



OTTAWA PC NEWS

Vol. 17 number 7

The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

September 2000

What's New on PUB II

Pure cool *by Chris Taylor, System Administrator*

We all strive to find programs for our computers that will make our lives more efficient, make work easier, and increase our productivity.

But there are times when we run across programs that are — what can I say — just pure cool. Such was my thinking when I ran across WindowFX v1.0 from the folks at www.stardock.com.

WindowFX v1.0 lets you tweak your display settings in ways that you never thought possible. You can customize the Windows settings to create transparent icon backgrounds, change the icon foreground colour, and make windows slide or fade into view as they open. Most interesting is the program's ability to make windows and menus semi-transparent.



Configure it to make windows, pop-up menus, and even entire applications translucent or transparent so that you can see what is behind them. You can set the transparency level from 0 to 100.

Another very nifty feature is the ability to “maximize” applications to something less than full screen. You can even set the location these “maximized” windows will appear.

All this is available in a small program using minimal resources. WindowFX works on Windows 98 and Windows ME, but its full capabilities emerge on Windows 2000. You can download WindowFX.exe from Utilities — Desktop Utilities file area (area 45) on PUB II. WindowFX is shareware with a registration fee of US\$14.95.



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NOTE:

Please note that the September meeting will be held the **second** Wednesday of the month (Sept. 13th) instead of the usual first Wednesday.

Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, September 13th, 2000**

COMING UP

Online privacy at risk by Tim Mahoney

Liliana Faillace of Zero-Knowledge Systems Inc. of Montreal will present a factual explanation on how privacy is at risk while surfing the Internet, including technical information, actual cases of privacy abuse, and how to avoid them.

There will be a live demonstration of Zero-Knowledge's software called *Freedom* that provides tools to prevent internet sites and hackers from collecting your personal information.



June prize winners by Bob Gowan

Several lucky club members walked away from the final meeting of the OPCUG 1999–2000 season with some great prizes. The 2nd Annual “Bring a Guest” membership drive concluded at the June 7th meeting with the drawing of contest prize winners and there was a raffle for software.

The first prize winner in the membership drive was **Bob Thomas**, who received his choice of prizes, a one-year membership in OPCUG, for bringing his guest, **Ed Fuchs**, to the April 2000 meeting. Bob owes Ed “big time” because Bob's winning ticket was one of the three bonus chances he received when Ed purchased a membership in OPCUG. The second winner was **Paul Cooper**. Paul's guest at the April 2000 meeting was L. Withnall. Paul received an Aureus pullover, donated by Toronto-Dominion Bank.

The third ticket drawn was yet another of Bob Thomas' bonus tickets. Bob kindly returned his second prize, and drew another winning ticket. The final winner of the software *Lost and Found*, donated by PowerQuest, was **Bob Gowan**, who's guests in April were Jonathan and Charles Tigner.

Raffle tickets were sold at the beginning of the June meeting for a copy of the latest version of *Partition Magic*, also donated by PowerQuest. Sales were brisk — the revenue generated for the club was \$87. The winning ticket drawn at the end of the meeting was purchased by **Bob Herres**. Raffles of other great products will be held at future meetings. Yet another good reason to attend!

I'm sure I speak for the other winners in expressing thanks to the OPCUG, PowerQuest and Toronto-Dominion Bank for providing the prizes.



CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Online privacy at risk (see above) Wednesday, September 13 th	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?)	September 13 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, September 13 th :	What can you do when your web site surpasses your ISP's limits on disk space or web traffic? What are the alternatives to just paying more to the ISP each month? Come and join our discussion.
Developers SIG	Wednesday, September 13 th : The SIG meetings run from 9 to 10 PM.	Immediately following the main OPCUG presentation the first Wednesday of the month (summers excepted), and occasionally at other locations in the region.

Drive Copy 3.0 & Drive Image 3.02 *by Chris Taylor*

PowerQuest has brought out new versions of these programs to help you move information from one disk to another. Drive Copy is really targeted at someone who is upgrading to a new, larger hard disk. Drive Image is like Drive Copy on steroids, with many more features and capabilities.

The last time I looked at Drive Copy, it was at v1.0. Since then PowerQuest has overcome some of the restrictions in that release. You are no longer required to have the destination drive as master and the source drive as slave. There is no longer a problem with the larger hard disks you run into these days. It can now copy single partitions, rather than just the entire drive. Finally, while v1.0 forced the partitions on the destination drive to be resized proportionally, you can now control the resizing of partitions to suit your needs.

Drive Copy supports FAT16/16x/32/32x, HPFS, NTFS, and Linux partitions. If all you require is a program to move the contents of an entire partition or drive to another disk, Drive Copy is a product that can accomplish this. The manual is very clear and anyone should be successful in moving to a larger hard disk.



While the program is very slick and easy to use, you may not need to spend the money. If you're using Win9x, it's not terribly difficult to manually do what Drive Copy does. If you are contemplating this, let me know if you would like my recipe. However, if you are using another OS, such as NT or Windows 2000 (Win2K), things get more difficult and Drive Copy may well be worth the modest price.

Drive Image can do everything Drive Copy can do, plus some powerful extras that make this a worthwhile addition to anyone's utility toolkit. It's these additional features that attracted me to Drive Image.

I recently replaced the 6GB disk in my Pentium II/266 with a 20GB disk. I wondered what to do with my old disk. I really didn't need the space (at least not right away). But when I saw what Drive Image could do, I knew the answer.

First, some background. I advocate periodically (after backing them up) wiping out your Windows and Program Files directories and installing fresh. It's amazing the performance benefit you can gain by wiping out all the crap left behind by un-installs (that don't remove all their files) and programs you no longer use (but take up tons of disk space), not to mention the added stability gained by removing mismatched DLLs, unnecessary drivers installed by some long-forgotten and unused piece of hardware, etc.

Deciding to take the plunge and start over is not for the faint-of-heart or folks who don't have a lot of time on their hands. It can mean a wasted weekend digging up all the original CD-ROMs, license keys, sitting

watching installation procedures, etc. And then you go through a week or two of remembering, finding, and installing those obscure little programs you find useful periodically.

What if you could do a clean install, use the machine for a couple of weeks to get it close to what you really want, and then image the drive? The task of blowing away an increasingly slow and unstable installation and returning to this fresh, stable, properly configured installation turns into a single operation completed in half an hour, rather than a weeks-long ordeal.

I have a dual-boot machine. Currently, the C: partition is 3GB using FAT32 and has Windows Millennium Edition (WinMe) installed. The D: partition is 17GB using FAT32 and has Win2K Pro installed. I used Partition Magic to resize the D: partition down to 11GB, and formatted the remainder, to be used for data files, as E:. I then added my old disk into the machine. To prevent drive letters from switching around, I partitioned the entire drive as an extended partition and created a single logical drive, which ended up as F:.



Drive Image runs from DOS. For those without DOS (WinMe, WinNT, Win2K, OS/2, Linux), you can use the Rescue Disks created during

installation. However, if you use FAT32 or NTFS, you can't boot from the Rescue Disks or Drive Image won't see the partitions. But you can boot from a Win98 or WinMe startup disk and then switch to the Drive Image rescue disks. If you use WinNT or Win2K exclusively, you'll have to get someone using Win98 or WinMe to make you a startup disk.

I moved data files from C: and D: over to E:. That reduced the volume of files considerably

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on my two operating system partitions. I had just finished getting rid of an old, bloated Win98 installation and replacing it with WinMe. As this installation was only a couple of weeks old, this was a great opportunity to image the partition. I had installed all the standard applications I normally use and had been using WinMe for a few weeks, so my working environment was pretty complete. At this point, the disk space used on C: was about 1.1 GB. I used Drive Image to make an image file of this partition and store it on my old 6GB hard disk F:.

Drive Image supports two levels of compression to allow you to balance time against disk space when creating an image file. The results were pretty impressive. With no compression, the image file was just over 1GB and took 6.5 minutes to produce at a rate of 150MB per minute. Low compression took 7.5 minute and created an image file of 800MB at a rate of 130MB per minute. With maximum compression, an image file of 680MB was created in just under 12 minutes or 84MB per minute.

I then turned to my D: drive, which contains my main working OS — Win2K Pro. It has 3.5GB in use. With maximum compression, the image file was just over 2GB. Since the old drive I am storing the images files on has a capacity of 6GB, I have plenty of room.

Since I've been using this installation of Win2K Pro since mid-January, what I really should do is wipe it and install from scratch. If I then install all my applications and use the system for a few weeks, it will be lean and mean yet contain everything I normally use, all configured properly. If bad things happen, it would very fast to blow it all away and return to this state, saving hours of aggravation. Another benefit would be that the image of this would be smaller, leaving more room for a second image.

Why do I want a second image? Well, even though I could return to the lean and mean initial image, sometimes I do something that has an immediate detrimental effect on my machine. I don't want to go all the way back to that initial image, since there are changes I have done that will require some work to

recover. That's where a second image file would come in really handy. If I keep a second image that gets recreated every week or two, it may help me through such a situation.

“The task of blowing away an increasingly slow and unstable installation and returning to this fresh, stable, properly configured installation turns into a single operation completed in half an hour, rather than a weeks-long ordeal.”

Although I'm using a second hard disk to store images, Drive Image also supports just about any removable media as long as DOS can assign it a drive letter. Included in the installation routine is support for Iomega, SyQuest and Magneto-Optical drives. It is also possible to use a writable CD to store images, if you have a driver to access it from DOS. Drive Image can span multiple disks when storing images on removable media.

Restoring complete partitions is not an acceptable solution for general backup and restore operations. But PowerQuest has included Image Editor, which runs from within Win9x/NT/2K. This program allows you to manipulate image files, editing comments, creating spanned images from a single image, combining spanned images, compressing or decompressing images, etc. It also provides the ability to restore files and directories from an image file.

By using Drive Image to back up or restore entire partitions and Image Editor to restore individual files, you might be able to use Drive Image as your only backup solution. Beyond the inability to backup individual files or directories, the other problem with using Drive Image is that it has to run from DOS. Normal backup solutions allow you to schedule unattended backups. This is not possible with Drive Image. To be fair, PowerQuest does not promote Drive Image as a backup solution.

The 117-page manual included with Drive Image is very clear and complete. It includes many different scenarios that can help walk you through just about anything you would want to do with the program. Thanks, PowerQuest, for continuing to provide good, written documentation.

You can purchase PowerQuest products at reduced prices at their User Group site www.ugr.com/order. You need to use code UGEVAL00 when ordering. Prices (in US\$) are \$20 for Drive Copy and \$30 for Drive Image. However, they tack on \$10 for shipping, which can bring the price close to shelf prices here in town, so it is worth shopping around. If you purchase a copy of Drive Image, be sure to register it on-line. This will automatically take you to a spot on PowerQuest's Web site where you can download a free copy of DataKeeper, valued at US\$20.

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“Hello” from the new Webmaster by Brigitte Lord

For those of you who haven't heard of me, I've been the OPCUG webmaster since June 9, 2000. I took the position over from **David Reeves**. By day, I'm a medical laboratory technologist handling tissue biopsies for a private laboratory. As the OPCUG webmaster, I maintain and update the current site and am working on redesigning it to give it a fresh, new look. I've been an OPCUG member since March 1999. If you wish to see who I am, visit the “Executive” page on the website and check out all the members of the executive and their mug shots.

As a fairly new computer user (1998), I was a little scared to apply for the position of webmaster. My previous experience with anything of this sort consists of a few pages of a family website that I started more than a year ago, never finished, and never uploaded. The program I was using then was an all-in-one desktop publishing package that could do a myriad of things. It was pure WYSIWYG and required zero knowledge of HTML. Although it did a half decent job of generating web pages, I wouldn't use such a program for a non-private site such as the OPCUG site. I wouldn't even use it today for the family site.

So what am I using now? I like to keep things simple. For starters, I am using two basic programs - Microsoft FrontPage Express and Netscape Composer. These are quite functional and easy to learn. A beginner can easily use either program without seeing a speck of HTML. Sometimes, I will use certain features of a word processor to do tedious tasks. I used Corel WordPerfect 8, for example, to sort the data in all three tables in the “Articles” section of the website. For designing graphics (buttons, etc.) for the new site, I am using Jasc's Paint Shop Pro 6. It is a relatively inexpensive program crammed full of features. It, too, is a fairly easy program to use. When I have something to upload to the server, I use LEECH FTP.

Because I am new at this, I had to learn from scratch how to maintain the current site. I did this mostly by trial and (offline) error.

Chris Taylor, our system administrator, started by giving me a copy of the entire website to review. My first amendment was a simple text change announcing the speaker at the next general meeting. I did this in Notepad (there's nothing like finding your way in the Sanskrit of HTML). That went well enough. After a few frustrating attempts, I finally uploaded the change and a webmaster was born. It was great to see my first change on the site in realtime. The next few days were spent making corrections to spelling mistakes and realigning text and paragraphs. These were good exercises for learning to work with

Frontpage Express and Netscape Composer. Now I use Notepad only to *tweak* the HTML when these two programs don't behave.

The next significant event was posting the archived software reviews. **Alan German**, the manager of the software reviews section, handed me an archive of two dozen past reviews. Most of these were in proper format ready for posting, but some were in the old “pre-frames” format. For these pages, I had to remove a bar on the left side that contained all the navigation links that the current left frame now contains.

The addition of the search engine was a simple matter of copying and pasting a source code provided free of charge by Atomz.com. Piece of cake.

The next major event was posting the past OPCUG newsletter articles. **John Keys**, a member of our club, has been keeping a personal index of all the newsletter articles dating back several years. He was very gracious in providing the club with a copy to post on the website. With the use of WordPerfect, I sorted the numerous articles into two additional tables. Thankfully, **Jocelyn Doire** created a macro that generated the numerous links to all the articles.

Presently, I am working on a brand new look for the website. This is proving to be quite a challenge. To date, I have presented two test sites to the Board for comments. I have abandoned both because my first attempts with JavaScript take too long to load. With some help from yet another member, **Helen Smyth**, I am working on a third design. There is some new colour and the layout is a little different. This is a slow process. In all fairness, the webmaster is not usually involved in designing a site. This is usually done by a team consisting of several design artists. Once the design team has finished and the site is posted, the webmaster is handed the

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reigns to maintain it. Thankfully, I have had the OPCUG summer hiatus to work on it and I hope to have a few new pages posted by September.

Members of PUB II can view my two test sites at the following URL's (you'll need your password): <http://opcug.ottawa.com/test/index.htm> and <http://opcug.ottawa.com/test2/index.htm>.

After a short delay, the JavaScript is loaded causing the OPCUG logo (at the "test" URL only, not "test2") and some navigation buttons on the left to animate when the mouse is over them (called "mouseovers" or "rollovers"). These are test sites only and some links are "dummy" links that bring you back to homepage. Also, some minor graphics are absent.

As you can see, I have lots of help from various members of the club and its executive. I wish to thank all for their help and generosity. I hope to serve as the OPCUG webmaster for many years.

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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.

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SOFTWARE REVIEW

Windows Me — Works for me!

by Bob Thomas



One of the first things you'll notice about Windows Millennium edition is that it boots up much more quickly — but the performance doesn't end there. WindowsMe is the latest operating system for home users, and it's loaded with new enhancements.

Let's face it — we all can't be computer geniuses. I know I've deleted important files on more than one occasion. So the new System Restore tool in WindowsMe is really cool. System Restore lets you "roll back" your PC to the last time it was working.

System Restore automatically takes snapshots of your system after 10 hours of continuous use or every 24 hours — you can even take snapshots manually. To restore your system, you select the snapshot you'd like to use. The System File Protection feature is a great bonus too — it automatically restores any of 80 critical system files if you delete one of them accidentally.

On the home networking front, WindowsMe makes it easier to set up home networks and share Internet connections through new wizards and improved hardware support.

It's a digital world — so its no surprise that what really sold me on WindowsMe were the new media bells and whistles. With Windows Movie Maker you can create, edit, and share movies over the Internet. Great graphics and rich sound. No extra software is required to import photos from scanners and cameras or to perform simple operations like previewing, rotating, and printing. I easily e-mailed photos and posted them to my web site. With some more time, I could have created slideshows and screensavers, or put them on a CD for safekeeping.

With Windows Media Player 7.0, you can download music from the Internet or record music from CD's of your own. Music can be easily organized into personalized play lists or custom CD's. You can listen to live Internet radio or view videos online.

Even if you're a little nervous about learning these new technologies, the new Help menus in WindowsMe are thorough and Web-friendly. You should be able to find all of your answers there.

You've definitely got something to look forward to!

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WinRoute Pro v4.1 by Chris Taylor

Over the past year, I have used SyGate to share the PUB II ADSL Internet connection with other computers in my house. Although I was pretty satisfied with the product, I had a couple of minor issues with accessing an Exchange Server from my client machines. To provide protection from the black hats on the Internet, I used BlackICE Defender. It also seemed to do a good job, although I found its flashing icon a little annoying after a while.

Then I heard of a product that would do both the above jobs and more, while permitting more extensive customization — WinRoute Pro v4.1 from Tiny Software. It is a NAT (Network Address Translation) gateway, allowing multiple machines to share an Internet connection, a packet-filter firewall to keep the wolves at bay, a DHCP server to take care of TCP/IP configuration on machines on the local LAN, a DNS forwarder to take care of name resolution requests for all machines, a POP3 mail server to provide mail services, and a proxy server to conserve bandwidth.



Installation and initial configuration was very simple and clearly laid out in the 128-page PDF-format manual downloaded from the Internet (an extra US\$20 gets a boxed copy with printed manual). My primary interest was with the NAT gateway so my computers could share the PUB II connection to the Internet. Since the computers were already configured with appropriate network cards, I was up and running in minutes.

NAT allows you to share a single valid, Internet-routable IP address with all your computers that are networked together. The nice thing about using NAT is that software on your client machines does not need to be reconfigured in order to access the Internet. In essence, almost everything works as if the computer had its own connection to the Internet. This is in sharp contrast to proxy servers which only work with certain types of software and require re-configuration on each client machine. The manual has a wonderful section that clearly explains how NAT works.

One potential problem with using a NAT gateway is if you want people on the Internet to be able to access computers behind your NAT gateway. Since these machines have what is known as *private IP addresses*, it is not possible to connect directly to them from the Internet. There is simply no way that Internet routers will pass on the packets to those private IP addresses. WinRoute Pro gets around this problem through port mapping. Basically, you tell WinRoute Pro that packets coming into the WinRoute Pro computer (which has a valid Internet-routable address) destined for a particular port should be forwarded to a specific machine on your internal network. For example, if you are running a Web server on a computer behind the

NAT gateway, you could tell the port mapper that any packets sent to port 80 (the default for Web servers) should be forwarded on to the computer running the Web server, which then responds to the web requests.

By default, WinRoute Pro closes all inbound ports, effectively preventing anyone on the Internet from connecting to your computer and doing bad things. In cases like PUB II, you want to open some ports to allow folks from the Internet to connect to your computer. I needed to open port 21 for Telnet, 23 for FTP, 25 for SMTP, 80 for HTTP (Web server), and 110 for POP3. WinRoute Pro includes a packet filter firewall that is easily configured to control access to any TCP or UDP port. You can open ports for access from a specific IP address or address range or allow access from any address. You can even limit the period of time a port is accessible. For example, you could make a web server available only from 5:00 p.m. on Fridays until 8:00 a.m. on Mondays.

Not only can you limit inbound traffic, but you can do the same for outbound. If you want to ensure your 8-year old is not surfing the web from the computer in his room all night, it is a simple matter to limit outbound access to certain hours. You can also block access to particular ports from a specific computer.

In the WinRoute Pro firewall, the action to be performed on inbound packets may be set to *permit*, *drop*, or *deny*, with the default being *deny*. This means the port is visible, but the person can't connect to the port. For the ultimate in security, you want to tell the firewall to *drop* packets. That way, your computer does not even appear to exist to others out on the Internet. Very cool! Personally, I think *drop* should be the default action. If you download build 20 or higher from the Tiny Software web site, you can change the default to *drop*. I discovered this

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Group Meetings

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

Fees

Membership: \$25 per year.

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almost by accident. I suggested to Tiny Software that they add a history list to the Web site and they have agreed to do so.

The mail server in WinRoute Pro appears to be quite functional, allowing you to configure an e-mail server that will function within your LAN. Connecting to the outside world is a bit more complex. While you can easily send e-mail to the Internet, receiving is a little harder. To do this right, you need to register a DNS name. Given that you need two DNS servers in order to register a name, plus the fact that you probably only have one valid Internet-routable IP address, suffice it to say that you are going to need some assistance here. However, there are free DNS hosting services (<http://granitecanyon.com>) that enable you to run your own Internet mail services for all the folks on your network, whether that is your family or the employees of a company.

If you want to conserve bandwidth, WinRoute Pro includes a proxy server. A proxy server receives requests for HTML elements such as pages and graphics. If the cache in the proxy server already has the information from a previous request, it returns the information directly, saving the fetch across the Internet. If it does not have the information already, the proxy server fetches it over the Internet, returns the information to the requesting machine and stores a copy in the cache in case someone else requests it. I am not a fan of proxy servers, but it is there for those who want to use it.

WinRoute Pro has excellent logging capabilities that can help when it comes to trouble-shooting. I was able to analyse log files to discover the root of my problems with Exchange Server. When I connect to the Exchange Server, it picks two completely random UDP ports above 1024 for use in pushing new mail notifications to the client. I first attempted to use the port mapper to map all accesses from the IP address of my Exchange Server on ports above 1024 and send them to my client machine. So far no luck, but I have not given up yet.

WinRoute Pro v4.1 requires a Pentium class PC with 32MB RAM, 1MB disk space, and Windows 9x/NT4/Win2K. Cost ranges from US\$199 for 5 users to US\$699 for unlimited. For those with somewhat less demanding requirements, WinRoute Lite and WinRoute Home drop some of the more advanced features for prices as low as US\$49. See the Web site at <http://www.winroute.com> for details.

Through the generosity of the folks at Tiny Software, we have a boxed copy of the 5-user WinRoute Pro (valued at US\$219). It will be raffled off at the September general meeting of the OPCUG. Tickets are \$1 for one or \$2 for three. Help support the continued low cost of OPCUG membership and have a chance at this terrific piece of software.

