

OTTAWA

Happy New Year!

PC NEWS

Volume 41, Number 1

January 2024

PRODUCT REVIEW

Slidewise

by Chris Taylor

I use Microsoft PowerPoint. A lot. I prepare presentations for OPCUG's main meetings and Q&A, the Ottawa Public Library, the Orleans Photo Club, the National Capital Freenet, and more. I use PowerPoint most days.

I like the extensive capabilities and flexibility of PowerPoint. But that can be a double-edged sword. It is easy to end up with a mess, especially if multiple, inexperienced people are editing presentation files. You can easily end up with slide formatting deviating from the slide master, multiple conflicting slide masters, random colour and font selections, and more. All can lead to a drastically inconsistent look and feel to your slides. You can also have PowerPoint files bloated with oversized graphics and unnecessary embedded fonts.

Frequently, I have been given PowerPoint files created by others that were so inconsistent and difficult to edit that I resorted to creating a new file and manually transferring all the content from the old file.

Biggest issue by far—fonts

I find inconsistent fonts are the most egregious problems with PowerPoint. It is far too easy to copy text from multiple sources and carry the font formatting into your slides, leading to a dog's breakfast such as;

- Aggregate
- Aggregate
- Aggregate

The first line is Calibri and the second is Arial. Both are sans-serif fonts but the shape of the letter g is dramatically different and even though they are both the same point size, they are different heights and widths. The third line is Century—a serif font. All these differences lead to a very jarring effect when used together.

If you have slides developed on different computers, even bigger problems can occur when Windows silently substitutes fonts. Consider one person designing a poster and passing it on to someone else who will print and post the final copy throughout your neighbourhood.



The title used a font called *Frightmare*. The file was then opened on a computer that didn't have *Frightmare* installed. Windows substituted a different font, resulting in a *completely* different effect!

Unfortunately, even though PowerPoint is over 30 years old, Microsoft has never seen fit to add tools to PowerPoint that would allow users to find these problems, let alone fix them or—better yet—prevent them in the first place.

Slidewise from Neuxpower Solutions can ferret out these PowerPoint problems and more. It can fix inconsistencies with fonts, consolidate and organize Masters, Layouts and Slides, find non-theme colours, check hidden content, and find images bloating the file or reducing quality.

Slidewise appears on the Home tab of the PowerPoint ribbon. Clicking it brings up the Slidewise panel.



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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, January 10th, 2024**

Next Meeting

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

Fraud 101: Beware of Scammers

Speaker: Cst. Sébastien Lemay (Ottawa Police Service)

Constable Sébastien Lemay from the Ottawa Police Service will be giving a presentation on fraud. He will discuss the types of fraud – both online and in-person – we are likely to encounter. He will provide us with tips on how to spot fraud attempts so we can avoid becoming a victim and what to do if you fall victim to a fraudster.

Fraud can happen to anyone. But the more you know, the less likely you are to fall victim. Please invite others to attend this important presentation.

Cst. Sébastien Lemay has been an officer with the Ottawa Police Service for 14 years, after serving in Wakefield, Quebec, for 2 years. He is in his seventh year as a community police officer for the Lower Town, Byward Market and Sandy Hill neighbourhoods.

As a community police officer, Sébastien acts as a liaison between the community and the Ottawa Police Service. He regularly follows up on problems that patrol officers might not have been able to resolve; meets with residents and business owners to share some crime prevention strategies; attends meetings with resident associations, businesses and other stakeholders; and finally, meets with different groups to offer presentations on various safety and security topics.

This meeting will be via Zoom video conference.

Join us at <https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting>. The Zoom link will be live at 7:15 pm. The meeting will begin at 7:30 pm.

The above link includes the meeting ID and password. However, if you are prompted for the information, use:

Meeting ID: **924 9556 0898**

Password: **opcug**

Coming Up...

Next Q&A session: [Wednesday, December 20](#)

February 14

[Using ChatGPT to program in Python](#)

Speaker: Tom Trottier (OPCUG)

Follow Tom as he tries to cajole ChatGPT into creating a python program to combine chat and caption transcripts together by time. This will be Tom's first Python program.

March 13

[Building a Website – No Coding Required!](#)

Speaker: Alan German (OPCUG)

In this presentation we will see how to create a website from scratch and make our content available on the Internet, no HTML coding required

April 10

TBA

May 8

[Free Software: What Can It Do For You?](#)

Speaker: Adam Hunt (writer, Full Circle Magazine)

This presentation will cover some interesting free software applications you could be using today, plus a quick look at Linux on the desktop in 2024.

Upcoming OPL Presentations

The Fall OPL presentations by our club have all been given. We are waiting for the OPL to accept presentations we have submitted for January-March 2024.

Visit <https://opcug.ca/opl-presentations/> for updates.

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.

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
Regular Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, January 10 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, December 20th	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, January 10 th	Enjoy a cold brew or other beverage in the comfort of your home during the video conference.

PRODUCT REVIEW

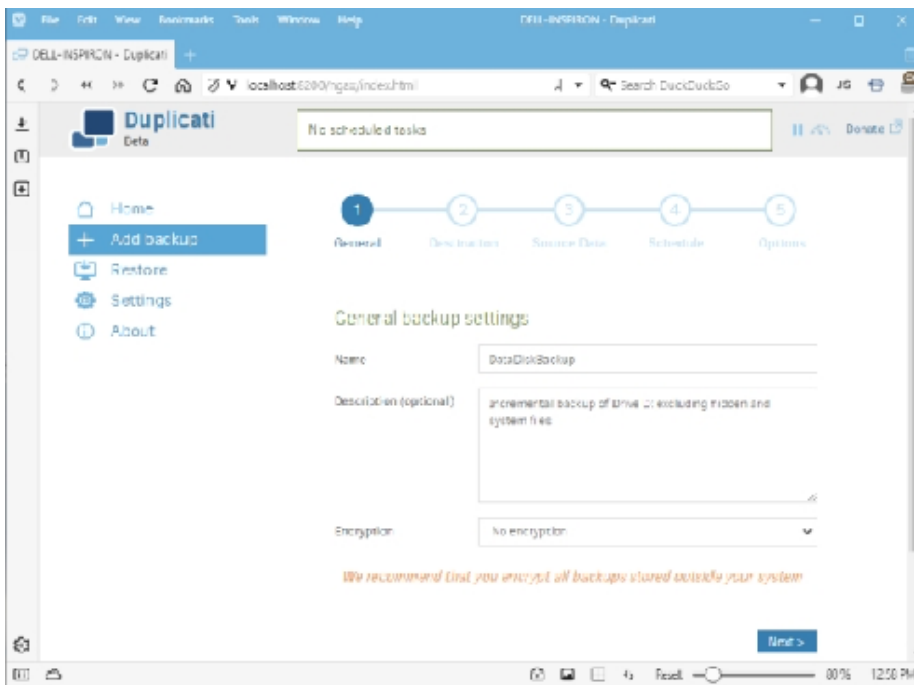
Backup Your Data With Duplicati

by Alan German

Duplicati is an open-source backup program developed by Kenneth Skovhede, a computer science professor at the Niels Bohr Institute, University of Copenhagen. While it was originally developed to store encrypted data in the cloud, it functions equally well as a general-purpose backup solution using local disk drives.

My application for this software is to create an incremental backup of the dedicated data partition on my hard drive. Typically, I make full-disk backup images on a monthly basis that take good care of the operating system and the installed applications since the files related to these systems change infrequently (think Patch Tuesday!) I also make a manual backup of the working files on the data disk to a USB flash drive each time I make changes to the data files. To supplement these long-term and short-term backups, a series of incremental backups made perhaps on each day in a given month would provide a reasonable historical record of past versions of the data files.

Duplicati readily provides this function with the added benefit of being a cross-platform solution, with versions available for both Windows and Linux (and also for MacOS/OSX users on the dark side.) The program has a web-style user interface, running in the default browser through a localhost server. It is very easy to use as it features wizards to build the backup configuration and the restore function.



The wizard to add a backup requires a name to be entered for the backup and, optionally, a description of the nature of the backed-up files. By default, the backup process employs 256-bit AES encryption; however, this can be turned off if encryption is not required. On the subsequent screen, a wide variety of backup destinations is available, including cloud storage servers such as Dropbox, Google Drive, and Microsoft OneDrive, in addition to local folders or drives. As indicated for my purposes I opted to use a folder on an external USB drive as the backup target.

The location for the source data is similarly configurable, allowing selection of mul-

tiple drives, files and folders, with options to exclude hidden, system, or temporary files, or files larger than a specific size. There is also the ability to filter out specific files and folders based on a range of parameters, such as “names contain” or specified regular expressions. Backups can be scheduled for any time of day, with timed repeats (e.g. every hour), on any days of the week. If any backup is missed, the job will run as soon as possible thereafter. The automatic backup process can also be disabled, leaving it to the user to run a backup process manually.

An interesting feature of Duplicati’s backup system is that it stores blocks of data in multiple zip files that it refers to as volumes. There are three types of files produced with the extensions: .dblock.zip, for the actual blocks of data, and .dlist.zip and .dindex.zip, which track the block contents for subsequent restoration. Building the configuration allows the size of the stored volumes to be specified. The default value is 50 MB, chosen to avoid timeouts when uploading to a remote file server. Since this is not a consideration for local disk storage, I opted to increase the volume size to 1 GB which resulted in a total of 15 files for approximately 6 GB of data. Interestingly, the data compression factor is not very high as the 15 files occupied almost 5 GB of disk space.

The final configuration option is the selection of the retention period for the backup files. By default this is set to keep all backups. Other options include deleting backups that are older than a specified time period, retaining a specific number of backups, or “smart backup retention”. The latter option retains one backup for each of the last seven days, each of the last four weeks, and each of the last twelve months, with there always being at least one remaining backup.

I didn’t set a backup schedule as my preference is to run the backup manually. Having completed the configura-

(Continued on page 7)

THROUGH THE LENS

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

Making a photo collage

by Lynda Buske

I will be giving a demonstration at an upcoming Q&A session on how to make a photo collage using free Photoscape X software. I will not provide in-depth instructional details in this article but instead hope to encourage you to think about what sort of collages you may wish to create.

I've used this handy feature to commemorate all sorts of events such as day trips, family gatherings, births, wedding, etc. I've also done topic specific collages for pets, birds and flowers. I typically have them printed on 8x10 paper for easy framing. They make great gifts!

While there is an automatic **Collage** feature in Photoscape X, I find it limiting in terms of photo dimension and arrangement so I prefer a method where I have more control. If you use the automatic feature and want to print it later, please be sure to resize the collage to your desired aspect ratio (e.g. 8x10) so it will print properly.

I prefer to start by creating a white or coloured background. You can use any photo for this. Drag it into the working area, crop to the desired aspect ratio (e.g. 8x10) then go to the **Insert** tab, click on the filled in rectangle, click on a corner of the image and drag it down and across. This covers the existing photo and you can now choose any colour or pattern you wish. Save this with a name such as *Blue background 8x10.jpg*. You can also add a thin frame if you wish under the **Framing** tab. Once your background is complete, make sure you are still in **Insert** mode, then simply drag any photos you want onto this background. I typically apply a frame (or a shadow) in Editor mode using Framing/Borders to each image before I lay them onto the background.

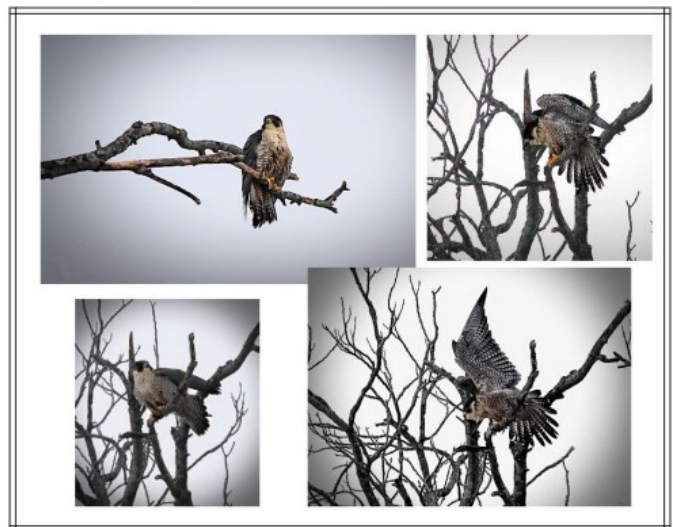
There is lots of flexibility when arranging your images. You can re-size, move, overlap, and rotate them. Once you have the pics arranged as you want, you can add text in the size, colour and font you desire.

If you want to display old family photos, collages can be very useful since old snapshots often do not

have enough resolution or clarity to enlarge. With an 8x10 collage, you may have three 3x5 photos that will look just fine in a collage as they will appear close to their original size. With a bit of prior photo editing within Photoscape X (contrast, sharpening, etc.), they may actually appear nicer than the originals.

I also find a collage is a nice way to display wildlife shots that I have taken with a less than adequate zoom lens. I can combine smaller images where resolution is adequate and even tell a bit of a story if I want.

Warning: Once you have saved your collage it becomes a flat file and while you can add to it, you cannot rearrange previous photos or text.



Read as PDF at <https://opcug.ca/digital-photography/>. Visit <https://opcug.ca/opl-presentations/> to see Lynda's OPL presentations.

Free Membership in OPCUG!

If you are currently an OPCUG member, there is no need to pay to renew your membership for another whole year. As has been done for several years, the Board of Directors has once again decided to waive membership renewal fees, and this will apply to all members in good standing as of April 1, 2024. So, don't send us any money. Your next membership year is absolutely free.

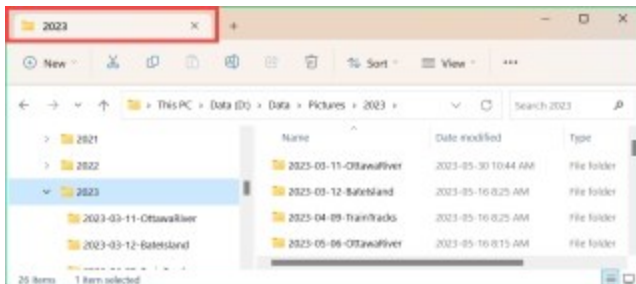
This also means a return of our two-for-one offer for new members. Anyone purchasing a new membership from now until March 31st will buy a one-year membership. So, for example, a membership purchased on December 24, 2023 will provide membership until December 24, 2024. But, because this new member will be in good standing on April 1st (this is NOT an April Fool's joke!) their membership will automatically be renewed until December 24, 2025. Hence, two years for the price of one! What a tremendous Christmas present for all your techie friends and relatives. And, of course, anyone can buy their own new membership at any time up to March 31st and receive this same great offer. Go to <https://opcug.ca/join-or-renew/> to join our club.



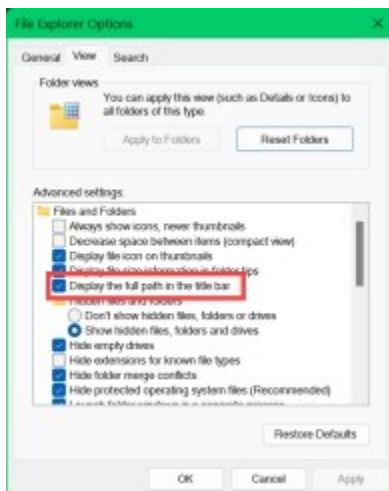
Quick Tip 59: Show the full path in File Explorer's title bar

by Chris Taylor

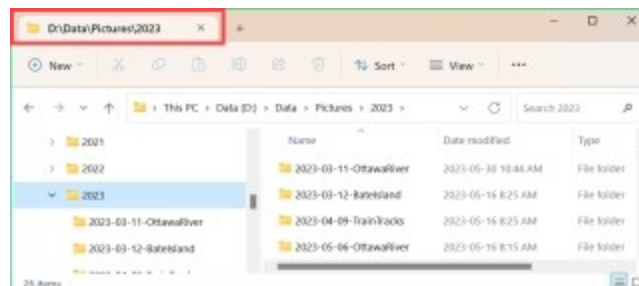
A minor annoyance in Windows File Explorer is that the title bar only shows the current folder name rather than the full path. In the following example, it shows 2023 rather than *D:\Data\Pictures\2023*.



I know I can see the path below the toolbar, but it includes extraneous fluff such as *This PC* and greater-than signs, making it harder to read at a glance.



Both Windows 10 and 11 allow you to change this. Click the Start button and type *Control Panel*. When it appears in the *Best match* list, click it. Click *File Explorer Options*. If you are in *Category* view, click *Appearance and Personalization* followed by *File Explorer Options*. On the *View* tab check the box *Display the full path in title bar*.



File Explorer's title bar will now show the full path rather than just the folder name.

<Chris's latest rant> If you happened to notice the different title bar colours in the screenshots above, that is just Windows being so consistent in handling *Settings > Personalisation > Colours > Show accent colour on title bars and Windows borders*. *Control Panel* follows my choice for this setting. *File Explorer*...not so much.</Chris's latest rant>

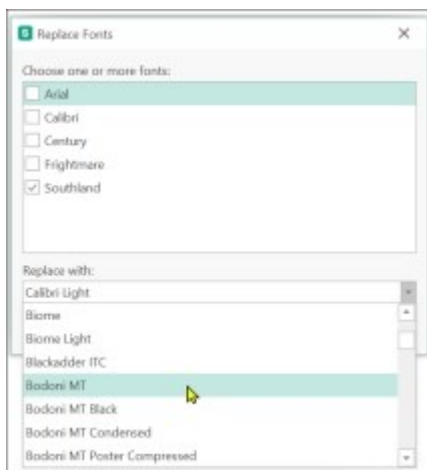
Slidewise (Continued from page 1)

The *Fonts* section of the *Fonts and Media* tab will show you all the fonts that are part of your presentation file. Double-click any font to list the slides where the font has been used. In the example above, *Frightmare* has been used in the title on slide 1, a rectangle on slide 3 and the content placeholder on slide 7. *Southland* is listed in orange with a warning symbol, indicating the font does not exist on this computer and a different font has been substituted in the content placeholder on slide 5 and the title of slide 7.

You can manually clean up fonts by going to each instance and changing the fonts used. Or you can use Slidewise to replace fonts on all slides by right-clicking and choosing *Replace Fonts...*



Choose one or more fonts to replace and select the font to be used.



Select a placeholder in PowerPoint and Slidewise will list all the fonts used in it. Slidewise can't show you the actual characters using each font, which would be a nifty addition to the program. But it is a pretty simple operation to select the placeholder and apply a font to all text in the placeholder.

PowerPoint presentation files can be bloated by embedded fonts. Slidewise finds them and allows you to unembed them. On the other hand, if you are passing on a PowerPoint file and are using fonts that are not standard Win-

dows fonts, you can use Slidewise to embed the fonts so they will display properly on other computers.

Slidewise has tabs for other capabilities that can fix inconsistencies in your presentations.

Slide Masters lists all the slide masters and their included layouts. You can re-assign slides from one layout to another. If you have a real mess where multiple masters and layouts have been used, this function can help clean things up.

Colors shows where non-theme colours have been used in your presentation. I often use colours that are not part of the template theme but if I get a file from someone else where they used several different shades of a colour, I would probably look to standardize.

File Review lists hidden slides, comments, and notes. You can have Slidewise delete all comments or speaker notes from the slides, so you don't share information you did not intend to.

Slide Selection has two views, listing all slides by either slide master/layout, or transition. Each view allows you to see at a glance how they are used throughout the presentation. I find the transition list particularly useful. I can see when there are too many different transitions, or when a wayward *Fade Through Black* was chosen on one slide when all others were set to *Fade Smoothly*.

Image Audit lists all images in the presentation and flags those that have been significantly scaled up (resulting in poor quality) or down (candidates for compression to save space), or have been unevenly scaled (affecting the aspect ratio). Slidewise gives real insight into the images in your presentation, showing the sizes in KB, the actual & displayed sizes in pixels, the scale factors and the bits per pixel. Given how much bloat in PowerPoint files can be attributed to images, this is really useful.

If you have concerns about bloated presentation files, the *Fonts and Media* tab can help tease out issues. The example below is a 100MB PowerPoint file. Embedded fonts take up 3 MB. Of course, this may be required if the file is to be passed on to others since one of the fonts—*Frightmare*—is not a standard Windows font. There are 12MB of

images with one alone being 6.5 MB. This might be worth investigating. There is a 66MB audio file and a 20MB video file. In some cases, it makes sense to link to external content rather than embedding it.



Slidewise has useful export capabilities. You can export a list of the size and number of all embedded fonts, images, audio, and video files. You can generate summary lists of all comments and speaker notes. You can also have Slidewise export all embedded images, video, and audio.

A caution and a bug

While reassigning slides from one slide master to another (admittedly not something you are likely to do frequently), Slidewise made the change and automatically saved the file without notice. If you make such a change and want to reverse it, hit Ctrl-Z or the Undo icon on PowerPoint's Quick Access Toolbar.

When consolidating masters, I got an error: *Sorry, an error occurred while Slidewise was trying to perform the action you requested.* I got around the problem by having Slidewise reassign all slides using the second master to the main master and then deleting the second master. Neuxpower tells me this is

(Continued on next page)

Duplicati (Continued from page 3)

tion and now back on the home screen, Duplicati tells me that the *Last successful backup* for my newly-created job was *Never*. So, to start the backup, I click on the *Run now* link.

The first time the program runs it creates a full backup of the source files and folders. Subsequent runs produce incremental backups and so the process runs much faster and the additional storage space required is considerably reduced.

As noted earlier, a second wizard is provided when restoring data from a backup. Firstly, a backup is identified using either the name of the backup or its storage location, and the specific date of interest (in the case of multiple incremental backups). Next, we browse through the directory tree to tag the files and folders to be restored. Options for the restored files are to place them back in the original location or to select a new location. Existing files can be overwritten or new files can be created with time stamps in the file names. Duplicati handles the process of identifying, locating, retrieving, and storing the files recovered from the backup zip files without any further user interaction.

I came across a strange (to me) occurrence when testing the restore process. I was getting a warning that *Restore completed without errors but no files were restored*. Checking on Duplicati's user forum I found that no action is taken to restore a file if the backup version is identical to that in the location where the file is to be restored. So, rather than giving this specific explanation, the program issues the rather generic warning message.

Duplicati is simple to use, very flexible and highly effective. In particular, the incremental backup process is very efficient in terms of both time and disk space required. And, additional features, such as strong encryption of the backup files, are available should these be required. Best of all, Duplicati is both free (donations welcome), multi-platform, and open source. So, if you are in need of a backup solution, this software package is definitely worth a look.

Bottom Line

Duplicati (Open Source)

Version 2.0.7.1

Kenneth Skovhede

<https://www.duplicati.com>



DUPLICATI

This review is available as a PDF at:
<https://opcug.ca/reviews/>.

Slidewise (Continued from previous page)

a PowerPoint API issue affecting some users, rather than a Slidewise bug. The next version of Slidewise will work around the issue.

Getting to know Slidewise

Neuxpower has created a series of 17 short videos on using Slidewise that is well worth the time for anyone new to the program:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQaZjflWUG5QqjMjRfZaaQ3cCizwMWT9a>

Is Slidewise worth the price?

Slidewise is not inexpensive—the price is CA\$106 per year. A 30-day free trial version is available.

At the start of this review, I mentioned that I sometimes have to deal with PowerPoint files so messed up that I find it easier to begin a new file and manually transfer content to it. Slidewise would have made it far easier to just correct the original file. In some cases, it would have saved me hours of laborious, manual, error-prone efforts. Slidewise also helps ensure my own PowerPoint presentation files are consistent in their look and feel. Having used Slidewise for a few weeks, I definitely do not want to work in PowerPoint without it.

Members of the OPCUG have been offered a 25% discount. Contact me at Chris.Taylor@opcug.ca for details.

Bottom line:

Slidewise PowerPoint add-in

<https://neuxpower.com/slidewise-powerpoint-add-in>

Price: CA\$106 per year

System requirements:

Windows 8.1 or greater

32-bit or 64-bit Office 2016 or greater or installed (not web) Office/

Microsoft 365

XML versions of PowerPoint data files (e.g. pptx and potx)

This review is available as a PDF at: <https://opcug.ca/reviews/>.

Nominations for OPCUG Board for 2024

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.

We currently have two vacant positions: Meeting Coordinator and Public Relations. The most pressing position is Meeting Coordinator. If you like our monthly meetings, please participate in the nomination process (you can nominate yourself!).

If you want more information about what is involved, please contact 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: nominations@opcug.ca.

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2023.

Please get involved. Help the OPCUG continue in its role of *Users helping users*.

Bob Herres

Election Chair, 2024

Bob.Herres@opcug.ca



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