



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

Volume 37, Number 10

December 2020

MERRY CHRISTMAS

FancyZones by Chris Taylor


About Chris Taylor: Chris is on the Community Review Board for [SANS's OUCH! security awareness newsletter](#) designed for everyone. He is President of the [Ottawa PC Users' Group](#) and a [Microsoft Windows Insider MVP](#).

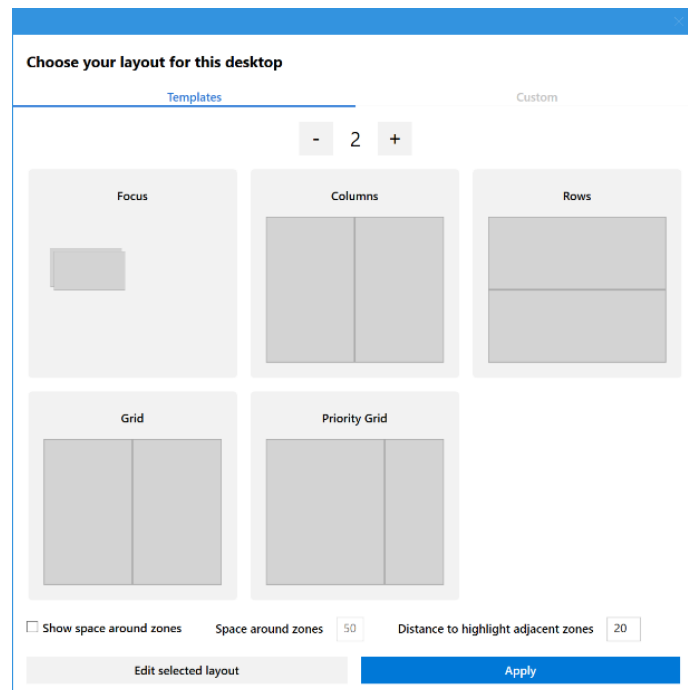
In the ancient history of Windows 95 and XP, Microsoft released an unsupported suite of tools for the operating system called *PowerToys* that added nifty functionality to Windows. On May 8, 2019, Microsoft launched the open source project *PowerToys for Windows 10* on GitHub. The September 5, 2019 release included an especially useful module: FancyZones.

FancyZones lets you define various zones on your desktop and have program windows fill the zones. For anyone who likes to have multiple programs visible at the same time, FancyZones is great. It's like Windows Snap on steroids.

Windows Snap can arrange application windows and works pretty well. But it has annoyances like not remembering where you had programs snapped, difficulty getting multiple programs to snap into the same section of the screen, only permitting 2, 3, or 4 areas, and only allowing easy resizing of screen areas when using 2 areas. FancyZones overcomes all those and more.

To get FancyZones, install the *Windows 10 PowerToys*. Browse to the repository on GitHub at <https://github.com/microsoft/PowerToys/releases/>. Scroll down to *Assets* at the bottom of the most recent release. Click the entry for the *PowerToys*.exe* file. Once the download completes, run it and have it launch PowerToys when the installation completes.

I recommend taking FancyZones for a quick spin before getting into customizing zones. Press the default hotkey;  + ~ (hold down the Windows key and press tilde).



(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

<i>Next Meeting / Coming Up / Calendar</i>	2
<i>FancyZones</i>	1, 4
<i>Changing Icons in Android Pie</i>	3
<i>Lawrence's Thoughts: Wi-Fi Part 3</i>	5
<i>Using your photos at Christmas</i>	6
<i>Chris Taylor's Quick Tips</i>	7
<i>Nominations for OPCUG Board 2021</i>	7
<i>Contact Information</i>	8

Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, December 9th, 2020**

Next Meeting

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

As has been the case since the onset of COVID-19, this meeting will be via Zoom video conference (connection details below)

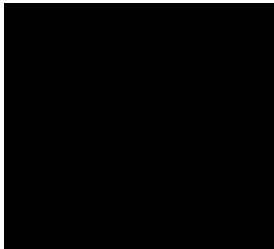
Topic: Wi-Fi: Making sense of it all
Speaker: Lawrence Patterson, OPCUG

Wireless computers (tablets, phones, laptops, and even a new desktop) have made our cable free experience wonderful (I'm hopeful that I never go back to wired surround sound speakers).

Yet, understanding the "literal" alphabet soup of engineering standards, advertising claims, and device compatibility that makes up the wireless standard can be frustrating. Learning that your wireless router or device might be obsolete within a few months just adds to that frustration.

Lawrence is going to expand on his last three wireless newsletter articles by providing a brief history of wireless standards, an historical lesson to avoid repeating, and what you should look for over the next year when buying your next router / wireless device.

For connection details, visit:
<https://opcug.ca/events/wi-fi-making-sense-of-it-all/>



Coming Up...

January 13, 2021

Topic: Creating your own blog and web site using WordPress
Speakers: Alan German and Brigitte Lord, OPCUG

Join Alan and Brigitte and discover how to easily create and maintain a blog, or build a web site, using the free version of WordPress. Brigitte will demonstrate how easy it is to create web pages using the free version of the Elementor plugin for WordPress.

More details at:
<https://opcug.ca/events/creating-your-own-blog-and-web-site-using-wordpress/>

February 10, 2021

Topic: Micro Controllers and the Internet of Things
Speaker: Deid Reimer, Victoria Pi Makers
(details to follow)

March 10, 2021

Topic: Keeping passwords safe
Speaker: Chris Taylor, President, OPCUG

Chris Taylor will show how to use free software that stores all your usernames and passwords along with related information and protects them with a single, very strong password.

More details at: <https://opcug.ca/events/keeping-passwords-safe/>

April 14, 2021

Topic: Photobook presentation
Speaker: Lynda Buske, OPCUG
(details to follow)

All scheduled events, including regular monthly meetings, weekly Q&A sessions, and OPCUG@OPL presentations, are posted on our website at <http://opcug.ca/>. All events are via video conference until further notice.

2020 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
Regular Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, December 9 th	7:30 pm via Zoom video conference: https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting To see all scheduled events, visit http://opcug.ca/ .
Q&A Session	Wednesday, December 9 th	Immediately following the Regular Monthly Meeting. (approx. 9 pm) on the same video conference.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, December 9 th	Enjoy a cold brew or other beverage in the comfort of your home during the video conference.

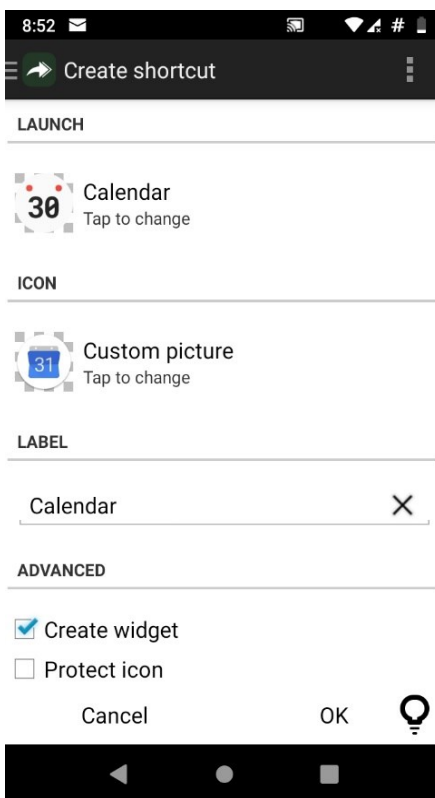
Changing Icons in Android Pie

by Alan German

I recently updated the Android 7.1 (Nougat) custom ROM on my Moto G3 smartphone to Android 9 (Pie). Most of the icons used in Pie look fine, but I really didn't like the default icon for the Calendar app. So, what I needed was an app to let me switch the default icon to a different image, and a new icon.

Awesome Icons, from Simo and Henri Tukiainen of Momocode Ltd, Finland, and obtained from Google's Play Store, provided the required program. Locating a calendar icon that I liked proved a little more challenging. Amir Zaidi's *Icon Pack: Google Icons* contained images used on Google's Pixel phone and, in particular, had an attractive calendar icon. However, this icon pack had to be applied in its entirety to the phone's launcher rather than allowing an individual icon to be extracted. Fortunately, the icon pack is open source so the desired icon could be located and downloaded from GitHub as a digital image.

Launching *Awesome Icons* brings up a *Quick start* window which lists the apps that are available on the phone's home screen, and a number of icons that may be associated with each app. Pressing any one of these icons displays a window (see screenshot) showing the current icon used to launch the app, an option to change to a new icon, and a label to be used as a caption.



Note that the *Launch* section contains the default calendar icon that I wish to change. Initially, the *Icon* section displays the same image; however, clicking on this image brings up options for the source of a replacement image. The choices are *Application icon* (default icon), *Icon pack icon* (downloaded icon pack), *Picture* (digital image), and *Camera* (a photograph taken with the phone's camera).

In the present case, I select *Picture* since I have downloaded the icon I wish to use as a digital image file (calendar.png). An edit screen allows me to crop the image. Interestingly, this includes the ability to expand the borders for the area to be cropped so as to encompass the entire image selected for use.

The label, *Calendar*, is left as the default as this is the app that is being processed. *Create widget* produces different sized icons depending on

whether the box is checked or not (but I am going to use a different form of this process), and *Protect icon*, when checked, forces the change in the icon if Android doesn't want to play nicely.

With *Create widget* checked, the resulting icon is a little large while, with the box unchecked, the icon is a reasonable size but has an *Awesome Icons* logo (a right-arrow) overlaid as a shortcut symbol. I didn't find either of these options satisfactory, so I opted to use a different strategy.

Pressing any blank area of the phone's screen brings up a menu that includes a *Widgets* option. Selecting this option produces a list of available widgets. In the *Awesome Icons* section, I select *Shortcut 1x1* and drag and drop this onto the screen. The resulting window is equivalent to that shown in the screenshot. I need to select the icon to launch (Calendar), my replacement icon (calendar.png), and leave the label as Calendar. With this technique, the only remaining choice is OK to continue.

This now creates the smaller version of the desired icon, complete with the Calendar caption, and with no shortcut symbol. The resulting icon is a similar size and is in essentially the same format as the other icons on the Android Pie desktop.

Awesome Icons is not particularly intuitive, but it is very adaptable, and it works!

Bottom Line

Awesome Icons (Freeware) Momocode Ltd
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.momocode.shortcuts>



FancyZones *(Continued from page 1)*

Click the spinner near the top to select the number of zones. At the bottom, there is an option to have space around zones. In the middle are a number of zone layout templates. There is one *Windows layout* template with overlapping zones called *Focus*. All others are *Table layouts* that have non-overlapping, tiled zones. Select one of the templates, and click the *Apply* button. Back in Windows, hold down the shift key while dragging the title bar of a program window. As it moves over a pre-defined zone, the zone will show in blue. Release the mouse button and the program will fill the zone.

You can even drop program windows into multiple zones. Hold the shift key and move the mouse pointer near the common edge of two adjacent zones. Both zones will turn blue and releasing the mouse at that point will drop the window into both zones. You can also hold Shift+Ctrl keys to select multiple zones as you drag.

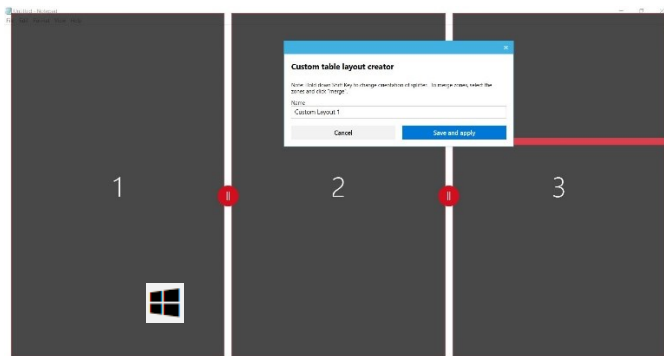
Zone editing

You are not locked into the provided templates. You can define layouts with your preferences for the number of zones, their positions, and whether the zones overlap or not.

Table layout mode editing

If you want zones that are tiled, create a custom *table layout*. Press **Win** + ~ and select an existing table (non-overlapping) layout template. Click *Edit selected layout*.

In the editor, as you move your mouse around, a line will appear. Hold down the shift key to toggle between horizontal and vertical lines. Click the mouse to split the zone at that point. To merge zones, click within one zone and drag to select an adjoining zone. When you release the mouse button, click the *Merge zones* popup that appears. To change the sizes of zones, drag the gutter handles that appear in circles along the borders of zones. When done, enter a name for your custom layout and click *Save and apply*.



Windows layout mode editing

If you want zones that can overlap, create a custom *windows layout*. Press **Win** + ~. Select the *Focus* layout template and click *Edit selected layout*. In the editor, select any zone, drag it to a new position, and use the corner handles to resize the zone. To add a new zone, click the *ADD NEW ZONE* button. Delete zones by clicking the *X* in the top-right corner of the zone. Once done, give your layout a name and click *Save and apply*.

To customize settings for FancyZones, click the PowerToys icon in the system tray followed by *FancyZones* in the left panel. There are many settings and most are pretty self-explanatory. There are a few that I found particularly worth considering;

- By default, when dragging windows, zones are ignored and you can drop them anywhere. Only when you hold the shift key down while dragging will placement in zones be forced. By turning off *Hold Shift key to activate zones while dragging*, you reverse the behaviour – a normal drag will force the window to a zone, shift-drag will allow you to drop a window anywhere.
- If you are in the habit of changing screen resolution, *Keep windows in their zones when the screen resolution changes* will keep things orderly when you do so.
- *During zone layout changes, windows assigned to a zone will match new size/positions* makes it easier when changing sizes or positions of zones. Existing windows will resize to the new layout automatically.
- *Move newly created windows to their last known zone* ensures when you launch a program, it starts in the last zone it was in.
- At the bottom, you can exclude programs from snapping to zones. A part name can be used to match multiple programs such as *note* matching *Notepad.exe* and *Notepad++.exe*.





Lawrence's Thoughts

Wi-Fi Part 3: Securing your network!

By Lawrence Patterson
lawrence@opcug.ca

Unlike your residence where you can lock the door (and if you're like me, paranoia sets in and you double check before you go to bed), your wireless network isn't as easy to check because it's invisible and therefore harder to observe. That said, easy and free tools are available for you to use to make that check. Especially if things seem odd (Spidey sense isn't just for the comics) you'll want to use the following check list to make sure (and put that electronic paranoia to bed).

1. Get to know your router / Wi-Fi device(s). This one requires no tools, just your awareness of what you have running on your network. However you record your stuff, setup an old fashioned list of what you have in your residence.
2. Change the default passwords. Everything that allows you to set a password (don't care if it's for a lightbulb, old tablet you have lying around, or the **ROUTER(s)**), make sure you have the passwords on each updated and documented (@password phrasing works, use the same theme / change the last word for each).
3. Update the Router's Firmware. Every 6 months, double check if there's been a firmware update made available for your device and get it done.
4. Routers – with no recent Firmware update they don't get better with age. I know many of you won't replace it because it still works. That said, if your deadbolt stops protecting your family, you have to replace it. Same thing for routers. If the latest firmware is more than 2 years old, seriously plan on replacing it sooner than later.
5. Don't assume you know what's connected. In my Wi-Fi Parts 1 & 2, key points are to know what is connected to your network on a regular basis. Next step, document, document, document (screen snapshots are wonderful things) and don't pretend you know, because you can't know what radio signals are being broadcasted or received. Ignorance is not bliss.
6. Keep your network naming a mystery. Using the default router Wireless name or using "BlueJays-Forever" just cries out that you want to be found (especially if your residence has a couple of Blue Jay memorabilia lying around for all to see). The only people that should be able to know that "Xingray" is your network is you, your family and your closest colleagues.
7. Set Wi-Fi encryption strength to WPA2 AES. Encryption is your friend, the more stringent the better. Avoid devices that insist on less.
8. Is Remote Management on? Going back to item 1, know if Remote Management is on or not. Better to be off, unless you have a specific reason. How about your provider access? Sure, turn it on when needed, otherwise keep it off, as others are looking for you if you do leave it on.
9. Do all Router services need to be on? WPS (Wi-Fi Protected Setup), UPnP (Universal Plug & Play), Game Mode and whatever other "features" are available; understand what they are and whether you require them or not.
10. Be aware and reach out when you have questions. Remember to use your community to reach out and ask questions. <https://opcug.ca> is one of a number of resources to use whenever there's a question to be had.

As a final comment, there is plenty of advice out there: "change router password frequently", "hide the network name / SSID", "turn off anything that's a potential security threat", "turn off the router when away", etc.. These are not bad advice, though in some cases they assume you're a target. Maybe you are, most likely you're not. My paranoia of checking the door lock before bed isn't necessarily bad, though if you miss a night, it's not likely that you'll be robbed that evening.

My point is that all security needs to be measured against the risk of being taken advantage of. Your best bet is to be aware of the wireless appliances / devices and make Wise Trust decisions. They may not be perfect, but humans rarely are.

Take care.

THROUGH THE LENS

A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts. After the click of your camera, you're only half done!

Using your photos at Christmas

by Linda Buske

With the inevitable restrictions over Christmas time due to COVID, it's nice to think about continuing traditions that don't require contact or even Zoom.

Perhaps you can jazz up your usual newsletter or make some special Christmas cards using topical photographs and add some festive clip art. Snowy winter scenes work well or you could take photos of your decorations (and even get some star effects with small apertures if you have lit candles).

For greeting cards, you can purchase packages of blank cards at Michael's, DeSerres, and sometimes Walmart. The boxes include envelopes and self-adhesive strips to easily attach your 4x6 photos. There are also on-line stores such as Shutterfly that provide Christmas card templates. You simply insert your photo and they will print them for you.

There are many companies (Walmart, Costco, Shutterfly) that produce a myriad of personalized gifts such as mugs, jigsaw puzzles, cushions, etc. using your photos. I have often created gifts using the recipient's photos and those are always much appreciated.

Free clip art is everywhere and can easily be accessed through programs such as PowerPoint or just downloaded directly. However, much free clip art comes with a white background which means you have to "cut out" the object you wish to overlay on top of your photo. Depending on your photo editing program, it may be finicky or tedious to remove the background. An easy solution is to download clip art from the FAVPNG site (<https://favpng.com/>). Unlike "jpg" format, a "png" format allows for a transparent background. There is a paid version that allows for infinite downloads or you can opt for the free version which offers two clip art downloads per day. For my purposes, that is sufficient. Have fun!



Lynda regularly gives presentations for the OPCUG at the **Ottawa Public Library** (<https://opcug.ca/opl-presentations/>). This article is also in PDF format on the OPCUG website (<https://opcug.ca/digital-photography/>).

CHRIS TAYLOR'S QUICK TIPS

Quick Tip 11: Microsoft PowerToys

The Microsoft PowerToys for Windows 10 is a free collection of utilities that extend the capabilities of Windows. While FancyZones, a component I reviewed in this newsletter, is my favourite PowerToy, there are many others in the collection. As of October, 2020, version 0.24.0 includes the following.

Color Picker: Click anywhere onscreen to get the colour value in HEX or RGB values.

FancyZones: Define regions for the screen and have windows snap into those places. See my review [on page 1](#) of this newsletter.



File Explorer: Preview handlers for SVG and Markdown files as well as SVG thumbnails.

Image Resizer: Flexible resizing for graphic files. Choose from a wide variety of sizes including user-definable. Choose JPG quality, PNG interlacing, and TIFF compression.

Keyboard Manager: Remap keys. You can even change mapping on a per-app basis.

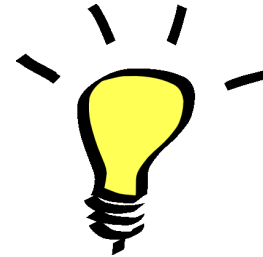
PowerRename: Powerful and flexible tool for bulk renaming a series of files using search & replace or regular expressions.

PowerToys Run: A quick program launcher with built-in search function.

Shortcut Guide: Hold down the  key for a screen overlay showing all functions you get using the  key in combination with other keys.

Video Conference Mute: “Mute” microphone, camera, or both while in a video-conference.

The Windows 10 PowerToys can be downloaded from GitHub at <https://github.com/microsoft/PowerToys/releases/>. Scroll down the page to *Assets* at the bottom of the most recent release. Click the entry for the *PowerToys*.exe* file. Once the download completes, run it and have it launch PowerToys when the installation completes.



Quick Tip 12: Start another program instance

If a program supports having multiple instances open, the fastest way to start another window is to either shift-click or middle-button-click on the taskbar icon of the running program.

And a reminder from [Quick Tip 02](#) ... the fastest way to launch a program in the first place is to pin it to your Taskbar, where it can be launched with a single click.

Nominations for OPCUG Board 2021

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 me or any current or past Board member. Names are listed on the [back page](#) of this newsletter and on the web site at <https://opcug.ca/executives/>.

Nominations can be submitted to **Bob Herres**, Election Chair, by sending an email to nominations@opcug.ca.

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2020.

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

*Bob Herres
Election Chair, 2021*

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.

To receive the monthly newsletter by email, send an email to:

opcug-newsletter+subscribe@googlegroups.com (leave subject and body fields blank)

You do **not** need to create a Gmail or Google Groups account.

To subscribe to other OPCUG Google Groups member services, go to:

<https://opcug.ca/google-groups-how-to/>

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Riverside United Church, 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Parking is free at the church. OTranspo bus #90 stops nearby. Details at <https://opcug.ca/venue/>.

(NOTE: Due to COVID-19 safety guidelines, all our events are via video conference until further notice. Details at <https://opcug.ca/venue/>)

Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. followed by a Q&A Session until 10 p.m.

OPCUG Membership Fees:	\$20 per year
Mailing Address:	3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6
Web address:	https://opcug.ca
Follow us on Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/opcug
Follow us on Twitter:	https://www.twitter.com/opcug

President and System Administrator		
Chris Taylor	chris.taylor@opcug.ca	613-727-5453
Meeting Coordinator		
Lawrence Patterson	meetings@opcug.ca	
Treasurer		
Alan German	alan.german@opcug.ca	
Secretary		
Gail Eagen	gail.eagen@opcug.ca	
Membership Chairman		
Mark Cayer	mark.cayer@opcug.ca	613-823-0354
Newsletter		
Brigitte Lord (editor/layout/e-distribution)	brigitte lord@opcug.ca	
Public Relations		
Lawrence Patterson	PR@opcug.ca	
Facilities		
Bob Walker		613-489-2084
Webmaster		
Brigitte Lord	webmaster3@opcug.ca	
Privacy Director		
Wayne Houston	privacy2@opcug.ca	
Special Events Coordinator		
(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire	jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca	

© OPCUG 2021.

Reprint permission is granted* to non-profit organizations, provided credit is given to the author and *The Ottawa PC News*. OPCUG requests a copy of the newsletter in which reprints appear.

*Permission is granted only for articles written by OPCUG members, and which are not copyrighted by the author. Visit <https://opcug.ca/copyright-and-usage/>.



Q&A HAS GONE ON-LINE!

Because of the pandemic, the OPCUG is holding weekly Q&A sessions in Zoom video-conferences.

Join us every Wednesday at 7:30 pm to discuss computer issues. Questions (and answers) on any computer-related issue are welcome. Or, do you have a favourite computer program or topic that you would like to share with the group? Send your questions, answers, or the details of what you would like to share to: SuggestionBox@opcug.ca.

Everyone is welcome to attend Q&A sessions and to ask questions about their specific computer-related problems. Join us at: <https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting> (if you use the Zoom client, the meeting ID is **924 9556 0898** and the password is **opcug**).

