ARTICLE

Trading Up To Linux – Part 1   *by Alan German*

Windows 10 will reach end of life (EOL) on October 14, 2025. Many existing users of Windows 10 will know that there is no upgrade path to Windows 11 for their specific computer due to some stringent hardware requirements that are being imposed by Microsoft. For example, some reputable sources suggest that machines must be less than four years old in order to be upgraded! For most machines, an Intel 8th-generation Core, an AMD Ryzen 2000 series, or better chip, is required as the central processing unit (CPU). Additionally, a Trusted Platform Module (TPM) must be installed and enabled. If you are not sure if your computer can run Windows 11, use Microsoft's PC Health Check software to determine your machine's current status.

So, now you should know if your specific computer can or cannot run Windows 11. At the time of writing there is no indication that Microsoft is going to relax the hardware requirements noted above. So, if your computer will not run Windows 11, the question becomes what are you going to do as of October 14th next year?

Firstly, do not panic. You have a whole year to get ready for the end-of-life of Windows 10. You can continue to use Windows 10 for the next twelve months as you have in the past. Your computer will run as normal. System patches will continue to be supplied and installed through Windows Update over the entire time.

However, what you do need to do is think ahead. When Windows 10 reaches EOL, there will be no further security patches and machines still running this operating system may be vulnerable to attack, particularly if they remain connected to the Internet.

So, what are the options? Clearly, continuing to run Windows 10, with no further security patches, is highly undesirable since most of us rely heavily on having stable and secure Internet access on a daily basis. A second option is to purchase a new computer that will have Windows 11 installed. However, a third option may well be to switch to using Linux as the main operating system, perhaps retaining the use of Windows in off-line mode in order to run specific applications that either won't run under Linux or for which there is no satisfactory native Linux equivalent.

The latter option might well be attractive to many users who are (a) reluctant to abandon perfectly good hardware, or (b) unwilling or unable to bear the expense or purchasing a new computer. However, many users are hesitant to consider this option because they have heard that Linux is "hard" or "only for geeks". Nothing could be further from the truth and the good news is that, if you are willing to at least give the option a try, you have an entire year to check things out. So, this is the premise of this first article in a planned series that will act as a simple guide to the use of the Linux operating system.

Specifically, we will initially download the Cinnamon edition of Linux Mint Version 22 (Wilma) and create a bootable USB drive that will enable us to run Linux without affecting Windows on our computer in any way. We'll find that the Cinnamon desktop is very similar to that used by Windows 10 and that many useful applications are bundled with the Linux software.

Inside this issue:

Next Meeting: WEDNESDAY, October 9th, 2024

Next Meeting

Wednesday, Oct 9th, 2024

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

Speaker: Carol Pearson, OPCUG

My bio is far removed from libraries. I am not a librarian. This is a personal interest journey. My interest came about as I was moving to Ottawa 7 years ago. Moving heavy books is labor intensive and expensive. I had read one of those *simplify-your-life* books, and one of their suggestions was to use Public Libraries. So, I downsized my book collection, and got a library card.

Shortly after my Ottawa arrival, I joined a club called the Ottawa Newcomers Club (ONC) (shameless plug, an excellent club for women new to Ottawa in the last two years, newly widowed or divorced). For my own education, and in case other new ONC members wanted help, I enlisted another lady, a longtime Ottawa resident and frequent library user and we did a presentation to inform the newcomers about all the OPL has to offer. The Ottawa Public Library is an incredible open source resource. 😊

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…

November 13

Topic: Artificial Intelligence
Speaker: Brett Martensen, founder of Adaptron Inc.

December 11

Topic: AI Showdown *(details to follow)*
Speaker: Bob Herres, OPCUG

See all scheduled events at https://opcug.ca/#upcoming.

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

Thursday, 10 Oct, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Restoring old photos
Thursday, Beaverbrook Branch, Lynda Buske

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

2024 CALENDAR

Events	Date	Time and Venue
Next Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, January 10th	7:30 pm via video conference. Zoom link: **https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting** To see all scheduled events, visit https://opcug.ca/#upcoming
Next Q&A Session	Wednesday, December 20th	7:30 pm via video conference. Zoom link: **https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting** Weekly except on monthly meeting nights. More info at weekly Q&A.
Next OPL Presentation	(see Upcoming Events)	Visit https://opcug.ca/mec-category/opl-presentations/ for the full list of OPCUG presentations at the OPL.

CLUB LIFE

User-Helping-User

In a slight twist on the club's motto, the Board of Directors is considering implementing a programme of one-on-one remote assistance for computer-related issues and is seeking volunteers to participate prior to soliciting inquiries for such assistance. If you have knowledge and experience with any relevant items, and are willing to assist your fellow club members on an as-available basis, please send an E-mail message to SuggestionBox@opcug.ca, indicating the areas in which you can help.

A poll of participants at the Q&A session held on August 28th indicated a strong interest, at 94% of those responding (30 of 32), in the idea of one-on-one support. The levels of interest in specific types of support were seen to be quite broad as shown in the following table:

Issue	%
Windows operating system and/or the Office Suite	79
Issues with free or proprietary software	72
Networking (e.g. browsing, downloading, uploading)	66
Hardware issues (e.g. desktop, laptop, printer, router)	79
Other	34

Remote assistance anyone?

Clearly, in order to be meaningful, requests for assistance will need to be much more specific than "I would like help with Windows" and, once the programme has been implemented, individuals requesting assistance will be required to provide very specific details of their problem. They will also be asked to indicate what they have done already to try to resolve the issue as this may avoid duplication of effort.

As indicated earlier, we are currently seeking volunteers who are willing to provide assistance to other computer users. The offers of assistance can be very specific (e.g. I can help with setting up backups using EaseUS Todo Backup) or more general (e.g. I can help with E-mail problems). The aim is to develop a list of volunteers and their areas of expertise so that requests for assistance can be positively matched to potential helpers.

The assistance process is likely to take the form of a specific request being received, a match being made to a volunteer with the appropriate knowledge and expertise, and contact being made between the two individuals. The arrangements for items such as date, time, and any other details will be left to the participants. Assistance will normally be provided remotely, using either Microsoft Quick Assist (built-in to Windows) or Zoom (used for all OPCUG meetings.) Both of these platforms allow remote viewing of the screen on the computer with the problem and remote control of its keyboard and mouse. Initial telephone contact will facilitate establishing the software connectivity and any requests for permission that may be required to activate remote control.

Note that one-on-one assistance will only be available to members of the Ottawa PC User's Group. This will be a specific benefit of being a club member and will avoid overburdening volunteers with requests for assistance from external users. It will also be made clear that neither OPCUG nor any member providing assistance can accept responsibility for any negative outcome. Every effort will be made to avoid such problems, including making backups as necessary to facilitate system rescue should this be required. Nevertheless, individuals requiring assistance must be prepared to accept that a "fix" may not necessarily work.

Some issues may lend themselves to inclusion in Q&A sessions and this will be a first consideration rather than immediately seeking volunteer assistance. When one-on-one assistance is required, it will be expected that both the member requesting assistance and the member providing the help will provide feedback on the experience in order that the effectiveness of the programme can be evaluated and improved if necessary.

So, if the proposed one-on-one assistance programme is of interest to you, and you have knowledge and expertise that you would like to share, please send an E-mail message to SuggestionBox@opcug.ca, indicating the specific or general aspects of computing where you can help.

WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Strange Font Behaviour *by Brigitte Lord*

There was some odd text in the September newsletter. I am using a new font called Cambria and there is a known corruption of this font in older versions of Microsoft Publisher, the desktop publishing program I use to lay out articles in the newsletter.

The previous font, Times New Roman (TNR), was created in 1931 for *The Times* of London. It was designed for a newspaper and is narrow and tight to fit more words per line. After forty years of TNR in our newsletter and us squinting at our monitors for the last six (our last printed issue was in June 2018), I wanted a font that was more readable on-screen. With the help of Chris Taylor and his knowledge of fonts, I chose Cambria. It was designed in 2004 with a more open style for the screen. With the comparison at bottom, I think many of you will agree that it is an improvement over TNR.

With the corruption in Publisher, I would have had to abandon Cambria were it not for my position on the OPCUG Board of Directors allowing me access to a free, downloadable licence of Microsoft Office 365. It includes the latest version of Publisher and I am now free to use Cambria without issue.

If you didn't notice the odd entries in September and are curious, they are in the following articles:

Etching a USB Bootable Drive (Alan German, p. 1): "Flash from ^{6}ile" below the graphic should be "Flash from file"

The Exposure Triangle (Lynda Buske, p. 4): "bird in ^{D}light" under *Situation 1* should be "bird in flight"

Quick Tip 65: Text cursor visibility (Chris Taylor, p. 6): "Windows 54" should be "Windows 10"

The corruption is erratic: only the second instance of "Windows 10" in Chris' article was affected, as was only one letter "f" in each of Alan's and Lynda's articles (I have corrected the online copy so the corrupted text can only be seen in the newsletter distributed by email in August).

You can download the corrected issue here: https://opcug.ca/Articles/2409NEWS.pdf .

Visual Comparison of Times New Roman and Cambria

In the comparison below, notice how TNR is tighter, taking up less space with more characters per line (both fonts are in 10 point size and side margins are the same for both entries). Not only is there more space between the letters in Cambria, there is more space between the lines, making it easier to read on a screen. (The excerpt below is well worth reading, especially the brilliant passage in bold written by Stanley Morison, typographer and very creator of TNR. "A brief history of Times New Roman" is short and also a good read.)

[Excerpt from *A brief history of Times New Roman* (*Typography for Lawyers, 2nd Edition* by Matthew Butterick, *Thomson Reuters*)]

Times New Roman	Cambria
"Even when new, Times New Roman had its critics. In his typographic memoir, *A Tally of Types*, Morison good-naturedly imagined what William Morris […] might have said about it: **"As a new face it should, by the grace of God and the art of man, have been broad and open, generous and ample; instead, by the vice of Mammon and the misery of the machine, it is bigoted and narrow, mean and puritan.""**	"Even when new, Times New Roman had its critics. In his typographic memoir, *A Tally of Types*, Morison good-naturedly imagined what William Morris […] might have said about it: **"As a new face it should, by the grace of God and the art of man, have been broad and open, generous and ample; instead, by the vice of Mammon and the misery of the machine, it is bigoted and narrow, mean and puritan.""**

THROUGH THE LENS

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

Getting up close and personal!
by Lynda Buske

Even though I think of myself as primarily a landscape photographer, I do like getting up close to objects in nature. Sometimes this involves getting down low as well and I enjoy achieving that different perspective from the very common eye-level pics many people take. While a lower perspective can work in all sorts of situations, it is particularly useful for macro nature photography. If I'm going to show you what a mushroom looks like from the perspective of a mouse, I need to get at mouse level. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Let's think first about some common macro natural subjects. For me, what immediately come to mind are blossoms, bugs and butterflies. The key to macro composition is eliminating background clutter and homing in on a single subject. There are various ways to do this. If you don't have an actual macro lens, just get as close as you can (either physically or zooming) and crop your image tightly later. It varies but many standard lenses do not allow you to get closer than a foot or so from your subject.

My cell phone (Google Pixel 6 pro) can actually focus within an inch or so of an object and once it's locked in, I can zoom even closer whereas it will not focus that close from the start (this is only possible if you have an optical zoom on your phone).

A second method of eliminating or lessening background "noise" is to have a short depth of field so all but the main areas of interest are softened. With a standard lens, this can be done by opening your aperture as wide as you can (smallest f-stop number). However, with a macro lens, your camera is so close to the subject that setting a wide aperture may literally result in only a few millimetres depth of field (the area of your photograph that is considered to be acceptably sharp focus). Unless the subject is very thin, this will probably result in too much of the photo being out of focus. So, while you can get much closer with a macro lens, you need to make sure you have sufficient depth of field. Using my 105mm macro, at just a few inches from the subject, I set the aperture to f/11 for image 1 and f/16 for image 2.

Image 1, A=11 (f/11)

Image 2, A=16 (f/16)

When selecting a small aperture (high number) in order to achieve enough depth of field, you will need a longer shutter speed to let in sufficient light for proper exposure and it may be too slow for you to hand hold the camera steadily enough. Using a tripod will keep things still when a long exposure time is required. For image 3, I didn't have a tripod but instead placed my camera on the ground (on a plastic bag) and shot up. It is very useful to have an articulated back screen in this situation so you can see what you are shooting.

An alternative to a longer shutter speed is bumping the ISO to a higher number. This will give you a faster shutter speed although it may introduce some graininess/noise at the higher settings. This can be corrected in post processing.

Image 3

Of course, macros do not have to be only bugs and flowers. It is fun to take closeups of all sorts of subjects and isolate details you want the viewer to focus on.

If you wish to explore macro photography further, an excellent Canadian photographer is Don Komarechka. (https://www.donkom.ca/)

♦♦♦

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

Quick Tip 66: Notification of apps added to Windows 11 Startup

by Chris Taylor

When programs are added to Windows Startup, several things can happen

- Programs that work in the background to provide functionality can do their thing,

- You may get quicker access to these programs when you need to work with them as they are already loaded, and

- They may slow down your PC since they are loaded every time you start Windows, remain running all the time consuming memory, and using CPU cycles.

The first two may be desirable. The third, not so much.

When you install programs, some will silently add themselves to the Startup functionality—usually not letting you know. If you are running Windows 11, you can receive a notification when programs do this and you can reverse the action, if you want.

Press Win+i to load Settings. Choose *System > Notifications*. Scroll to the bottom of the list and toggle *Startup App Notification* on. Customize the notifications by clicking > beside the toggle switch.

If a program adds itself to *Windows Startup* you will get a notification. If you don't want the program to autostart with Windows, press Ctrl+Shift+Esc to start Task Manager. Choose *Startup apps* in the left panel, right-click the program on the right, and choose *Disable*. If you want to reverse this action later, you can go to the same spot and choose *Enable*.

That there are many other ways a program can set itself to autostart with Windows. *Autoruns* is a free program from Sysinternals that can help you deal with any program. See https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/downloads/autoruns.

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 on the back page of the Newsletter and on the website.

Nominations can be submitted via email to Lynda Buske, Election Chair, at 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

Linux—Part 1 *(Continued from page 1)*

This will give us the confidence to eventually in-stall Linux side-by-side with Windows 10, giving us dual-boot capability where we can decide to use either Linux or Windows, with each operating system working completely independently of the other. There, we will have the best of both worlds. We can try out all the features and possibilities of Linux while retaining the option to return to Win-dows by simply rebooting if and when necessary.

We will go through the process of thoroughly try-ing out Linux in manageable steps. After all, we have a whole year to see if Linux can be a viable replacement, or at least a useful partner, for our Windows 10 system. So, let's get started.

Firstly. we need a USB drive, with a capacity of 4 GB or more, which we can use to create a bootable disk. The disk should be empty or at least not con-tain any files that are needed since the process of creating the boot drive will overwrite any existing files. Now, go to the Linux Mint 22 "Wilma" page (https://linuxmint.com/download.php). Click on the *Download* button for the Cinnamon Edition and select the link to the *Manitoba Unix User Group*. This will download the file *linuxmint-22-cinnamon-64bit.iso* (2.91 GB) which we will use to create the bootable USB drive.

We can use Balena Etcher as a really simple way to create the bootable disk (see Etching a Bootable USB Drive). Download the Windows version of Balena Etcher from https://etcher.balena.io by scrolling down the page and clicking the *Download* link for *ETCHER FOR WINDOWS (X86|X64) (INSTALLER)*. The downloaded file, *balenaEtcher-1.19.21.Setup.exe,* is a portable version of the soft-ware so simply double-clicking on this exe file runs the program. Click on the *Flash from file* but-ton in the main program window and select *linuxmint-22-cinnamon-64bit.iso* as the source file. Now, plug in the 4 GB (or bigger) USB drive and choose this drive using the *Select target* button. Finally, press the *Flash* button and wait for Etcher to complete the writing process.

We can now reboot the computer from the just-created bootable USB drive. The process required varies by computer. If you don't already know how to boot your specific machine from a USB drive, enter a query in Google or check the manu-facturer's web site. For my Dell laptop, I simply have to press F12 as the machine is rebooting and a one-time boot menu pops up that allows me to select the USB drive.

A boot menu (GNU GRUB version 2.12) will be displayed. The first menu item, **Start Linux Mint 22 Cinnamon 64-bit (compatibility mode)* is set as the default selection as indicated by the asterisk. Press the Enter key to boot into Linux Mint.

Be patient as the boot process may take a little time. Note that we are booting directly from the USB drive which is relatively slow. The pro-cess will involve black screens and the occa-sional green-and-white Linux Mint (lm) logo, but the Linux desktop will eventually load - in all its splen-dour! (as shown in Figure 1)

Figure 1. The default Linux desktop
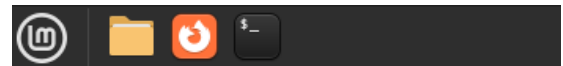

Figure 2. The right end of the panel

Figure 3. The left end of the panel

A notification window popped up briefly as the desktop loaded. If you missed it, the text indicated that "Wi-Fi networks are available". As a first step in making use of our Linux desktop, we can make the Wi-Fi connection and try out the Firefox web browser that is bundled with Linux Mint.

The lower portion of the Linux desktop is called the panel and is equivalent to the Windows' taskbar. At the right end of the panel there is a group of icons of which the fourth icon from the right (Figure 2) is for networking. Left-click on this icon to bring up a list of available network connections. Select the name of your home Wi-Fi network. In the subsequent pop-up dialogue box, enter the pass-word for your Wi-Fi system and press *Connect*. Now click on the or-ange Firefox icon in the group of icons at the left end of the panel (Figure 3). When Firefox loads, type opcug.ca in the address bar. You are now browsing the Internet using Linux!

Feel free to try any of the other applications that are available on your Linux desktop. (Hint – the Start menu is the *lm* icon in the lower-left corner of the desktop.) However, we will be exploring Linux in detail in upcoming articles in this series so you can also stay tuned for much more information on how to configure and use Linux.

Bottom Line:
Linux Mint (Open source)
Version 22 (Wilma)
Clément Lefèbvre
https://linuxmint.com

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 (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/

Monthly Meetings

OPCUG meets at 7:30 pm 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 meetings are via **video conference**.
Details at https://opcug.ca/venue/

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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

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