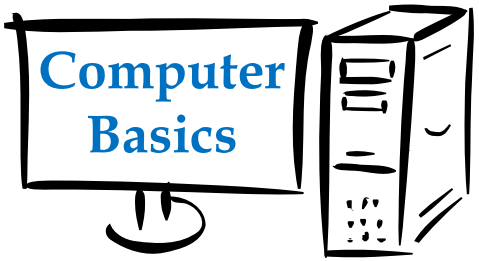
OPCUG

Users helping users
for over 40 years

Alan German & Chris Taylor
Ottawa PC Users' Group

September 17, 2025



Avoiding malware

PCWorld

Home / Feature / Security Feature

FEATURE

I haven't gotten PC malware in a decade. Here are my 7 simple secrets

Tips to keep your PC free of malware!

By Dominic Bayley
Australian Editor, PCWorld | SEP 4, 2025 3:30 AM PDT

https://www.pcworld.com/article/2896812/i-havent-gotten-pc-malware-in-a-decade-here-are-my-7-simple-secrets.html

1. **Dodgy websites are a no-go for me**
   - If I get a banner or ad pop up that I just can't close, I'll often just shut the whole PC down
   - If possible, you can simply close the tab in your browser .
2. **I always use reputable antivirus and antimalware software**
3. **My Windows Firewall is always active**
4. **I keep everything updated**
5. **I read emails with a skeptical mind**
   - Never click on any links or download any attachments and look out for obvious warning signs like spelling misteaks
   - Do not click on links in emails that supposedly come from crucial accounts like banks.
6. **I avoid public networks and use a VPN**
7. **I use strong passwords and multi-factor authentication**

Wemo Smart Switches

- Owned 4 Belkin ***Wemo Mini*** smart switches
- Allowed me to turn bedroom/living room lights on/off
  - by voice using *Google Assistant* with
    - *Google Home Mini* in living room
      Lenovo Smart Clock in bedroom
  - with routines in *Google Assistant* and *Wemo* app
    - automate lights on/off at specific times
  - through Wemo app on phone from anywhere in the world
- Some frustrations over the years
  - periodically, when trying to control switches by voice
    - ***Cannot contact Wemo right now***

Belkin drops the ball

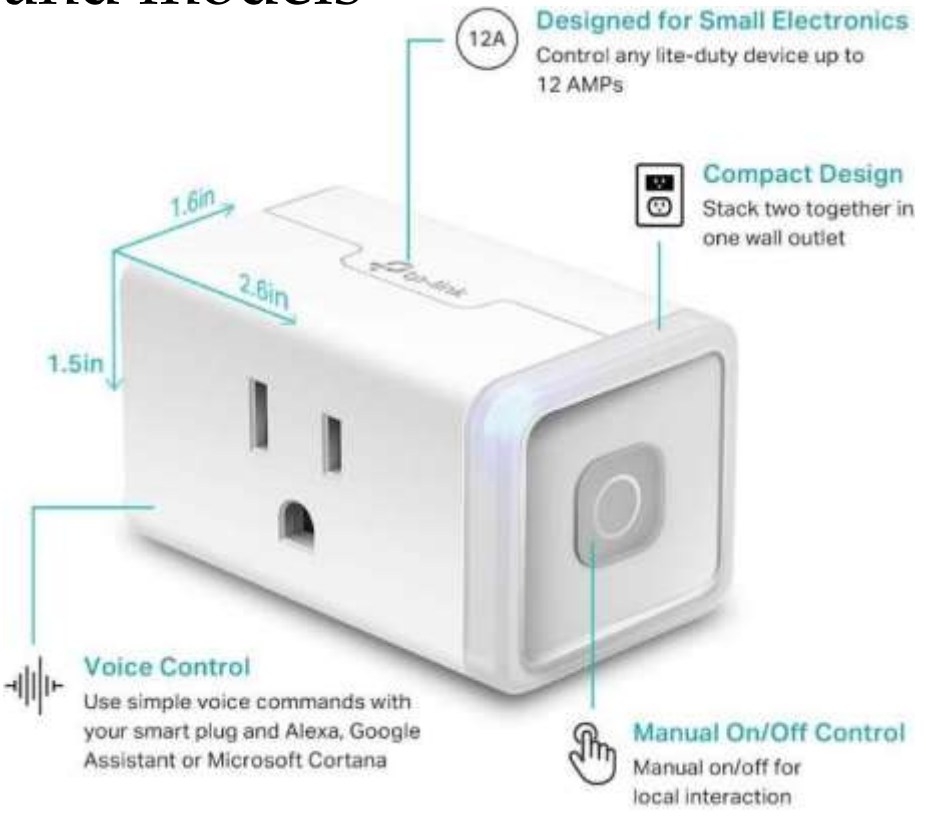
- July, 2025: Belkin announced it is dropping support
- Not only would I lose automation features, but
  - *Wemo smart products will turn into paperweights in 2026*
- I could *maybe* see losing capabilities that used Belkin servers
- I couldn't see why I would lose automation functions controlled by app on phone talking directly to switches
- I think should be able to maintain static routines & control through the Wemo app on phone

- https://www.pcworld.com/article/2845719/belkin-essentially-waves-goodbye-to-its-wemo-smart-home-brand.html
- https://www.pcworld.com/article/2846584/your-belkin-wemo-smart-home-devices-will-die-soon-here-are-great-alternatives.html

Share

Choosing a replacement

- Decided to no longer buy *Belkin* products
  - not happy with perfectly good switches turned into doorstops
  - no logical reason why support should be dropped—***except greed***
- Looked for replacement for the *Wemo* smart switches
- Read reviews on various makes and models
- Settled on *Kasa* from *TP-Link*
  - good reviews
  - good capabilities
  - good pricing
  - can be controlled through
    - *Google Assistant*
    - *Amazon Alexa*



Kasa Smart Plug Mini by TP-Link (HS103P4)

Share

Easy setup

- Download *Kasa* app on phone
- Create account at *Kasa* website
- Use *Kasa* app
  - connect directly to smart plug over WiFi
  - configure smart plug to connect to your network
- Use *Google Assistant* app to connect to *Kasa* device
- Only one minor issue (easily worked around)
  - *Kasa* smart plugs only operate on 2.4 GHz Wi-Fi
  - *for initial setup*, phone must be connected on 2.4 GHz Wi-Fi to router
  - forced phone to connect on 2.4 GHz by moving further from Wi-Fi access point than is supported by 5 GHz
    - could also have temporarily disabled 5 GHz band at router
    - could also have configured separate names for 2.4 and 5 GHz bands
  - ***after initial setup, phone can be on any network***

Share

Final configuration

- Main usage *for me:* voice control through Google Assistant
  - *Living room light off*
  - *Goodnight* (tells me date/time, weather & calendar items for tomorrow, turns off living room and bedroom lights…)
  - *Good morning* (turns on bedroom light, tells me date/time, weather & calendar items for the day, streams radio station)
  - *Leaving* (turns off lights, stops radio streaming, tells me traffic)
  - etc.
- Created a few directly scheduled items through Kasa app
  - living room and bedroom lights on and off at specific times
  - advantage of Kasa app: it can randomize times
    - if away from home, lights not on/off at exactly same time every day

Share

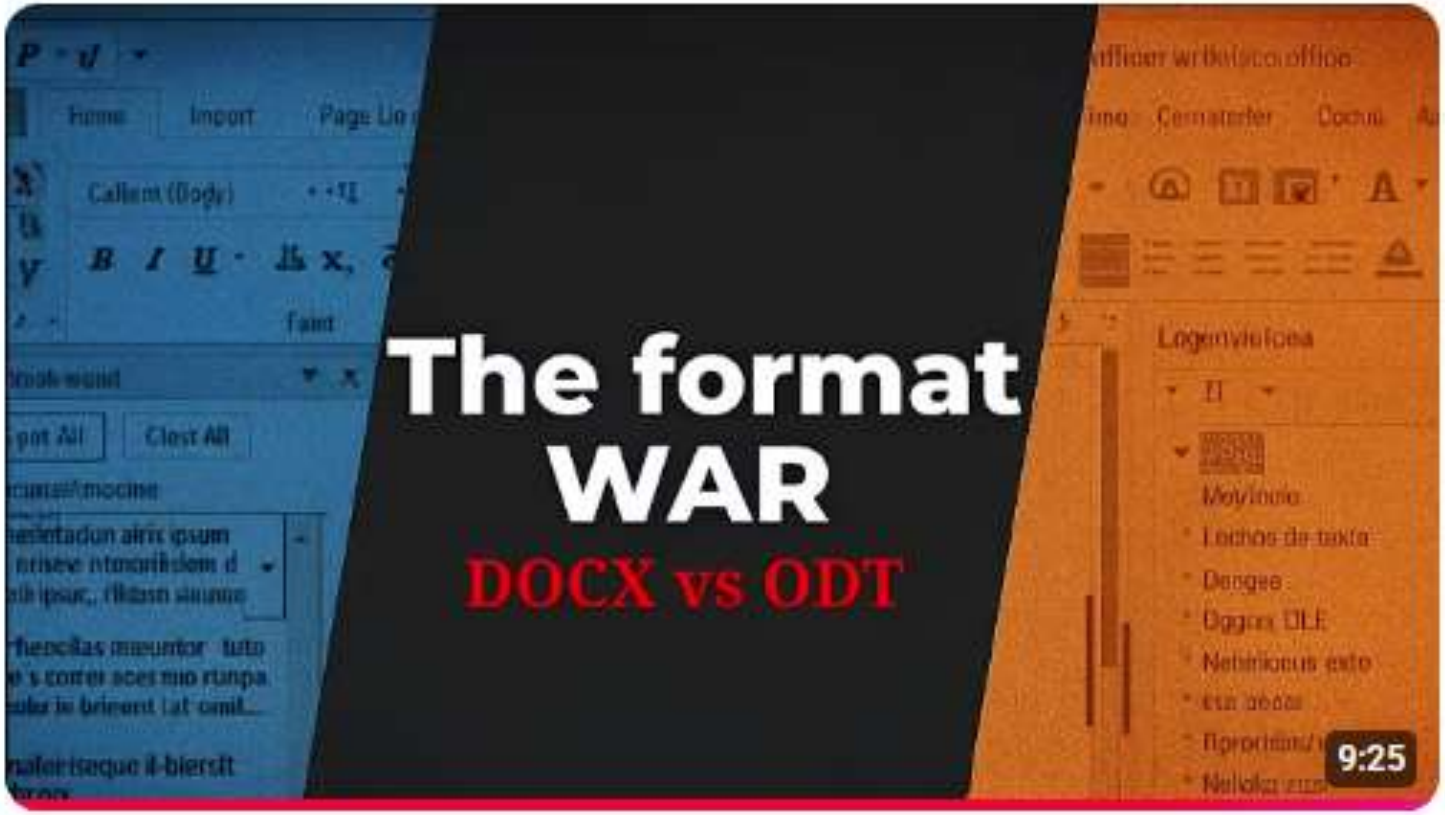
Kasa plugs I bought

- Kasa Smart Plug Mini by TP-Link (HS103P4)
  - 2-year warranty
- Amazon Canada (sold & ships from Amazon.ca)
  - 1-pack $15
  - 2-pack $25
  - 4-pack $45

https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B07RCNB2L3

YouTubeTech

LibreOffice vs Microsoft: The Document War



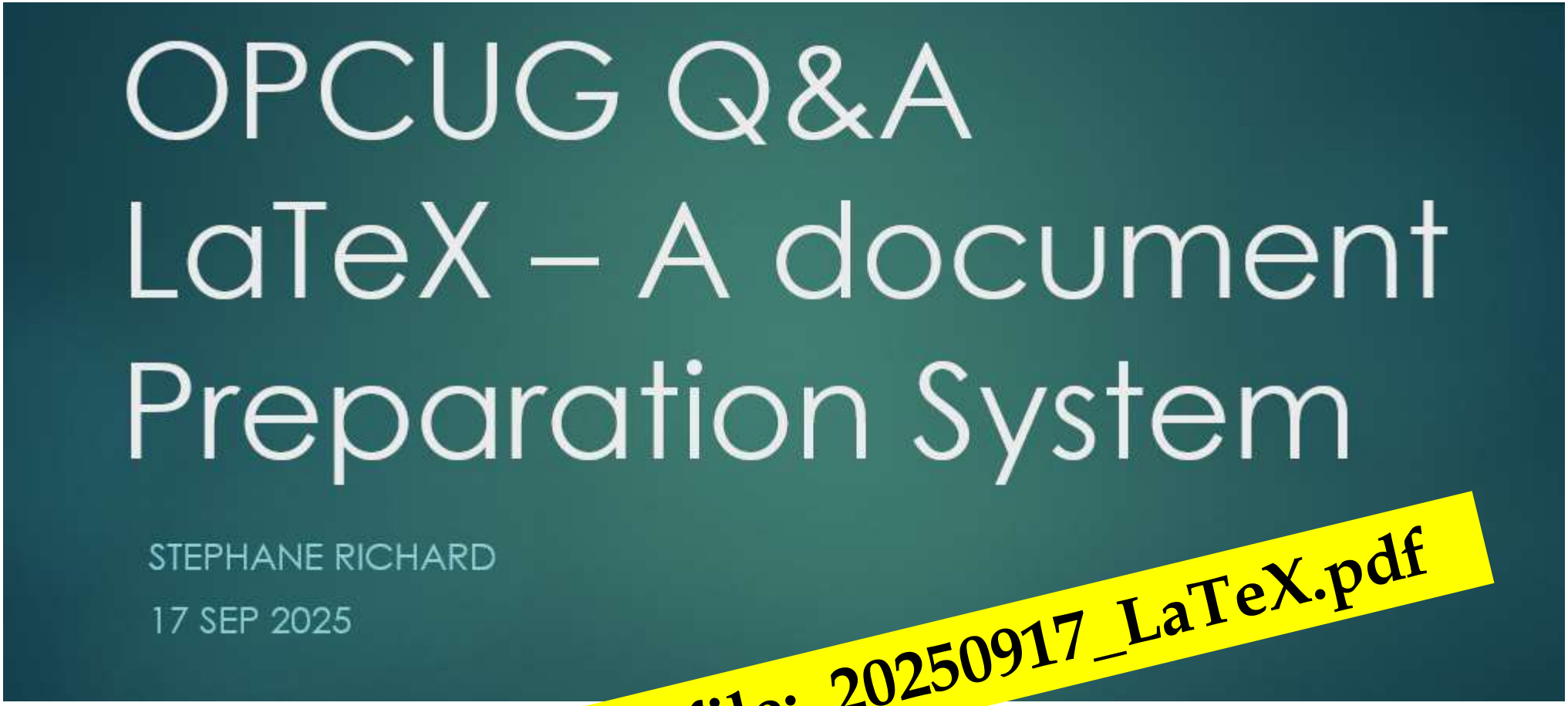
LibreOffice vs Microsoft: The Document War

YouTux Channel
10.7K subscribers
Subscribe
1.9K
Share
Download

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgxhn3bCD58

Share

LaTeX



See the file: 20250917_LaTeX.pdf

Loonie Links

What Happens to My Waste?

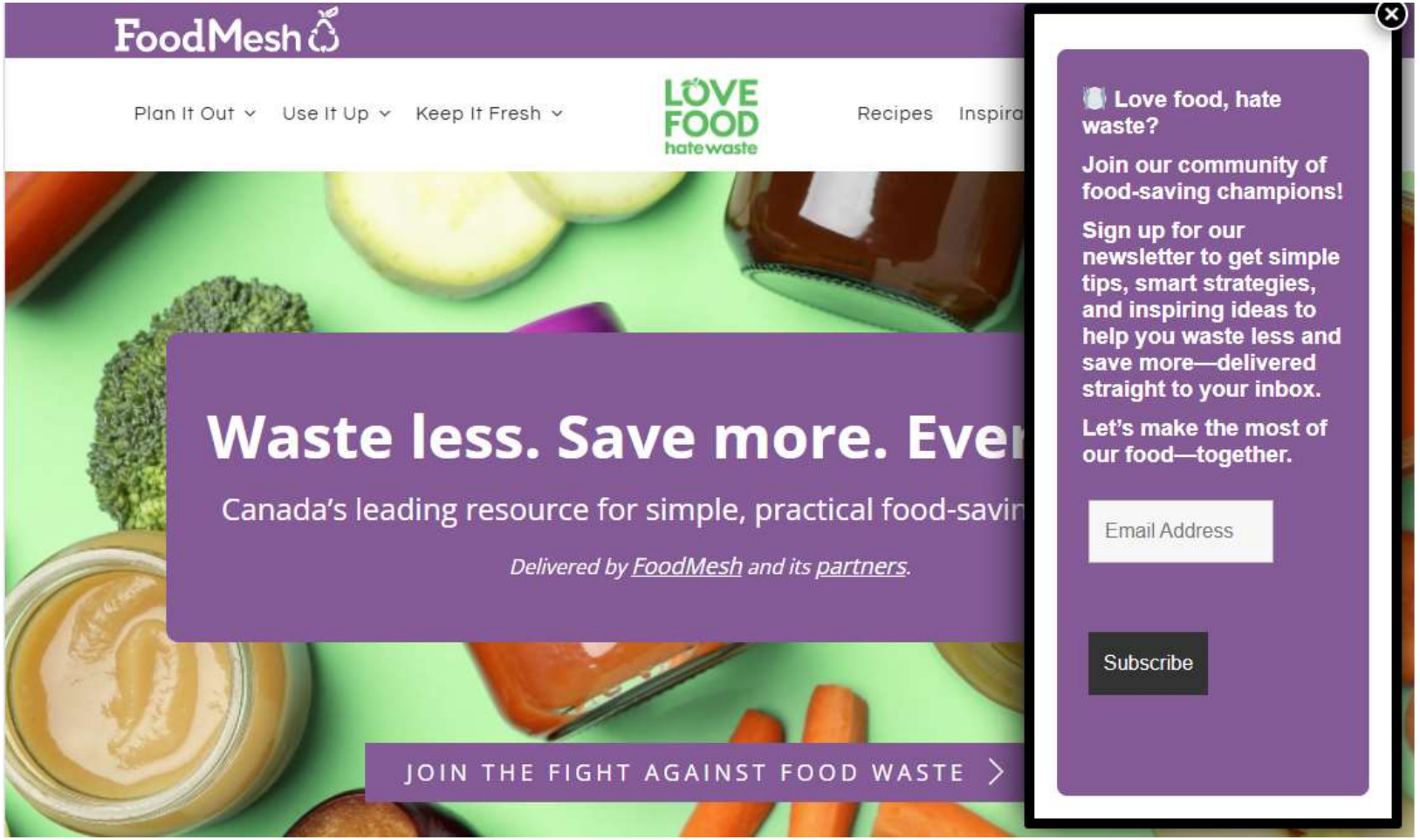
Videos from the City of Ottawa

- Ottawa's Gren Bin Program & Composting Process Explained
- What Happens to My Recycling?
- What Happens to My Garbage
- What is EPR?

https://ottawa.ca/en/garbage-and-recycling/waste-reduction-and-education

YouTubeTech

Love Food Hate Waste



https://lovefoodhatewaste.ca/

Love Food Hate Waste is a globally-recognised and proven behaviour-change campaign to help people reduce food waste at home.

It provides people with useful tips and tricks to ensure they are shop smarter, store food better and use up every last scrap of their food.

PLAN IT OUT

USE IT UP

KEEP IT FRESH

Household waste: By the numbers

63%

Amount of food that's thrown away that could have been eaten.

140 kg

Amount of edible food the average Canadian household wastes each year.

$1,300

Amount the average household spends every year on food that's wasted.

6.9 million tonnes

Amount of greenhouse gas emissions Canada's households food waste produces each year.

Share

Windows 11 upgrade failure

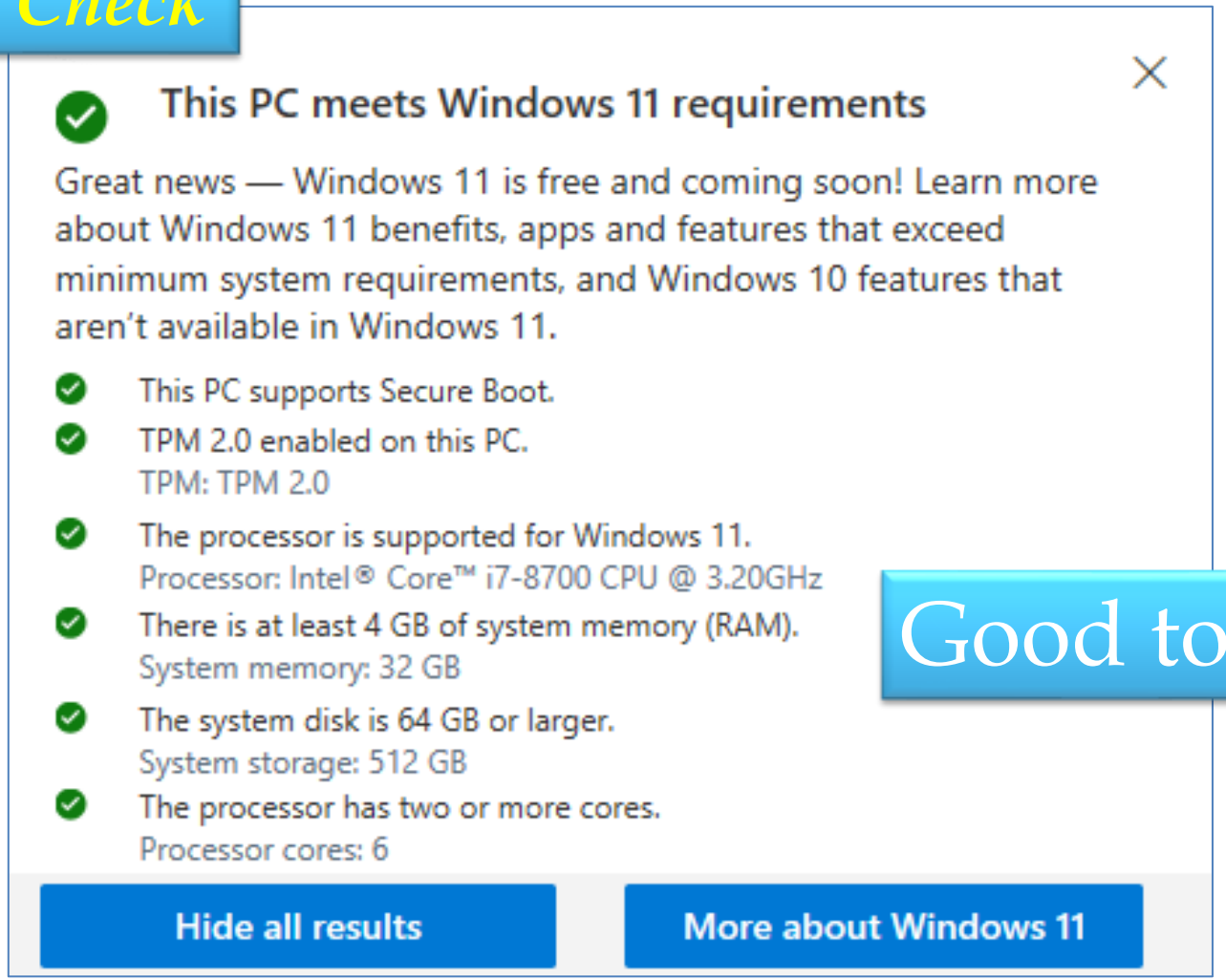
- ACER Predator PO3-600
  - purchased July 2019

Windows Update page has been offering Windows 11 for about a year

Share

Is it *really* ready?

Ran *PC Health Check*



Good to go!

Share

Good to go!

- Did a fresh full backup
  - can easily recover if things go south
- Started upgrade from the *Windows Update* page

After a couple of hours…
- it failed
- rolled back (successfully) to Windows 10

Share

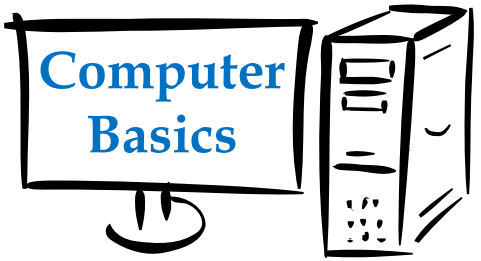
Why did it fail?

- Checked online for common fixes to upgrade failures
  - updated NVIDIA drivers
  - checked Device Manager (Win+X > *Device Manager*)
    - no warnings
  - ran *Windows Update Troubleshooter*
    - no problems found
  - ran *Deployment Image Servicing and Management*
    - **`dism /online /cleanup-image /restorehealth`**
  - ran System File Checker
    - **`sfc /scannow`**
  - some discrepancies about availability of BIOS update

Share

…and then I got specific

- Asked Perplexity.AI—*Does ACER support upgrading from Windows 10 to Windows 11 on Predator PO-03-600*
  - **Acer does not support upgrading to Windows 11**
  - Official Acer Guidance
    - Predator PO3-600 not listed in Acer's Windows 11 upgrade compatibility tables
    - **recommended to stick with Windows 10**
  - Windows 11 Upgrade Feasibility
    - Microsoft may allow the upgrade: base hardware meets requirements
    - **operational issues due to missing or outdated drivers may arise**
    - **blue screen errors & device instability following attempted upgrades**
  - Recommendations
    - **continuing with Windows 10 advised for Predator PO3-600 owners**
    - upgrading to Windows 11 unsupported by Acer and carries risks of driver incompatibilities and hardware issues
- PC will get one more year through Extended Security Updates
  - and likely get replaced in the next year



Reinstalling Windows

YouTubeTech

Using Windows 10? Do THIS Now Before It's Too Late!

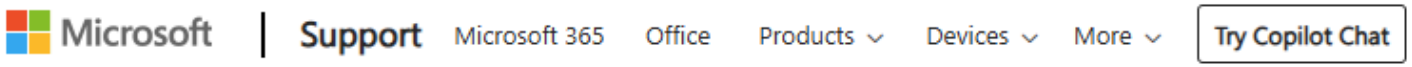
Using Windows 10? Do THIS Now Before It's Too Late!

Dave's Garage
1.02M subscribers
Subscribe

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=am0O6GpB7qI

Reinstalling Windows 10 (or Windows 11)

- You need to reinstall/refresh Windows
- You need an installation disk
- Obtain Microsoft's *Media Creation Tool*
  now, before you actually need it!
- MediaCreationTool_22H2.exe
- Use an 8GB+ USB drive



Upgrading Windows

Upgrading Windows
Can I upgrade to Windows 11?
Check if a device meets Windows 11 system requirements after changing device hardware
Create installation media for Windows
Getting ready for the Windows 11 upgrade
Install or upgrade Windows using a product key
Windows 11 on devices that don't meet minimum system requirements
Retrieve files from the Windows.old folder after a Windows upgrade

Create installation media for Windows

▶ *Applies To*

Installation media, such as a USB flash drive, can be used to install a new copy of Windows, perform a clean installation of Windows, or reinstall Windows.

To create installation media, go to the software download website, where step-by-step instructions can be found. On that website, you can select a version of Windows and create installation media on ar a USB flash. Alternatively, an ISO file can be created for use in virtual machines (VMs) or for burning the installation media onto a DVD:

Windows 11 **Windows 10**

Support for Windows 10 will end in October 2025

After October 14, 2025, Microsoft will no longer provide free software updates from Windows Update, technical assistance, or security fixes for Windows 10. Your PC will still work, but we recommend moving to Windows 11.

https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/create-installation-media-for-windows-99a58364-8c02-206f-aa6f-40c3b507420d

1. Go to the Download Windows 10 site.

2. Under **Create Windows 10 Installation Media**, select **Download Now**. The **MediaCreationTool.exe** tool is downloaded.

3. Run **MediaCreationTool.exe**. The media creation tool walks through creating installation media.

Important: Back up your files before you install or reinstall Windows on your PC. Learn how.

Windows 10 2022 Update | Version 22H2

The Update Assistant can help you update to the latest version of Windows 10. To get started, click **Update now**.

Update now

Create Windows 10 installation media

To get started, you will first need to have a licence to install Windows 10. You can then download and run the media creation tool. For more information on how to use the tool, see the instructions below.

Download Now

https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/software-download/windows10

Windows 10 202

The Update Assistant can help you upda ck **Update now**.

Update now

Download "MediaCreationTool_22H2.exe"?

File Name: MediaCreationTool_22H2.exe
File Size: 19.46 MB
Host: download.microsoft.com
Location: D:\original

Always Save Files to Default Download Location

Save | Save As... | Open | Cancel

Create Windows 10 installation media

To get started, you will first need to have a licence to insta Windows 10. You can then download and run the media creation tool. For more infor nation on how to use the tool, see the instructions below.

Download Now

Save the downloaded file to the USB drive

Using the tool to upgrade this PC to Windows 10 (click to show more or less information)

Here's when to use these instructions:

- You have a licence to install Windows 10 and are upgrading this PC from Windows 7 or Windows 8.1.
- You need to reinstall Windows 10 on a PC you've already successfully activated Windows 10.

If you are installing Windows 10 on a PC running Windows XP or Windows Vista, or if you need to create installation media to install Windows 10 on a different PC, see **Using the tool to create installation media (USB flash drive, DVD, or ISO file) to install Windows 10 on a different PC** section below.

Note: Before you install Windows 10, check to make sure your PC meets the **system requirements** for Windows 10. We also recommend going to the PC manufacturer's website for any additional info about updated drivers and hardware compatibility.

1. Select **Download tool**, and select **Run**. You need to be an administrator to run this tool.
2. On the **Licence terms** page, if you accept the licence terms, select **Accept**.
3. On the **What do you want to do?** page, select **Upgrade this PC now**, and then select **Next**.
4. After downloading and installing, the tool will walk you through how to set up Windows 10 on your PC. All Windows 10 editions are available when you select Windows 10, except for Enterprise edition. For more information on Enterprise edition, go to the **Microsoft 365 admin centre**.

    - If you don't have a licence to install Windows 10 and have not yet previously upgraded to it, you can purchase a copy here: **get-windows-10**
    - If you previously upgraded to Windows 10 on this PC and you're reinstalling it, you don't need to enter a product key. Your copy of Windows 10 will automatically activate later using your digital licence.

1. When Windows 10 is ready to install, you'll see a recap of what you've chosen, and what will be kept through the upgrade. Select **Change what to keep** to set whether you would like to **Keep personal files and apps**, or **Keep personal files only**, or choose to keep **Nothing** during the upgrade.
2. Save and close any open apps and files you may be running, and when you're ready, select **Install**.
3. It might take some time to install Windows 10, and your PC will restart a few times. **Make sure you don't turn off your PC**.

Installation Process

- Getting a few things ready...
- **Accept licence terms => Accept**
- **What do you want to do? => Upgrade => Next**
  - *or create installation media (for a different computer)*
- Downloading Windows 10, verifying your download, creating Windows 10 media
- Setup is cleaning up before it closes
- Installation program restarts...

- Preparing, getting updates (again), checking your PC, we're getting a few things ready

- **Accept licence terms (again) => Accept**
- Choose what to keep [no choice!], getting updates (again!), making sure you are ready to install, making sure your PC has enough space
- **Ready to install, Change what to keep => Nothing**
  (Keep personal files and apps [default],
  Keep personal files only, or Nothing)
- Getting updates, making sure you are ready to install, making sure your PC has enough space (again! – because I chose nothing?)
- **Ready to install => Install**

- Installing Windows 10
- Your PC will restart several times
- This may take a while...

- **Setup questions:**
  - **Region => Canada**
  - **Keyboard => US**
  - ***(Disable voice control)***
  - **Second keyboard layout => Skip**
  - **Connect to network => I don't have Internet**
    => Continue with limited setup

    If you connect to Wi-Fi, later you will have to use a Microsoft account or create a new one; don't connect if you want to use a local account
  - **Who's going to use the PC? => Admin**
  - **Create a super memorable password => Admin**
  - **Confirm your password => Admin**

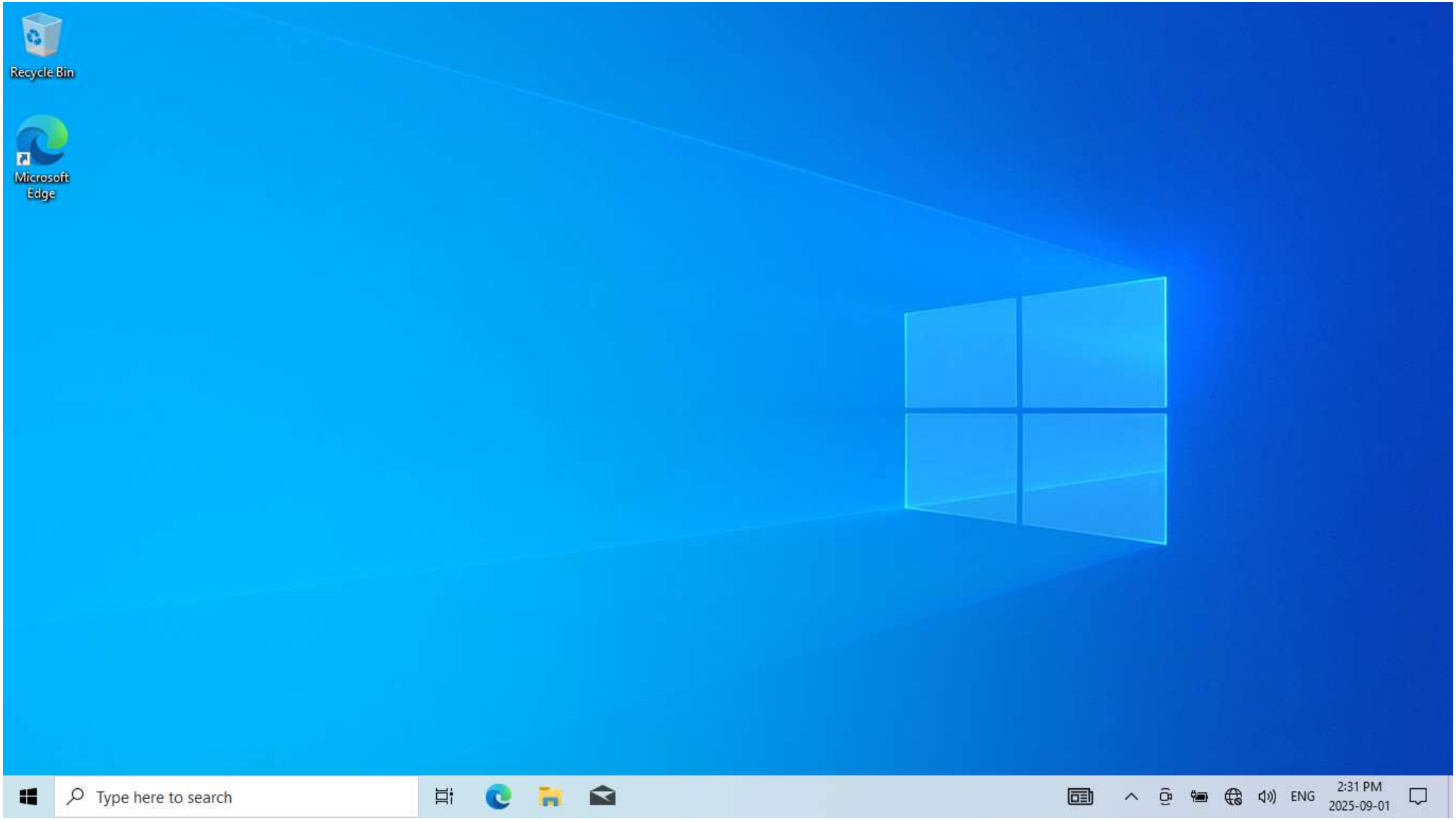
Your choice

- **Create security questions => Three questions with nonsense answers**
- **Let Microsoft apps use your location = > No**
- **Find my device => No**
- **Send diagnostic data to Microsoft => Required data**
- **Improve inking & typing => No**
- **Get tailored experiences with diagnostic data => No**
- **Let apps use advertising ID => No**
- **Let Cortana help you get things done => Not now**

Your choice

- Just a moment...

- Just a moment...
  - Almost done. We just need to get a few more things polished up for you, and Windows will be all yours. Looking forward to helping you!
  - Hi. We're getting things ready for you. This might take several minutes. Please don't turn off your PC
  - Leave everything to us, Windows stays up to date to help protect you in an online world,
  - Almost there...


Recycle Bin
Microsoft Edge
Type here to search
ENG
2:31 PM
2025-09-01

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Consumer Reports has words for Microsoft

CR / ADVOCACY /

Consumer Reports calls on Microsoft to extend support for Windows 10

September 16, 2025

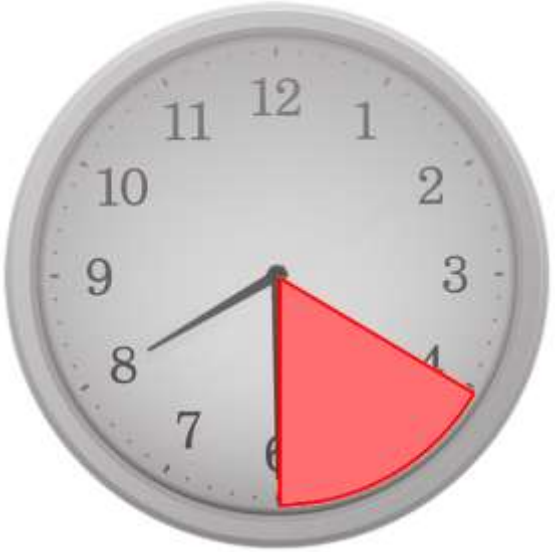
Consumer Reports sent a letter to Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella calling on the company to extend its support of Windows 10 devices given the security threat posed by leaving millions of operational devices unprotected. On October 14, these computers will be stranded when Microsoft transitions from the Windows 10 operating system to Windows 11. Windows 10 is currently used by an estimated 46% of Windows computers, and a significant percentage of these machines are unable to run Windows 11.

Consumer Reports is calling on Microsoft to provide free extended support for consumers who have not — and often cannot — make the transition, and to continue providing that support for free until more users have transitioned off the older OS. In the attached letter we explain why Microsoft's decision to provide paid support only for one year is a security risk, and how the lack of backwards compatibility for certain Windows 10 machines sold only a couple of years ago is a blow to consumers' pocketbooks. Microsoft should do the right thing and continue supporting Windows 10 without charging consumers.

Highlights from letter

- computers incapable of running Windows 11 still available for sale in 2022 and 2023
- as of August, 46.2% of people worldwide still using Windows 10
  - about 646.8 million people based on Microsoft's estimates of 1.4 billion people using Windows
  - estimated 200-400 million PCs worldwide cannot be upgraded to Windows 11
- Decision to make Windows 11 incompatible with existing hardware, & with only 4 years notice is incompatible with consumer expectations and Microsoft's own history
- Arguing that Windows 11 is an essential upgrade to boost cybersecurity while also leaving hundreds of millions of machines more vulnerable to cyber attacks is hypocritical

https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/CR-Windows-transition-letter-9.16.25.pdf



Any other:

Questions

Comments

Shares?

Monthly Meetings

- Programme is set through February 2026
- **Need one more presentation by a club member to round out the "year" (2025-26)**
- Any computer-related topic
- 90 minute presentation (including questions)
- Shorter is acceptable (and I will find filler!)

alan.german@opcug.ca

Members' Favourites

Date TBD

- Any computer-related topic (neat application, awesome hardware, operating system tweak…)
- 10-20 minute presentation

Reserve your presentation slot:
SuggestionBox@opcug.ca

Protecting your PC

Chris Taylor

Carlingwood Branch, Monday September 22, 2025 at 6:00pm

Windows 10 End-of-Life – What's Next?

Alan German

On-line (Zoom), Monday September 22, 2025 at 6:30pm

Artificial Intelligence (AI): fun and useful tips

Chris Taylor

Ruth E. Dickinson, Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at 2:30pm

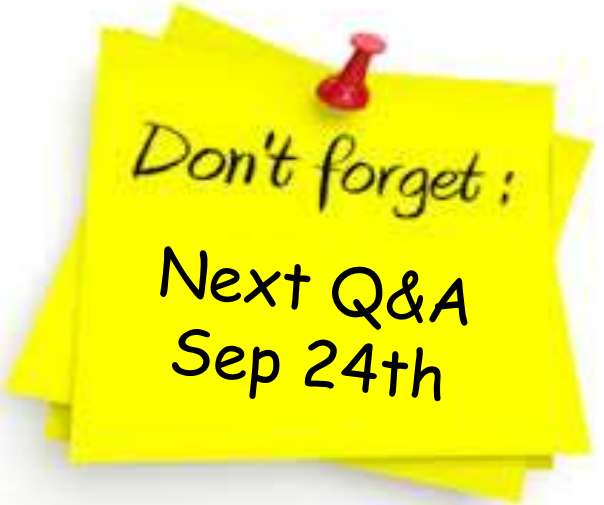
https://opcug.ca/mec-category/opl-presentations/

Share

Chris needs some shares!

- Alan is not going to be able to attend Q&A sessions for a couple of weeks
- Chris is more than capable of running the show
- But, what is he going to do?
- He could use a little help!
- Do you have a topic that you could share with the group?
- Let us know the outline of your favorite computer-related item at:

SuggestionBox@opcug.ca



Send your questions, answers, and topics you wish to share to:

SuggestionBox@opcug.ca