



PRODUCT REVIEW

Managing Smartphone Contacts

by Alan German

In a previous article (Managing Email Addresses in the January newsletter) I looked at how to synchronize contacts in the Thunderbird Email client across multiple devices and users. A similar situation occurs for the contacts on my smartphone, and those on my wife's phone, since we find it useful to have the same list of contacts available on both devices. However, the process that was previously described needs to be tweaked a little since Android smartphones do not export/import the list of contacts as a comma-separated (CSV) file.

In fact, Android exports (and imports) contact information as a Virtual Contact File (VCF). Each contact has its own set of parameters in the form of a virtual business card or vCard. The resulting VCF file is pure ASCII (see Figure 1) and could be imported directly into Microsoft Excel. However, because of the nature of the record format (and the possible use of many more data fields than those shown), the data would require extensive manipulation

However, there is a much simpler solution - use VCF Import v3.085.xlsm, an Excel spreadsheet developed by Greg Hadlock. As Greg notes: "This is an Excel based VBA script used to import bulk .VCF files that contain more than 1 Vcard and then convert them to a comma separated .CSV file or Excel xls file".

Since the spreadsheet uses a VBA macro, Excel must be configured to allow macros to run using Options – Trust Center – Trust Center Settings –Macro Settings – Enable all macros (not recommended; potentially dangerous code can run). As Excel notes, allowing all macros to run should only be enabled if the user knows what they are doing. But, we want to convert our VCF file as easily as possible, and we will be fearless in doing so!

Running the macro is easy. We simply load the Excel spreadsheet which automatically runs the macro and asks us to browse to the subject VCF file. Next, the macro asks if we wish to delete empty columns, but suggests that the answer should be no if we wish to combine multiple VCF files. The reason for this caveat is that different CSV files might contain different data fields and so retaining all the data fields would be advisable.

In my case, there is a limited number of fields in use in the contacts on the two smartphones. It is quite likely that all of the fields will be consistent across both sets of contacts; however, if this proves not to be the case, any additional col-

umns in one of the resulting Excel files will be readily apparent and easily accommodated.

(see Figure 2 on page 7)

Data processing is almost instantaneous and a message box indicates the number of contacts processed and the time taken. The macro parses the data, for example producing First Name (Jim) and Last Name (Watson) from the full name that was entered into the smartphone's list of contacts.

Some additional fields are produced, such as Mobile Phone, since most of the contact information (not shown here) includes this data element. An interesting data field is Middle Name. In my case, this occurs solely due to one contact that takes the form of

(Continued on page 7)

```
BEGIN:VCARD
VERSION:2.1
N:Watson;Jim;;
FN:Jim Watson
TEL;WORK:613-580-2496
EMAIL;WORK:jim.watson@ottawa.ca
END:VCARD
```

Figure 1. Sample vCard

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Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 12

Annual General Meeting followed by our speaker.

Speaker: Alan German (OPCUG)

Topic: Computer Programming: Then and Now

Many members of our club have a long history of using computers, and for quite a number this has included some aspects of computer programming. In tonight's presentation, Alan German will take a look back at his own involvement with computers over more than five decades. This includes using platforms from mainframes to smartphones, programming from assembler to JavaScript, and almost everything in between!



Alan German
Ottawa PC Users' Group

My favourite whatchamacallit by Alan German

The Board of Directors wants to encourage members to give presentations at club meetings and, in particular, to share their experiences with a piece of software or a hardware component as part of our Members' Favourites series. While we don't yet have the next such session scheduled, please put some thought into something that you would like to showcase. As an incentive, the door prize for the evening will be a 2TB external USB drive, with a retail value in excess of \$100 and, any member (other than those on the BOD) making a presentation will be given five additional tickets for the door prize draw. Presentations for Members' Favourites should be around 10-15 minutes and, as we have seen in the past, can be on any computer-related topic, from backup software, to drawing tablets, to on-line shopping! So, give us your take on your favourite computer gizmo and multiply your chances of taking home an external USB drive! Let Lawrence Patterson, our Meeting Coordinator (meetings@opcug.ca), know your topic of choice and he will be pleased to reserve a spot in the evening's program just for you.



Upcoming Meetings...

March 12

Topic: Web services offered by [Rebel.com](#)

Speaker: Justine Sousa, Rebel.com

April 8

Topic: Scripting and automation

Speaker: Chris Taylor, OPCUG

For meeting updates and additional details, visit <https://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm>.

January Prize Winners

The winner of door prize #1, a "smart pack" including smart bulbs and plugs, was **Norm Dafoe**.

Door Prize # 2, a "grab bag" containing a Dual port US plug, Surge protector and an SD Card Wallet, was won by **Pauline Wood**.

2020 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, February 12 th	7:30 p.m. at the Riverside United Church , 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Parking is free. OC Transpo bus #90 stops nearby. Visit https://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm for directions.
Q&A Session	Wednesday, February 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. (approx. 9 pm)
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, February 12 th	10:00 p.m. (after the Q&A) at Moose McGuire's , 3320 McCarthy Rd. Map: https://goo.gl/maps/zAtCx9ZcxRVptSY68

2019 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Chris Taylor

For the first time in my memory, we only had nine general meetings in the year. The February meeting was cancelled due to the weather.

Only one third of the presentations were given by outside presenters. In January, Zeina Osman from CompuCorps told us what CompuCorps is doing to battle the digital divide and help the disadvantaged in our community. In June, Cameron Bell from CANImmunize let us know about the apps they have created for things such as tracking vaccinations, letting you know about your life expectancy, and preventing sexual assaults at music festivals. In December, Kyle Christopher from the Ottawa Public Library brought us up to date on the digital services they provide.

The presentations given by OPCUG members covered interesting topics on multi-factor authentication, digital photo editing, backup strategies, migrating from a hard drive to SSD, video editing, virtualization, Bluetooth hearing aids, cross-border shopping, using a drawing tablet, and scam avoidance. Thanks to Lawrence Patterson, Lynda Buske, Alan German, Bob Walker, Bob Herres, and yours truly for providing such a wide variety of useful information.

Brigitte kept producing attractive, informative newsletters. Major article contributors were Alan German, Lawrence Patterson and myself.

A few other notables;

- Continued collaboration with the Ottawa Public Library with Alan German, Lynda Buske and myself giving 64 presentations on 15 topics at 16 library branches.
- Community contributions through our June eWaste event and the December raffle and collection of food & money for the Ottawa Food Bank.
- A fall hands-on trouble-shooting workshop was attended by 7. Four board members were on-hand to do their best to rectify problems.
- Elimination of raffles. Instead we will have more substantial door prizes which will be open only to members of the OPCUG.
- In order to foster better communications, we now have name badges at meetings.
- A project was started to modernize the look and feel of our web presence.

I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the Board of Directors, Mark Cayer (membership), Richard Aylesworth (financial review), Bob Herres (election chair), all who helped out in various ways at meetings, and all members.



TREASURER'S REPORT—2019

by Alan German

As indicated in the balance sheet shown below, the club ran a deficit of \$2,315.89 in fiscal year 2019, this being largely due to the Board of Directors implementing the club's financial plan to reduce our accumulated assets. Nevertheless, we have retained total capital assets of \$17,372.35, leaving us in a sound financial situation going forward.

ASSETS			Revenue		
Current Assets			2100	Bank Interest (Tangerine)	158.67
1000	Cash Account (TDCT)	1,163.47	2200	Membership Income	1,880.00
1100	Investment Account (Tangerine)	16,139.76	2300	Raffle Income	648.00
1200	Membership Float	40.00	2400	Merchandise Income	0.00
1210	Petty Cash Float	10.00	2500	Workshop Income	0.00
1300	PayPal Account	19.12	2900	Miscellaneous Income	290.95
			2910	Donation Income	0.00
	Total Assets	17,372.35		Total Revenue	2,977.62
LIABILITIES AND OWNER EQUITY			Expenses		
Owner Equity			3100	PUB II Expense	1,882.12
			3200	Newsletter Expense	0.00
	OPCUG, Capital		3300	Office Supplies Expense	113.65
	December 31, 2018	19,688.24	3400	Bank Charges (TDCT)	59.40
			3500	Barbecue Expense	409.62
	Total revenue	2977.62	3600	Meeting Expense	1,553.22
	Total expense	5293.51	3700	Workshop Expense	100.00
			3800	Merchandise Expense	0.00
	Net income	-2,315.89	3900	Miscellaneous Expense	174.25
			3910	Donation Expense	433.60
	OPCUG, Capital		3920	Membership Expense	33.44
	December 31, 2019	17,372.35	3930	Raffle Expense	534.21
				Total Expense	5,293.51
				Net Income	-2,315.89

Balance Sheet and Income Statement for 2019

The club's financial plan called for a reduction of our accumulated assets, with the measures adopted aimed at providing benefits to members in some manner. As such, 2019 represents the first year in which membership fees were reduced from \$25 to \$20 per annum with a consequent reduction in the associated income stream (\$1,880 in 2019, down from \$2,250 in 2018).

Annual meeting expenses are dominated by the cost (approximately \$1,100.00) of the facility rental at Riverside United Church. The Board had sought to offset this cost through the decision to discontinue printing and mailing hard copies of the newsletter, and to move our on-line presence to external hosting services. The Meeting Expense item also includes the costs of \$426.32 for the coffee and Timbits provided at the club's monthly meetings. The latter cost was partially offset by the associated receipts totalling \$182.35 which were recorded as part of the Miscellaneous Income item.

As part of the financial plan to reduce the accumulated assets, in fiscal year 2019, the Board approved contracting the redesign and future hosting of our web site to Rebel.com at a cost of \$1,810.26 which accounts for the majority of the Pub II Expense item. Additional measures taken by the Board were to increase the value of gifts made to external speakers at club meetings, and to purchase higher-value raffle and door prizes for club members. These items are reflected in the Miscellaneous Expense and Raffles Expense amounts.

The Donation Expense amount of \$433.60 reflects the donation to the Ottawa Food Bank of funds collected in December, 2018 as a cheque which was not cashed until January, 2019. Cash donations collected in December, 2019 were presented directly to the food bank, together with donated food items, and were not included in the club's accounting system.



12 SCAM AVOIDANCE TIPS

By Lawrence Patterson lawrence@opcug.ca

Hello. As life slows down and we hunker down 'til spring comes, I wanted to reiterate the advice I provided on @OPCUG twitter account and will reiterate during the upcoming Ottawa Public Library <https://bibliottawalibrary.ca/en/program> presentations. I ask we share this with family & friends to avoid being a victim and fully enjoy what 2020 brings us.



When buying a Gift card for that special someone, be careful to check that a scammer hasn't altered the card to give it the same the value as a lump of coal. Don't rush and take time to confirm before you buy.



When presented with an unexpected electronic threat, use "Wise Trust" and call a friend - confidant before acting. A scammer wants to catch you off guard; don't allow that to happen.



Scammers are emailing, calling, messaging and using any manner possible to get you respond and act without thinking. Don't rush into rash decisions and pause before responding.



Ever wonder why you're lucky enough to receive notification of an unexpected delivery and all you have to do is just click on this link to confirm? Chances are the only thing being delivered is the opportunity for a scammer to lure you in to their trap.



Last minute shopping and someone in a parking lot is offering a great gift suggestion at a fantastic price? Keep your money and proudly walk away knowing you won't be another victim.



Take the time to enjoy the company of people you trust, and pass the word that if they feel threatened, they know who to call to get the advice needed before performing "Blind Trust" actions.



Looking for a friend online? Be careful on what you commit to the relationship as scammers find it very easy to build a seductive online and fake persona, with its only purpose being to reel in your money.

When people / organizations in need are looking for donations to a worthy cause, be careful to check their credentials before you contribute with your hard-earned funds.



Think carefully about anyone in authority making you think that the only payment they're accepting is either Bitcoin or Gift Cards. Call a friend before committing.



Getting contacted without warning from an authority figure (bank, police, taxes)! Write down the information, hang up, contact a friend first to discuss the threat, then use another advertised number / link (back of card, website) from separate line / phone to confirm if it is real.



Received a message or phone call that claims a loved one is in danger and needs money right away, or else? Take a breath, check the facts before allowing a stressful situation take advantage of your good nature.



While you're celebrating, be aware that the scammers know you're also at your most vulnerable and will do their best to take advantage of you. Don't start 2020 being scammed, and have a Happy New Year.

Take care.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Through the Lens *A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts*

Bring on the birds! *by Lynda Buske*

Life is not an Alfred Hitchcock movie so don't be nervous about bird photography just because you don't have a birder type lens...you know the kind that is longer than a Subway special! Within the limits of your camera, there is probably lots you can do to capture a good bird photo. With my current gear, I use my bridge camera (Lumix FZ1000) that only has a 16 times zoom. Make sure to have as much light as possible, i.e., wide aperture ("A" set to low number). As well, consider a higher ISO setting. If you have the time and patience to sit in one locale, a tripod is ideal but keep in mind birds move quickly and frequently so you may prefer just hand-holding your camera.

Get whatever zoomed shot you can while making sure to focus on the bird and not the branch in front or behind because with a wide aperture, you will have a short depth of field. If your camera defaults to multiple point focus, change it to spot focus. Many bird photographers insist that the photo show at least one eye of the bird so keep that in mind. I try to get an angle where the surrounding area and background are attractive. I then crop in my PC photo editing software making sure the bird is not centred (rule of thirds) and has plenty of space in the direction it is looking. See waxwing below.

The before and after shots of the blue jay illustrate the limitations of my camera but also what I could do in post processing with Photoscape X. The jay was very skittish and disappeared the minute I stepped outside so I shot from behind a pane of glass. I was able to remove the glass effect with a dehazing tool. I then applied some overall contrast and sharpening on just the bird. I could not make a tight crop or I would lose too much resolution so instead I added a vignette to focus the eye on the bird even though it is not filling the frame. It's a handy trick for sure!



Lynda regularly gives presentations for the OPCUG at the **Ottawa Public Library** (<https://opcug.ca/OPL.htm>). This article is also in PDF format on the OPCUG website (https://opcug.ca/Lens/through_the_lens.htm).

Smartphone Contacts *(Continued from page 1)*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Full Name	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Email Address	Business Phone	Mobile Phone
2							
3	Jim Watson	Watson	Jim		jim.watson@ottawa.ca	613-580-2496	
4							

Figure 2. Data fields produced by the Excel macro

"Elizabeth and Philip". While it appears that the macro, not unreasonably, identifies "and" as the contact's middle name, this doesn't occur for a number of similar listings. Nevertheless, as noted, such oddities are easily identified and rectified in the resulting spreadsheet.

Now a similar dataset can be obtained from the second smartphone, after which the process of combining the data files, eliminating duplicates, and tidying up the resulting master file is essentially as described in the previous article on Email addresses. The master file can be saved in comma-delimited (CSV) format, and the final consideration is how to import the data back into the smartphone's Contacts app.

The answer, once again, is to use a piece of free software, namely CSV to vCard (author unspecified). Running this program brings up a dialogue box in which we can browse to the master CSV file that we have created, and specify the name of the VCF file that we wish to create.

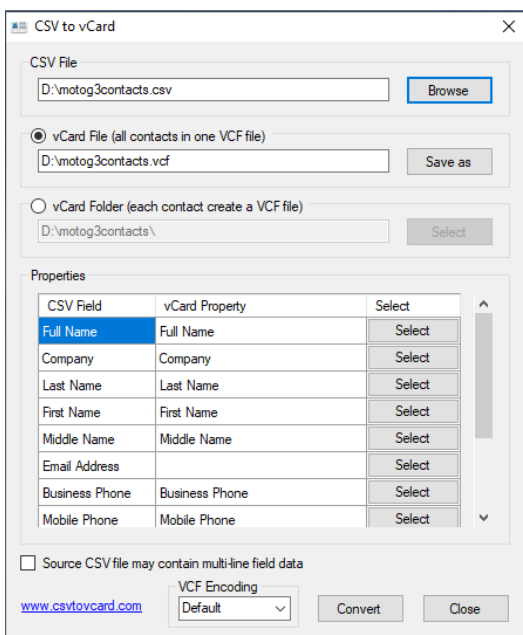


Figure 3. CVS to vCard dialog box

There is one minor glitch in the data conversion process. The dialogue box lists the data elements to be transferred by the program. The CSV Field lists one of the parameters as Email Address (the column title imported into Excel) but the corresponding vCard Property is blank (see Figure 3). If the program is run in this state, none of the available contact Email addresses will be included in the resulting VCF file. To rectify this issue, it is necessary to press the Select button adjacent to the Email

Address field and choose Email from the resulting drop-down menu. Pressing the Convert button then creates the desired VCF file.

Now it's a simple matter to activate the Contacts app on each smartphone, select all of the current contacts, delete these entries (otherwise many of the contacts will be duplicated) and, finally, import the master set of contacts from the new VCF file.

Bottom Line

Free VCF file to CSV or Excel converter (Freeware)

Greg Hadlock
<https://sourceforge.net/projects/bulkvcftocsv/files/>

CSV to vCard (Freeware)
<http://www.csvtovcard.com>

OPCUG Website Redesign—Again!

by Brigitte Lord

As our Treasurer, Alan German, mentioned in his report on page 4, our website is undergoing redesign (once again). The Board felt the need to keep up with the times and has hired a professional company for the task. Although we had just done an in-house redesign in 2018, the site still had a dated look despite being more appealing and functional than our old site.

After obtaining quotes from a few web design companies, Rebel.com was chosen. Their price was fair and we were allowed to **own** our website and port it to any web hosting service. This also means that we can maintain it ourselves and not be reliant on Rebel.com to update content (which can be several times per month).

You might wonder why we did not redesign our site in-house as we had in 2018. I'm afraid the result would not have been much better; I may be a webmaster, but I am not a web designer. Many sites are now created in WordPress. After trying my hand at WordPress last summer, I had to give up in utter frustration. As a newbie webmaster 20 years ago, learning basic HTML by looking at the code behind webpages was easier than learning WordPress!

I'm glad to say that Rebel gave me my very own copy of the new site to play with in WordPress and things are going very well. Perhaps the difference is that I have access to a very nice WordPress editing tool (Elementor) that I did not have last summer.

We hope to launch the new site within the next few months. We'll make an announcement at the time.

Here is a sneak peek of our new Home page (it is a static image so the links won't work). You will have to zoom in to see details.

<https://opcug.ca/GRAPHICS/RebelHomePage.jpg>

OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 95 Compiled by Alan German, Bill Bradwin, and Chris Taylor

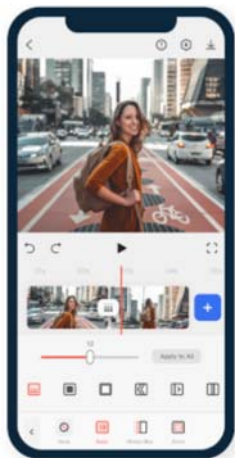
This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available software is provided for the information of our members who may find one or more of the programs useful.

FilmoraGo - Free Video Editor

A powerful video editing app for your smartphone or tablet from Wondershare Software. Mix digital photos and videos, add your favorite music, insert titles, and add transitions to create a fully-featured video. Export the final product in multiple formats suitable for sharing over E-mail, YouTube, Facebook, etc.

Current Release: Version 3.1.4

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/vosgrjt>



FocusWriter

This word processor provides a simple, distraction-free writing environment. It utilizes a hide-away interface, accessed by moving the mouse to the edge of the screen. This allows the program to have a familiar look and feel, while getting out of the way so that you can immerse yourself in your work. It's available for Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X.

Current Release: Version 1.7.3

Web Site: <https://gottcode.org/focuswriter/>

Duolingo

Learn a language for free. Learning with Duolingo is fun and addictive. Lessons adapt to your learning style. Exercises are tailored to help you learn and review vocabulary effectively. Earn virtual coins, unlock new levels, and watch your fluency score rise as you master new words, phrases, and grammar.

Web Site: <https://www.duolingo.com>

FreeNAS

FreeNAS is an operating system that can be installed on virtually any hardware platform to share data over a network. It's the simplest way to create a centralized and easily accessible place for your data. Use FreeNAS with ZFS to protect, store, and backup, all of your data.

Web Site: <https://www.freenas.org>



PowerRename

Need to change the file names of a large number of files? Want to do a simple search/replace on just a portion of various file names? This utility, from Microsoft's PowerToys v0.12, is an advanced bulk renaming tool that uses simple search and replace or more powerful regular expression matching.

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/y2voncaf>

Telegram

This messaging app focuses on speed and security and lets you access your messages from several devices at once. You can use your smartphone, tablet, and computer, and share an unlimited number of photos, videos and files. Telegram is free, with no ads, and no subscription fees.

Web Site: <https://telegram.org>



Telegram
a new era of messaging

Stellarium

Stellarium is a free, open-source planetarium for your computer. It shows a realistic sky in 3D, just like what you see with the naked eye, binoculars or a telescope. The program includes default catalogues for over 600,000 stars and 80,000 deep-sky objects, plus illustrations of the constellations, and the full Messier catalogue of nebulae images.

Current Release: Version 0.19.1

Web Site: <http://stellarium.org>



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). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

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/regmtg.htm>.

Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. followed by a Q&A Session until 10 p.m.

OPCUG Membership Fees: \$20 per year
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Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Bring your old computer books, software, hardware, and paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the General Meetings, and leave them at the table near the auditorium's entrance. Please limit magazines to publication dates under two years.

You may TAKE AWAY any items of use to you.

Any items left over at the end of the meeting have to be taken back home by those who brought them in.

