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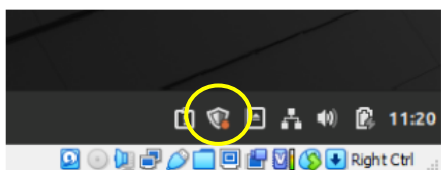
ARTICLE

Exploring Linux – Part 31: Three Ways to Try Linux – Software Updates/Installation

by Alan German

In recent articles in this series we have created a virtual machine (VM) running Linux Mint 21 on a Windows 10 host computer using VirtualBox. The virtual machine includes a virtual hard drive so we now have the capability to install additional applications and store data files. However, before we get into these details, we should use the ability to store new and updated files on the VM's hard disk to bring the Linux operating system up to date.

In the lower-right corner of the Linux panel there is a shield icon that is displaying an orange dot. This is indicating that software updates are available for the OS and the installed applications. Clicking on this icon launches the *Update Manager* (that is equivalent to Windows Update). We will ignore the suggestion to set up system snapshots and simply press the *OK* button. We can also forego the option to switch to local mirror by clicking on the *No* button.



Now, our first task is to install a new version of the Update Manager itself by selecting *Apply the Update*. We are now required to confirm (authenticate) the requested action and must enter the password that we chose when installing Linux. Entering the password and pressing *Authenticate* causes the system to download and install the new version of Update Manager.

The program now reads the information from the on-line software repositories and displays a list of the updates that are available. In the current instance there are 122 updates (873 MB) available. Note that this is an unusually large number of updates and results from this being the first updating process following the initial installation of the Linux OS.

Note also that Update Manager is far more flexible than its Windows' cousin. Each update indicates its *Type* using small icons (e.g. grey shield = security update, up-arrow = application update). The name of the item being updated, its description, and the new version number are also listed. In addition, each update has a checkbox (checked by default) that determines if the update is to occur.

Linux provides the user with total control of the update process. Update Manager is only initialized if the user activates the program and any individual update can be avoided by simply unchecking the upgrade box. All that being said, it is usually desirable to run Update Manager when updates are available, and accept all the updates offered. Normally, there are very few updates available and the process is quite rapid. Also, rebooting the machine is not usually required.

So, let's press *Install Updates*, press *OK* (in this instance) to accept additional changes to the OS that the current updates trigger, enter our password, press *Authenticate*, and sit back while the update process continues

automatically. The updates (package files) are downloaded with a progress bar and a timer indicating that processing is underway. This is followed by a second window and progress bar as the downloaded packages are installed.

Finally, the updating process finishes and, in this case, a reboot of the VM is required. Click on the Linux menu button in the lower-left corner of the panel, select *Quit* (the red power icon), and *Restart*. Mint reboots and, this time, when Update Manager's icon is displayed in the panel there is no orange dot which shows that the system is now up to date.

Another feature of Linux that is quite different to Windows is that many applications that are not initially installed with the distro are available from the software repositories. So, effectively,

(Continued on page 7)

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PIZZA PARTY, WEDNESDAY, June 14th, 2023

Next Meeting

Annual Pizza Night

Wednesday, June 14, 6 PM

Location: Britannia Park
(see next page for details)

***This will be our last meeting until September.
Have a nice summer, everyone!***

Coming Up...

September 13

Directory Opus: the Ultimate Windows Explorer Replacement
Speaker: Serge-Érik Thériault (OPCUG)

October 11

Self-driving cars (*details to follow*)
Speaker: Bob Walker (OPCUG)

November 8

Celestial Shadows – Eclipses of the Sun and Moon
Speaker: Howard Simkover

Q&A Poster Launch!

Do you enjoy our weekly Q&A sessions? Do you think your friends and colleagues would too? Then we have a new way for you to invite them. Our sexy new poster is sure to catch their eye with our club's Process Blue (see banner top of next page) displayed in a myriad of beautiful shades. You can download the poster to share it electronically with friends and family, or print and post it at work, community centres, or any public bulletin board. Help our club in its mission of **Users Helping Users!**

Brigitte will have B&W printed copies at the Pizza Party on June 14th. Be sure to grab one!

Click on the image at right to print or download the PDF version (964 KB). The poster is letter size (8.5 x 11) and is also available on our [Home page](#).

The banner was designed by [Fiverr.com](#). Thanks to Alan German for making this happen.

OPCUG
Users helping users
for over 40 years

DO YOU HAVE A COMPUTER PROBLEM?
Our members may have the answer!

Q&A
Give us a heads-up on your issue.
Send your question to:
SuggestionBox@opcug.ca

For more than forty years, members of the **Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG)** have been helping computer users with issues related to their PCs. Our members can answer questions about computer hardware, operating systems, software applications-in fact, just about anything that is computer-related.

Each week* we hold an on-line question-and-answer session through a Zoom video conference. You don't have to be a member of OPCUG to participate. Everyone is welcome to attend our Q&A sessions.

Then, join us at one of our **Q&A sessions**
from 7:30 to 8:30 pm
on **Wednesday** evenings
and see if we have the answer!

Full details of our Q&A sessions are posted at:
<https://opcug.ca/qa>

* Note that the second Wednesday of each month is our club's monthly meeting where we have an invited speaker but no Q&A session. However, you are welcome to attend these meetings too!

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

2023 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
Regular Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, June 14 th	7:30 pm via Zoom video conference: https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting To see all scheduled events, visit https://opcug.ca/#upcoming
Next Q&A Session	Wednesday, May 24th	Until further notice, Q&A sessions are no longer held after regular monthly meetings. Join us on all other Wednesdays for weekly Q&A .
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, June 14 th	Enjoy a cold brew or other beverage in the comfort of your home during the video conference.

ANNUAL PIZZA NIGHT

Pizza Time! Wednesday, June 14, 6 PM

Once again we are fast approaching the end of our OPCUG season, and once again we'll celebrate it with pizza, drinks and desserts. These are free for OPCUG members and their guests. This year we'll even have door prizes for our members.

The event will be, as always, on the second Wednesday of June, that is June 14, 2023, starting at 6 PM. It will be at the **Britannia Park Trolley/Picnic Station** (see images below), under a sheltered area in case the weather does not cooperate, with free parking and bathroom access. For those who like to beer or wine with their pizza, **alcohol is not permitted** in the park. Pop and water will be provided.

To help with planning, we're asking you to **register by email** to pizzaparty@opcug.ca. Tell us if you are bringing guests and how many, if you require special pizza accommodations (e.g. gluten-free, vegetarian), and if you need a ride or can offer a ride.

We look forward to seeing you all in great numbers!

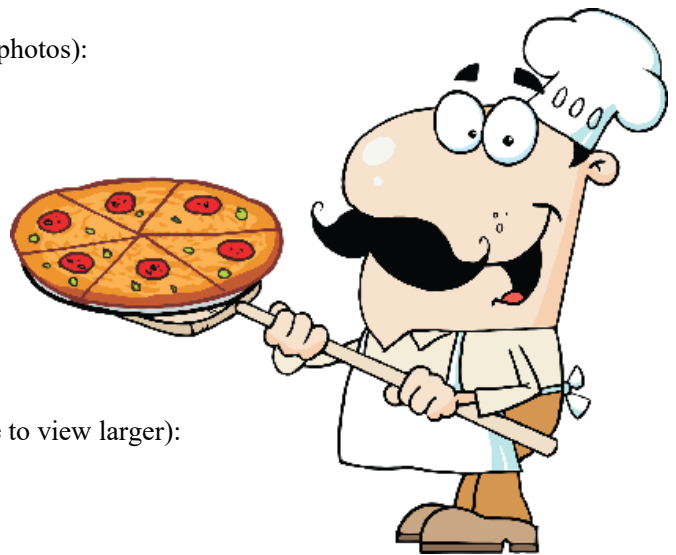
Britannia Park Trolley/Picnic Station (click image for more photos):



Sky view of Trolley/Picnic Station and parking (click image to view larger):



Map to Britannia Park (click image to go to Google Maps):



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022/2023

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2022/2023 was held on February 8, 2022 at the beginning of the February Monthly Meeting. Minutes were taken by the Secretary, Gail Eagen, based on the recording since she was absent. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

1. Election Results

Chris Taylor, President, announced that there were nine nominations received by the deadline of December 31, 2022 and thus the Board was acclaimed with no Election required. The newly elected Board for 2022/23 was announced as follows:

Jocelyn Doire
Gail Eagen
Alan German
Wayne Houston
Brigitte Lord
Lawrence Patterson
Chris Taylor
Bob Walker
Karen Wallace-Graner

Chris thanked Bob Herres for again taking on the role of Election Chair.

Chris noted that the Board would be looking to appoint someone as Program Chair. Our previous Program Chair, Lawrence Patterson, resigned from the Board and decided not to run again due to personal commitments. Chris asked members interested in joining the Board as Program Chair to talk to any existing Board member.

2. President's Report

Chris said that his **President's Report** was published in the January 2023 Newsletter.

3. Treasurer's Report

Chris stated that the **Treasurer's Report** was published in the February 2023 Newsletter.

Alan provided highlights of the report for the period January 1 to December 31, 2022.

The current Club capital was \$15,945.49.

Income was down due to providing free membership for current members in March 2021 and again in March 2022. The largest Income item was from membership at \$460 after offering 2 years of membership for the price of one. The other Income item was \$98.22 from bank interest. Thus, Income was \$558.22

Expenses were \$2,134.66. Major Expenses included the web site and Zoom software (\$506.23), honorariums to external and non-Board member speakers (\$800.41) and the Pizza Q (\$710.77). The attendance at the Pizza-Q was about half of that in previous years. However, food was purchased based on historical numbers and thus too many pizzas were ordered. The Board decided that, in the future, registration for the Pizza-Q would be required and food would be ordered based on registration numbers.

In summary, Income for 2022 was \$558.22 and Expenses for 2022 were \$2134.66 for a Net Income of **-\$1576.44**.

Alan indicated that the Board's financial plan was to reduce our capital. Thus, this deficit was planned and the OPCUG was in a strong financial position.

Chris thanked Alan for his efforts.

4. Secretary's Report

Chris said the **Secretary's Report** would be published in the March 2023 Newsletter.

5. Questions and Answers

Chris asked if members had any questions or issues to raise.

Tom Trottier thanked the Board and, in particular Alan for the financial report.

There were no other questions. Chris said that questions could be asked in the chat or in the future.

6. Notes of thanks

Chris included a slide in his deck thanking 2022 Board Members, Mark Cayer for his membership work, Richard Aylesworth for performing the financial review, Bob Herres for taking on Election Chair, presenters both from the Club and from outside and Newsletter contributors. He acknowledged the efforts of Alan German and himself in running the weekly Question and Answer Sessions and thanked members who participated and shared. He also thanked the membership for being a part of it all.

7. Meeting Adjournment

Chris adjourned the meeting at 7:42 PM.

Submitted by

*Gail Eagen,
Secretary, OPCUG*

THROUGH THE LENS

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

Pack your bags!

by Lynda Buske

As you already know, one of my interests is travel photography and we are entering the season when many of us travel far (or near) to experience and photograph new locations. A stay at an area B&B or a friend's cottage can provide ample opportunity to enjoy a different life from your normal routine. Perhaps you have time to notice nature's beauty when the pace is slower and your schedule is not so packed. Maybe you also have the chance to view familiar things from a different perspective. Finding beauty that others walked by is a comment I often hear with respect to my photos.

I have written often about travel photography so here are some links to past articles that you may find useful.

Tips for travel photography. Review my five tips for better travel photos.

<https://opcug.ca/Photography/TipsForTravelPhotography.pdf>

Rainy day photos. Don't spend vacation days inside when rainy days offer enticing photographic opportunities.

<https://opcug.ca/Photography/RainyDayPhotos.pdf>

Shooting near water. Canadians have abundant opportunities to visit lakes and seashores so review these tips before heading to the beach!

<https://opcug.ca/Photography/ShootingNearWater.pdf>

Don't miss the road shots! Don't miss photo opportunities from the passenger seat or on a bus.

<https://opcug.ca/Photography/RoadShots.pdf>

What to do with all those travel photos? How to organize your pics once you are home. Please note that the article refers to Shutterfly.com. As of March 2023, setting up a personalized site for sharing on Shutterfly is no longer an option. I would suggest trying a site like Flickr where you can post 1000 free photos and provide links to friends.

<https://opcug.ca/Photography/WhatToDoWithAllThoseTravelPhotos.pdf>

Happy travels!



This article is also in PDF format on the OPCUG website (<https://opcug.ca/digital-photography/>).

ARTICLE

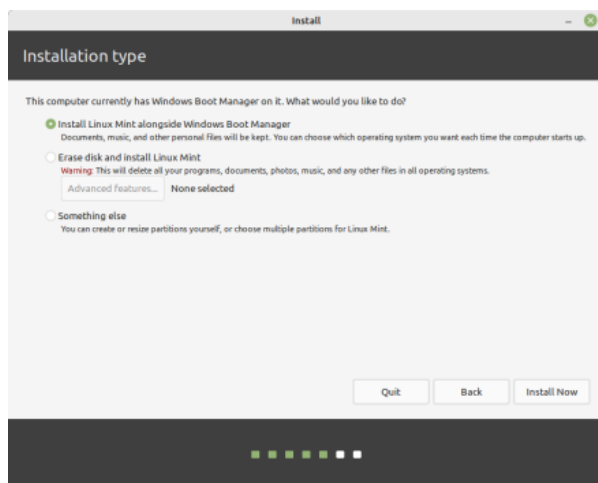
Exploring Linux – Part 32: Three Ways to Try Linux – Dual Booting *by Alan German*

In recent articles in this series we have explored some of the features of Linux using a live-USB, and have taken a more in-depth look by installing Linux on a virtual machine (VM) on a Windows 10 host. Both of these methods allowed us to try Linux without really affecting the operations of our Windows machine. The live-USB didn't change Windows at all, while the VM was created on a program (VirtualBox) installed on the Windows computer just like any other application. This time, we are going to actually install Linux on our computer's hard disk. However, we will use separate partitions for Windows and Linux and be able to dual boot between the two operating systems. So, the only real change for the Windows system will be a little less available disk space.

But, first things first. Before making such a radical change to our working system we should make a full disk image backup. Chris Taylor reviewed a number of free backup programs (<https://opcug.ca/Reviews/BackupPrograms.htm>), any of which will be appropriate for the task. Store the backup image on an external USB drive so that it is completely separate from the system disk. Then, should anything go wrong with the installation of Linux or, should you decide that dual-booting isn't for you after all, the disk image can be restored and your entire system very quickly and easily restored to the point in time when the image was made.

We already have the necessary tools and experience to install Linux on the hard drive, and just need to adopt a small modification to the previous installation process. We will use the bootable USB drive that we used to try out Linux in live-USB mode. However, this time, when the Linux desktop loads, we will double-click on the Install Linux Mint icon in order to start the process of installing Linux to the hard disk.

The installation process continues exactly as it did when we installed Linux on the virtual machine that we had created with VirtualBox. However, when we reach the point where we need to select the disk drive on which Linux is to be installed, this time we don't want to use the entire system disk. Rather, we want to accept the default option of Install Linux Mint alongside Windows Boot Manager. This selection will have the installer take some of the free disk space from Windows, create a separate partition, and install the Linux OS and the included apps on this new partition.



For most users, the system disk will be quite large and, even with Windows, all of the installed applications, and the user's data files, there will still be lots of free disk space available. The Linux installer will normally partition the disk completely automatically with no further action being required by the end user. For example, on my laptop, with a 250 GB drive, Windows was using about 150 GB, and the Linux installer carved off about 60 GB of which 11 GB was used by the OS and the apps bundled with the distro.

When the installation is complete, selecting the option to Restart Now causes the computer to reboot and, because we opted to install Linux alongside Windows, we now see the GRUB (Grand Unified Bootloader) boot menu that allows us to select the operating system that we wish to use.



By default, the entry for Linux Mint 21 Cinnamon will be selected and the GRUB menu will be displayed for 10 seconds before Mint is automatically booted. Scrolling down the menu to the Windows Boot Manager stops the countdown, and pressing Enter results in the machine booting into Windows 10. Note also that, if we do wish to boot into Mint, we can simply press Enter, which overrides the countdown process and boots into Linux immediately.

The final step in the installation process is to run Update Manager, just as we did previously for the virtual Linux machine, and bring Mint completely up to date.

Now, we have the best of both worlds. We have a fully-functional Linux installation running directly on the system's hardware, and have also retained the option to boot into our Windows system should we so wish.

Note that installing Linux is only one of the required steps to making full use of this operating system. Not everything is directly transferable from the Windows' world and, while most Windows applications have Linux equivalents, or can be run using specialized software, some programs that are very specific to Windows may not run on Linux.

(Continued on next page)

Linux - Part 31 *(Continued from page 1)*

we have a single resource from which we can download and install new software. And, because the source is controlled by Linux developers, we can be reasonably assured that the software packages available are safe to use.

If you paid close attention to the set of slides that were displayed while Linux was being installed on the virtual machine, you may have noticed that you were invited to “enjoy a high-definition movie or a video with VLC”. But, if you navigate to *Menu – Sound & Video*, you will find that, despite VLC being previously noted as “featured software”, this app was not actually installed as part of the distro. However, we can easily remedy this by installing the software from Mint’s on-line repositories.

Open the main menu and click on the second icon from the top of the left side bar (Software Manager). In the window that opens there are a number of suggested programs that can be installed as well as a series of buttons for different categories of software from which we might wish to select. However, since we know precisely the program that we wish to install, we can simply type VLC into the search box. Note that we don’t even have to press Enter as the search starts immediately and lists a number of packages related to VLC. The first listing is labeled *VLC – Multimedia player and streamer* so we can select this entry which will display a window with more information about the software package. Clicking on the green *Install* button, and entering our Linux password to authenticate the request, starts the installation process. Once the installation is complete, a green *Launch* button and a red *Remove* button are displayed. Note that the latter button is the easiest way to uninstall VLC and this will be available should we reload the VLC window in Software Manager.

We don’t need to use the *Launch* button as an entry in the *Sound & Video* menu has automatically been created for *VLC media player*. Note that we can also right-click on this menu entry and display options to *Add to panel* or *Add to desktop* which will create an icon for VLC in the selected location. There is also an option to uninstall VLC from this context menu.

The above-noted installation process is similar for most of the software packages that we might wish to have available in Linux Mint. Software Manager provides a simple way to access and install available programs. One of the benefits of using Mint as a virtual machine is that we have available (virtual) disk space and can use this to install such software.

Bottom Line



VirtualBox (Freeware)
Oracle Corporation
Version 7.0
<https://www.virtualbox.org>

Linux - Part 32 *(Continued from previous page)*

So, if you are considering switching, I recommend checking out my series entitled [Preparing to abandon the Windows’ ship](#) which was presented as part of the club’s on-line Q&A sessions, starting in September, 2021. This series discusses the use of Linux packages as alternatives to Windows software, how to run some Windows programs in Linux using Wine, and how to adopt the last-resort option of running Windows software on a virtual machine or in dual-boot mode. The series of presentations shows how to adopt Linux as a (more-or-less) full-time operating system.

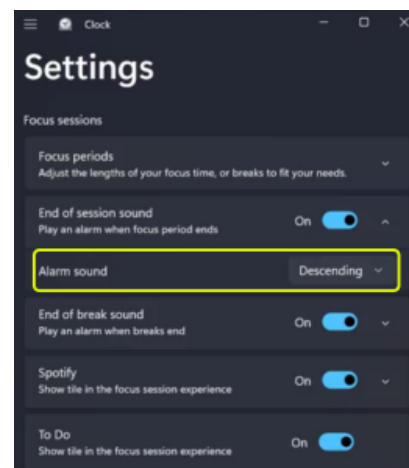


This completes the current series of ways to try out Linux without compromising a Windows installation. I hope that it has given anyone who is considering switching away from Windows 10 in 2025 (or before!) all the tools required to try using Linux well ahead of the end-of-life deadline.



Quick Tip 54: Customizing sound in Focus sessions by Chris Taylor

In Windows 11, you can customize the alarm sound that plays at the end of a Focus session. Go to the **Settings** page in the Clock app to choose.



You can’t choose the sound when Focus sessions end in Windows 10. Is it enough to get me to upgrade to Windows 11? Nope.

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. OCTranspo bus #90 stops nearby. Details at <https://opcug.ca/venue/>.

(NOTE: Until further notice, all our events are via video conference. 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! WEEKLY!

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

Join us every Wednesday (except on regular monthly meeting nights) 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**).

OPCUG



Users helping users
for over 40 years