



# OTTAWA PC NEWS

Volume 41, Number 7

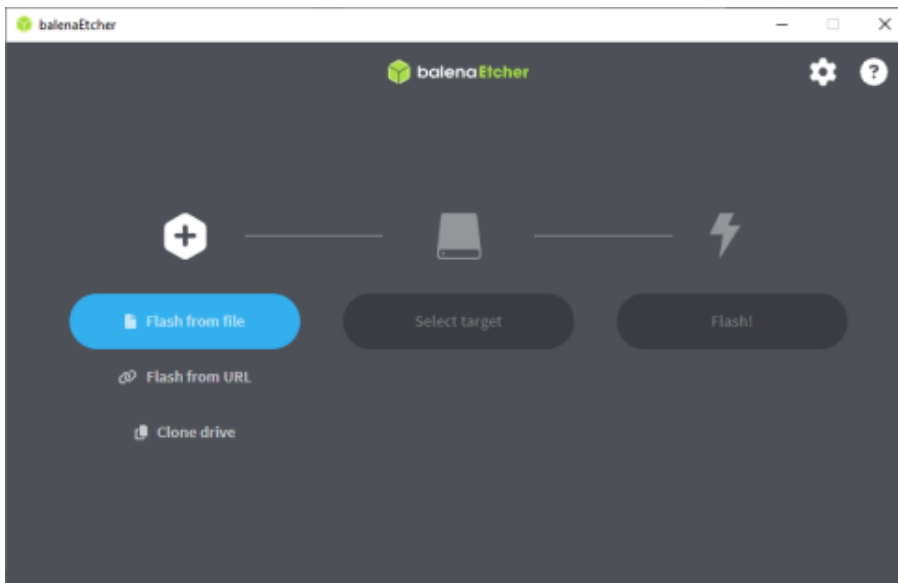
September 2024

## PRODUCT REVIEW

### Etching a Bootable USB Drive by Alan German

**B**alena Etcher may just be the easiest software to use if you want to create a bootable USB flash drive. The software only writes a single image of an operating system to a flash drive but, if that's all you need, it does so intuitively and with style.

When downloading the software you can choose from versions for Windows, macOS and Linux. The Windows version is downloaded as an EXE file which is a portable version of the package. Consequently, there is nothing to install. Simply double-click the executable file to launch Etcher.



The main program window shows the three steps involved in flashing an image to a USB drive. First, click on *Flash from file*, navigate to the directory where the disk image for your chosen operating system is located, and select the ISO file. Secondly, plug in the USB flash drive that is to become the bootable disk. Click on *Select target* and choose the USB drive from the list of drives displayed. A User Access Control dialogue will request authorization for the app to make changes to the USB drive.

Note that there are no further warnings. If you select *Yes*, and the flash drive wasn't initially empty, the target flash drive will be overwritten and any previously stored files destroyed. So, make sure that the flash drive you use doesn't contain any data that you wish to retain!

Now, click on *Flash!* A progress bar will initially indicate the percentage completion for the image writing process. A second progress bar similarly indicates the degree of validation. Finally, the display screen will indicate *Flash Completed!* Your USB flash drive can now be used to boot your computer.

So, there we are. Three simple steps to create a bootable USB drive. What could be easier?

#### Bottom Line

Balena Etcher (Open source)  
Version 1.19.21  
<https://etcher.balena.io>



(read all OPCUG reviews [here](#))

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

## Next Meeting

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

### Building a Website – No Coding Required!

**Speaker:** Alan German, OPCUG

Conventional websites require knowledge of the HyperText Markup Language (HTML), editing HTML files, and uploading these files and any associated digital images, etc. to a web hosting service, in order to create an on-line presence. Today's technologies offer web page templates, WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editors, and instant web hosting. So, it's easy to create a website with no HTML coding being required. And it can be completely free. For example, anyone who has a Google account (e.g. uses Gmail) can use their login credentials to create and manage Google Sites. In this presentation we will see how to create a website from scratch and make our content available on the Internet.

#### 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**

Instructions for using Zoom are provided here: <https://opcug.ca/wp-content/uploads/Zoom-instructionsv3.pdf>

**Until further notice, Q&A sessions are no longer held after regular monthly meetings.** Hence, monthly meetings now end one hour earlier at 9 pm. Everyone is welcome to join us on all other Wednesdays for **weekly Q&A sessions**.

## Coming Up...

**October 09, 2024**

Everything you didn't know, but wanted to know, about the Ottawa Public Library

**Speaker:** Carol Pearson (OPCUG)

**November 13, 2024**

Artificial Intelligence (*details to follow*)

**Speaker:** Brett Martensen, founder of Adaptron Inc.

**December 11, 2024**

Topic and Speaker: (*TBA*)

### OPCUG Presentations at the OPL:

Monday, 23 Sep, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

#### How to buy a PC

Carlingwood Branch, Chris Taylor

Tuesday, 24 Sep, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

#### Armchair travel: Ireland and Scotland

Sunnyside Branch, Lynda Buske

Saturday, 28 Sep, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

#### Restoring old photos

Elmvale Branch, Lynda Buske

Thursday, 03 Oct, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

#### Tips and techniques for better photos

Rosemount Branch, Lynda Buske

Visit <https://opcug.ca/mec-category/opl-presentations/> for the full list of OPL presentations.

## 2024 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
Next Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, September 11 <sup>th</sup>	7:30 pm via Zoom video conference: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting">https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting</a> To see all scheduled events, visit <a href="https://opcug.ca/#upcoming">https://opcug.ca/#upcoming</a>
Next Q&A Session	<a href="#">Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup></a>	Until further notice, Q&A sessions are no longer held after regular monthly meetings. Join us on all other Wednesdays at 7:30 pm for <a href="#">weekly Q&amp;A</a> .
Next OPL Presentations	(see <a href="#">Upcoming Events</a> )	Visit <a href="https://opcug.ca/mec-category/opl-presentations/">https://opcug.ca/mec-category/opl-presentations/</a> for the full list of OPL presentations.

## CLUB LIFE

### In-person meetings: to be or not to be?

A couple of people at our June Pizza Night expressed a desire to have more in-person meetings. This is a subject that the Board of Directors has discussed at length a few times in the past couple of years. Strict COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 were the reason for going virtual and, after four years, these Zoom meetings have grown on many of us. There's no denying their favour in terms of time saved (no driving), comfort (sofa, anyone?) and accessibility (ability to play back the slideshow and audio anytime). Virtual meetings are also attractive to outside speakers who can give their presentation from anywhere on the planet.

The Board revisited the subject at its June meeting and after much discussion it was decided that meetings would continue to be virtual. Since we've gone virtual, we have attracted members who live some distance from Ottawa. Others are no longer able to attend in person due to age or reduced mobility. These factors would necessitate recording (possibly live-streaming) audio and video of in-person meetings which would involve editing and storage of very large files. In turn, recording in-person meetings would likely contribute to some members staying at home and watching the recording later, calling into question the expenditure of renting a



venue and risking the disappointment of outside speakers who would expect at least 40-50 people in the room.

We know this disappoints some of you. We empathize with new members who want to meet others and with veteran members who miss shooting the breeze with their clubbies. Perhaps a member could organize a coffee or other outing through our Members' Forum (see [Google Groups How-To](#) on how to join). All it takes is one person to get the ball rolling.

*Sincerely,  
Brigitte Lord*

### Nominations for OPCUG Board for 2025

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 in the Newsletter and on the web site.

Nominations can be submitted via email to Lynda Buske, Election Chair, at [nominations@opcug.ca](mailto:nominations@opcug.ca).

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2024.

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

*Lynda Buske  
Election Chair*



# THROUGH THE LENS

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

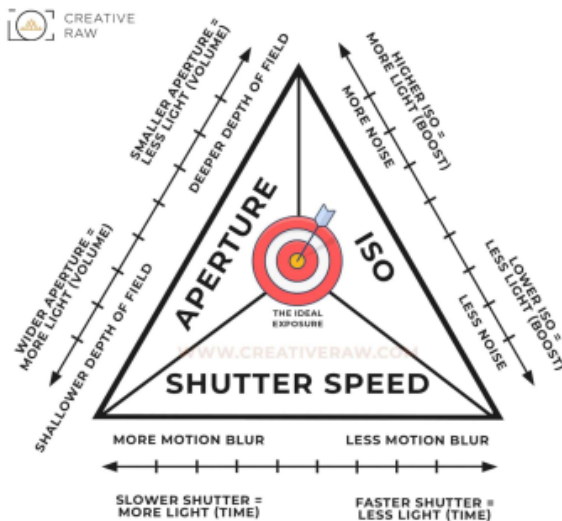
## The Exposure Triangle

by Lynda Buske

The camera exposure triangle consists of aperture, shutter speed and ISO. The aperture is simply the size of the hole through which the light passes into your camera. A larger aperture lets in more light and has the effect of decreasing the depth of field, i.e. the amount of the image that is considered in sharp focus. It can vary depending on what you (or the camera) decide is appropriate for the photo you are trying to take.

Shutter speed is pretty self-explanatory and simply represents the amount of time the sensor (or film) will be exposed to the light before the shutter mechanism closes. It has the effect of changing the amount of motion there is in an image.

The ISO refers to the sensitivity of the camera sensor. While you can't actually change the sensitivity of the sensor, a digital camera can increase the gain of the signal coming from the sensor. In effect this appears to increase sensitivity by making dim objects appear brighter, but at the cost of signal noise being introduced, causing speckles to appear in otherwise smooth tones.



Source: <https://creativeraw.com/>

Each choice you make for any one parameter (aperture, shutter speed, and ISO) will have implications for one or both of the other two parameters in order to maintain a proper exposure. For example, if you make the shutter

speed faster in order to stop the motion of a bird's wings, this lowers the amount of light hitting the sensor and you must compensate for that by either changing the aperture to a larger opening, increasing the ISO, or both.

**Situation 1:** You want to capture a bird in flight. A wide aperture will let in the most light and give you the fastest speed. The depth of field will be small which can be an advantage as the bird will stand out against a nicely blurred background. If at the widest aperture, you still don't have enough speed for a flying bird (perhaps as fast as 1/1500 sec), your remaining option is to manually bump the ISO higher. While a high ISO gives you more light and therefore faster speed, it can create "noise" or graininess in your image. However, if you were shooting a puffin in flight, you might be quite willing to accept some noise to nail a fast-moving nature shot which might otherwise have too much motion blur. You can either reduce the noise in post processing or assume all eyes will be on the puffin anyway!

**Situation 2:** You are inside a cathedral and have a low light situation. You use a small aperture to achieve a long depth of field so everything is in focus from the closest foreground objects to the most distant objects. Unfortunately, this increases the exposure time and you find you cannot hold the camera steadily enough. You can bump the ISO to increase sensitivity as well as prop your camera on a pew to minimize the camera movement during a long exposure. The same situation could occur outdoors if it was a rainy day and you wanted a long depth of field. Solution would be the same, i.e. bump up the ISO or use a tripod to steady the camera during a longer exposure.

**Situation 3:** You have your tripod and want to take a picture of a waterfall with an exposure of half a second to make the water appear silky smooth. If you set your shutter speed to half a second, even with the smallest aperture you may find too much light comes in and your photo will be overexposed. In this situation, you can lower the light levels by setting the ISO to its lowest value, thus decreasing sensitivity of the sensor. If you reach the lower limit of ISO and there is still too much light for a proper exposure, you can turn to neutral density filters which cut down on the light entering the camera.

Make the triangle work for you!

Read all of Lynda's articles [here](#). See her [presentations](#) at the Ottawa Public Library (select **Lynda Buske** as **Organizer**).



## Modern-Day Bonnie and Clydes Are Trying To Steal Your Identity and Your Money

By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, Central Kentucky Computer Society  
<https://ckcs.org/>  
lextown2 \*\* gmail.com

I've written in the past that if Bonnie and Clyde were alive today, they definitely wouldn't waste time robbing banks. If you're not familiar with the couple, they were ruthless gangsters who robbed banks, stores, and other places of business and killed lawmen, shopkeepers, and owners of cars they were stealing in at least four states.

They were, perhaps, best known for robbing more than a dozen banks—some of the same banks twice—over a four-year period, primarily in Missouri, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas. Back in their heyday, they also targeted stores in small towns and funeral homes located in rural areas. Make no mistake about it. They were dangerous lawbreakers. That was how it was in the Depression-era 1930s.

Fast forward to today. Modern Bonnie and Clydes don't rob banks. It's too much work. Instead, they steal personal data from computers, phones, and tablets. They're called hackers. One of their main goals in this life is to steal, rob, and gain access to your hard-earned dollars. Their goal is to grab your money and run; your goal is to keep that from happening. So, whether you're tech-savvy or not, how in the world are you supposed to keep this from happening? There are simple steps you can take.

1. When someone calls you on the phone from an unknown number, DO NOT answer the phone; wait for a voicemail message. Microsoft, Apple, etc., will not call you. These thugs want to get their hands inside your computer or other device to steal your passwords or personal information. If you answer the phone, your number may be sold for more money.

2. Don't open emails from unknown sources. Don't open attachments from unknown senders. Don't respond to

schemes alerting you that a friend has been hurt in London, Paris, Sydney, or some other location. Could you send money to help them? Your friend is in the hospital and needs your financial help. Their wallet's been stolen. Their purse has been snatched. And I'm the king of Spain.

Please don't fall for it. Don't click on links in an email from someone you don't usually hear from, urging you to view these great photos. There are no photos. Once you click on the link, malware infects your Windows PC and sends emails to everyone in your address book with the same message, urging them to click on a link to view photos. Phishing is the most successful cybercrime in America.

There were nearly 324,000 victims last year alone. (Phishing refers to an email that appears to be from a legitimate company or organization. There's often a threat – your account will be closed, or the sheriff will come to your house unless you respond. It's all bogus. But plenty of Americans fall for it.) Ever gotten an email that you owe \$500 for Norton 360 (virus and malware protection software) that you never even purchased? You'd be surprised by how many folks respond to the email and even pay for the software they don't own. The thugs sending the email are not from Norton. Most junk email trying to get into your wallet originates in Russia, Germany, the U.S., and China.

3. Yes, it's a pain. But what tech folks call two-factor authentication can save your bacon. Turn it on. You'll be blocked if you decide to change your Gmail password, Facebook log-in, iCloud username or password, or some other account, you'll be blocked. You must enter a code you receive in a text message, an email, or even using the Gmail app on your smartphone to get permission to change your password. Yes, as I said, it's a pain. But it's preventing crooks from gaining access to your account. So instead of just changing your passwords, you must first receive a code and enter it into a website or Gmail app. That proves you are who you say you are.

4. Run antivirus software.

For Windows PCs:

Safety Detectives: The Best Windows Antivirus  
<https://www.safetydetectives.com/>  
PC Mag: The Best Antivirus Software for 2023  
<https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-antivirus-protection>

For Macs:

Safety Detectives: Ten Best Antiviruses for Mac in 2023  
<https://www.safetydetectives.com/best-antivirus/mac/>  
Macworld: Best Mac Antivirus Software 2023  
<https://www.macworld.com/article/668850/best-mac-antivirus-software.html>

For Linux:

Safety Detectives: Five Best Antiviruses for Linux in 2023  
<https://www.safetydetectives.com/best-antivirus/linux/>  
Ubuntu Pit: Top 15 Best Linux Antivirus Programs in 2023  
<https://www.ubuntupit.com/best-linux-antivirus-top-reviewed-compared/>

5. Don't go on a fishing expedition on the Web. The World Wide Web is remarkable. It's the best library in the world. There are an estimated 1.6 to 1.9 BILLION websites currently accessible. Less than 400 million are currently active. More than 51% of all people in the world are online. Asia accounts for half the Internet traffic worldwide. Talk about diversity. Websites appear in more than 200 languages. But watch your step. Don't put your foot into horse dung. Make sure the website you visit starts with https. No, this is not always possible.

Some websites refuse to use the "https:" system. The "s" stands for secure. You're accessing a secure web-

*(Continued on next page)*

**Bonnie and Clydes** (Continued from previous page)

site. Don't randomly visit online gambling websites, sites with outdated addresses, websites with shortened addresses, sites ending in .onion, torrent websites (file sharing sites), porn sites and others.

Google constantly scans websites, looking for legitimate websites that have been compromised, unsafe sites, or other questionable pages. If you wonder whether a website is safe or not, visit the web address below and paste your website into Google's Safe Browsing website:

<https://transparencyreport.google.com/safe-browsing/search>

It will tell you whether it's safe to proceed or not.

### 5. Use a well-regarded virtual private network (VPN).

This tool sends your Internet signal through a tunnel so that hackers and other thieves cannot access the web pages you visit, your email, your passwords, or additional private information. Do your homework. Find a good VPN you can afford.

Steer away from free VPNs because many sell your data online, bombard you with ads, and some even use your computer's processing power.

For Windows PCs:

Privacy Savvy: Five Best VPNs for Privacy

<https://privacysavvy.com/vpn/best/windows/>

VPN Reports: Best of the Best VPNs

<https://www.vpnreports.com/best-vpn/windows/>

For Macs:

VPN Reports: Best VPNs for Mac in 2023

<https://www.vpnreports.com/best-vpn/mac/>

Safety Detectives: Ten Best VPNs For Mac

<https://www.safetydetectives.com/best-vpns/mac/>

For Linux PCs:

Safety Detectives: Five Best Linux VPNs

<https://www.safetydetectives.com/blog/best-linux-vpns/>

Pro Privacy: Ten Best VPNs for Linux

<https://proprivacy.com/vpn/comparison/best-linux-vpn>

6. Use a password manager to track your passwords and log in to many websites requiring a username and password automatically. Experts say this is smarter than allowing your browser to remember your passwords. Unfortunately, web browsers are not really safe to keep that sort of information. As Tom's Guide writes, "That's because desktop web browsers, despite their best efforts, tend to do a lousy job of safeguarding your passwords, credit card numbers, and personal details, such as your name and address. As a result, web browsers are fairly easy to break into, and lots of malware, browser extensions, and even honest software can extract sensitive information from them."

Here are websites where you can read about the best password managers and pick one that works for you:

PC Mag: <https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-password-managers>

Tom's Guide: <https://www.tomsguide.com/us/best-password-managers,review-3785.html>

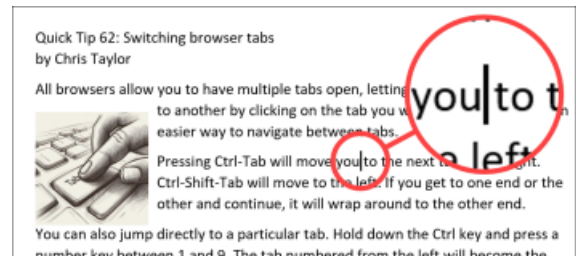
How To Geek: <https://www.howtogeek.com/780233/best-password-manager/>



### Quick Tip 65: Text cursor visibility

by Chris Taylor

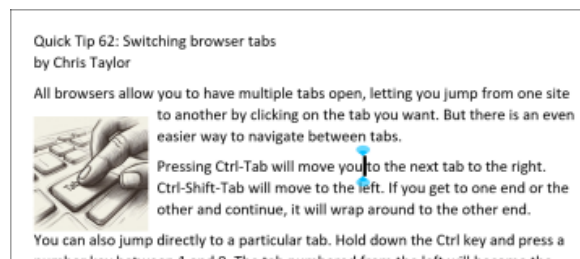
By default, the text cursor is a thin, vertical bar. In a document with a sea of text, this can be hard to pick out. Since any text you type will go in at the text cursor position, it is important to know where that is at all times.



Default text cursor is hard to see

Windows 10 and 11 provide a means of making the text cursor much more visible.

In Windows 11, navigate to *Settings > Accessibility > Text cursor*. In Windows 10, it is found at *Settings > Ease of Access > Text cursor*. Toggle on *Text cursor indicator*. Choose a size and colour to add little coloured circles to the top and bottom of the text cursor. You can also adjust the Text cursor thickness. Both sections have previews so you can see the effect of your choices.



Text cursor: blue, size 3, thickness 4



# Smartphone Wireless Connections – Help Keep Us Connected

By Phil Sorrentino, Secretary and APCUG Rep  
Sun City Center Computer Club, FL  
<https://www.scccomputerclub.org/>  
philorr \*\* yahoo.com

The smartphone is a wireless marvel. You may not have thought about your smartphone in this way, but your smartphone may be able to connect to up to five different wireless networks. (I'm sure this would have made Nicola Tesla very happy, he is credited with the wireless transmission of energy via his patented Tesla coil, though Marconi got the credit, and the patent, for inventing radio communications.) Just think about the hardware and software that allow your smartphone to participate in five different kinds of networks, all wrapped up in your smartphone package along with all the other electronics needed to support a powerful computer system. I bet even Steve Jobs would be impressed.



## Cell Phone Network

The most apparent wireless network your smartphone works with is the one you initially bought your smartphone to use; that is the cell phone network supported by all those antenna towers that have sprouted up all over in the past 40 years. (Not many landlines around anymore.) This network lets you keep in voice contact with just about anyone since over 91% of the people in the world has smartphones; that's over 6.6 billion possibilities. (Even more impressive is that most Americans – 97% now - own a cellphone. The share of Americans that own a smartphone is now over 85%). This cell phone network also provides access to the internet when you are out and about. The internet is considered a "Wide Area Network" or WAN. A WAN is an extensive computer network spread over a wide geographic area. A network's speed is its data speed or data rate and is measured in bps or bits per second. Typically Mega bps or Giga bps. WAN data rates are typically around 150 Mbps. When you are not out and about and are within a Wi-Fi network, the Wi-Fi router provides access to the internet. Without this ability to be constantly connected to the internet, I'm not sure how many would own what would only be a competent personal digital assistant.



## Wi-Fi Network

So, Wi-Fi is the second wireless network that your smartphone can take advantage of. Wi-Fi is considered a "Local Area Network" or LAN. A LAN is a collection of wired and/or wireless connected devices typically in your home or office. LAN data rates can be from 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps. Using Wi-Fi, you can connect to the many servers on the internet. The use of your smartphone in this manner is sometimes called "Cloud Computing" because you are accomplishing a task on the smartphone by using the resources of a server computer somewhere out there on the internet (in the cloud), like using GPS and the Maps or Waze app on your smartphone to help navigate you from home to a place you've never been to before. Cloud Computing is just a more common term for "Client-Server Technology," which allows our smartphones to take advantage of powerful computer servers connected by the internet.



## GPS Network

Remember that every wireless network your smartphone can work with requires a transmitter, a receiver, and an antenna in the smartphone so that it can send data to and receive data from the other network members. (This is only possible because of digital electronic circuitry; this would never have been possible in the analog electronics world. Thanks to micro-miniature integrated circuits that typically get smaller and cheaper over time.) Though GPS, which is a third wireless network, is an exception. Your smartphone only has GPS receivers and antennas, no GPS transmitters. But it has multiple receivers because to determine your location, your smartphone has to receive data from at least 3 GPS satellites. (More detail than that may be the subject of a future article.)



## Bluetooth Network

The fourth wireless network supported by your smartphone is Bluetooth. You may not

have taken advantage of this feature unless you have a relatively new car and you have introduced (paired) your smartphone to the car's entertainment system. If you have, you are familiar with one of the best safety features in the new cars, the ability to receive and make calls from your smartphone while always keeping your hands on the steering wheel. (Now, if they could only convince the many speeding drivers to stay under the speed limit; another topic for a future article.) Bluetooth has also become the preferred connection for speakers and headphones (earbuds). Bluetooth headphones are for quiet listening, and Bluetooth speakers are for loud listening (a whole lot louder than the sound capability of the smartphone). Bluetooth is considered a "Personal Area Network" or PAN. A PAN is a computer network for interconnecting devices within a person's workspace. It transmits data among devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, and personal digital assistants. Bluetooth data rates can be as high as 1 Mbps.



## NFC Network

The fifth wireless network may not be available on some older smartphones or even some new ones. This network is called NFC or Near Field Communications. NFC is a set of communications protocols (rules) that enables communications between two devices over very short distances, maybe an inch or two. It facilitates data transfer between nearby smartphones, laptops, tablets, and other devices. NFC data rates are around 400 Mbps. NFC is used for making easy contactless payments with your smartphone using Apple Pay or Google Pay. Just enable the amount in the payment app and touch the smartphone to the NFC reader or terminal. This type of payment protects your payment information with multiple layers of security to help keep your account safe. The payment terminal does not share your card number when you pay, so your private information stays secure.

So, with these five networks, your smartphone helps you keep in touch and connected.



## 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).

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

[opcug-newsletter+subscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto: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/>

**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](mailto:chris.taylor@opcug.ca)

Treasurer

**Alan German** [alan.german@opcug.ca](mailto:alan.german@opcug.ca)

Secretary

**Gail Eagen** [gail.eagen@opcug.ca](mailto:gail.eagen@opcug.ca)

Meeting Coordinator

**Vacant** [meetings@opcug.ca](mailto:meetings@opcug.ca)

Membership Chair

**Lynda Buske** [membership@opcug.ca](mailto:membership@opcug.ca)

Newsletter

**Brigitte Lord** [brigitte lord@opcug.ca](mailto:brigitte lord@opcug.ca)

(editor/layout/e-distribution)

Public Relations

**Vacant** [PR@opcug.ca](mailto:PR@opcug.ca)

Facilities

**Bob Walker**

613-489-2084

Webmaster

**Brigitte Lord** [webmaster3@opcug.ca](mailto:webmaster3@opcug.ca)

Privacy Director

**Wayne Houston** [privacy2@opcug.ca](mailto:privacy2@opcug.ca)

Special Events Coordinator

(Mr.) **Jocelyn Doire** [jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca](mailto:jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca)

Director w/o Portfolio

**Karen Wallace-Graner** [karenwg@opcug.ca](mailto:karenwg@opcug.ca)

Director w/o Portfolio

**Bob Herres** [bob.herres@opcug.ca](mailto:bob.herres@opcug.ca)

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## Q&A IS ON-LINE! Weekly!

Since the pandemic, the OPCUG has been 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](mailto: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