



OTTAWA PC NEWS

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The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

June 2000

CLUB NEWS

"Bring a Guest" *by Bob Gowan*

In the last few issues, we have been encouraging members to bring a guest to the April and May general meetings, and to register for a chance to win one of the prizes in draws to be held at the June meeting. Members who signed in one or more guests receive one entry for the draw for each guest. If their guest joined OPCUG by the end of the May meeting, the sponsoring member has been awarded three additional entries for the draws.

Our membership drive has been modestly successful. A total of seven members brought a total of nine guests to our April meeting. Two of those guests have become members. At our May meeting, one member signed in one guest, but that guest has joined OPCUG.

Welcome to our three new members, and thanks to all of those who brought a guest. You have a great chance to win one of the prizes!

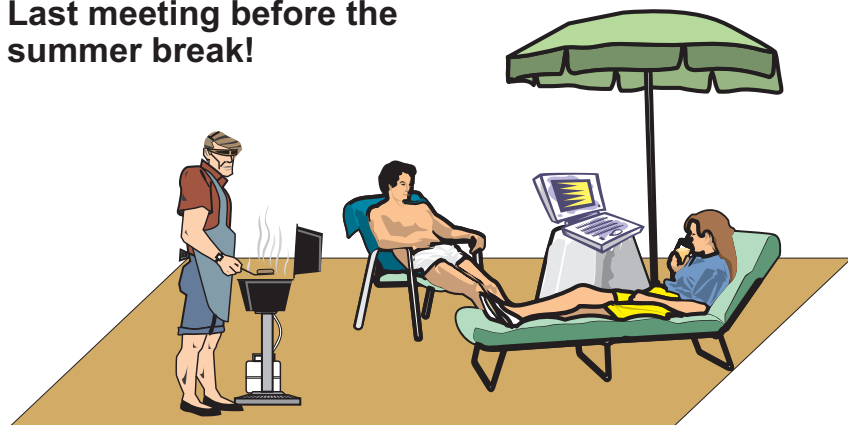
At our June meeting, three prizes will be awarded to sponsoring members. The first one drawn will have their choice of either:

- ♦ the software "Lost and Found" donated by PowerQuest,
- ♦ an Aureus pullover, donated by Toronto-Dominion Bank, or
- ♦ membership for one year to the Ottawa PC Users' Group, donated by OPCUG.

Thanks to PowerQuest and Toronto-Dominion Bank for their contributions. Good luck.



Last meeting before the summer break!



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Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, June 7th, 2000^o**

SOHO networking

by Bert Schopf

Luc Laplante and Leana Smith of Bloom Microtech will be making a presentation to the OPCUG on setting up your own home office / small office network.

More people these days are setting up not just a computer at home, but several computers at home (one for work, one for games, one for internet, etc.). It is desirable to share files and printers among the machines, and of recent interest, sharing high speed internet connections. Bloom will cover these topics and more!

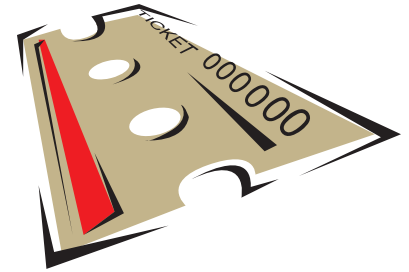
Please note that the June is the last meeting before the summer break and we will be drawing the membership prizes at this meeting.



PartitionMagic 5.0 raffle

by Chris Taylor

As you may recall from the May newsletter, we will be trying to keep membership dues at the current level through a variety of methods. At the June 7th General Meeting, the OPCUG will be holding its first raffle.



We have a copy of Partition Magic v5.0, courtesy of the folks at PowerQuest (<http://www.powerquest.com>). This powerful program lets you to easily and safely manipulate the partitions on your hard disks. No longer do you have to backup, FDISK, reformat, and restore from backups when you need to adjust the size of partitions. You can even combine partitions and convert partitions from one format to another (NTFS to FAT32, FAT32 to FAT16, etc.)

For a more complete review of this great program, see <http://opcug.ottawa.com/public/reviews/partmag3.htm>

Tickets for the raffle will be \$1 for one or \$2 for three. Tickets will be sold before the general meeting. A final call for ticket sales will be made just prior to the draw, which will be held right after the main presentation.

Help keep your membership dues low by buying some raffle tickets.



CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, June 7 th : SOHO Networking with Bloom Microtech	7:30 p.m. - Auditorium of the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa Paradox Users Group	Third Thursday of each month	6:15 pm - Corel Bldg 1600 Carling Ave.
PIG SIG (or is it WING SIG?)	June 7 th , after all the other SIG's - All questions, be they serious or not	"Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe
Internet SIG (I-SIG)	Wednesday, June 7 th :	First Wednesday of each month, immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting at the Museum of Science and Technology

Firm offers free tool to fight 'love you' virus

by Ken Fermoye

A temporary free solution for the "I Love You" virus and its various mutations, latest in the epidemic of malicious viruses, is available from Binary Research International (BRI). Other sources also offer information about and help stopping the virus.

The virus, called the "worst in history," began to appear as "Joke" files and possibly other mutations within 24 hours or so of its birth. It acts as a worm and those who use Microsoft's Outlook Express seem to be most vulnerable.

Those interested in BRI's solution can download the e-mail content filtering program MailMarshal directly from BRI's web site www.binaryresearch.net/. Alternatively, Binary Research will ship the software to those who prefer to receive it on CD. While the normal evaluation period for MailMarshal is 21 days, Binary is offering to extend that an additional three weeks to ensure the "I Love You" threat has subsided.



The widespread and devastating impact of the virus caught individuals, governments and corporations of all size off guard. Estimates of lost productivity and commerce as a direct result of this one virus attack are in the billions of dollars — and still climbing.

I have not yet tested MailMarshal V.3, a third-generation e-mail management software tool from Designer Technology Ltd., an Auckland (NZ) software developer. I plan to do so ASAP but wanted to get this word out quickly as possible because of the urgency of

the virus problem. Also, BRI's track record is excellent.

BRI is the former wholly-owned subsidiary of Binary Research Ltd. of New Zealand, best known as the original developers of Ghost (now Norton Ghost), the hard-disk cloning utility that was acquired by Symantec Corp. in 1998. BRI is also the master distributor for RemotelyAnywhere, SkunkLabs' Media Studio, Win², News Clipper and WebMarshal.

Reportedly, MailMarshal offers immediate, simple, effective e-Mail protection, without requiring users to download the latest virus definition enhancement. By relying solely on an anti-virus solution, organizations need to wait hours or even days for a potential fix.

"With its ability to scan incoming messages, MailMarshal denies or quarantines messages based on a variety of criteria. It can control the movement of commercially sensitive data and proprietary information, give legal liability protection, block junk mail and eliminate inappropriate use," a company spokesperson reports. By monitoring and controlling key words (lexical scanning), users or system administrators can effectively remove the threat of malicious viruses, including the current "I Love You".

Don't ignore your other virus protection software. True, it sometimes takes time for the virus-killers to work out and post their solutions, but they remain valuable tools to help keep your system from being vandalized.

One last word of caution, the equivalent of "Don't quit your day job!" Don't ignore your other virus protection software. True, it sometimes takes time for the virus-killers to work out and post their solutions, but they remain valuable tools to help keep your system from being vandalized.

Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM PC Users Group and *PC World* columnist offers the following advice "You may have already received one [copy of the virus e-mail]. If not, be patient. Because the "I Love You" worm is heading your way. (I got four already.)

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Honesty, accuracy: Keys to good product reviews

by Ken Fermoye

After meeting notices and other club news, product reviews make up a major share of the content in most user group publications. Therefore, it's important — even critical — that they be done properly. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case.

In the two years since I started my column, I've read at least 2000 newsletters sent to me by groups that use the articles. I don't read every single one cover to cover, but I do scan them and read most of the interesting material, including reviews. Most are okay, some are very good, and some are terrible! The majority of them would be improved if reviewers followed a few simple rules.

- ♦ **Honesty is the only policy** — Yes, you want to keep vendors happy so they will continue to support your group and the UG community as a whole, but your first obligation is to your fellow members. This means telling it like it is. If you find a flaw in the product, tell your readers about it.
- ♦ **Be fair to readers & product** — Don't blame the product for your shortcomings or those of your computer. If a software program runs slower than you'd like, maybe it's because your machine doesn't have enough RAM. Or perhaps you haven't configured things properly. You need to put things into context so readers can judge whether a flaw you report is inherent in the product or may be pilot error.
- ♦ **Accuracy is vital** — I've read many reviews in which the reviewers criticized a product with which I was familiar. It was obvious to me that the reviewer didn't understand it, had not read the manual or help page carefully, and had not sought help from a more experienced fellow member or the product's Tech Support before writing the review.
- ♦ **Explain user benefits** — Up front, preferably in the first paragraph, tell readers what the product is designed to do for them and how it can make their computing life easier. Be specific enough so they can determine whether or not the product would be useful for the type of computing they do most often.
- ♦ **Specify system requirements** — We all know that requirements listed a box aren't usually realistic. Sure, a graphics program may run with 32MB of RAM, but it will make a snail's pace look speedy. Spell out exactly how your system is configured so readers can compare it to their own setups.
- ♦ **Balance subjectivity, objectivity** — You're allowed to editorialize, but make it clear when you're giving a subjective opinion. ("This program was somewhat difficult for me to use because the interface is different from the XYZ software that I normally use" is a clearly-labeled subjective statement." "It took exactly 5.4 seconds to save to save a 5.6MB file to this disk" is clearly objective.)

- ♦ **Check out tech support** — Is there an 800 number? How long were you on hold before a real live techie was available? Is a manual furnished in the package? Is the manual helpful? (Hint: Lots of illustrations, including screen shots, and a very complete Index, with abundant cross-indexing are characteristics of a really good manual.) Remember the fairness factor, however, and check to see what experiences others have had with this vendor's tech support.
- ♦ **Include relevant details** — Give readers the suggested price, and user group discount, if one is offered. Add complete vendor contact information: address, phone & fax numbers (both sales & tech support), website URL, e-mail address.

Your group may have its own set of product review guidelines. If not, it would be a good project for an editorial committee to undertake. Such guidelines should spell out minimum and maximum lengths, how a review should be delivered to the editor (usually on diskette or via e-mail), what file format should be used (plain ASCII text, Word, Rich Text Format, etc.) and other editorial requirements.

Correct grammar and spelling are certainly important, but don't let lack of writing experience stop you from doing reviews. Honesty, accuracy and fairness are more important than an occasional split infinitive or misspelling. Do a spell check, and you might want to have a third party check your opus for obvious goofs (An ex- or current English teacher would be great).

Those are the basics. Follow them and you will be a real asset to your group when it comes to doing product reviews that are effective, readable and useful for readers.



What's Happening at I-SIG ? by Bob Gowan

The May meeting of the Internet SIG covered a range of topics, including GIF transparency, Java applets, residential DSL and wireless Internet. There was a brief discussion of the “Electronic Post Office”, or

“E-POST” (see <http://www.epost.ca/main/english/index.shtml>)

This web-based service offers a single location for Canadian consumers and businesses to send and receive mail, pay bills, access services, find information and interact in a secure, private and easy to use environment. Firewalls and the meaning of firewall software ‘attack’ reports continue to be a ‘hot’ topic, both at the SIG meetings and on the Internet SIG listserve. New readers should check out recent newsletters and our Web site for reviews of firewall software. Those interested in this topic can keep up-to-date by following the discussion on the listserve.

There was also a good discussion of a free e-mail group service called ‘eGroups’ (see <http://www.egroups.com>). This site has recently merged with a similar service, ONElist, with the updated eGroups site using features taken from each of its parents. These groups can include discussion areas, chat, file storage, searchable tables, calendar sharing, and polling. The ‘owner’ of the group can sign up members, limit or approve membership, allow multiple moderators, or allow non-moderated postings. Messages contain a small advertisement. This service is well-suited for groups that lack the resources or expertise to set up their own server, but want to be able to communicate frequently and to share information. There are now thousands of eGroups. Some examples of eGroups users are families, clubs and amateur sports teams and leagues.

You may have noticed in recent newsletters and listserve postings that the I-SIG has been asked to take a greater role in the ongoing tasks of maintaining and upgrading the OPCUG web site. One of our SIG members, **Brigitte Lord**, has agreed to take over the role of Webmaster. We should not, however, expect her to do all of the work. Several of our members have contributed significantly to the current site, some provide ongoing support; but still others are needed. We have heard some criticism of the website — I challenge all SIG members to identify any page they don’t like, and to suggest what should be done with it. Better yet, take a stab at putting together a new page showing what you think it should look like.



If you would like to accept this challenge to help build a better site for OPCUG, please post a message to I-SIG’s message area, or e-mail either Brigitte or me directly at the addresses listed on the back page of the newsletter. Experience is not necessary — the I-SIG has an online HTML course that you can follow, and our “members help members” — the main criteria is an interest in learning web page building and in contributing to your club.

If you have not yet joined the I-SIG Listserve, you can do so by sending the message **subscribe Internet-SIG** (in message body) to listserv@opcug.ottawa.com. You can easily cancel your subscription by sending message **unsubscribe Internet-SIG** (in message body) to listserv@opcug.ottawa.com. If you change your e-mail address, first unsubscribe from the listserve using your old e-mail account, and then subscribe using your new e-mail address.



It really is easy (to make your own CDs)

by Andrew McIntyre (www.mp3.com/news/154.html)

After writing my previous article “Rolling Your own Audio CDs”, I received a lot of user feedback. Apparently my steps in the audio CD recording process were not as easy as I had hoped that they would be.

To solve this problem, I have two software recommendations to make burning your own CDs as easy as pie. The software that I’m talking about is HyCD Play&Record and PTS-Audio CD MP3 Studio. With these software titles, anyone can directly burn audio CDs from their MP3 files. It takes no experience with CD Recorders (CDR or CDRW), decoding files, or anything beyond the basics of the average user’s computer knowledge. I now think that if you can download or encode and play MP3 files, you have enough computer know-how to put them on a CD that will play in your home stereo, using a CD burner.

The idea behind both these software titles is simple, taking the hassle out of making audio CDs from your MP3 collection.

HyCD Play&Record

A trial version of Play & Record is available at www.HyCD.com.

Play & Record tries to be an MP3/Sound Editing/Audio CD burning program. It succeeds at all 3. But even just as an Audio CD suite I found that HyCD was up to par with any burning software out there.

MP3 support is just the great addition that puts it ahead of the other audio burning Suites. HyCD Play&Record uses a great system, that most people are familiar with from word processing, to record CDs.

When burning an Audio CD you use a right mouse click to select the HyCD Copy option to select your files in Windows explorer. To record the CD, you only have to press the HyCD Paste option on the drive of your CD recorder. The CDR playlist comes up with all your selections, wav files or MP3s. All that is left is to select the order of the desired songs and press record. HyCD’s software does all the MP3 decoding and begins the CD burn.

The thing that makes this kind of software so appealing, is that it takes the work out of making audio CDs. HyCD Play&Record’s features are not exclusively limited to MP3 to CD though. Making Audio CDs from wav files and direct CD to CD copying is also included. There is also a sound editor to clean up the sound of your wav files before burning them to disc, an MP3 encoder and decoder, an MP3 player and even a data CD burning feature.

HyCD Play&Record is very user friendly and has a great tutorial and great help files. The only gripes I have are minimal interface tweaks that are being looked at as you read this. There is also the possibility of some incompatibility issues if you have an older CDR, but I have been

assured that those problems are also being looked into. Future updates will take care of any problems. If you have been considering spending some money on a MP3 or CD burning suite, I would definitely consider Play & Record. The price for the Play & Record with MP3 encoding capability is less than \$60 U.S.

A better name for HyCD Play&Record would be “Everything you ever wanted in a Music/Burning program”. In my opinion, a definite 5 out of 5 stars.

PTS — Audio CD MP3 Studio

Available at products.pts-shop.de

Audio CD MP3 Studio has a few of HyCD Play&Record’s features, the most prominent being, the ability to make audio CDs directly from your MP3 collection with no need to do any of the work yourself. This program is quite a bargain for only \$30. It supports both MP3 and wav files and does a good job of automating the process of recording your MP3 files to an audio CD. Audio CD MP3 Studio is a good addition to your burning software but it isn’t a replacement like HyCD Play&Record. Selecting MP3 or wav files to burn is as easy as picking which songs you want in the add track menu and pressing open within the program then selecting what order you want the tracks in. A great feature of this program is the ability to save the burning playlist so that you can make the same CD over again with out too much trouble. The help files are well done and the program is pretty easy to get the hang of.

Using a special trial access code, PTS Audio CD MP3 Studio is available to download and use 20 times. Just enter the serial number code: CSN02A-999893-0303

The only complaint with PTS - Audio CD Studio is a few little bugs and the amount of effort it takes to change the order of the songs

around that you want to burn. In my opinion, this product deserves its MP3.com previously rated 5 out of 5 stars.

PTS - Audio CD MP3 Studio is a piece of software, with a small price tag, that makes a great addition to your library of CD burning software. Check out the PTS web site (<http://products.pts-shop.de/>) for more information or to register your shareware copy. The Gold Edition of PTS - Audio CD MP3 Studio has many more features including an Ripper/Encoder.

Both HyCD Play&Record and PTS-Audio CD MP3 Studio save you time and make the MP3 to Audio CD recording process easier.



MP3 system requirements

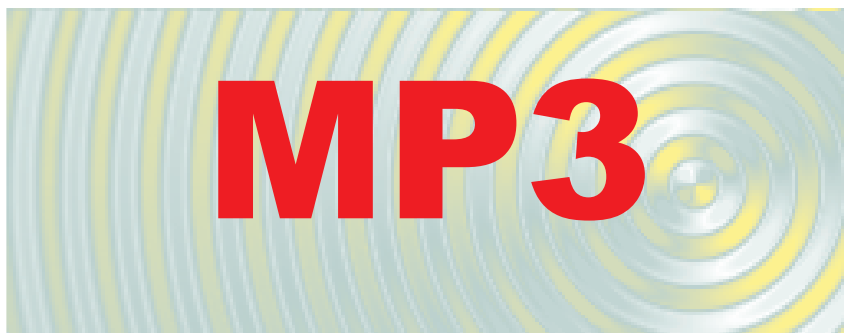
Windows

- ♦ Win 95*, 98 or NT (*OS-R2)
- ♦ 200 MHz Pentium
- ♦ 32 MB RAM
- ♦ Netscape Communicator 4.5 or better
- ♦ Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or better
- ♦ 56K modem**

Linux

- ♦ i386 or compatible hardware
- ♦ CD-ROM drive capable of digital audio extraction
- ♦ 32 MB RAM
- ♦ Netscape Communicator 4.5 or better
- ♦ 56K modem**

**Unless you have a cable modem or better, we recommend that you listen in Lo Fi. Hi Fi requires more bandwidth than standard 56K modems can handle.



SOFTWARE TIPS

Making MP3's with files from www.mp3.com

How do I get music from CD to MP3 on my computer? (Windows)

Step#1: Download MusicMatch.

(http://click.mp3.com/ct/i_getstarted/u_chooser.mp3.com/cgi-bin/help/ctc-reg.cgi)

The first step is to download a copy of MusicMatch, and install it in the Program Files directory on your computer. This is the only software you will need to encode .mp3s from your Audio CD.

Step#2: Making an MP3 file.

Put the CD you want to encode into your computer's CD drive. Open the MusicMatch Jukebox. Click on the red REC button in the Player to open the Recorder. A window will appear listing the tracks on the CD with track numbers. If you're connected to the Internet, the names of the songs, the artist, and album name will be filled in. If you do not have an Internet connection or the CD information is not returned, you may type titles in the available fields.

Click the box next to each track you want to make into an MP3 file. When you have finished choosing the tracks click the "start" button found in the upper left side of the window. Sit back and wait for a few minutes while the track is encoded into the .mp3 format.

Step 3: Playing your file.

Now that you have made an MP3 of your track, you can listen to it. Click the musical note icon at the bottom left of the Player window to open the Music Library. The track you've recorded will now be listed in the Music Library database, with some fields left blank to enter in custom information (for instance Genre, Tempo or Mood. Simply double-click the tracks to add to the player, or drag them into the Playlist window.

Click the Play button when you are done and your track(s) will start playing.



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. Deadline for submissions is three Saturdays before the general meeting. If you would like to contribute an article to *Ottawa PC News*, please submit it to the newsletter editor.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the first Wednesday in the month, except in July and August, at the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30 to about 9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups go until 10 p.m.

Fees

Membership: \$25 per year.

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See you in September!

CLUB LIFE

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 your magazines to publication dates of less than two years old.

If you don't bring something, you may want to TAKE AWAY something of interest, so look in on this area. Any item left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to the... recycle bin.

