



OTTAWA

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PRODUCT REVIEW

File and Folder Synchronization Revisited *by Alan German*

One of my data backup strategies is to maintain a copy of the data partition of my hard disk on a USB memory stick. The “live” data (as opposed to archived material) usually adds up to no more than 2-3 GB so there is lots of room to store the entire contents on a reasonably sized memory stick.

For some time now, my – free – backup program of choice has been Microsoft’s SyncToy (See: <http://opcug.ca/public/Reviews/synctoy.htm>); however, recently, I have found SyncToy getting confused and insisting on trying to copy files between disks when I know that the files have been synchronized. Unfortunately, the only way I have found to rectify the situation has been to delete and then recreate the relevant folder pair. Now, I didn’t mind going through this exercise on a once-in-a-blue-moon basis but, when the problem kept recurring, I decided that it was time to move on.

In the Linux world, the equivalent program that I use is FreeFileSync, an open-source offering from ZenJu on SourceForge. The promotional

blurb states: “FreeFileSync is a free and Open Source folder comparison and synchronization tool. It is highly optimized for performance and usability without a needlessly complex user interface.” The really useful feature for our present purposes is that the program runs on multiple platforms, so there are both Linux and Windows versions.

Downloading and installing the Windows version (6.3 MB) is straightforward. I find it best to tweak the settings when first running the program. In particular, I disable the “Overview” window on the main screen since this simply lists the folders that are to be synchronized and this information is effectively displayed as part of the “Relative path” column. I also right-click on the file category listing in the left-hand window and check “Date” so that the file categories displayed are Relative path, Name, Size and Date. Similarly, I enable the date field in the right-hand window so that it’s obvious which is the newer file in the list of comparisons.

Other settings for “Compare” and “Synchronize” can be accessed

through the blue and green cog wheels adjacent to each button. The default comparison method is “File time and size” (as opposed to “Content”) which I find adequate for my purposes. In the synchronize settings, I opt to leave the synchronization method as “Automatic” (effectively a two-way folder synchronization). This works well for me since I use the USB memory stick to synchronize my data files between two different machines. Since I can create, modify or delete files on either computer, allowing the program to perform a two-way synch between the memory stick and a hard drive maintains the same set of data files on both machines. I also change the “Deletion handling”

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, November 14th, 2012**

November Raffle

Courtesy of **SoundZone**, we have an **SZ5002 MP3/FM Radio Speaker**. This great little capsule speaker – listed as “Little speaker, mighty sound” will not only playback from any audio device with a 3.5mm jack (such as an MP3 player, smart phone, or computer) but comes with a built-in MP3 player (takes SD cards up to 8GB) and an FM radio so you can have music with you with nothing more than this little 2.5 inch diameter ball!

Valued at \$90, this is a terrific prize for anyone who wants portability when it comes to sound but does not want to compromise on quality and versatility.

For more details on this mini-speaker, see <http://www.bluewireonline.com/mp3fm-radio-speaker-p-36.html>

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! Help keep your membership dues low by buying tickets on this great little speaker.

I will have my SZ1001 at the meeting if you want to listen to how great the sound is before buying your tickets. You can read my review of the SZ1001 at <http://opcug.ca/public/Reviews/soundzoneSZ1001.htm>

October Prize Winner

Our raffle prize winner for the evening was **Tim Hillock**.

Tim is now the proud owner of a copy of McAfee All Access 2012.

Congrats Tim and thanks to McAfee Canada for the prize donation.

Coming Up...

►Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Topic: The eBook industry as it pertains to libraries
Speaker: Chris Simmons, Ottawa Public Library

Wednesday, December 12, 2012

Silent Auction (see article [next page](#))

There will also be a speaker:

Topic: Publishing Music
Speaker: Roger Lanthier, NRCan.

Storage Space Needed

The OPCUG owns a set of display panels that were used many years ago when we attended computer fairs and swap meets. Bob Herres has been kindly looking after the three cardboard boxes that contain the panels but has a need for the space and is asking if someone else can look after them. The boxes are about 3 feet by 2 feet by 6 inches. If you have some space and wouldn't mind looking after these three boxes, please send an email to opcug-info@opcug.ca

2012 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, November 14 th	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, November 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, November 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, November 14 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).

CLUB LIFE

2013 OPCUG Elections

Once a year, the OPCUG holds elections for the 9-member Board of Directors. We are once again coming up to this annual event.

We encourage all members to consider running for a board position or getting involved in some other manner in the operations of the OPCUG.

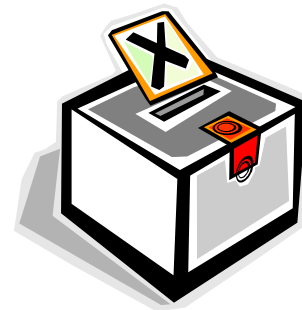
If you want more information about what is involved, please talk to any current or past Board member. Names are listed on the [back page](#) of this newsletter and on the web site (<http://opcug.ca>).

Nominations can be submitted to Bob Herres, Election Chair, in person at the November and December club meetings or by sending an email to nominations@opcug.ca.

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2012.

Please get involved. Please help the OPCUG continue in its role of *Users Helping Users!*

*Bob Herres,
Election Chair 2013*



Silent Auction in December

For our December meeting we are going to have a silent auction and its proceeds will be donated to the Ottawa Food Bank. All the items for sale will be displayed with a bidding sheet on which you can write your name and your bid, as many times as you want, and the highest bidders will win the items. So, if you have good stuff that you would like to donate, please send us an email with a description of what you want to donate to SilentAuction@opcug.ca

Also, we will have a box to collect your non-perishable food donations for the food bank. For those who prefer to give money, we'll have a box for that, too. Donations over \$10 are tax deductible. With its food industry partnerships and bulk purchasing power, the Ottawa Food Bank turns every \$1 donated into \$5 worth of food.

And furthermore, as if that were not enough, the OPCUG will give all the proceeds of the December raffle ticket sales to the food bank.

So, in December, if you feel like helping others, you will have plenty of choices.

Webpage: <http://opcug.ca/public/history/Auction/SilentAuction.html>

Date: December 12, 2012

Email: SilentAuction@opcug.ca

Info: <http://ottawafoodbank.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Food-Bank-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

PRODUCT REVIEW

Exploring Linux – Part 23 by Alan German

For me, one of the great mysteries in Linux has always been how to find specific files within the overall file system. I consider myself to be reasonably well organized in terms of file storage so I have never really had to delve into the various file search commands that Linux has to offer. But, recently, I came across a blog entry discussing how to use the “locate” command to search for files (<http://linuxaria.com/howto/find-files-on-linux-with-the-command-locate>). It turns out that locate needs an updated database of file names in order to identify current files. Now, while it is relatively easy to create and maintain such a database (e.g. with a script file and a cron job), my preference is for something a little simpler.

The basic problem is that most simple commands (and graphical file managers) only search inside the current file folder, so we need to be a little more creative. Enter the “find” command. This too, by default, searches in the current folder, but it is a simple task to extend the range of the search. In addition, find is such a powerful command that, once we specify a desired path, it will do all of the work for us, automatically scanning the entire directory tree structure below the specified path.

But, before we continue, let me set the stage on my particular requirements. The downside to the find command is that it can be slow, precisely because, by default, it does search through the entire tree structure. However, in my case, all of my data files are stored in a single partition, and the total disk space used in this partition rarely exceeds 2 GB. In consequence, the number of files and folders to be scanned is quite manageable. Combine this with a fast CPU, tons of memory, and a solid state disk, finding any given file across the entire data partition is pretty much instantaneous. So, a simple find command easily suffices for my purposes.

The data partition is mounted as /media/DataDisk in the root directory, whereas I am normally issuing the find command from my home folder. Consequently, I use the command in the form:

```
find ../../media/DataDisk filename
```

where the “../” pair changes the folder from home to root in order to access the data partition and then search for whatever “filename” is of current interest. The filename string can be specific to a given file, or can include wildcards to broaden the scope of the search.

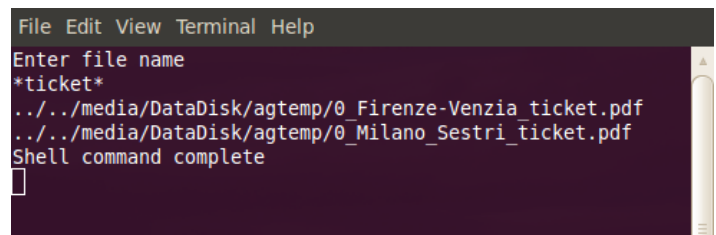
Now, this command is still too complex for me to remember and, since I only need to use it occasionally, I need an even simpler method. My solution has been to create a bash script file to ask for the filename string as a user input and then automatically include this in a search across my data partition.

The complete script file is as follows:

```
#!/bin/bash
# Find command used from the home folder in all sub-
# folders of DataDisk
# for a case insensitive search of a specific file name
echo 'Enter file name'
read filename
find ../../media/DataDisk -iname $filename
echo "Shell command complete"
read
```

Note that the script requests the search string as the variable “filename” and then includes this search string in the subsequent find command by calling up the variable as “\$filename”. Note also that the -iname switch has been used in order to make the search process case insensitive.

The script file is saved as filefind.sh and this file has its executable bit set so that the script will run in Terminal. The following screenshot shows the results of searching for any files with names that include “ticket”.



```
File Edit View Terminal Help
Enter file name
*ticket*
../../media/DataDisk/agtemp/0_Firenze-Venzia_ticket.pdf
../../media/DataDisk/agtemp/0_Milano_Sestri_ticket.pdf
Shell command complete
█
```

This is just a simple example of the use of the find command. Additional criteria can readily be added to make searches quite specific and/or wide ranging. Furthermore, it is even possible to combine these with subsequent file actions such that, for example, files bigger than 250 MB and more than six months old, can be deleted (<http://www.debian.org/how-to-find-files-on-your-computer-with-find>). As noted earlier, find is a very powerful command!



Articles by Leo!



Say No Thank You to New Toolbar – Opt Out During the Installation Process By Leo A. Notenboom of [Ask Leo!](http://articlesbyleo.com/) (<http://articlesbyleo.com/>)

Have you ever had a new toolbar suddenly “appear” in your browser? Although it might not seem like you agreed to install it, the likelihood is that you did.

One of the most frustrating strategies companies use to deploy more toolbars relies on your not paying close attention when installing software or other programs on your computer.

For example, let’s say you’re installing an update to the popular Java runtime, which is software used by some websites to provide rich functionality beyond just displaying static pages.

The update consists of the normal installation program, and then proceeds to ask you the normal installation things, including agreeing to the software license. Then another screen comes up and without reading it you’re about to click Next.

Wait! In doing so you would have been asking to have the Yahoo! toolbar installed.

Nothing against Yahoo, Java or Sun here, but this can be very annoying. It’s not that the Yahoo toolbar is bad. It’s actually a fine toolbar. The annoying part is this:

- The offer appears during an update- you’d already made your selection when you initially installed the program, there’s no need to ask again.
- It defaults to “Yes”. Anything optional, particularly anything totally unrelated to what is being installed, should default to off.
- They’re “sneaking it in”. OK, this is really subjective, but you can’t help but feel like this might be an attempt to sneak the installation in, during a process where people are usually just hitting Next repeatedly to get the install over with.

This installation is not the only case. During installation of many software packages – both initial installs and updates – the option to install a toolbar will often be selected by default. You have to click a box to opt out. This choice typically comes during the middle of the process when you’re conditioned to hitting “next” just get it over with. If you’re not paying attention once you’re done suddenly a new toolbar will “appear.” A toolbar you didn’t realize you had actually agreed to.

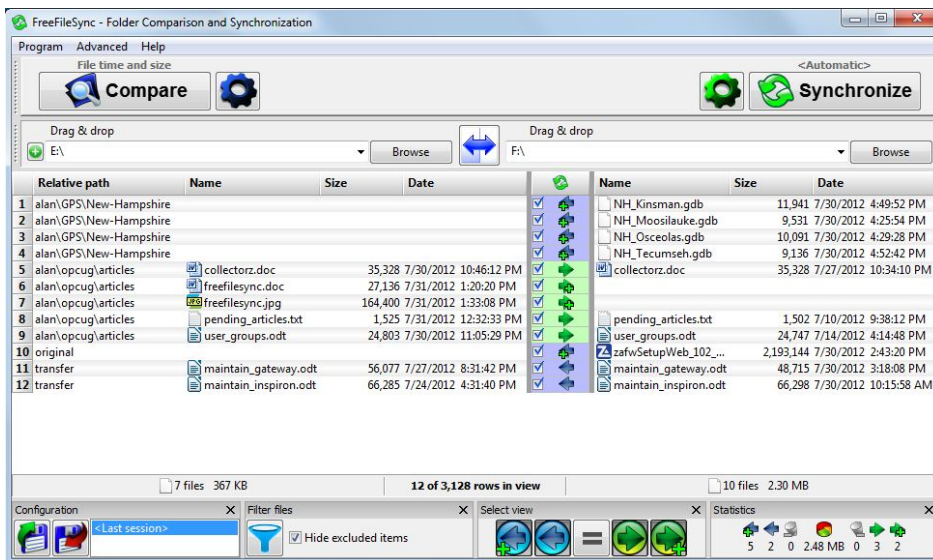
Typically, installers include this option to earn profit. It’s a way for those offering free software to recoup some of the cost. But this habit certainly shows up in paid for software as well.

This tactic is a perfect example of why it is important to pay attention during installations and updates. Read each step before clicking next or you might find you’re about to “ask” for something you didn’t really want at all.

File Synchronization *(Continued from page 1)*

field from “Use Recycle Bin” to “Delete Permanently”. On my system, FreeFileSync complains that the recycle bin is not available on the memory stick and permanently deletes any deleted files so, to avoid the warning message, it is simpler to have the files deleted. I don’t mind this since, once I decide to delete files, I frequently follow up by emptying the recycle bin.

The final tweak to the program’s settings is to click on the Filter Files icon and add to the excluded items. By default, FreeFileSync will exclude files like System Volume Information and \$Recycle.Bin. My preference is to add .Trash-1000 (the Linux trash folder for my data drive) and SyncToy*.* (the SyncToy database files for various folder pairs). I don’t need to back up any deleted files and SyncToy is probably going to disappear from my system, so backing up its database files seems somewhat redundant! Once the exclusions are set, we hit the “OK” button and check “Hide excluded items” which prevents the listed items from being displayed in subsequent folder comparisons.



Now we have reached the main event. We want to back up the data drive to the memory stick. All we need to do is hit the “Browse” button in the left-hand window and drill down to select DataDisk (E:) in order to establish the first disk for the file comparison. Similarly, using the browse button in the right-hand window, we select Lexar (F:) i.e. the backup USB memory stick. Hitting the “Compare” button creates a listing of those files that are different between the two disks together with an indication, using various arrows, of how the files are to be synchronized.

For example, in the screenshot we can see a number of new files on the memory stick that are to be copied to the hard disk (left arrow with plus sign) and also some updated files on the hard drive that are to be copied to the memory stick (right arrow) so as to overwrite the older versions.

This preview allows the synchronization process to be reviewed and possibly modified before any actions take place. To avoid an individual file being processed one simply unchecks the appropriate box. Alternatively, the action to be taken can be changed by hovering the mouse over the arrow and moving it either to the left or right to select a different action (e.g. take no action or delete the file).

Once the file actions are satisfactory, pressing the Synchronize button causes all the files transfers to take place and effectively synchronizes all the files and folders on the subject disks.

This is simply one way in which FreeFileSync can be used to maintain a mirror of specific files and folders. The power of the program is in the various optional features that can be harnessed to undertake the desired tasks. The beauty of the program is the simplicity of its operations once the appropriate options have been set.

Bottom Line

FreeFileSync (Open-source software)
Version 5.5

Author : ZenJu

<http://freefilesync.sourceforge.net/>



OPCUG Free Software Guide – Part 35

Compiled by Alan German,
Micheline Johnson,
and Jeff Dubois

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.

Explorer++

This open-source file manager features the familiar interface of Windows Explorer, but introduces several enhancements and improvements, including tabbed browsing, file previews, and a customizable user interface.

Current Release: Version 1.3.4

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

Synchronicity

An open-source backup and synchronization program that is both powerful and lightweight. It makes backing up your files extremely easy, while remaining fully customizable.

Current Release: Version 6.0

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



Kingsoft Office Suite Free 2012

This office suite includes Writer, a fully-equipped modern word processor; Spreadsheets, to handle all of your data processing and analytical requirements; and Presentation, for effective multimedia presentations.

Current Release: Version 8.1.0.3036

Web Site: <http://www.kingsoftstore.com/kingsoft-office-freeware.html>

DriveImage XML

This easy to use, reliable program creates disk images allowing you to fully back up partitions and logical drives. The imaging process creates safe "hot images" - even from drives currently in use - and you can restore images to drives without having to reboot.

Current Release: Version 2.30

Web Site: <http://www.runtime.org/driveimage-xml.htm>

Auslogics Duplicate File Finder

Keeping unnecessary duplicates on your computer means wasting valuable hard disk space. Auslogics Duplicate File Finder will find and delete these files, searching not only by name but by file content.

Current Release: Version 2.4.0.5

Web Site: <http://www.auslogics.com/en/software/duplicate-file-finder/>



WizMouse

A utility that enables the mouse wheel in applications that don't support mouse wheels! Scroll windows under the mouse pointer without having to click first to give the window focus.

Current Release: Version 1.6.0.2

Web Site: <http://preview.tinyurl.com/a9wkm7>

LockItTight

Once secured with LockItTight software, your computer consistently reports its location to your account on LockItTight.com. You can log on from anywhere to locate your computer on a map.

Current Release: Version 2.3.0.2369

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



Desktop Dungeons

The perfect quick-play, rogue-like puzzle game for your coffee-break. Fight your way through fantasy dungeons in 10 minutes or less.

Current Release: Version 0.2

Web Site: <http://www.desktopdungeons.net/>

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.

OPCUG Membership Fees:	\$25 per year	
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Linux / Open-Source SIG		
(vacant)		

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“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.