

OTTAWA

Happy New Year!

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Removing Duplicates in LibreOffice Calc by Alan German

Occasionally, notably when combining multiple list of contacts for my computer and smartphone, I find it useful to be able to remove duplicate listings. Excel has a control button (Data – Remove Duplicates) that will achieve this aim in a couple of clicks. In contrast, by default, LibreOffice Calc has no similar facility and the removal of duplicate listings is quite a complex process of filtering and copying data. However, a Remove Duplicates extension for Calc provides the same functionality as that found in Excel.

To install the extension, go to Tools – Extension Manager and select the link labelled *Get more extensions on line...* In the search box enter *Remove Duplicates*. At the time of writing, two extensions are displayed. Select the extension named "Remove Duplicates" and download Release Version 0.9.2, saving this as the file *removeduplicates.oxt*.

Going back to Calc's Extension Manager, click on the *Add* button, and select the downloaded extension file. Accept

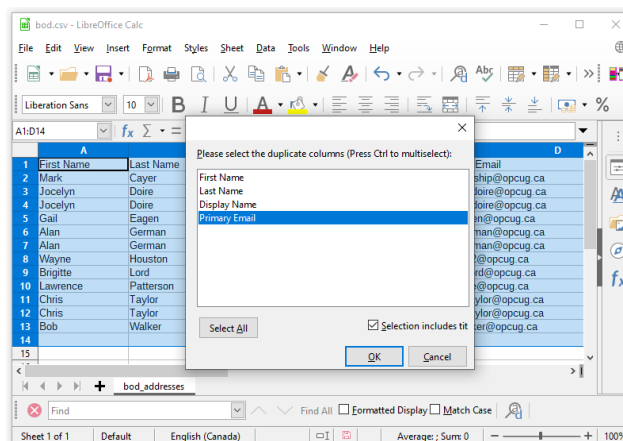


Figure 1. Original dataset

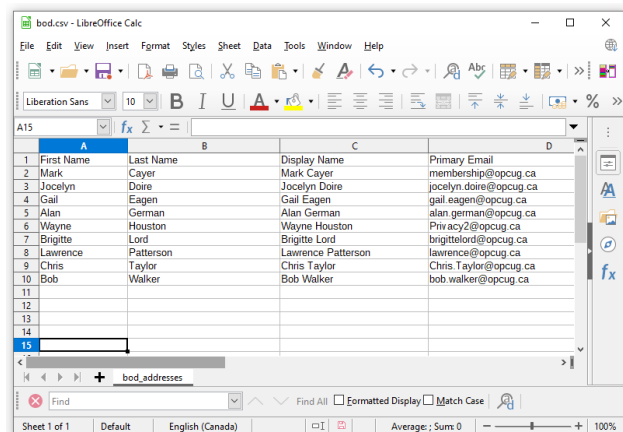


Figure 2. Dataset with duplicates removed

the terms of the GNU General Public Licence to install the extension. Calc will now need to be restarted in order to make use of the extension.

Removing duplicate entries, for example from a list of E-mail addresses (Figure 1), simply requires clicking on the Remove Duplicates icon in the top-right corner of the menu bar. A pop-up dialogue allows selection of the column(s) of data to be used to identify the duplicate listings. Note that, in our example, we have selected the column labelled Primary Email.

The transformation reduces the number of rows in the spreadsheet from 13 to 10 (Figure 2) by eliminating the duplicate entries in Rows 3-4, 6-7 and 11-12 (Figure 1).

The Remove Duplicates icon performs a single task but does so extremely well. The use of

this extension in Calc simplifies enormously the process of eliminating duplicate records in a spreadsheet.

Bottom Line

Remove Duplicates (Open-source)
Krasnaya Ploshchad, ACTom, and awaysoft

<https://extensions.libreoffice.org/en/extensions/show/remove-duplicates>



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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, January 9th, 2021**

Next Meeting

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

Topic: [Creating your own blog and web site using WordPress](#)

Speakers: Alan German and Brigitte Lord, OPCUG

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

Would you like to have your own blog or web site to share information over the Internet with friends and family? If so, 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. In fact the hardest part about the whole process will be selecting a unique name for your blog or site. So, start thinking of the name for your on-line presence. We will show you how to make it a reality!

The Zoom link will be live at 7:20 pm. Join us at <https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting>.

Those using the Zoom client will need to enter the following:

Meeting ID: **924 9556 0898**

Password: **opcug**

Instructions for using Zoom:

<https://opcug.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Zoom-instructionsv2.pdf>

There will be a Q&A session after the regular meeting at approximately 9 pm on the same video conference. Everyone is welcome to attend Q&A sessions and to ask questions about their specific computer-related problems.

Don't forget our weekly Q&A sessions every Wednesday!
Details at <https://opcug.ca/qa/> and on [page 8](#).

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



Coming Up...

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: Sharing photos

Speaker: Lynda Buske, OPCUG

This lecture will show you how to put your pictures up on line so they can be viewed by friends and family. See how to set up a shared site at Shutterfly.com with unlimited, FREE storage and how to customize your site. Learn how to add and organize both photos and albums and how to enable people to make comments.

2021 CALENDAR

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

PRODUCT REVIEW

Creating a Hard Disk Partition *by Alan German*

Many modern hard drives contain more than one disk partition. Everyone is familiar with the main disk partition which Windows displays as Drive C:. However, not everyone realizes that the hard disk typically contains other partitions, e.g. reserved and recovery partitions, some of which Windows may keep hidden. Equally, not everyone is familiar with the techniques to create a new disk partition and what this might be used for.

For most of us, the hard disk in our computer will have a much bigger storage capacity than we really need such that there will be lots of free disk space. Similarly, most of the disk will be taken up with the single Windows partition (Drive C:). It's actually quite easy to split the Windows partition into two, retaining the largest portion for continuing use as Drive C: and creating a second partition that Windows will see as Drive D: (assuming that this drive letter isn't already in use, such as for a CD/DVD drive).

One use for such a second partition is as a dedicated data drive. The operating system (e.g. Windows 10) and all the installed applications (e.g. Microsoft Office) continue to reside on Drive C: while all of the user's personal data (text files, spreadsheets, digital photographs, music files, etc.) are moved onto the new data partition. All future disk activity relating to personal data (creating new files, updating old files) is carried out on Drive D: so that the operating system and applications remain completely separate from the user-developed data. This is readily facilitated by, for example, changing the default storage locations in software such as Microsoft Word and Excel to point to Drive D:

Having all of the user data in a single location provides the opportunity to organize the files and folders in a systematic manner (rather than leaving this task largely to Microsoft with their – in my view – bizarre scheme of Documents, Pictures, etc. pointers to actual disk folders). It also makes it very easy to back up all of the user data through disk imaging and/or file synchronization software.

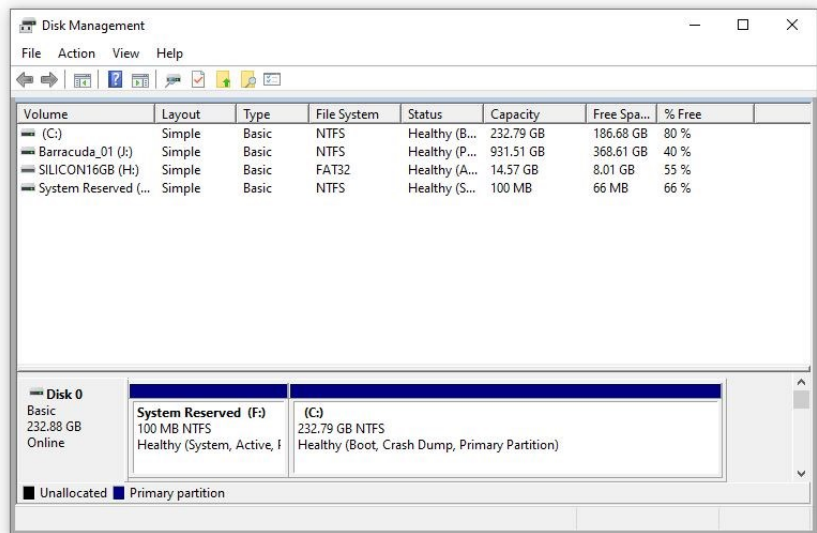


Figure 1. Initial Status of Disk Drives and Partitions

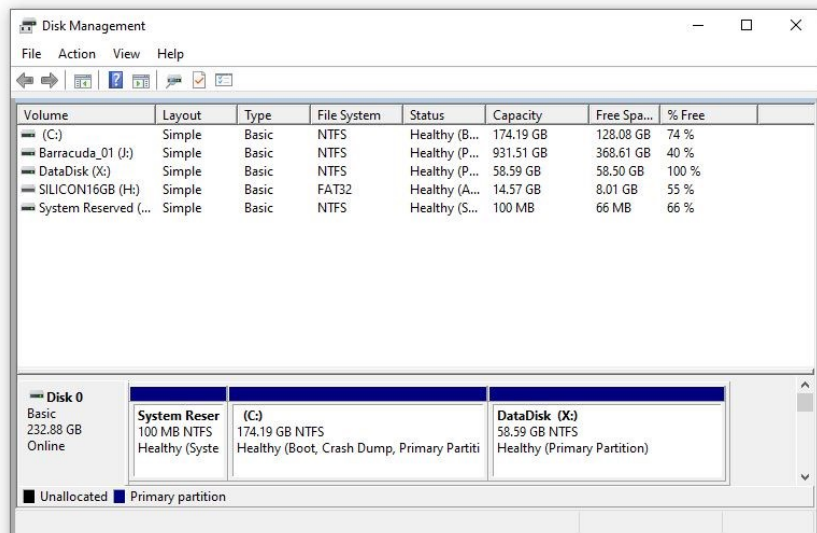


Figure 2. Final Set of Partitions (C: and X:) on Disk 0

So, how do we go about creating a new disk partition? For straightforward situations, Microsoft has a Disk Management tool that is fairly easy to use. To get started, assuming we are logged in to an administrator's account, we right-click on the Start menu button and select Disk Management. A window will open on the desktop and, after a few seconds, the partitions currently present on the computer's hard drive will be listed. For example, Figure 1 shows the initial state of a computer's disks. Note that Disk 0 is the main hard disk installed in the computer. Two existing disk partitions are displayed, Drive F: which is a reserved partition (System Reserved, 100 MB), and Drive C: which is used by Windows itself (232 GB). The display also tells us that Drive C: has 186 GB (80%) free space so, as indicated earlier, there is a lot of disk space available in which we can create a new partition.

(Continued on next page)

Disk Partition *(Continued from previous page)*

Note that there are other disks associated with this particular computer. It has a second, 1 TB, hard drive (Barracuda_01) installed as Drive J: and a 16 GB flash drive (SILICON16GB) presenting as Drive H: For our present purposes, we will confine our discussion to the partitions on Disk 0.

To create a new disk partition, we need to undertake several steps. First we shrink Drive C: to create a segment of unallocated space from some of the available free space. Then, we make this unallocated space into a *Simple Volume* (Microsoft speak for a regular disk partition). Finally, we assign a drive letter and format the new drive.

All of these tasks are performed in the Disk Management utility. Firstly, we right-click inside the box that is labelled (C:) 232.79 GB NTFS. In the context menu that is now displayed, we select *Shrink Volume*. A subsequent dialogue box allows us to *Enter the amount of space to shrink in MB*. Rather than using the increase/decrease arrows, we can simply type 60000 into the box, indicating that we intend to create a 60 GB (approx.) partition. Pressing the *Shrink* button results in a new box being displayed after Drive C: this being labelled *58.59 GB Unallocated*. (Clearly, the size of the new partition can be set to use any other amount of the available free space. The trick is to find a reasonable balance between the two drives depending on the user's needs. However, nothing prevents the partitions being readjusted at a later time.)

We now right-click on this unallocated space and select *New Simple Volume* from the pop-up menu. This activates the *New Simple Volume Wizard* and a dialogue box allows us to choose an available drive letter, e.g. D: Should Drive D: be already in use, we can choose any of the other listed options, e.g. Drive X: A final dialogue box allows us to *Format the volume with the following settings*. The default parameters for the *File system* (NTFS) and *Allocation size unit* (Default) can be left untouched. In the *Volume label* text box, we can enter DataDisk, as the name Windows will use for our new partition. Finally, we can leave the box marked *Perform a quick format* checked.

The final window (Figure 2) indicates that Disk 0 has been re-partitioned such that

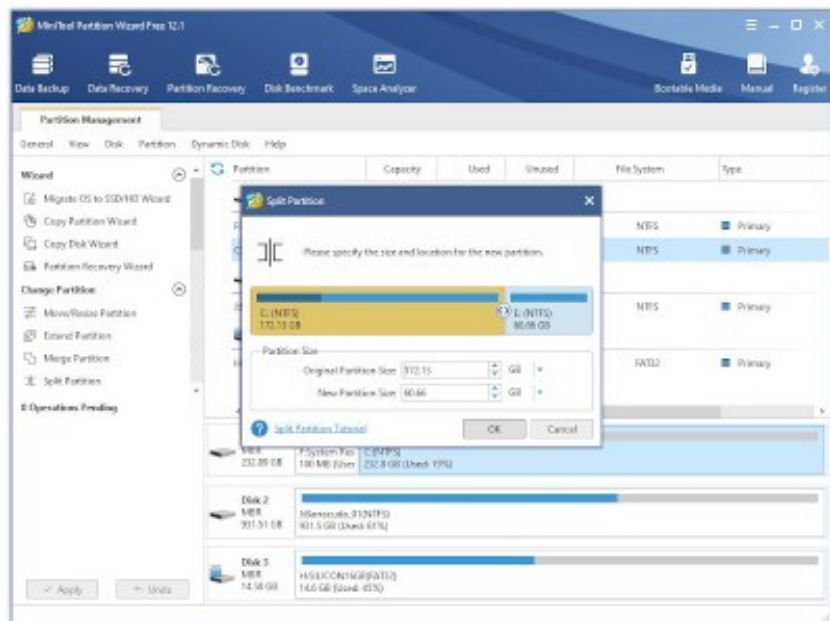


Figure 3. MiniTool Partition Wizard – Split Partition

Drive C: now has a storage capacity of 174.19 GB and our new disk partition, Drive X: (DataDisk), has been created with a size of 58.59 GB.

For those who would like a somewhat simpler way of doing things, MiniTool Partition Wizard Free Edition is a third-party utility that provides a number of disk management options, including moving, resizing, extending, merging and splitting partitions.

Figure 3 shows the *Split Partition* task being run on our exemplar disk drive. In this case, Partition Wizard provides a dialogue box with a slider to allocate the amounts of disk space to the original partition (Drive C:) and the new partition (Drive E:). Simply moving the boundary to the left or right establishes the size of our new partition.

Partition Wizard creates a list of operations pending and displays how the disk partitions will appear as a result of the selected operations. The *Apply* button must be pressed in order to activate the tasks and modify the disk structure. Alternatively, the *Undo* button can be used to remove unwanted tasks.

Either of the disk management tools described can be used to create a new disk partition, assuming that the disk has sufficient free space available, and the process will normally proceed flawlessly. However, modifying the disk structure can potentially have an adverse impact on the files and folders stored on the disk so, as with any major changes to the system, it is wise to make a full disk image backup before proceeding to partition a disk.

Bottom Line

MiniTool Partition Wizard Free Edition (Freeware)
Version 12.1

MiniTool Software Ltd.

<https://www.partitionwizard.com/free-partition-manager.html>





Lawrence's Thoughts

2020

By Lawrence Patterson
lawrence@opcug.ca

Here's to 2021, and the hope that 2020's lessons leave us with a brighter future. With that said, here's my take on the critical moments that 2020 brought us as it pertains to society, events, and people along with my personal interpretation of how we'll use technology going forward towards a peaceful and healthy new year.

Working remotely, the change that finally happened.

Here's an example of Covid-19 leaving a positive legacy in that the nay-sayers of past (some are still hanging on, airlines anyone) have to admit that employees can successfully work from home where it's practical. In the post Covid-19 world, the key will be flexible work arrangements that are beneficial to employee and employer.

The Internet at home didn't come crashing down.

To our carriers who claimed that bandwidth caps were the only way to keep our internet connection functional, yet when they were removed due to Covid-19, we were still able to Zoom. Yes, we all have to play nice and not hog our neighbourhood's bandwidth, and the carriers need to do their bit too (it'd be nice if they actively fixed outside telecom boxes within weeks of being damaged).

Cities, transit - ride sharing.

Fortunately, rush hour traffic isn't what it was pre-Covid-19 and I'm hoping with remote working expanding possibilities, along with more reliable high-speed home-based internet, that the commuting ritual isn't an everyday affair. And the realization for families, along with non-rush hour users, that Ride Sharing is becoming more affordable / convenient than transit's status quo.

Zoom made Video Conferencing cool and, more importantly, normal.

Before March, how many people refused to be on camera as they felt it uncomfortable, but being face to face was ok? Society has allowed us to be welcoming of our home backgrounds (none are perfect, some are an interesting commentary) and though many of us have been forced into being camera pros, I'm betting we'll be better off for it.

Zoom, security.

Zoom's security fumbles, which it gracefully took in the chin then picked itself up to fix, made us realize how social media's negative reactions can result in positive change. That said, there were as many over reactions (school boards not taking ownership of proper security and blaming the platform) though it's worked out in the end.

Will Microsoft Teams make Zoom just a memory?

Do you remember Quattro, Multiplan or Lotus 123 (never mind the many database examples)? I predict that Zoom will be another Microsoft footnote in history as Microsoft has made Teams its future. Teams' capabilities are improving and as it is bundled in Microsoft's 365 offering, it won't be long before Zoom loses its appeal.

Social Media, George Floyd and BLM.

Regardless of your politics, social media (and the ability to quickly post videos / pictures and make them available to a worldwide audience) is helping us become more responsive to bad behaviour and take people to task for making bad decisions.

Oil prices going negative (even if it was only a one-day affair).

What does the lower price of oil have to do with technology? Everything. Even with Doug Ford removing investments in electric vehicles (can returning the rebates be too far behind) society is slowly turning away from being almost totally dependent on oil products to using technological advancements towards a cleaner society.

Scams.

So, whether it's romance, Covid, CERB, or credit card scams (aren't those early morning robo calls just wonderful), you need to be careful of what you read or respond to, and continue to use Wise Trust actions to guide you in not becoming a victim.

Rumours and herd mentality.

Do you remember the toilet paper shortage of 1973? If a Wisconsin congressperson and Johnny Carson's jokes caused empty shopping shelves in 1973, well this past year's reaction doesn't seem too far fetched. Lesson learned: don't accept everything you read as fact and be prepared in case everyone else does.

There you have it, my take on 2020; I'm sure opinions will differ. 2020 resulted in many of our loved ones taking leave early, so let's raise a glass and wish us all a safe 2021!

Take care.

THROUGH THE LENS

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

Focus Stacking

by Lynda Buske

The depth-of-field you get with a photo—the amount of your image that appears in acceptable focus—is controlled by three factors: lens aperture, lens focal length, and distance to the point of focus. To maximize depth-of-field, use a small aperture, a short focal length, and a long distance to the point of focus.

While you can influence your depth-of-field with these three factors, you can't always get the depth-of-field you want. This could be because of artistic concerns such as framing and relative size of near/far objects, or physical considerations such as reaching the limit of the aperture or focal length of your lens. Another possibility is you are in a low light situation and cannot use a small aperture to create a long depth of field.

You can circumvent the limitations and increase the amount of your image in acceptable focus through a technique known as focus stacking. You take multiple images focused at different distances and then combine them using software so that the sharpest parts of each image are used to create a composite with an extended depth-of-field.

Considerations/issues

Focus breathing: with many lenses, the focal length changes as you change the focus distance. The candles in the “Close focus” image below appear larger than in the “Far focus” image. Objects that change size are a challenge to focus stacking software.

Movement in frame: You can't successfully merge images if objects in the image move between frames.

Exposure: use manual exposure to ensure the exposure doesn't change between shots. This makes it easier for the focus stacking software to blend images.

Tripod: while possible without using a tripod, focus stacking software works best if the camera doesn't move.

Amount of change in focus between shots: It can be an exercise in trial and error figuring out just how much change in focus distance you should have between shots. Some cameras, such as the Nikon D850 and Nikon Z-series cameras can help. They have a focus stacking mode that can automate the process of taking multiple images while changing the focus between frames.

Software: Some focus stacking software is simply better than others.

While it can be challenging, a successful focus stack can give you an image with an overall sharpness you simply can't get through any other means.

Some focus stacking software

→Free

CombineZP - <http://combinezp.software.informer.com/>

ICOLAY - <http://www.picolay.de/>

→Paid

Helicon Focus - <https://www.heliconsoft.com/heliconsoft-products/helicon-focus/> (US\$30/year, US\$115/lifetime. Up to four computers for non-concurrent use.)

Zerene Stacker - <https://zerenesystems.com/cms/stacker> (US\$89. Up to three computers for non-concurrent use.)

→Full photo editors with focus stacking capabilities

Adobe Photoshop - <https://www.adobe.com/ca/products/photoshop.html> (US\$10/month for Photoshop/Lightroom bundle. Up to two computers for non-concurrent use.)

ON1 Photo RAW 2021 - <https://www.on1.com/products/photo-raw/> (CA\$138. Concurrent use on up to 5 Windows or MacOS computers)

Affinity Photo - <https://affinity.serif.com/en-gb/photo/> (CA\$70. Concurrent use on all computers you own. Separate licenses required for Windows and MacOS)

I want to pass on a special thanks to Chris Taylor for his significant contributions to this column.



Close focus



Far focus



Focus stack of 40 separate images

CHRIS TAYLOR'S QUICK TIPS

Quick Tip 13: Battery saving in Windows 10

It's not always easy or convenient to charge up your battery when you are using your computer. Fortunately, Windows provides quite a few ways to extend battery life.

In *Settings* | *System* | *Battery*

- *See which apps are affecting your battery life* – avoid running battery-hungry apps.
- *Battery saver* - choose a level when Windows will limit background activity.
- *Lower screen brightness while in battery saver.*
- *Battery saver status until next charge* – immediate switch to battery saver.

In *Settings* | *System* | *Power & sleep*

- Select timing values for turning off the display and going to sleep.
- If you have the option *When my PC is asleep and on battery power, disconnect from the network* - set to *Always* or *Managed by Windows*.
- *Additional power settings* | *Choose what closing the lid does* - set to *Sleep*.

In *Settings* | *System* | *Display* – lower *Change brightness for the built-in display*

In *Settings* | *Personalization* | *Background* – choose *Solid colour* and choose a dark colour.

In *Settings* | *Apps* | *Video playback* | *Battery options* | *When watching films and videos on battery power* – choose *Optimise for battery life*.

Click the battery icon in the system notification area of the taskbar. If you have the option *Power mode (on battery)*, move the slider to *Best battery life*.

When you don't need Bluetooth or other wireless communications, press Windows-A to open the Action Centre and click the *Flight mode* icon.

Sometimes, restarting your computer will help battery life.

Quick Tip 14: Weather app

The Weather app in Windows 10 provides an amazing amount of weather information for most populated places on earth with data from Foreca, Weather Trends, and Environment Canada.

The main screen has current conditions; temperature, wind speed/direction, visibility, barometric pressure, humidity, and the dew point.

Following is a daily overview for the next 10 days. Click any day to get details for that day; hourly forecast, sunrise/sunset/moonrise/moonset times, moon phase, probability of precipitation, humidity, UV index, maximum wind and historical records & averages for precipitation and temperature.

On the left bar, *Maps* are available for temperature, radar, precipitation, satellite, and cloud cover over the next 24 hours. *Historical Weather* provides yearly charts for temperature, rainfall, and snowfall. The gear icon lets you set defaults. *Send Feedback* allowed me to suggest the addition of a date picker for historical information. That could help in planning upcoming events and vacations.

Pin the Weather app to the Start menu as a live tile to show conditions at a glance. Try different icon sizes to see different levels of detail.

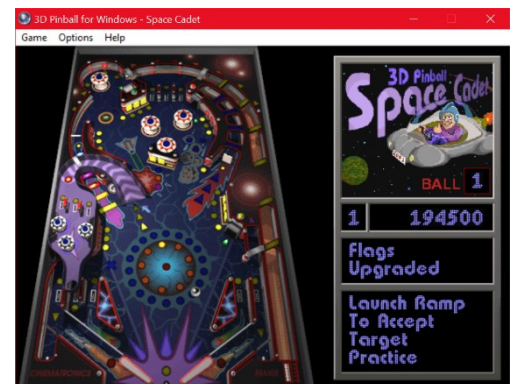
Quick Tip 15: Space Cadet Pinball in Windows 10

3D Pinball for Windows – Space Cadet (a name only Microsoft could come up with) is a pretty decent pinball game that came with Microsoft Plus for Windows 95, Windows NT, ME, 2000, and XP. If you still have a Windows XP CD around, you can play it under Windows 10.

Assuming a CD drive of E: and a profile folder of C:\Users\JoeUser (adjust as required), open a CMD prompt and run the following commands;

```
md "C:\Users\JoeUser\Pinball"
e:
cd \I386
expand -r pinball*.* "C:\Users\JoeUser\Pinball"
expand -r sound*.wa_ "C:\Users\JoeUser\Pinball"
expand -r font.da_ "C:\Users\JoeUser\Pinball"
expand -r table.bm_ "C:\Users\JoeUser\Pinball"
copy wavemix.inf "C:\Users\JoeUser\Pinball"
```

You should end up with 70 files in the Pinball folder. Run the program Pinball.exe for a blast from the past.



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
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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**).

