copy formatting from one cell to another with Format, which is Excel's name for Format Painter.

It also works with certain graphics in some Office programs. In Word, you might want to include an auto shape like a large arrow on the cover of a brochure for emphasis. You might have resized it, added a border, and filled it with a custom color. Format Painter can reproduce that format on another arrow on the back page with very few clicks.

Here's how it works. It is best if you follow the advice from the professionals and type the entire document before formatting it. Then, once you get an item – word, phrase, or paragraph — manually formatted the way you want it, select it. Then click the Format Painter icon once, which turns the cursor into a paint brush. Scroll to the item you want to change and select it. Immediately it changes to match the format of the original item. If you have more than one item you want to change, double click the Format Painter and use it on as many items as you need to. It will remain active until you click its icon to turn it off.

Some quick tricks

If you want to copy text formatting, select a portion of a paragraph. If you want to copy paragraph formatting, select the whole paragraph plus the paragraph mark. Make a mistake? Use Undo. Want all formatting done for you? In Word, choose one of the Templates (or Themes in Word 2007). Format Painter is only one of several commands that even beginners can learn to use to save time and frustration when using Office programs. Other tools will be featured in future articles.

Copyright 2010.

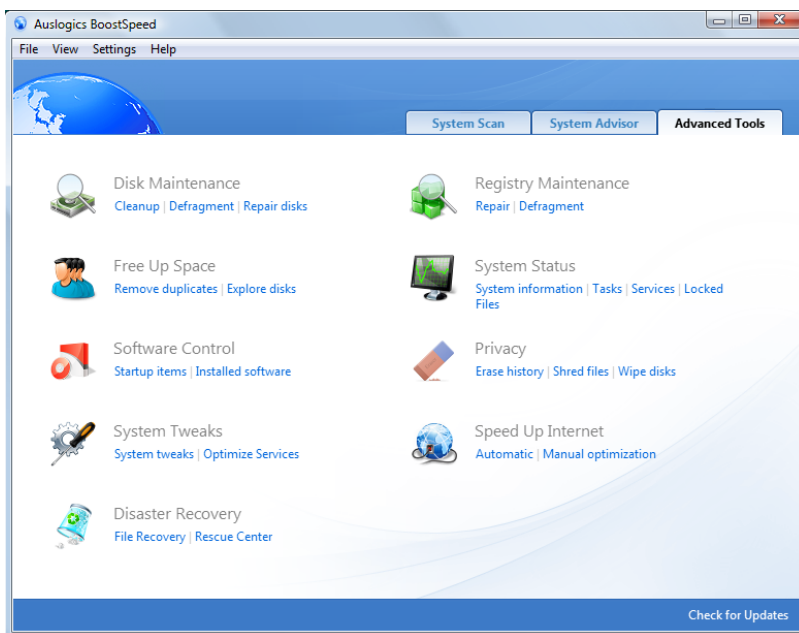
This article was originally published in the October, 2010 issue of the *Sarasota PC Monitor*, the official monthly publication of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc. (<http://www.spcug.org>), and is reprinted here with the permission of SPCUG.

BoostSpeed 5 *(Continued from page 1)*

from 893 MB to “at least 1.00 GB”. This machine does actually have 1 GB of RAM (which seems to be plenty for its main task of running Ubuntu Linux). However, it appears that something is siphoning off a few MB that causes BoostSpeed to believe that the available RAM has dropped below the magic number.

So, for some of the recommendations, a little research will be necessary before I agree to implement the advice. However, there is one recommendation that I really like – Disable ReadyBoost Service – because “Your computer is fast enough, so ReadyBoost wouldn't improve system performance.” Yes Sir! Now that I know I (perhaps) have a super-fast machine, I can turn off ReadyBoost quite happily.

The program's final tab leads to a menu of advanced tools as shown in the following screenshot:



The Disk Maintenance – Defragment option calls up Version 5.0.6.250 of Auslogics' Disk Defrag utility. An earlier version of this software was my first introduction to Auslogics (see: <http://opcug.ca/public/reviews/auslogics.htm>). I really like this program over Vista's defragmenter, since it allows multiple disks to be selected for concurrent processing, and shows a graphic illustration of the defragmentation process, among many other options.

As you can see from the menu, BoostSpeed has many other tools available in the single package to help optimize your system. To free-up disk space, you can search for and remove duplicate files of various types (e.g. image, audio or video files), or you can run a check on your disks and directories to identify where most of your disk space is being used and then either delete or move individual folders as desired. You can easily disable programs from running at boot time by simply unchecking their entry in the list of start-up programs in the Software Control menu and, similarly, change a whole bunch of Windows' features with the System Tweaks settings.

Some of the other program features are a recovery utility to retrieve accidentally deleted files from disks, USB memory sticks, and digital camera

memory cards; a track eraser to remove your browsing history (with options for both Internet Explorer and Firefox on my system), delete cookies, and remove various lists of recent documents and operations; plus the ability to securely shred files and folders (including the recycle bin) and to entirely wipe disk contents. A system information utility provides an in-depth report on both the hardware and software present on the computer, while other components identify items like running tasks and services. Internet connectivity can be analyzed and the associated settings adjusted, while registry maintenance options provide the abilities to analyze, repair, and defragment the Windows' registry. And, when all else fails, a Rescue Center lets you undo changes made to the system by any of the Auslogics' programs.

Even BoostSpeed itself has multiple settings that can be tweaked to have the program work the way you prefer, including specifying which modules should backup their changes for possible rollback, the option to run the program at boot-up, or to schedule a system scan and repair.

A clearly written and well illustrated help manual is available on-line as a PDF file. The manual may be viewed in a browser or downloaded for off-line review or printing. The manual consists of only 21 pages. It covers the basics, but doesn't go into much detail on any of the individual programs. For example, I learned that Disk Doctor found my disk error, but I got no more information on the types of errors that this program identifies. There was just a warning that “If you start seeing a lot of bad sectors, backup and replace the faulty disk to prevent data loss.” I guess so.

However, even though the manual is a little brief, the program's operations are so intuitive, it's doubtful that you will need to read the instructions. All of the program's features are just a click or two of the mouse away, and appear to run flawlessly.

BoostSpeed 5 is available for purchase on-line at a cost of \$49.44 (automatically converted in the shopping cart from US \$49.95). Each software license covers three computers for an individual user. And, the Auslogics' web site lists 20 features that are bundled into the software suite. So, that's 60 items for fifty bucks – less than a dollar an option. Or, is that the new maths?

Bottom Line

Boost Speed 5 (\$49.44)
Version 5.0 for Windows
Auslogics Software Pty Ltd
<http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/boost-speed/>



OPCUG Free Software Guide – Part 22

Compiled by Alan German
and Bill Bradwin

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.

GreenPrint

GreenPrint eliminates wasteful pages in any printout, saving time, money – and trees! The software eliminates any pages destined for the printer that contain just a URL, banner-ad, logo, or legal jargon. Greenprint World is the free version of the software for home users.

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



Soluto

Is your computer taking too long to boot, or crawls once it has booted? Soluto takes a novel approach to fixing such problems by (a) indicating the specific applications that are causing the hold-up, and (b) by harnessing the power of the crowd to learn which actions you can take to best improve your user experience.

Current Release: Version 1.1.1369.0

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

Lightscreen

Lightscreen is a simple screen capture utility that can be accessed from the system tray or by using configurable hotkeys for specific tasks. The program will let you take a snapshot of the entire screen, a window, or an area that you define. The screenshot is stored to disk as an image file (PNG, JPG, etc.)

Current Release: Version 1.01

Web Site: <http://lightscreen.sourceforge.net>

Folder Size

This little utility will analyze your hard drives and display the sizes of the folders and files, and the percentage of the total disk size that they occupy. You can easily figure out which files or folders are taking up the most hard disk space. Besides

scanning an entire hard drive, Folder Size can also scan a single folder in order to save time.

Current Release: Version 1.4.0.0

Web Site: <http://www.mindgems.com/products/Folder-Size/Folder-Size.html>

BatteryBar

This program constantly monitors the status of the battery as you use your laptop, keeps historical data, and provides you with a very accurate estimate of how much time is remaining with a display of the battery's status in the taskbar.

Current Release: Version 3.1

Web Site: <http://osirisdevelopment.com/BatteryBar>



ImgBurn

Everyone should have this lightweight disk burning application in their toolkit. Create audio CD's or video DVD's, or simply write data files for storage on optical media. CD, DVD, HD DVD and Blu-ray disks are all supported.

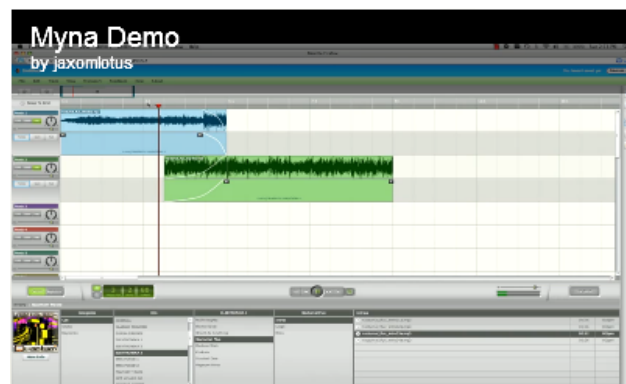
Current Release: Version 2.5.5.0

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

Myna

Do you need to quickly modify an audio recording, but don't have a full-blown editor installed? No problem, go on line and use Myna to trim your clip, add various effects, mix audio tracks, or even make a brand new recording.

Web Site: <http://www.aviary.com/tools/audio-editor>



RootkitRevealer

An advanced rootkit detection utility from Bryce Cogswell and Mark Russinovich at Windows Sysinternals

Current Release: Version 1.71

Web Site: <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb897445>

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 (SIGs) go until 10 p.m.

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Within a couple of minutes you will receive a confirmation message from the listserver.

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