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ARTICLE

Backing Up Gmail Messages

by Alan German

A Gmail account can be accessed using a web browser (webmail) or by using an Email client such as Thunderbird. Both systems allow for messages on Gmail to be saved to a local disk as a backup.

I like to use the Thunderbird E-mail client since this allows me to access multiple accounts, including Gmail, on both my computer and smartphone. On Gmail's server, I use IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) to store my messages efficiently in different folders. Thunderbird reflects the folder structure on the mail server, using local disk folders to store downloaded copies of the E-mail messages. This effectively creates an offline backup of the entire message base.

The individual mail folders (*INBOX*, *Sent*, etc.) are stored on my hard disk as files and sub-folders of D:/thunderbird. Each mail file uses the mbox format where all the components of multiple individual messages are concatenated into a single text file. This includes the Email headers, the message text, and MIME (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions) encoding of any attached files for each message in any given mail folder.

Email clients, such as Thunderbird, interpret the mbox file, provide a list

of the included messages and, when one message is selected, display the message for the user. Typically, this includes showing the sender (From) and recipient (To), the date, subject, the message text, and the availability of any attachments. Since the mail files contain just text, they can also be read by any text editor; however, it is then up to the user to locate and view the specific material of interest from what is generally a large amount of loosely-structured ASCII text.

I make regular backups of my entire data drive. This includes the thunderbird folder and so ensures the retention of multiple backups of my current Email messages. I also maintain archive folders of some older messages. In this respect, it is useful to understand how Thunderbird stores and processes messages for any given folder.

For example, I have a sub-folder named *OPCUG* where I store messages that have been received and sent with respect to my computer-club activities. Thunderbird uses two related files to allow me to locate and read messages in this folder.

The file *OPCUG* (no extension) contains the actual messages, while a second file named *OPCUG.msf* provides Thunderbird with an index of the contents of the main message file. The *msf* file takes the form of a compact database of message elements such as send-

ers, recipients, subjects, and dates that allow rapid processing and display of the message list for the folder without having to load the complete messages.

For the purposes of my mail archive, only the main message folder is required, so I retain the *OPCUG* file but discard the associated *OPCUG.msf* index file in the offline archive. If I were to restore the *OPCUG* folder in Thunderbird, the program would automatically create the index file. However, if I wish to simply locate and read a message from the *OPCUG* file I can do so directly because, as noted earlier, the content of this file is just ASCII text. We will return to this technique shortly as our second backup method also provides us with ASCII files.

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, April 8th, 2026**

Next Meeting

Wednesday, April 8th

Restoring old photos

Speaker: Lynda Buske (OPCUG)

How many of us have inherited boxes of old family photos and have watched them slowly deteriorate while trying to decide what to do with them? Once you have digital versions of print photos or slides, you can edit them to bring them back to life or indeed give them a life they never had! Lynda will show how you how to work with the digital images to straighten, sharpen, adjust light, remove scratches, lines and spots using free software (Photoscape X). She will also briefly discuss the possible use of AI to improve your images and how best to display and share them afterwards (e.g., collage, photobook).

Lynda is an avid photographer who has penned the Through the Lens column in the OPCUG newsletter for the past 6 years. She has given over 140 presentations on a wide variety of photographic topics at many organizations, including the Ottawa Public Library, the Orleans Photo Club, the OPCUG, and others. Lynda is the Competition Director at the Orleans Photo Club and the Membership Chair of the OPCUG.

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.



Coming Up...

25 Mar

Next [weekly Q&A session](#)

31 Mar (Tuesday) Bonus Presentation #3

[Armchair Travel: Newfoundland](#) with Lynda Buske (see [page 6](#))

13 May

[Ask the Geeks!](#) (test our in-house “experts” with your questions)

10 Jun (6 PM)

[Annual Pizza Night](#) (Britannia Park, [page 5](#))

09 Sep

[Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#) (Chris Taylor)

14 Oct

[Vibe Coding Competition](#) (see [page 6](#))



See all our scheduled events [here](#).

OPCUG Presentations at the OPL:

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

Artificial Intelligence (AI): fun and useful tips (Chris Taylor)
Emerald Plaza Branch

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

How to take better vacation photos (Lynda Buske)
Nepean Centrepointe Branch

Monday, 30 Mar, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Artificial Intelligence (AI): fun and useful tips (Chris Taylor)
Rosemount Branch

Saturday, 04 Apr, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

The ins and outs of electronic mail (Chris Taylor)
Main Branch

Sunday, 12 Apr, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Artificial Intelligence (AI): fun and useful tips (Chris Taylor)
Stittsville Branch

See all our presentations with links to the OPL [here](#).

CALENDAR

Event	Date	Time and Venue
Next Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, April 8 th	7:30 pm via Zoom video conference: https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting See all our scheduled monthly meetings here .
Next Q&A Session	Wednesday, March 25th	Q&A sessions are held weekly except on monthly meeting nights. Join us most Wednesdays at 7:30 pm for weekly Q&A .
Next OPL Presentation	Monday, March 23 rd	See all our presentations with links to the OPL here .

AGM MINUTES 2026

Annual General Meeting of the OPCUG 2025/2026

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2025/2026 was held on February 11, 2026 at the beginning of the February OPCUG Monthly Meeting. Minutes were taken by the Secretary, Gail Eagen. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM.

1. Agenda

Chris Taylor, President, opened the meeting at 7:30 PM. He outlined the Agenda as follows:

Election Results
Board Reports
Questions/Comments

2. Election Results

Chris Taylor, President, introduced the Election Chair, Lynda Buske. She announced that there were eight nominations received by the deadline of December 31, 2025 and thus the Board was acclaimed with no election required. The newly elected Board for 2026/27 was announced as follows in order of first name:

Alan German
Bob Walker
Brigitte Lord
Chris Taylor
Gail Eagen
Jocelyn Doire
Karen Wallace-Graner
Stewart Bruce

Lynda gave a huge thank you to Bob Herres, former Special Events Coordinator, who stepped down from those duties. She mentioned that Bob had been an OPCUG member for 34 years. He had been involved with the Board for at least 20 years and had planned many events.

Lynda noted that the Board had asked Harvey Hope to be the ninth Board member and he had accepted.

Chris asked if there were any questions. Coreen Saikaley asked how long the OPCUG had been in existence. Chris responded that it was started 43 years ago.

3. President's Report

Chris said that his **President's Report** was published in the February 2026 Newsletter. Chris asked if there were any questions. There were none.

4. Treasurer's Report

Chris stated that the **Treasurer's Report** was published in the February 2026 Newsletter.

Jocelyn Doire provided highlights of the report for the period January 1 to December 31, 2025, our fiscal year 2025.

Jocelyn indicated that the Board's financial plan was still to reduce our capital while providing service to our members and we were gradually meeting our goal. However, in 2025, income exceeded expenses. One mechanism to lower income had been to waive membership renewal fees for existing members in good standing.

The current Assets were \$14,085.14 so we were in good financial shape.

Income for 2025 was \$1554.31 with \$614.31 from bank interest including GIC income and \$920 in membership income, and \$20 in donations.

Expenses were \$1224.81. Major Expenses were the Pizza Q at \$521.32, Meeting expenses at \$302.84 including Zoom expenses and speaker honorariums, Internet (\$281.36), APCUG (\$71.83), Bank Fees (45.36) and office supplies (\$2.00) to mail the income tax.

Income exceeded Expenses by \$329.50

He reminded current members that their membership fees would be waived for the coming year so there was no need to renew their membership. New members could join before March 31, 2026 and receive two years for the price of one.

He said that the annual review of the financial records had been completed by the reviewer, Richard Aylesworth. Jocelyn reported that the reviewer had stated that "It is this reviewer's assessment that the 2025 OPCUG financial records submitted to me by the Treasurer are a complete and accurate representation of the club's financial records for that year."

Jocelyn again thanked former Treasurer, Alan German, for 20 years from 2004 to 2024 and for all his support during the transition.

Jocelyn asked if anyone had any questions on the Treasurer's Report. There were none.

5. Secretary's Report

Chris said that the Secretary's Report would be published in an upcoming Newsletter along with the minutes of the AGM.

6. Notes of Thanks

Chris thanked the following for their contributions:

- The 2025 Board of Directors members
- Lynda Buske for again taking on the role of Election Chair and Membership Chair
- Richard Aylesworth who had reviewed the financial books for several years
- Presenters both from within the Club (Alan German, Bob Herres, Carol Pearson, Chris Taylor, Lynda Buske and Harvey Hope, Eldon Gaw, Jose Costa) and from outside (Arfi Hagi-Yusuf, Bill James, Francis Chao, JB Burke and Mark Schulman)
- Newsletter contributors
- Contributors to the weekly Question and Answer Sessions as well as the co-chairs, Chris and Alan
- Members who participated, shared, asked questions, and answered questions in weekly Q&A's and in Monthly Meetings, and
- The membership for being a part of it all.

7. Questions and Answers

Chris asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Coreen Saikaley asked if the OPCUG had ever considered offering scholarships. Chris responded that the idea had come up but the Board decided that it would prefer offering services that helped the membership as per our constitution.

8. Meeting Adjournment

Chris adjourned the meeting at 7:41 PM. There were 61 participants.

Submitted by
Gail Eagen,
Secretary, OPCUG

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2025-2026

Secretary's Report for the period February 2025 to February 2026

2024 Election

Bob Herres was the Election Chair for the 2024 Election. Calls for nominations were done in the newsletter and at OPCUG monthly meetings throughout the fall. Eight nominations were received by the due date of December 31, 2024. Since there were only eight nominations for nine Board positions, no election was required.

2025/2026 Board Members

The Board of Directors for 2025/2026 was acclaimed on February 12, 2025 at the Annual General Meeting. The Board selected positions at their next Board meeting on February 17, 2025 resulting in the following slate of officers:

Chris Taylor, President and Systems Administrator
 Jocelyn Doire, Treasurer
 Gail Eagen, Secretary
 Alan German, Program
 Bob Herres, Special Events
 Brigitte Lord, Webmaster and Newsletter
 Bob Walker, Facilities
 Karen Wallace-Graner, Board Member without Portfolio

The Board agreed to search for a ninth Board member. Later in March 2025, Stewart Bruce agreed to be the ninth Board member and took on the role of Privacy Chair.

The Board thanked Wayne Houston who stepped down from the Board after many years of service.

Board Meetings

The Board met 11 times on Feb 17, Mar 17, April 14, May 19, Jun 16, Aug 23, Sep 10, Oct 13, Nov 17, and Dec 15 in 2025 and Jan 19 in 2026. Minutes of meetings were posted on the OPCUG Google drive.

Discussion at meetings related to

- creating the program for the meetings,
- ensuring articles for the newsletter,
- monitoring the financial situation,
- maintaining the web site,
- maintaining OPCUG Google Services, and
- publicizing club meetings and events using Facebook, Twitter, the OPCUG web site and press releases to targeted audiences.

There were discussions about resuming in-person meetings or having a mix of in-person and video-conferencing Monthly OPCUG meetings. The Board continued online video-conferencing of the Board and Monthly meetings using Zoom. Weekly Question and Answer sessions were continued through Zoom. A hybrid Q&A session was carried out on April 23, 2024 at the Emerald Plaza Library with 10 attendees in person (mostly Board members) and 41 attendees online.

Major discussions, decisions made and actions taken:

- To accept Richard Aylesworth's comments and recommendations on the review of the Treasurer's financial records for 2024
- To continue investing funds in the TD bank account into staggered GICs
- To ensure Ontario Business Registry records were up to date according to the latest provincial guidelines
- To continue online Zoom meetings and Q&A and not try in-person or hybrid meetings again due to the difficulty of logistics and the low in-person attendance (special events might be arranged)
- To hold the June 2025 Pizza-Q outside at Britannia Park, renting a covered location
- To require registration for the Pizza-Q to determine the amount of food and drinks to be ordered
- To select an Election Chair to run the nomination and election process for 2025/26 (Lynda Buske agreed to be Election Chair.)
- To offer presentations at the Ottawa Public Library and include them in the calendar of events on the OPCUG web site (91 presentations were given at 21 Branches and one Zoom)
- To organize a special event at the east end Big Rig on November 26, 2025(19 attended)
- To ask Richard Aylesworth to review the Treasurer's financial records for 2025
- To extend free membership for one year to members of good standing as of March 31, 2026 and to offer, between January 1, 2026 and March 31, 2026, new members or expired members 2 years for the price of one
- To continue membership of the APCUG, "an International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups" and continue benefiting from their services including publishing their newsletter articles, sharing OPCUG Newsletter articles, soliciting speakers from their Speaker's Bureau, presenting to various APCUG user groups, participating on their Advisory Board, and participating in their contests.

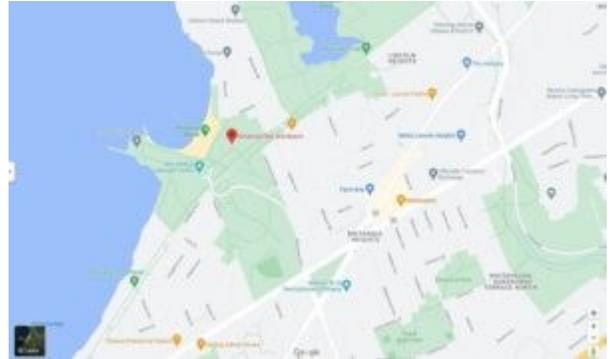
Submitted by

Gail Eagen,
 Secretary, OPCUG

SPECIAL EVENT



Map of Britannia Park ([open in Google Maps](#)):



Britannia Park Trolley Station ([see more photos](#)):



Sky view of Trolley Station and parking ([view larger](#)):



ANNUAL PIZZA PARTY

FOR OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS

When: Wednesday, June 10, 2026, 6 PM

Where: Britannia Park Trolley Station ([see images at right for directions](#))

Once again we are approaching the end of an OPCUG season, and once again we'll celebrate with pizza, drinks (pop, water) and dessert. **This is free and only for OPCUG members and their guests.**

The event will be on June 10 at 6 PM. It will be at the **Britannia Park Trolley Station** which is sheltered in case of rain and has free parking in an adjacent lot.

To help with planning, we're asking you to register by email at pizzaparty2026@opcug.ca. Tell us how many guests you are bringing and your pizza preference (e.g. combo, special, meat lover, vegetarian, gluten free, etc.). **If you have trouble climbing into a picnic table, please let us know in the email and we will try to make accommodations** (we can provide card tables & chairs and ask the park if it can re-orient some picnic tables to expose more end-of-bench seating spots).

We look forward to seeing you and your guests!

BULLETIN BOARD

Armchair travel: Newfoundland

with Lynda Buske, OPCUG



Photos and narration from multiple car trips around this wonderful province. Sights from north, south, east and west coasts.

Highlights include the Viking settlement in L'Anse aux Meadows, the fjord at Western Brook Pond, the Tablelands, Bonavista, Twillingate, Cape Spear, icebergs, puffins, and more.

Experience The Rock with photos by club member Lynda Buske.

The Zoom lecture will take place on **Tuesday**, March 31st, at **7:30 pm** EST and will last approximately one hour.

Hosted on Zoom at:

<https://tinyurl.com/opcug-bonus3>

If the above link doesn't work, you can use:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83948690493?pwd=iTrNWz9xyKtrYKpakYGXrA1rmfMl5w.1>

Or join by entering the meeting ID in the Zoom app:

meeting ID: **839 4869 0493**

passcode: **opcug**

October 14th Meeting

Vibe Coding Competition (non-members are welcome to participate)

OPCUG will offer two prizes for submissions using vibe coding in a competition to be held at the club's monthly meeting in October. **Holding the competition will be subject to having multiple entries submitted.** The use of vibe coding will be on the honour system. For those providing entries, there will be two prizes offered: (1) the most useful product, and (2) the best presentation of the development process. Note that the project doesn't have to be successful for this second portion of the competition. Stories of trials and tribulations, and even abysmal failure will be happily accepted. So, get started on your vibe-coding project. You have lots of time to refine both the code and the associated presentation. When you are ready, submit your entry to the competition to SuggestionBox@opcug.ca.

(See the article "You Too Can Be A Programmer" in the [March Newsletter](#).)



BOGO Membership Drive (last chance)



Buy One (Year) Get One Free!

Join OPCUG before March 31st, 2026
Pay \$20 for one-year's membership

We will extend your membership by a further year at no additional cost!

Details at <https://opcug.ca/join-or-renew/>

Already an OPCUG Member?



Do not renew your membership !

Your membership expiry date will be extended by another year at no cost

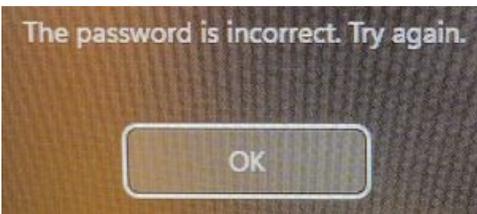
APCUG ARTICLE

“Help, Tom! I Forgot My Windows Login Password!”

Tom Burt, Vice-President,
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
<https://www.scsccl.com>
tomburt89134 (at) cox.net



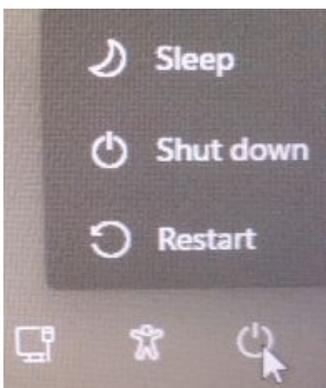
Not long ago, a long-time friend emailed me in some desperation, asking for my help. She had been “cleaning up” her Windows laptop PC and at some point, she was no longer able to log in; her password, which had worked earlier in the day, was rejected as “incorrect”. I agreed to take a look and, if it looked beyond my skills, to advise her on what options she might have. This began a two week odyssey on my part to get the laptop back into a state where she could login and then to recover her data files, which we discovered had seemingly gone missing.



Let me call my friend “Amiga”, which is Spanish for “female friend”. (In Las Vegas, we all “hablamos un poco español”.)

Amiga brought her laptop to Casa de Burt (my house), powered it up and showed me the login failure. She was pretty certain her Windows login was her Microsoft account.

We tried using her smart phone to log in to her Microsoft account and reset her password. We gave the laptop a couple of minutes to synchronize with the online Microsoft account and then tried logging in with the new password. (I determined later that this was useless because the laptop wasn’t connected to my in-house LAN.) Windows rejected the new password and also the old password.



At that point, I said I’d have to do some research on how to reset a forgotten Windows password. Amiga said, based on her own research before calling me, that if I clicked the power icon at the lower right corner of the Login screen and then clicked the Restart option while pressing the Shift key, it would boot into the System Recovery screens. Sure enough, it did. But she didn’t know what any of

those screens did and was, wisely, uneasy about clicking around and initiating any actions.

****Note**** The icons only appear after you press Enter or click to display the password entry box.

We agreed I’d keep the laptop, do some research, and see if I could get in and reset her password.

Research

I set up Amiga’s laptop in my office, near my WiFi router and desktop to make it easier to do research and then try things on the laptop. It was fairly easy to use the Power > Shift+Restart sequence to get into the laptop’s Recovery environment and then go to: Advanced > Command Prompt. The Command Prompt would show it was running from the Recovery environment’s boot partition, labeled with drive letter X:. When I tried to switch to the laptop’s C: partition, I would get an error message saying I needed to enter a recovery key to access that partition. I didn’t have that recovery key. I didn’t initially appreciate the implications of that message.

Connecting the Laptop to the Internet



By then, it had also occurred to me that Amiga’s laptop was set up to login using her Microsoft account credentials.

But with the laptop at my house, it wasn’t able to access the Internet because it wasn’t connected to my in-house WiFi LAN. I noticed an icon at the lower right of the laptop’s login screen that, when I hovered the mouse over it, displayed the word “Internet” I clicked the icon and got to a screen where I could connect the laptop to my in-house LAN’s guest network. I gave it a few minutes to synch up with Microsoft’s servers, hoping that the recently-changed Microsoft password would now work. But the laptop still rejected the password.

Consulting Gemini 3

I decided to consult Google’s Gemini 3 AI on how to reset forgotten passwords. It offered up a very helpful discourse on the topic. In the Command Prompt, there’s a command: NET USER that lets you list user accounts, reset the password of a specific user or to add a new user. Just what I needed! However, those commands apply to the current boot partition’s registry. When running the Command Prompt from the Recovery environment, those actions were not affecting the users defined on the laptop’s C: drive. So, time for more research.

(Continued on next page)

Windows Password (Continued from previous page)

BitLocker Surprise

I'd also come to the realization that, when initially set up by Dell, Amiga's laptop had Windows BitLocker encryption activated on the C: partition. This is now quite common. I spent another hour with Gemini, learning all the fundamentals of how BitLocker worked and how to locate the 48-digit BitLocker recovery key for Amiga's laptop on her Microsoft Account. It's kept at:

<https://account.microsoft.com/devices/recoverykey> .

Once I had that recovery key, I could manually enter it in the Recovery environment's Command Prompt and finally have access to her laptop's C: drive. My first action was to plug in a flash drive and copy all her data files from the C: drive to the flash drive.

It had gotten late, and I decided to shut down Amiga's laptop for the night, planning to pick up the troubleshooting the next morning. However, the attempt to shut down reported that Windows Updates were in progress and to not power off. I finally left the laptop running overnight. The next morning, I found the laptop shut down. I powered it up and got to the login screen. I hopefully tried various passwords, but all were rejected.

Consulting Gemini 3 Again

I consulted Gemini 3 again, this time asking how to reset a password when the C: drive was encrypted with BitLocker. Gemini returned another sympathetic, but helpful exposition outlining the steps needed to get to a Command Prompt operating on the unencrypted C: drive.



The key step is to take advantage of an icon on the login screen that launches the Accessibility Settings applet (utilman.exe). Once connected with the

Recovery environment's Command Prompt to the unencrypted C: drive (by entering the 48-digit recovery key), here are the commands to type in:

1. `CD C:\Windows\System32` Navigates to the correct folder
2. `copy utilman.exe utilmanback.exe /Y` Backs up utilman.exe
3. `copy cmd.exe utilman.exe /Y` Copies cmd.exe over utilman.exe
4. Exit the command prompt
5. Exit the recovery environment, choosing to boot normally.

Resetting the Forgotten Password

The login screen will appear. Press Enter to show the "Accessibility" and "Power" icons at the lower right. Click the "Accessibility" icon and it will launch utilman.exe, which is actually now a copy of cmd.exe. Shazaam! A Command Prompt window opens from the now-accessible C: drive. Once in this state, it's possible to use the NET USER and NET LOCALGROUP commands to reset the forgotten passwords and to create a separate local administrator account.

Here are the commands I typed to reset Amiga's password on the laptop:

1. `NET USER` Lists the current user accounts (to be sure of spelling)
2. `NET USER amiga *` Initiates a reset of the password for Amiga's account
3. Enter the new password I used her latest Microsoft account password
4. Confirm the new password

Creating a New Local Administrator Account

Here are the commands to add a new local administrator account: "amigaadmin".

1. `NET USER amigaadmin * /Add` Creates the new user
2. Enter the password for amigaadmin Her latest Microsoft account password
3. Confirm the password
4. `NET LOCALGROUP administrators` Lists the current administrator accounts
5. `NET LOCALGROUP administrators amigaadmin /Add` This Makes amigaadmin an administrator.

I decided to add the local administrator account so that if future problems developed with Amiga's regular Microsoft account, there would be an alternative way to login to the laptop and do system management without needing to resort to these back door methods.

I tested both logins and they both worked. I was able to get to the Windows desktop and all the regular windowed interfaces worked. A final step was to restore utilman.exe so that the icon on the login screen actually launches the Accessibility settings. This required once more clicking the Power icon on the login screen, Shift-clicking the Restart option to reach the Recovery environment, selecting Advanced and the Command Prompt and then entering the 48-digit BitLocker recovery key to access the C: drive. Here are the commands to restore utilman.exe:

(Continued on next page)

Windows Password *(Continued from previous page)*

1. CD C:\Windows\System32 *Navigates to the correct folder*
2. Copy utilmanback.exe utilman.exe /Y
3. Exit the command prompt
4. Reboot normally

On the login screen, clicking the Accessibility icon will again display the Accessibility settings screens.

Where Did the Data Go?

Once I got logged in to the laptop (as Amiga), I did some checking in Windows Update and found that Windows 11 had updated itself to version 25H2. Everything seemed to work, but I was suspicious because there were no third-party apps installed and a lot of the data file icons in the OneDrive folder didn't launch any app when clicked. The laptop was also very sluggish. Clicking on things would take several seconds before there was any visible response on screen. This laptop had only a 5400 RPM hard drive – no solid-state drive.

I had Amiga come back to my house to check things out. She said that many items from her desktop were missing. It appears that in her own attempts to resolve the login problem before calling me, she may have initiated a factory reset. The Windows event logs were inconclusive. It did look like most of her data files were backed up to her OneDrive cloud storage on Microsoft. But the laptop didn't seem to be connected to that cloud storage, even though it was logged in using her Microsoft Account. Amiga took the laptop home. She planned to access her OneDrive cloud storage from her other Windows PC, download the data to a flash drive and then load it from there onto the laptop. I got an email from her that night saying when she tried to login to her Microsoft account, she got rejected with an "invalid password" error.

Since I had the credentials for Amiga's Microsoft account, I tried logging into that account using my web browser and got in with no problems. I then browsed to her OneDrive cloud storage and confirmed all the missing data files were there. I downloaded a copy of everything to my own desktop's hard drive. I sent Amiga a note with directions on what I'd done to download the data. And that's where things stand. She's been busy with other things and set the laptop aside.

Conclusions

There are several morals to this story:

1. A key one that can't be stressed enough is that you **MUST** back up your data files – not just to the cloud, but also to local storage media, like a large flash drive or external USB drive. This has to be done regularly – once a week, once a month. Backups that are months out of date don't help much when you need to recover your current operational state.

2. Set up an emergency local administrator account with a known password. You only login to this account if something goes wrong with your primary login. Have those credentials written down and saved in a paper folder or envelope.
3. With laptops or desktops that come with BitLocker encryption enabled on the system drive, consider spending the time to turn BitLocker off. It will take some time for Windows to unencrypt the data, but it will make recovering from a forgotten or inadvertently changed password much easier. That setting is in Control Panel > BitLocker Drive Encryption.
4. If you **DO** want to keep BitLocker encryption, be sure to retrieve your drive's 48-digit BitLocker Recovery key and print it out on paper. File this in the folder/envelope with the credentials for your emergency administrator account.
5. If you're buying a new Windows 11 desktop or laptop, be sure to get a model that has a solid-state drive of at least 256 GB capacity for the system drive; 512 GB is better. Windows 11 is just too resource-hungry to be usable on a 5400 RPM laptop hard disk drive.
6. Lastly, be mindful that Microsoft has engineered Windows 11 to be very difficult for ordinary consumers to troubleshoot. Sometimes it's better to get skilled help from the start, rather than poke around on your own. In our club, the Repair SIG team has a lot of experience dealing with the issues I've described above. We also have several capable members willing to make a house call (for a modest fee) to help you.



Gmail Messages *(Continued from page 1)*

The second method uses Google Takeout. This is a feature of a Google account that allows many types of data, including Email messages, to be downloaded and saved to a hard drive. The process is straightforward but involves multiple steps.

Let's start by logging in to our Google account and navigating to *Manage your Google Account > Data & Privacy > Download your data*. In the section labelled *Products*, click on *Deselect All*. Now, scroll down the list and check the box in the *Mail* section. If you only want to download one or more specific folders, click on the button labelled *All Mail data included* and in the pop-up window make sure that only those mail folders that you wish to download are checked. For our current purposes, we will uncheck the box labelled *Include all messages in Mail*, then uncheck boxes such as *Drafts* and *Sent*, check only the box labelled *Inbox*, and press *OK*.

Having established the mail folder that we wish to download, we scroll to the end of the *Products* section and select the *Next step* button. Now, we can select the *Export once* radio button and leave the default file type and size as *.zip* and 2 GB respectively. In addition, do not change the default entry for *Send download link by Email* as this will allow us to download the message folder directly to the hard drive. Now press the *Create export* button.

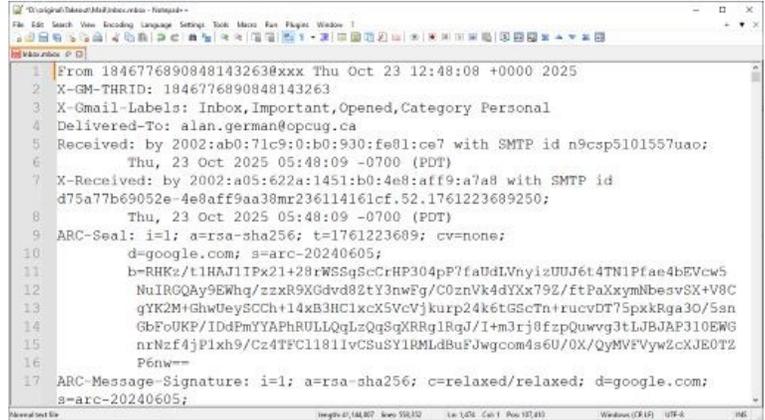
On the next screen we click on the *Download* button at which point we are asked to verify our intention by entering the login password for our Google account. A pop-up dialogue box allows the selection of the storage location on our hard drive where the downloaded file is to be stored.

This process results in a file named (something like) *takeout-20251214T152823Z-3-001.zip* being saved to the hard drive. Unpacking the zip file produces a *Takeout* folder with a sub-folder named *Mail* that includes the file *Inbox.mbox*.

It is this latter file, obtained directly from our Gmail account, that contains the messages as ASCII text in much the same way as does the file *OPCUG* that came from the Thunderbird Email client. The next step is to inspect the contents of one of these text files and see how to retrieve the information that pertains to a specific message.

Figure 1 shows the initial portion of the file *Inbox.mbox* displayed in the Notepad++ text editor. Note that the lines of text being displayed are all Email header information. In fact, the first 109

lines in the file consists solely of such headers. Of particular note in this respect is that the *From*, *To*, *Subject* and *Date* fields appear in Lines 86 through 90 respectively. The actual message text doesn't appear until Line 110 (Figure 2.)

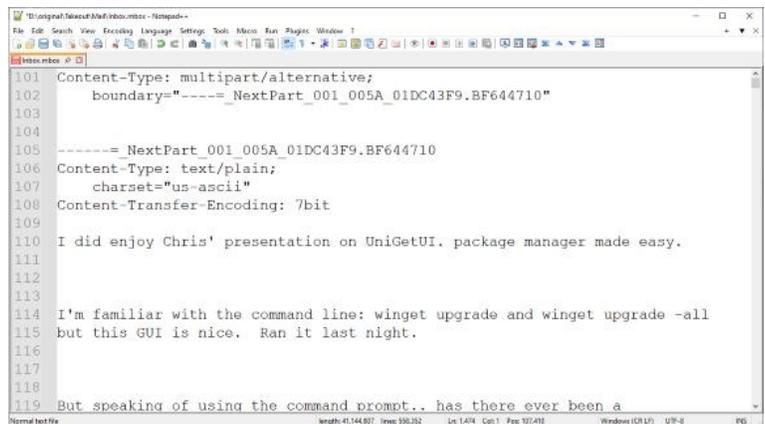


```

1 From 18467768908481432630xxx Thu Oct 23 12:48:08 +0000 2025
2 X-GM-THRID: 1846776890848143263
3 X-Gmail-Labels: Inbox,Important,Opened,Category Personal
4 Delivered-To: alan.german@opcug.ca
5 Received: by 2002:ab0:71c9:0:b0:930:fe91:ce7 with SMTP id n9csp5101557uao;
6 Thu, 23 Oct 2025 05:48:09 -0700 (PDT)
7 X-Received: by 2002:a05:622a:1451:b0:4e8:aff9:a7a8 with SMTP id
8 d75a77b69052e-4e8aff9aa38mr236114161cf.52.1761223689250;
9 Thu, 23 Oct 2025 05:48:09 -0700 (PDT)
10 ARC-Seal: i=1; a=rsa-sha256; t=1761223689; cv=none;
11 d=google.com; s=arc-20240605;
12 b=RHKz/t1HAJlIPx21+28rWSSqScCrHP304pP7faUGLVnyizUJ6t4TN1Pfae4bEvcw5
13 NuIRGQay9EWhg/zxr9XGdvd82tY3nwFg/COznV4dYXx792/ftPaXymNbesvSX+V8C
14 gYK2M+GhwYeySCCh+14xB3HC1xcX5VcVjkurp24k6tGScTn+rucvDT75pxkRga30/5sn
15 GbFoOKP/IDdPmYYAPhRULQqLzQqSgXRRg1RqJ/I+m3rj0fzpqUwvq3tLJBJAP310EWG
16 nrNzf4jP1xh9/Cz4TFcL181ivCSuSY1RMLdBufJwgc0m4s6U/OX/QtyMVFvYwzcXJE0TZ
17 P6nw==
18 ARC-Message-Signature: i=1; a=rsa-sha256; c=relaxed/relaxed; d=google.com;
19 s=arc-20240605;

```

Figure 1. The file *Inbox.mbox* displayed in Notepad++



```

101 Content-Type: multipart/alternative;
102 boundary="-----NextPart_001_005A_01DC43F9.BF644710"
103
104 -----NextPart_001_005A_01DC43F9.BF644710
105 Content-Type: text/plain;
106 charset="us-ascii"
107 Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
108
109
110 I did enjoy Chris' presentation on UniGetUI. package manager made easy.
111
112
113
114 I'm familiar with the command line: winget upgrade and winget upgrade -all
115 but this GUI is nice. Ran it last night.
116
117
118
119 But speaking of using the command prompt.. has there ever been a

```

Figure 2. The start of the text for the first message in the file *Inbox.mbox*

The message text continues through Line 152 and is then followed by 96 lines of HTML code, and a huge block of ASCII characters, from Line 250 through to Line 1473, which is the MIME encoding for an attached image.

Clearly, with such vast amounts of ASCII text being used for a relatively short message, locating and reading the actual message text requires some understanding of the mbox file format. Individual messages always start with *From* so this can be used as a search term, with *Match case* set in Notepad++, to quickly move through the file. However, this doesn't provide much useful information about the individual messages so more efficient searching might well be achieved by using more specific terms such as *From: Chris Taylor* or *Subject: [Suggestion Box]*.

(Continued on next page)

Gmail Messages (Continued from previous page)

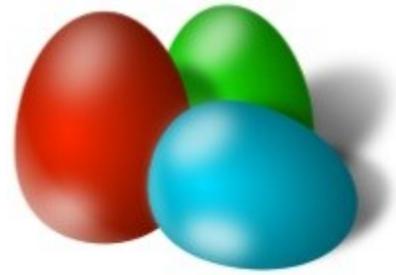
From the above examples, we can see how to backup Gmail messages to simple text files. Extracting a single message directly from such a file requires some effort due to the large number of “extraneous” lines of text that are present. However, for me, as a Thunderbird user, retrieving the entire set of messages in a much friendlier format is very easy. It is simply a matter of copying the file (e.g. *OPCUG*) into the `d:\thunderbird` folder on the hard drive. Then, when the Thunderbird program runs, it identifies *OPCUG* as a “new” folder, creates an *OPCUG.msf* index file, and all of the included messages are listed as usual when the *OPCUG* folder is selected.

Although Google Takeout provides a method for downloading message folders, it does not include an option to do the reverse in order to restore the offline folder. Interestingly, one method to do this is to use Thunderbird as an IMAP client for Gmail. The required mail folder is implemented in Thunderbird as described above, and the folder is then synchronized to Gmail’s server as part of the normal IMAP process when the mail server is accessed by the client.

One final note about the downloaded ASCII files is that to retrieve an attached file, such as a JPG image or a PDF file, it is necessary to use a MIME decoder to reconstitute the binary file from the relevant block of ASCII text. Several online tools and third-party applications are available for such tasks.



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Quick Tip 83: Select word or paragraph

by Chris Taylor

We all know that clicking the mouse pointer somewhere in a document in Microsoft Word will place the insertion cursor at that position.

There are a couple of other handy mouse actions to add to your repertoire:

- double-click to select the word, or
- triple-click to select the paragraph

Logically, I think triple-clicking should select the sentence and quadruple-clicking should select the paragraph. LibreOffice Writer does exactly that!

There is a way to select the sentence in Microsoft Word. Hold down the Ctrl key and click anywhere in the sentence.



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.

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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**).

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