## PRODUCT REVIEW

# Optoma Pico Pocket Projector
*by Chris Taylor*

I give a lot of presentations that require the use of a projector to either display a PowerPoint deck or demo something using my netbook computer. Most of the places I go have a projector I can borrow, but I always worry it won't be there when I show up, the bulb will blow, there will be missing cables, etc.

Years ago, I tried to have a spare projector *just in case*. But they are pretty expensive (so I borrowed) and bulky (so they were a pain to schlep around.)

I recently came across something that turned things around for me – the Optoma PK201 Pico Pocket Projector. This amazing device is hardly bigger than my BlackBerry smartphone! It has its drawbacks, but does quite an amazing job. First, some background on how I ended up as a proud owner of one.

### Been there, didn't do that

I first heard of the Optoma line of Pico projectors a few years ago. Although they looked interesting, they had no way to be used as an output device for a computer. You had to export information (photos, video, and presentations) to the projector's memory and then use it standalone to display whatever you had downloaded. That was too limiting for me and I didn't bite.

Then, on July 8th, 2011, Amazon.ca sent me an email with the subject; *Amazon.ca: Bestselling Video Projectors from Optoma*. I clicked the link for the *Optoma PK201 Pico Pocket Projector*. The first thing that caught my eye was they had it on for $255.87, 56% off their

normal price. As I started reading the specs, I started getting very interested! Two days later, it was delivered to my door.

### Tiny powerhouse

With dimensions of 2.4" x 0.7" x 4.6" and a weight of 5.6 oz., you might be forgiven for thinking this projector can't do much. But you would be wrong. The PK201 is a powerhouse. For input, there is a VGA port that allows up to 1280x800 resolution. A mini-HDMI port handles 720p or 1080i resolution. An optional iPod kit allows you to plug in an iPod and display photos or videos through the projector.



*Tiny projector packs a big punch*

The display technology in the PK201 is DLP, which stands for Digital Light Processing. DLP was invented in 1987 by Texas Instruments. The image is created by microscopically small mirrors. Wikipedia has an article that talks about this amazing technology:  
http://preview.tinyurl.com/mf73eo

The PK201 uses LED as the light source. While non-replaceable, the LED is rated for 20,000 hours which is – to me – beyond the useful life of the device itself. At 20 ANSI lumens, the PK201 is not super bright, but I find that even under normal room light, I can project a modestly-sized image of maybe 30" that is plenty bright. In a dimly-lit room, the full 66" image is quite bright.



*26" image plenty bright in moderately-lit room*

**Next Meeting: WEDNESDAY, January 11th, 2012**

# January Raffle

**C**ourtesy of the Microsoft MVP program, we have a copy of **Windows 7 Ultimate** for the January raffle. This is the full version (not the "upgrade only" version) that can be installed on any PC. Valued at $350.

If you have not yet moved to Windows 7, buy some tickets and see why so many Windows users think this is the best operating system to ever come out of Redmond.

Tickets are, as always, a good deal at $1 for one, a great deal at $2 for three or the unbelievable bargain of $5 for ten!

## December Prize Winners

Thanks to the generosity of Wondershare 4 attendees at the December OPCUG meeting were the winners of a raffle prize of a copy of the LiveBoot 2012 software.

Congratulations to **Bob Whitla, Richard Aylesworth, Gary Byron** and **Art Hunter.**

# Coming Up…

**Wednesday, January 11, 2012**

**Speaker**: Ottawa Public Library (***not confirmed**—check the OPCUG website at http://opcug.ca for updates*)
**Topic**: Ottawa Library E-services (***not confirmed**—check the OPCUG website at http://opcug.ca for updates*)

| 2012 CALENDAR | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Meetings** | **Date** | **Time and Venue** |
| OPCUG General Meeting | Wednesday, January 11th | 7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the **Canada Science and Technology Museum**, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/index.cfm |
| Beginners' SIG | Wednesday, January 11th | Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. |
| Linux / Open Source SIG | Wednesday, January 11th | Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. |
| Beer BOF (Wing SIG East) | Wednesday, January 11th | 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

# RoboForm—Program stores website logins, passwords

*By Jim Thornton*  *jasthorn@gmail.com*

RoboForm is one of my favorite software programs as it helps me very quickly log into secured websites. My listings of these websites include airlines, email, financial, medical, stores, travel, etc., and I currently have more than 50 of these secured websites listed.

The program is very easy to use. For example, first open Internet Explorer, and then click on one of its little toolbars titled RoboForm and a list of several choices appear titled Logins, Identities, and Soft Notes. While I mentioned Internet Explorer, RoboForm works equally well with Firefox, Safari, Chrome, and many more browsers. Next, I click on Logins and then click again on the listed secured website that I want to enter. Next, RoboForm automatically redirects Internet Explorer to the website that I selected and when the login website appears, RoboForm automatically fills in my name and password, and I'm immediately logged into the secured website with unrestricted abilities.

Once you have the program installed, when you go to a new secured website and fill in your user name and password, and click on Enter, RoboForm will automatically add the information. including the website address, to your list of Logins. If you need a new password, RoboForm will generate a highly secure password. On the Login list in RoboForm, the secured websites are listed alphabetically and you can easily rename any listing.

Other RoboForm features include SafeNotes, which securely stores other information of your choice. For example, some banks will frequently ask you for your wife's favorite color, your first dog's name, etc., to ensure that you are the secured party attempting to access your bank account. You can securely store this information in SafeNotes.

RoboForm's options under Logins include Edit, New, and Print List. Under Identities are Edit, New, and Fill Empty Fields Only. SafeNotes includes Edit, New, Print to New, and Print Last. Numerous other choices include Fill Forms, Save Forms, Fields — Reset, Sat, and Clear, Profiles — Default, New, Date, Name, Refresh Fields, Explorer, Tools — Edit Identity, Edit Password, Edit SafeNotes, Search Fields, Taskbar Icon, Generate Password, and Sign RoboForm data, and Options — Help.

I've used RoboForm for numerous years in Windows ME, Windows XP, Windows 2000, Windows Vista, and now Windows 7. RoboForm's website is http://www.roboform.com, and there are three versions of RoboForm available: Desktop, Everywhere, and 2Go. Desktop provides high security and restricts the access to RoboForm from only one computer. Everywhere allows you to access RoboForm from numerous computers. 2Go works using a portable USB drive, so that you can take your RoboForm information and use it on many computers while traveling on business or on vacation.

RoboForm runs in numerous versions of Internet Explorer. including versions 6, 7, 8, and 9 but only on 32-bit versions and not the 64-bit versions.

There is a free version of RoboForm that is limited to only 10 logins. For more than 10 logins, the Everywhere version is available for $20 per year, and the Desktop version is $30. The current release, which is Version 6.10.2.0, was introduced earlier this year.

 When you install RoboForm for the first time, you will be asked to create a master password, which protects all of your secured data in your Logins, Identities, and SafeNotes. This prevents anyone else who has access to your computer from seeing or copying this information. If you prefer, you can eliminate this protection and allow anyone to access all of your important information.

# PRODUCT REVIEW

# Exploring Linux—Part 19 *by Alan German*

**U**buntu Version 10.04 LTS (Lucid Lynx) has been ticking over normally for the past few months on my production machine. During this period of trouble-free operation I took the opportunity to look at a number of subsequent releases of the software, specifically Version 11.04 (Natty Narwhal) and the current release, Version 11.10 (Oneiric Ocelot).

While this was largely due to my curiosity with all things new in Ubuntu, it was also precipitated by my acquisition of a netbook computer. The Acer Aspire One 522 has a 10.1-inch screen, with a native resolution of 1280x720. Even with the relatively high screen resolution for such a small unit, I thought that the display might benefit from the supposedly netbook-friendly Unity desktop that is a feature of recent versions of Ubuntu.

In general, Unity has not received stellar reviews. Critics have labelled it as buggy and inconsistent, and many users have indicated that they immediately reverted to the classic Gnome interface. However, Oneiric (and likely all future versions of Ubuntu Linux), has dropped the option to switch from Unity to Gnome as part of the base system (but, more on this later). So, it's probably a good time for me to take a look at Unity in order to decide if it's a viable interface for the future, or if I need to seek out other options to maintain a workable Linux system.

Unity, which was first introduced in the Ubuntu Netbook Edition of Version 10.10 (Maverick Meerkat), has been modified with different releases of the operating system so, for the purposes of this article, the interface used in Oneiric (see figure) will be described.



The most obvious new feature is the set of icons down the left side of the display. These are program launchers. Simply clicking the mouse on an icon launches the associated program. For example, the third icon down should be recognizable as the launcher for the Firefox web browser.

Now, while the initial use of these program launchers is intuitive, one can't say the same for the location of the program menu once an application has been launched. The normal File, Edit, Save... menu is generally not to be found along the top of the program window. Eventually, I discovered that, if I ran the mouse over what used to be the top panel, the program's menu magically appeared across the top-left of the

screen. They tell me it's to save screen real estate (for things like my shiny new netbook), but this change is going to take a bit of getting used to - if at all!

A number of inconsistencies in the user interface are shown in the way in which the LibreOffice suite of programs is handled. For example, a notable exception to the general rule for the File, Edit, Save menu is that this menu is retained as part of the LibreOffice program windows rather than being displayed in the top panel. In addition, launching LibreOffice Writer, runs the word processor and places small white triangles on each side of the launcher, which is the "standard" means to indicate that the application is running. However, launching Impress, runs the presentation manager, but the launcher may appear in various configurations. Sometimes, Unity opens a new, rather nondescript, black and white icon in the launcher, complete with two white triangles. On other occasions, the two white triangles are associated with the main (coloured) icon for Impress (as they should be). Yet another method of "display" for the open application is not to show any white triangles with any icon! Needless to say, this is all very confusing to the (this) end user.

Another issue with Unity proved to be yet another case of a "missing" menu. This time, it was the old series of drop-down menus from the top panel, namely the Applications, Places and System menus which were used to launch various programs, navigate through the file system, and change system settings. Now, with the availability of the on-screen program launchers, one might imagine that the Applications menu might be redundant. However, a moment's thought indicates that it isn't possible to launch all of the required software from such a restricted set of icons. Clearly, there has to be another way.

## Exploring Linux—Part 19

*(Continued from page 4)*

Further exploration of Unity's interface located an equivalent to the old menu system in one of the program launchers. It's actually the black-and-white icon in the top-left corner of the screen. Hovering the mouse over this icon identifies it as "Dash Home". Once Dash Home is open, one is confronted with a series of ghostly icons for "Media Apps", "Internet Apps", "More Apps", and "Find Files". There are familiar icons for Firefox and Thunderbird, although the latter are labelled "Browse the Web" and "Check Email" respectively. And, there are icons for "View Photos" (the Shotwell image manager) and "Listen to Music" (Banshee Media Player). The other feature of Dash Home is a "Search" box - just like the Windows start menu!

So, with all these choices, the question was - Where is Terminal? Trial and error identified a couple of ways to locate this utility. Clicking on "More Apps" pulled up a sub-menu of programs that had been recently-used, were already installed, or were available for download. The offerings were listed alphabetically but only a handful of programs appeared in each category. "Installed" had an option to "See 93 more results" and scrolling down through this latter list eventually located Terminal's icon. Of course, given the new search paradigm that is in place, I could also have started typing T-e-r... (or even just T) and Terminal would have been quickly displayed in the row of search results.

Hopefully, I thought, Terminal will show up in the most-frequently-used group (the first row of applications) at some point. Or, better still, I found I could delete the tab for Ubuntu One (which I don't use) and pin Terminal's icon to the left side of the screen. Right-clicking on the icon then allowed me to check "Keep in launcher" so that Terminal would always be available for use. I could even drag it up the column, and drop it immediately below the icon for Firefox, so that the black-and-white icon stands out from its more colourful associates and is thus more easily located.

The thing I really didn't like about early versions of Unity was that any application set to run in a "window" that occupied more than 75% of the display was automatically maximized when launched. I really don't see the point. If I wanted it to run the program in full-screen mode, I wouldn't have established an 80% window! But, this wasn't even configurable. Some screen designer decided that this was clearly the best setting for me. Fortunately, many user complaints about this behaviour have resulted in a recent change to allow configuration of the auto-maximize setting, with a 100% value effectively disabling this feature.

However, the really bad part of auto-maximize is that the window controls (minimize, maximize and close), which I had carefully configured to be in the top-right corner of the window (this being natural and just), suddenly jumped to the top-left of the screen, next to the File, Edit, Save menu, because that same screen designer decided that they should live in the top panel area - and he also knows that I really want them to be on the left! As far as I know there is no fix for this behaviour.

While all of the above noted items are basically annoyances, one behaviour of Ubuntu Linux with Unity when running on the netbook really brought the show to a grinding halt. Each time the computer would attempt to connect to my Wi-Fi network, the entire system would crash. No mouse movement, no keyboard control, nothing. In fact, the only means to bring the netbook back to life was to hold the power key down and force a cold reboot.

A Google search identified that the problem was related to the specific hardware in the Aspire 522, namely a Broadcom wireless adaptor, and an Atheros Ethernet controller providing wired connectivity.

Even more interesting was one of the potential solutions offered. One user indicated that: "You can... boot Win7 before and do a reboot to Linux..." While this solution (amazingly) does work, it clearly isn't a desirable method of solving a Linux problem!

A second solution was to blacklist the "atl1c" driver for the Ethernet controller (for details, see: http://linuxnorth.word-press.com/2011/10/23/wireless-less/). This had the desired effect in that the wireless connection could then be established. However, another consequence was that the wired Internet connection was now unavailable. Fortunately, the wireless connection is my method of choice in normal usage for the netbook, and the wired connection isn't needed (although this can be restored by reversing the blacklisting process.)

The final annoyance with Unity that I have identified to date is the answer to the question - Where is Restart? It turns out that "Restart" is on the dialogue box that is returned when you press "Shut Down". While this works, it means multiple clicks to restart the system.

So, given the above litany of problems and partial solutions, can I live with Unity? Time will tell. But, if not, there are a number of options to use a different user interface.

These include installing the Gnome Shell. Yes, that's right, although Gnome isn't available directly at login, I could install gnome-panel from Ubuntu's Software Centre, after which the Gnome classic desktop could be selected by clicking on the cog wheel icon on the login screen. Or, if I wish to avoid Unity entirely, one enterprising user has developed the Ubuntu Gnome Shell Remix, a distro that has Ubuntu Linux as its base, but uses Gnome by default. I could also run a different flavour of Ubuntu, such as Kubuntu (with the KDE interface) or Xubuntu (which uses XFCE), or perhaps just find a new distro entirely.

Alternatively, I could (and probably will) wait to see what Version 12.04 (Precise Pangolin) has to offer…

### Bottom Line

Ubuntu Linux Version 11.10 (Oneiric Ocelot) (Open-source)

Canonical Group Limited
http://www.ubuntu.com

**Optoma Pico Pocket Projector**   *(Continued from page 1)*

The projector can display an image from 5" up to 66" diagonally. Since it does not have a zoom on the output, you have to move the projector forwards or backwards (10" to 126") from the screen to get the size you want. There is a small wheel that operates easily to adjust the focus.

The image produced by the PK201 is gorgeous! It is sharp, with rich, saturated colours. When playing a video, there is no ghosting at all. I have absolutely no complaints about the quality of projection. DLP is a fantastic technology for projectors and even a tiny device like the PK201 performs like a champ.

The PK201 has a replaceable 1410 mAh Li-ion battery that can run the projector for up to an hour on a full charge. It can be run indefinitely on the included AC adapter. It is worth noting that the battery does not charge if the projector is turned on. You can also charge the battery by plugging the included USB cord into a computer. However, the PK201 does not operate as a projector as long as the USB cable is connected.

For sound, there is a built in 0.5 watt speaker as well as an audio-out port that accepts standard computer speaker jacks or headphones.

Built-in storage on the PK201 is anemic at 28MB. But there is a micro-SD card slot that takes cards up to 32GB.

The bottom of the PK201 sports a standard tripod socket. Pair this little item with a mini-tripod you can find at any camera store and you have an excellent way of propping it up while you use it as a projector.

Cables that come in the box are the AC adapter, the VGA cable, a USB cable, and an RCA-to-mini-jack A/V cable. An HDMI cable is not included. While not rare, HDMI cables that have one end the standard size and the other end the required mini HDMI tend to cost a little more. I bought a 10 foot one for under $20.

**Media to the projector**

If you want, rather than using the projector with a live connection to a PC or DVD player, you can download media files and project them from the memory on the projector.

The PK201 comes with MediaConverter 3.0 software from ArcSoft which can convert video, photos and PowerPoint files and download them to the PK201.

For video, MediaConverter supports most file types (WMV, MP4, FLV, MPeg, MOV, etc) and converts them to AVI, which are often larger than the originals. I did have some video files that MediaConverter choked on for no reason it would tell me.

On the still image front, the story is better. While the PK201 will display photos that you copy directly to it, the typical multi-megabyte file sizes just waste space and take longer to display. By using MediaConverter, file sizes for the final JPeg images is generally around 300KB.

MediaConverter can convert PowerPoint files (PPT, PPTX) into a series of JPeg files. Strangely, it names the files with an extension of EPF. When it downloads the files to the PK201, it groups them together in a single folder per presentation file. A menu option on the projector displays them without a hitch.

**PK201's big brother**

If you are willing to part with a bit more money, there is the Optoma PK301 Pico Pocket Projector. Everything is identical except it is slightly larger, slightly heavier, can project 50 ANSI lumens, and has a maximum image size of 120".

**Not quite perfect**

I really like the Optoma PK201 Pico Pocket Projector. But there are a few things that I see as minor issues.

First is the 20 ANSI lumens output. It is a little weak. But it is not as bad as I thought it would be. And keeping the brightness down extends the battery life. Which brings me to my second point…

A one-hour battery life is short. For me, most of my presentations run well over an hour. I would pay more (in dollars, weight, and size) to have a three-hour battery life. But this is not as big a deal as I thought it would be. I am generally close to an electrical outlet anyway, so it is a simple matter to plug it in. One option that might be really nice would be to allow it to charge on a USB port while it is in use as a projector.

The third thing that bugs me a little is the tiny memory included. 28 MB is pretty laughable. Surely it would not cost much to throw in a couple of GB of storage. But again, this is not a huge deal as there is the micro SD card slot. I added a $14 8GB card and that provides me with plenty of storage for my needs.

Overall, I am really impressed with the Optoma PK201 Pico Pocket Projector. I can throw it into my bag with my netbook and never have to worry about getting somewhere to give a presentation only to be faced with blank looks when I ask about the projector they promised would be there.

Come out to the Beginner's SIG and I will be happy to show it to you.

**Bottom line:**

Optoma PK201 Pico Pocket Projector

Price at Amazon.ca: $255.87 (free shipping)

PK201 at Optoma: http://preview.tinyurl.com/2aktylf

PK201 at Amazon.ca: http://preview.tinyurl.com/3vypt7p

# OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 27
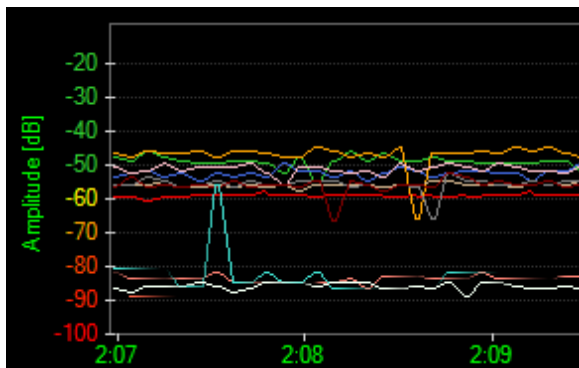
*Compiled by Alan German and Bill Bradwin*

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.

**inSSIDer**
This open-source Wi-Fi scanning software inspects your WLAN and surrounding networks, determines their security status, tracks signal strength over time, and lets you troubleshoot competing access points.
Current Release: Version 2
Web Site: http://www.metageek.net/products/inssider/



**SpeedFan**
This program will monitor voltages, fan speeds and temperatures in computers with hardware monitor chips. SpeedFan can even access Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology (S.M.A.R.T.) and show hard disk temperatures.
Current Release: Version 4.44
Web Site: http://www.almico.com/speedfan.php

**NTFS Undelete**
NTFS Undelete is an application that allows you to retrieve deleted files. It recovers files directly from hard drive, and will work even if you empty the Recycle Bin.
Web Site: http://www.ntfsundelete.com/

**SafeHouse Explorer**
This free encryption software makes your secret files invisible and hides them from anyone who doesn't have your permission to view them. SafeHouse Explorer uses passwords and maximum-strength 256-bit advanced encryption, and can protect files residing on any drive, including memory sticks and external USB drives.

Current Release: Version 3.01
Web Site: http://www.safehousesoftware.com/SafeHouseExplorer.aspx

**Google SketchUp**
Redecorate your living room. Invent a new piece of furniture. Model your city for Google Earth. There's no limit to what you can create with Google's fun and easy-to-use 3-D modelling software.
Current Release: Version 8
Web Site: http://sketchup.google.com/intl/en/index.html



**LookInMyPC**
This program will look in your PC and generate a comprehensive system profile with information on all of the installed hardware and software. The report includes such items as running processes, installed services, start-up programs, Windows updates, and active network/Internet connections. View the formatted report in your browser.
Web Site: http://www.lookinmypc.com/

**Speak-A-Message**
This utility lets you communicate with a more personal touch. It's three times faster than typing, and much fun! Send voice and photo messages via email, or upload them to Facebook. Speech recognition technology will convert voice messages into text.
Current Release: Version 7.3.0
Web Site: http://www.speak-a-message.com



**RoboForm**
The top rated, easy to use, secure password manager and form filler, RoboForm automatically remembers your passwords, logs you into web sites, and fills long web forms - all with one-click. The program is also available in a portable version for your USB drive.
Web Site: http://www.siber.com/consumer/roboform
*(see article on p.3 of this issue)*

# 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 Science and Technology Museum, 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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or:

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(to get the Adobe Acrobat PDF version).

And if you decide you do not need the printed version mailed to you anymore, simply let Mark Cayer (membership chairman) know. He can be reached at general meetings, as well as by e-mail at **Mark.Cayer@opcug.ca**. You might want to wait until you have successfully received at least one issue electronically before opting out from the printed version.

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

"Announcements" is a low volume list that the Board of Directors uses to get in touch with the membership. Subscribers can expect at least one message per month – the meeting reminder that goes out a few days in advance of the general meeting. Other than that, the only time it is used is when the Board feels there is some important news that should be brought to the attention of all members.