



# OTTAWA PC NEWS

Volume 41, Number 9

November 2024

## ARTICLE

### Trading Up To Linux – Part 2 *by Alan German*

In the first article in this series we used Balena Etcher to create a bootable USB drive using the Cinnamon Edition of the Linux Mint 22 (Wilma) distro. After booting Linux using this USB, we connected to our local Wi-Fi network and ran the Firefox web browser to load OPCUG’s web site. So, now that we have a working Linux system, albeit running in live-USB mode, it’s time to delve a little deeper into the software that comes bundled with our Linux distro.

Note that, since we are using a live-USB, any changes that we can make to the system will normally be lost when we shut down the Linux session. As a result, we will leave options such as system updates, desktop configuration, setting up E-mail, and software installation until we have a regular, installed version of Linux available on the computer’s hard drive. Nevertheless, we can still usefully try out many of the features of Linux and, because we are running Linux entirely from the USB, we can do so without affecting the Windows operating system currently installed on the computer’s hard drive.

As might be expected, Firefox can also be invoked from the Internet category in the menu. Selecting this menu option provides access to: Firefox Web Browser, Matrix (IRC-based chat), Thunderbird Mail, Transmission (Bit Torrent client) and Web Apps (convert website to desktop). With the Internet sub-menu displayed, once again, a single click on the Firefox menu item launches the browser.

So, we have seen two ways of launching an application, firstly by typing the program’s name into the search box, and secondly (and perhaps easier) using the graphical menu to select a particular menu item. Later in this series we’ll see how to make launching any program even more convenient by using either a desktop shortcut or a panel icon.

*(Continued on page 10)*

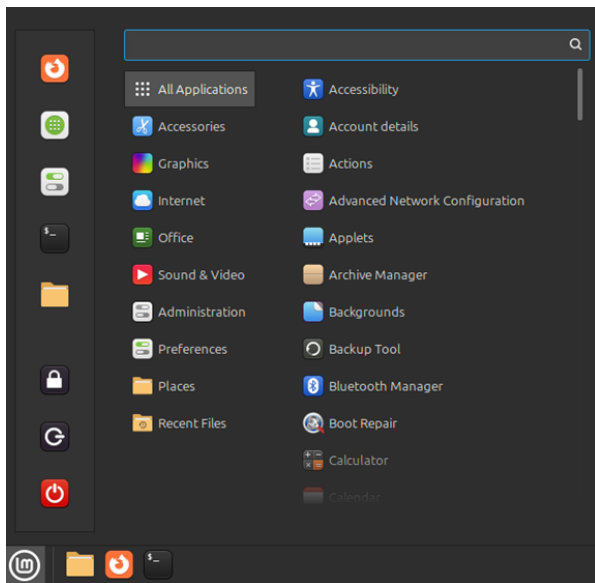


Figure 1 The main menu for Linux Mint

The main menu for Linux Mint is displayed by clicking on the *lm* icon on the left end of the panel (the lower-left corner of the display). The result is shown in Figure 1. The available software is organized in broad categories, i.e. Accessories, Graphics, Internet, etc.; however, an individual program can be accessed by typing a partial name into the search bar at the top of the menu. For example, typing “Fir” displays *Firefox Web Browser* and *Firewall Configuration*, while extending the search string to “Firef” limits the display to just the Firefox

Web Browser. A single click of the mouse on this listing then launches the browser.

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

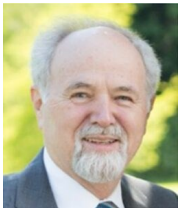
## Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### Artificial Intelligence

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

AI has become big news, particularly ChatGPT which, among other things, can write essays to order, an ability that the media built up to be (almost) the end of civilization as we know it. This talk will give us a clearer picture of what AI is, what it can do and what will be left for us to do.



Brett studied physics at UBC (Class of '71) and earned his MSc at Queens (Class of '76). At the same time, he was doing Artificial Intelligence research as a hobby. He pursued it as a hobby until 2001. In 2002 he founded Adaptron Inc. to continue the research inside a corporate structure. The company performs Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) research. AGI should be able to learn to do anything a human can do. That includes recognizing things, performing tasks and learning how to think.

Brett has said that a research principle is to explain things at the simple level first. That should dispel any worries that it will be over our heads.

**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...

23 October

[Weekly Q&A Session](#)

11 December

[Encryption Software](#)

**Speaker:** Mark Schulman, IT manager

08 January

[AI Showdown](#) (details to follow)

**Speaker:** Bob Herres, OPCUG

Visit <https://opcug.ca/#upcoming> to see all scheduled events.

## OPCUG Presentations at the OPL:

22 Oct, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Organizing your photos (Lynda Buske)

Tuesday, Orleans Branch

24 Oct, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Typography (Chris Taylor)

Thursday, Rosemount Branch

28 Oct, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Organizing your photos (Lynda Buske)

Monday, North Gloucester Branch

28 Oct, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Armchair travel: Ireland & Scotland (Lynda Buske)

Monday, Carlingwood Branch

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

## 2024 CALENDAR

Event	Date	Time and Venue
Next Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, November 13 <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, October 23<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 OPCUG presentations at the OPL.

## CLUB LIFE

### One-on-one remote assistance

As was discussed at Q&A and announced in the October issue of the newsletter (<https://opcug.ca/Articles/2410NEWS.pdf>), we are embarking on the next level of fulfilling our motto: **Users helping users.**

While the weekly Q&A sessions are a terrific way of getting computer assistance, sometimes we are faced with a tricky situation that may be hard to fix at Q&A. It is for those situations that we are offering one-on-one remote assistance.

This service—which is only available to members of the OPCUG—will pair up a requestor with a volunteer. A remote-control app such as Windows Quick Assist or Zoom will allow the volunteer to connect to your computer over the Internet. They will be able to see your screen and, *if you permit it*, control your mouse and keyboard remotely.

If you want to request one-on-one remote assistance, send an email to [1on1request@opcug.ca](mailto:1on1request@opcug.ca). In the email give lots of details of the issue you need assistance with. The more details you provide, the more likely one of our volunteers, currently numbering nine, will understand your issue and decide they can offer to assist you. Be sure your email includes a phone number and email address you would like to use for contact. The volunteer helpers will discuss your request and if one feels they can help you with the issue, they will reach out to you to arrange a time and date for the one-on-one remote session.

Some of the rules of the road:

- The service is only available to members of the OPCUG.
- There is no charge for the service.
- Civility is expected at all times.
- In-person assistance is not available.
- We can't promise we can fix your problem.
- Neither the OPCUG nor the helper can accept responsibility for a negative outcome; bad things can happen. One-on-one assistance requestors are encouraged to make sure they can recover from any sort of disaster. This will serve you well any time!
- If none of the volunteer helpers feel they can help you with your issue, we will let you know.
- Following the engagement, requestors are required to send a follow-up email to [1on1request@opcug.ca](mailto:1on1request@opcug.ca) with comments on how the engagement went and anything they thought could have been done better.



If you think you may be able to provide one-on-one remote assistance to other members of the OPCUG, send an email to [SuggestionBox@opcug.ca](mailto:SuggestionBox@opcug.ca). Conversely, if you need help on a specific issue, send full details to [1on1request@opcug.ca](mailto:1on1request@opcug.ca).

As this is a brand-new service, there could be hiccups along the way. Please be patient as kinks get worked out.

(There is a link to this program on the [home page](#) of our website.)

### 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.

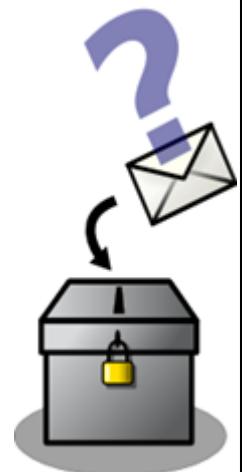
If you want more information about what is involved, please talk to me or any current or past Board member. Names are listed on the back page of the Newsletter and on the [website](#).

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



# PRODUCT REVIEW

## Really Uninstalling Software in Windows by Alan German

The developer says that Uninstalr is a “fast, lightweight and accurate way to uninstall software in Windows.” The notion of accurate uninstallation is intriguing. The list of relevant program features includes deep analysis with respect to installed apps, fixing incorrect data from the installed apps listing, and detecting previously uninstalled software leftovers. The latter option is especially interesting as it suggests that an “uninstalled” program may not necessarily be completely uninstalled. Another feature of this program that may be useful in some instances is its ability to batch uninstall several apps at the same time.

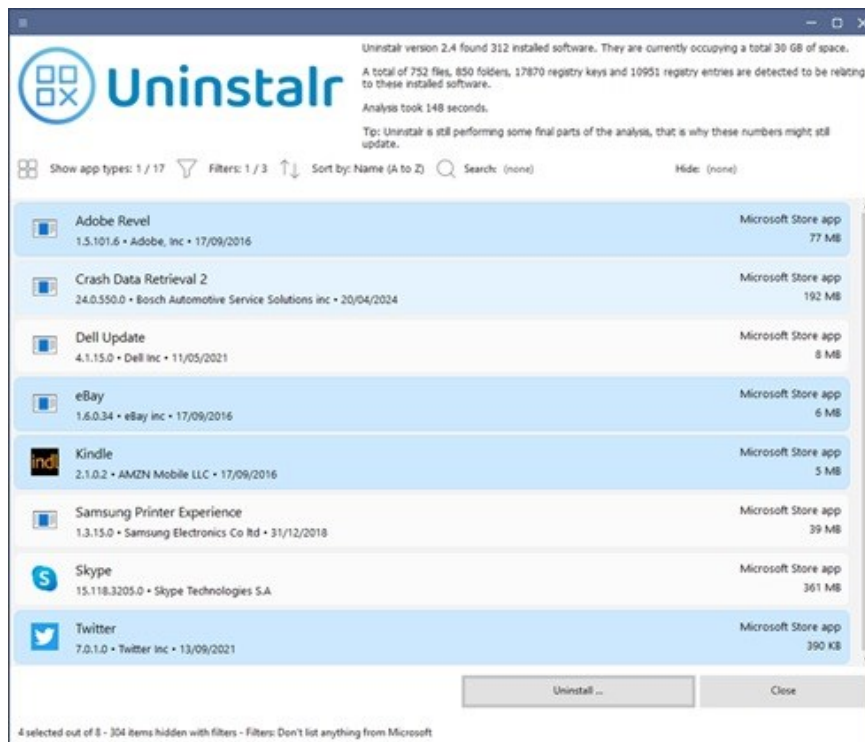
Two versions of the program are available. The *Portable* download provides a single executable file that can be run from any computer. The *Setup* version uses a conventional process to install the program on a specific computer. For testing purposes, I opted to use the portable version of Uninstalr.

When the program runs it takes a couple of minutes to analyze the software installed on the computer and then lists the installed programs in alphabetical order, together with a summary of the number of associated files, folders, registry keys, registry entries, and the disk space being used,

and a category named Possible leftover. One of the available filters is *Don't include anything from Microsoft*. This is enabled by default and ensures that, for example, no Windows software is inadvertently uninstalled. The other filters optionally list only installed software packages that are larger than 10 MB, or which have been installed in the last 7 days.

Since I have not installed any apps from the Microsoft Store, I initially restricted the checked items to be displayed to the Microsoft Store app category. The result is shown in Figure 1. Some of the listings were clearly surplus to my requirements and likely resulted from software bundled with the computer when purchased. Adobe Revel, taking up 77 MB of disk space, is particularly useless as (a) I have never used this package (that offered photo storage in the cloud), and (b) the service was shut down in 2016! Note that Adobe Revel and three other items in the list, the eBay, Kindle and Twitter apps, have been selected and can all be uninstalled by simply clicking on the Uninstall button to activate the batch process.

My next foray into the program's features was to check the Possible leftover category. The resulting listings all appeared to be related to software packages that I had previously installed and subsequently removed. Clicking on the Uninstall button requested confirmation for their removal. A subsequent screen (Figure 2) provided a summary of the items to be removed, the disk space occupied, and specific properties of each software package. It's worth noting that just removing these software leftovers would provide an additional 23 MB of free disk space.



**Figure 1. Software installed from the Microsoft Store**

The display includes options to show only certain file types, filter the list on pre-defined criteria, search for a file name, and hide files by partial file name. The *Show app types* option provides a checklist with various categories, most of which refer to apps installed from specific platforms such as Steam and PortableApps.com. Some other options are apps obtained from the Microsoft Store,

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# THROUGH THE LENS

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

## How to punch up your photos by Lynda Buske

If you regularly take photos with your cell phone, you may do very little editing (other than cropping) since cell phones, in the process of creating the jpgs, often add vibrancy, sharpness, saturation, etc. But it may end up looking a bit unnatural and can be tricky to dial back such effects in post processing.

However, if you are shooting with a more traditional camera such as a DSLR or mirrorless, you may find the opposite happens. Both the Canon and Nikon I shoot with regularly tend to process photos with a minimum of contrast. This can cause the photos to look kind of dull and muted when I first take them out of the camera and onto my PC.

I have heard folk say, "My cell phone takes better photos than my camera". With a few exceptions (like low light situations) it can just be that you like the decisions the cell phone is making on your behalf. It doesn't bother me that my camera tends to do fewer adjustments when creating the jpg as it means I am able to adjust without overdoing it (or I can shoot RAW for full control). For instance, I rarely add saturation to an image but instead, **use contrast to punch up my photos**. That way I don't get the lurid colours that don't usually occur in nature. Besides, I always have more pixels to play with than with my cell phone and that is a big help when making fine adjustments or cropping in on a bird or animal.

So how does contrast work? Below is an image out of camera, with added contrast versus added saturation.



Colours seem dull out of camera



Colours appear unnatural with saturation



Enhanced but natural with added contrast

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## THROUGH THE LENS

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Adding contrast increases the differences between the brighter and darker areas of your photo. It will add more pure black and pure white to your image so rather than a range of soft mid-tones (or grey in a monochrome image), your pixels are more evenly distributed and your image appears sharper. You can see this in the accompanying histograms (shown in bottom right-hand corner of all these pictures) which show the distribution of pixels with the left side being pure black and the right side being pure white.

Sometimes the contrast is a bit too much of a blunt instrument since it may end up creating too much pure black in order to get any pure white (see “Contrast” photo below and histogram weighted to the left side). In these cases, use the *White* and *Black* sliders. In the free Photoscape X these can be found under *Colour* then *More*. In Lightroom there are clearly marked under the *Develop* tab. Pull the white and black sliders individually to get what you want. Watch the histogram to make sure you have pixels touching both the left and right side of the graph. Be careful that there are no large areas of pure white if you are going to print the image as it may affect how it appears on glossy paper.



Dull colours right out of camera



Contrast added too much black



Using black/white slider bars gave more control

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

## ARTICLE

## Windows 10 & 11 - Differences in Security, Features, and Looks

By Phil Sorrentino,  
Secretary and APCUG Rep,  
Sun City Center Computer Club, FL  
<https://sccccomputerclub.org/>  
philsorr (at) yahoo.com

We know Windows 10 is not the last version; maybe Windows 11 will be, but I'm not taking any bets. Technology is constantly changing and usually improving. To say that this is the last of some technology would seem to say that this will be the end of that technology. But Desktop Operating Systems don't seem to be ending, at least not in the foreseeable future. So desktop/laptop computers need Software to provide control of, and organization, to the underlying computer hardware. Of course, that doesn't mean it has to be Windows; it could be MacOS, ChromeOS, Linux, Android, or even some yet-to-be-released Operating System that no one has ever heard of. But for my money and my lifetime, I think it will still be Windows. So it probably pays to review and possibly embrace the changes leading to the differences between Windows 10 and 11.



In a nutshell, the differences are in a few specific areas like Minimum hardware requirements, taskbar placement, the shape of the corners of windows, the looks and sounds of activities, the included Apps, and the CPUs it can run on. (A table showing many differences is included at the

end of the article.) The performance differences in Windows 11 are pretty much under the hood and come down to how Windows 11 handles system processes that you usually only see when you open Task Manager. According to Microsoft, Windows 11 does a lot of work in memory management to favor the App windows you have open and running in the foreground. Initially, Windows 11 required you to log in to a Microsoft account. Microsoft indicated that that offered benefits such as improved security, better integration with Microsoft's cloud services, and synchronization between one's computers. Early adopters provided negative feedback to Microsoft on this requirement, and they removed the need to log in to a Microsoft account, so now you can just set up a local account. Many things in Windows 11 look different, but many perceived differences are not in the functionality provided but where to go to find the functionality. Once you get there, you find that it works just the way it did in Windows 10. You'll probably notice one minor difference, "Command Prompt" is now "Windows Terminal." Features in Windows 11 now look more like Apps, though they have not really changed what they do or how they do it. There is a button on the Start screen, right above the "Pinned Apps" called "All apps," a term from the mobile device world. Some things are very much the same; right-click the start button in either OS, and you'll find a similar list of features (though Mobility Center is now added to the Windows 11 list). If you use the Action Center, you will notice it is not on the taskbar. The

Winkey+A keyboard shortcut will provide similar information without notifications. Notifications can be found in Settings-System. Control Panel is still around; search for it using the "Search" icon on the taskbar, which leads you to the "Quick Assist" window. When you open the Control Panel App, you will see just what you remember from Windows 10, minus Administrative Tools, but plus Windows Mobility Center and Windows Tools. And oh, if you feel that you will be happier with the start button on the left, go to Settings-Personalization-Taskbar and click on "Taskbar behaviors" and finally pull down the arrow next to "Center" and choose "Left" as the Taskbar alignment.

Possibly, the main difference between Windows 10 and Windows 11 is security. Windows 11 requires a PC that's capable of Secure Boot, which prevents malware from attacking the boot process. (You don't have to enable Secure Boot, but the PC must support it. It seems inevitable that it will soon have to be enabled.) And your PC must have a Trusted Platform Module (TPM) version 2.0 hardware chip to manage cryptographic keys and protect your PC's OS and firmware. TPM is usually a dedicated chip on a motherboard that provides hardware encryption for features like BitLocker and Windows Hello. Without these two security components, Secure Boot and TPM, you will probably have to stay with Windows 10. The concept of a Trusted Platform Module goes back around 20 years, and PCs have had them since 2005. (Microsoft's BitLocker, a whole-drive encryption system, relies on

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the TPM hardware to manage and protect its cryptographic keys. Windows Hello face recognition also makes use of TPM support. (Microsoft's documentation advises that any modern PC probably has a TPM and that any PC less than five years old most likely has the latest version of the TPM hardware, 2.0.) TPM is critical to security. It validates hardware and software components, so no one can tamper with your PC. It stores important cryptographic keys and supplies ultra-secure cryptographic functions to Windows and many applications. All this considered, it looks like a major difference is that Windows 11 provides improved computer security.

As an aside, Apple's OSs have had security baked into them from the start. The mobile OS, iOS, is even more locked down than the desktop OS, MacOS. Windows, on the other hand, is still in the process of locking down many system vulnerabilities. By requiring Secure Boot and a TPM 2.0 chip, Windows 11 will eliminate a whole class of malware attacks that gain control over the computer by subverting the Windows boot process or getting into the system before bootup. Unfortunately, some older PCs will be left behind in making the jump to a more secure Windows 11, but Microsoft has said that it will maintain Windows 10 for at least the next two years.\* Hopefully, the increased security will be worth the inconvenience and cost of upgrading to Windows 11.

\* (OPCUG editor's note: end of support for Windows 10 is October 14, 2025.)

<u>Feature</u>	<u>Windows 10</u>	<u>Windows 11</u>
Release date	2015	2021
Minimum hardware	2GB Ram, 32GB Storage	4GB Ram, 64GB Storage
Trusted Platform Module	1.2	2.0
Can run Android Apps	No	Yes
Start Menu	On the Left	In the Center (Can be moved)
End of Life	Oct. 2025	???
Snap Layouts	Minimal	Improved and easy to use
Virtual Desktops	Taskview	Improved –Similar to Mac
Taskbar -Location	Top, bottom, side	Bottom, center (or left)
Taskbar –Open Apps	All the same	Wide bar –App with focus
Windows	Sharp corners	Rounded corners –Softer look
Sounds	Yes	Muted –Light/Dark mode differ
Action Center	Yes	Changed
File Explorer	Yes	Improved
Browser Included	Internet Explorer, Edge	Edge
Snipping Tool	And Snip & Sketch	Only Updated Snipping Tool
Tablet mode	A Choice	Automatic when keyboard removed
Tablet Gestures	Yes	Multi-finger gestures added
Touch, Pen, Voice Input	Yes	Improved
Widgets	Yes	Improved –Slideout screen
32-bit version of OS	Yes	Not available
Feature Updates	Twice a year	Once a year
Startup Menu	Large Live Tiles	Grid of App Icons
On-Line Communications	Skype	Teams
Cortana Setup	Included	Eliminated





## ARTICLE

# Time to Replace Your Computer? Do this first.

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

To most of us, replacing our computer is a double-edged sword. There is the joy of expecting to take advantage of newer, faster hardware and software, and then there's the challenge of the unknown, new features. This is especially true now because we have been using Windows 10 for a long time and our next computer will undoubtedly have Windows 11. Windows 11 was released in October 2021. All computers from typical manufacturers like Dell, HP, ASUS, Microsoft, Toshiba, Lenovo, etc., come with Windows 11. Windows 11 does have some new features, but most Windows 10 users should feel comfortable with Windows 11 once they find out where their favorite features are. They're all there, but the path to get to them is not always clear. Before you think about how to use the new computer, there is one last thing you should do with your old computer. And that is to ensure no personal information is on the old computer. You may be giving the computer to someone, or you may be donating the computer to a service that refurbishes computers for re-distribution, or you might take it to an e-waste facility. You don't want your private information to go to the new user. (As for donated computers, I can confidently say that all the Computer User Groups I have been associated with always wiped the hard drives before anything else was done. Hard drives are often not even useable, so they are removed and destroyed, usually with a hammer or drill.)

Just a brief technical discussion. By now, most computer users know that deleting a file does not actually remove the file from the computer, and with some basic software, the file can be read (as long as another file has not been written over it). The first byte of the file indicates whether it is deleted or not. This may have been done to make it very easy for the Operating System to delete files, so it doesn't take too much time, especially if you are trying to delete hundreds of files at a time. But this leaves the file on the drive intact, except for the fact that the first byte indicates it has been deleted. When the file is deleted, all of the data space is returned to the Operating System so it can use the space again when it needs space for a new file. Depending on what else is happening, the deleted file may be written over in the next few seconds, but it might remain intact or partially intact for a long time. Of course, if it contains personal information, that information is at risk.

In the past, it was more difficult to ensure you removed all your personal information because the functionality wasn't part of the Operating System. Instead, you had to use a separate software program developed specifically for writing useless data into all of the space originally occupied by data files. There are many of those programs available, one of which is called DBAN. But today, Windows 10 makes the job very easy because that functionality can be found in Settings' "Update and Security" section. First, choose the "Recovery" option, then "Get Started," and finally, select "Reset this PC." At that point, you will be presented with "Keep my files" and "Remove everything." "Keep my Files" Removes

apps and settings but keeps your personal files; you don't want this choice. "Remove everything" Removes all your personal files, apps, and settings, which is what you want. Choosing "Remove everything" will write zeros into all of the space used by your files. Once zeros are written into a file's data space, that file will not be able to provide any indication of the original file contents. (The only slightly possible exception may be highly specialized hardware and software probably only owned by hard drive manufacturers and executed only by some government agency.) So, for all intents and purposes, the data is gone. (Remember that only the C: drive was wiped clean of your personal data. If you have a second drive, as might be the case with a desktop with personal data, the data is still on the second drive.) As a bonus, Windows 10 will be re-installed. The computer should be operating just like it did when you originally got it, but without any of the apps you installed and, of course, without your personal information.

If, for some reason, you are not comfortable using Windows 10's "Reset this PC," there is always software like DBAN available. DBAN is short for Darik's Boot And Nuke. DBAN is Free Open-Source Data Wiping Software for Personal Use, as it says on its website, [dban.org](http://dban.org). As you can see from the website, DBAN has many features and options, probably more than the average user will need. You can also get DBAN from [filehippo.com](http://filehippo.com), a reasonably safe place to download software. DBAN works well, but it comes with a warning, as shown below, and a disclaimer that "the authors are not liable for any damages arising from the use of this software," which might frighten some potential users."



```

Darik's Boot and Nuke

Warning: This software irreversibly destroys data.

This software is provided without any warranty; without even the implied
warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. In no event
shall the software authors or contributors be liable for any damages arising
from the use of this software. This software is provided "as is".

http://www.dban.org/

- Press the F2 key to learn about DBAN.
- Press the F3 key for a list of quick commands.
- Press the F4 key to read the BIOS disclaimer.
- Press the ENTER key to start DBAN in interactive mode.
- Enter autonuke at this prompt to start DBAN in automatic mode.

boot: _

```

## DBAN's Warning

"DBAN has been designed for the home user, and although it is good at what it does, the interface is a little clunky" is a quote from the [filehippo.com](http://filehippo.com) description, so unless you are a technically inclined user or very adventurous, this may not be for you. Use the Windows 10 "Reset this PC" functionality in that case.



**Linux** (Continued from page 1)

Note also that there a number of icons in the left sidebar of the menu. These are (top to bottom): Firefox, Software Manager, Settings, Terminal, File Manager (Nemo), Lock Screen, Logout, and Shut Down. We will take a brief look at Nemo, the default file manager, and we will eventually need to access the Shut Down option in order to exit gracefully from our Linux session. The remaining entries will be best considered in detail once we are using an installed version of Linux.

So, for now, let's click on the yellow-folder icon and bring up the Nemo file manager (Figure 2). The folders displayed in the Home directory will doubtless look familiar – Desktop, Documents, Downloads, etc. – as mostly are the same as those available in Windows. But, take a look in the lower-left sidebar of the window. Here you will see a number of disk locations, including two (64 GB) flash drives, the Windows 10 disk partition and, in my case, the dedicated data partition named DataDisk. Note also the YUMI drive which is a multi-boot flash drive that is being used to run the live-USB version of Linux Mint. So, not only do we have access to the native file system for Linux, all the other drives connected to our computer, including those used by Windows, are available.

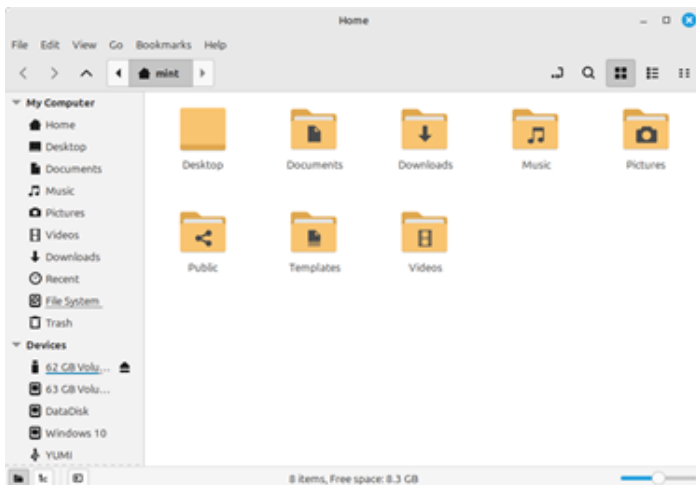


Figure 2. The Nemo File Manager

As noted earlier, the folders in the home directory are currently transient and are only available for the current Linux session. But, it is possible to retrieve and store files on other partitions on the computer's hard drive. In fact, I am writing this using LibreOffice Writer running in the live-Linux session and editing a docx file opened from a folder in DataDisk.

Now, let's take a quick tour of the programs in the various menu categories that are available as part of the Linux Mint distro. Unlike most software that is bundled with Windows

on a new computer, these applications are not “bloatware”, i.e. limited-time, trial versions of commercial products. Rather, these programs are all fully functional, really useful, and free! However, this is not to say that you are limited to only the programs that are provided. There is a wealth of applications of all types that can be downloaded, installed, and used on your Linux system.

We have already encountered the menu items available in the Internet category and, indeed, have made use of Firefox, the default web browser. Another stand-out offering found here is Thunderbird, a powerful yet easy-to-use Email client. However, since we are using a live-USB, implementing this software is currently impractical so we will leave a detailed discussion of this item until later in the series.

Mention has also already been made of LibreOffice Writer as the default word-processing application. Unsurprisingly, Writer can be accessed from the Office menu category. This sub-menu also provides access to a Calendar app and to Library (actually the *thingy* app) which can be used to access recent and favourite documents. The full LibreOffice suite of applications is available, consisting of the well-known Writer, Calc, and Impress modules that largely mirror the features of Microsoft Word, Excel, and Impress, and also LibreOffice Draw, a graphic-design program that has no counterpart in Microsoft Office.

It is worth noting that the native file format for LibreOffice is Open Document Format (ODF). This ISO-standard file format includes specifications for text documents (odt), spreadsheets (ods), and presentation files (odp). However, LibreOffice is fully capable of opening, editing, and saving Microsoft Office files (e.g. docx, xlsx and pptx). The use of Writer and Calc, as the main LibreOffice modules, will be largely familiar to users of Word and Excel so these may well be viable replacements when switching to Linux. For me, there is one specific idiosyncrasy in the default setup for LibreOffice Writer but the fix for this is simple and we will review both the issue and the solution later in this series.

Going back to our exploration of the main menu, let's take a look at the Graphics and Sound & Video categories. Graphics includes options for Document Scanner, Drawing (a simple drawing program), and Pix (a digital image manager). The Sound & Video category includes Celluloid (video player), Hypnotix (TV player), Rhythmbox (audio player), and an option to Install Multimedia Codecs. Hypnotix, offering access to free viewing of television programmes and movies, is an interesting application; however, a short period of testing suggests that the number of English-language channels that can be accessed is somewhat limited. Celluloid and Rhythmbox work well but a more popular option can be installed very easily and we

(Continued on next page)

**Linux** (Continued from previous page)

will eventually see how to do this. Finally, for this category, there is little point in installing media codecs in the live-USB version. This task will be undertaken as part of the installation process for Linux and will be a one-time operation.

The Accessories menu has many available utility programmes, including Archive Manager (used, for example, to handle ZIP files), Calculator, Document Viewer (PDF reader), and Text Editor. The utilities included in the Administration and Preferences menus allow for tasks such as managing date and time settings, printer and Bluetooth connections, and are best left until there is a specific need to use an available option.

Finally, the Places category provides access to drives and folders in much the same way as can be achieved using the Nemo file manager, while Recent Files, as the name suggests, provides a list of files that have been accessed most recently.

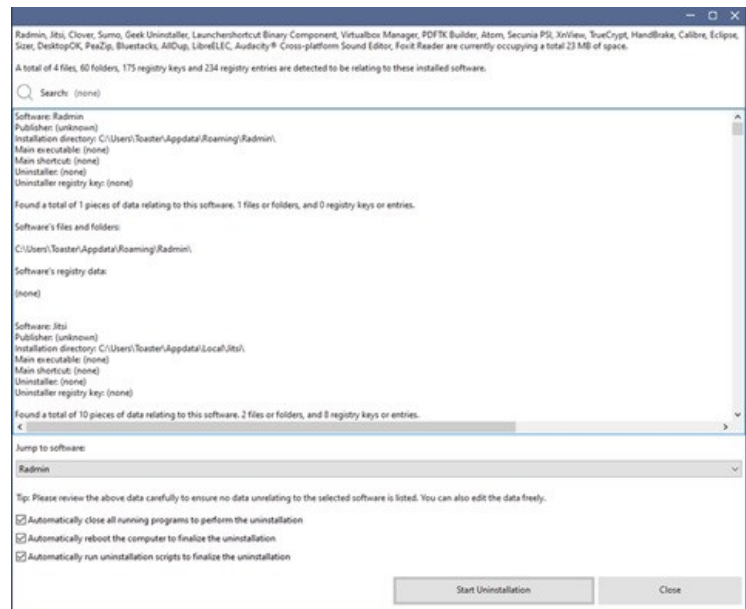
Booting the computer into Linux using the live-USB checks the compatibility of the machine's hardware before any decision to install the operating system has to be made. It also provides an opportunity to try the software that is bundled with the distro of choice and this is the option now available to us. Feel free to try composing a document in Writer, reading a PDF file using Document Viewer, playing an MP3 audio file with Rhythmbox, or any of the other available programs. One of the really good features of Linux is the broad range of applications that are packaged in a distro and instantly available for use.

Once we have made sufficient use of this testing phase, it's time to get a little more serious about Linux and install this operating system so as to create a dual-boot environment. But, let's leave this to the next installment of *Trading up to Linux* and, right now, let's take a break and shut down the live-Linux session.

Click on the *lm* icon to bring up the main menu and select the red *Shut Down* icon at the bottom of the left sidebar. The pop-up dialogue box includes options for *Suspend* (Sleep), *Cancel*, *Restart*, and *Shut Down*. Click on *Shut Down* and the computer will indeed power off "gracefully" as advertised!



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**Uninstalr** (Continued from page 4)

**Figure 2. Summary of software leftovers**

Uninstalr provides some useful options for uninstalling programs that are no longer wanted. The list resulting from the initial analysis can be reviewed for such apps and only those selected will be subject to batch removal. I didn't find the pre-defined categories of apps to be all that useful as many are related to software platforms that I don't use. The exceptions were the Microsoft Store that identified a number of bundled apps that I had never used and didn't need, and the possible leftovers that located and removed a number of disk files relating to previously uninstalled software that I didn't even know existed!

The program is freeware and can be run as a portable version on any computer without the need for installation. It provides a flexible, semi-automatic tool to aid in chasing down unwanted apps that are occupying disk space that could be better used for other purposes.

**Bottom Line:**

Uninstalr (Freeware)

Version 2.5

Macecraft Software, <https://uninstalr.com>

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

**Quick Tip 67: Minimize all windows except current**

by Chris Taylor

Sometimes it is nice to remove the clutter of multiple open windows on your screen to allow you to concentrate on the one program you are working in.

Press Windows+Home. All windows except the current window will be minimized.

Press Windows+Home again to restore all windows to their previous state.

## 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).

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### 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/>

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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**).

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