



OTTAWA PC NEWS

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The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

December 2000

CLUB NEWS

Election notice *by Chris Taylor*

The Ottawa PC Users' Group does not run itself. From the membership, a nine-member Board of Directors is elected each year to ensure its continued good health and smooth operation. The Board always benefits if at least a few stay on from a previous year in order to provide continuity. However, there is also great benefit in having some new people on the board to bring a fresh outlook on things. If you are interested in helping guide the direction of the OPCUG, then please consider running for the Board of Directors.

A common question is just how much work is involved. This is quite difficult to answer because it varies so widely. Once the Board of Directors is elected, they meet to select a Chairman, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. In addition, they select members to fulfill other roles as required to carry out the functions of the OPCUG. Typical functions include System Administrator, Web Master, Editor, Membership, Publicity, Facilities Coordinator, and Meeting Coordinator. At a minimum, Board members are expected to attend board meetings which are held ten times per year.

Nominations must be received by the head of the nominations committee, David Reeves, by the start of the OPCUG general meeting on January 10th. If you nominate another member, they must accept the nomination. Members are permitted to nominate themselves. Nominations may be done through snail-mail addressed to David Reeves, 5 Elmbank Cres., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 3P8 or by e-mail at

David.Reeves@opcug.ottawa.com. Please be sure to include the phone number of the nominee.

If there are more than nine nominations, an election will be held at the February OPCUG general meeting. Candidates will have an opportunity to include an article in the February issue of Ottawa PC News, outlining why they feel they should be elected to the Board of Directors. Candidates will also be given an opportunity to speak to the membership prior to the vote at the February meeting.

I have been a Director for many years and have found it to be a very rewarding experience. I would encourage others to run for a position on the Board for 2001. If you would like more information about what is involved, please feel free to contact me or any other current or former Board member.



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

COMING UP



Bring the family to our holiday season meeting

by Tim Mahoney

Our guest speaker will feature computer games and entertainment products by different manufacturers.



A Christmas eMessage

by T.P. Mahoney

*T'was the night before Christmas,
And all through the computer,
Not a byte was stirring,
Not even the user.*

*The floppies were still,
And the hard disk was parked,
The CPU slept,
And the files were all Arced.*

*Both RAM and ROM,
Were in quiescent state,
While down on the bus,
The expansion stayed upon wait.*

*The graphics board remained blank,
And the monitor clear,
Till over the modem,
A call did hear.*

*The mouse got excited,
While with electrons aflutter,
The monitor woke up,
In a bright burst of colour.*

*The speaker hoots,
And a message appears,
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL,
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.*



CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Games & entertainment (see above) Wednesday, December 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	6:00-8:00 p.m. — Corel Bldg 1600 Carling Ave
PIG SIG (i.e., Wing SIG)	December 13 th — An informal social event held after the other SIGs are finished	“Good Times” cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe
Internet SIG (I-SIG)	Wednesday, Dec. 13 th	Come and join our discussions!
Developers SIG	Wednesday, Dec. 13 th	Immediately following the main OPCUG presentation the second Wednesday of the month, and occasionally at other locations in the region.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

Drive Image 4.0 *by Chris Taylor*

This fall, PowerQuest released a new version of their hard disk imaging software—Drive Image 4.0 (DI4). I recently wrote a review of Drive Image 3.0 (DI3), which was published in the September issue of Ottawa PC News. You can also read the review on the OPCUG web site at opcug.ottawa.com/public/reviews/drivcop3.htm.

The new version has a few handy new features but should be considered an evolutionary change, rather than a revolutionary one. As with most PowerQuest releases, if you already own the n-1 release of the product (in this case DI3), look closely at the new features. If you don't need the new features, the cost of upgrading may not be worth it. In most cases, I find that n-2 is more appropriate for a general recommendation to upgrade.

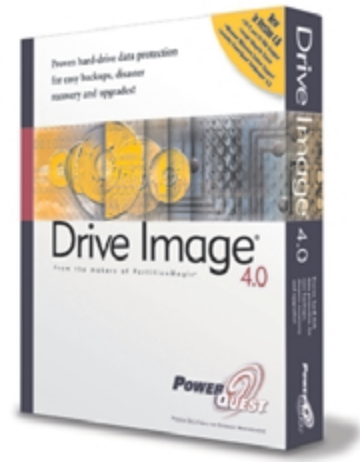
As the review of DI3 points out, Drive Image provides an easy way of copying one drive or partition to another. Its real strength, in my opinion, is making compressed images of your working partitions as a means of disaster recovery. When — not if — Windows goes south on you, recovering a fresh, clean, and stable configuration is fast and easy. All you need to convince you of the value of imaging software is to once go through the painful process of reinstalling Windows and all your applications. Figure out what your time is worth per hour and I bet you will find Drive Image to be an inexpensive insurance policy.

The interface and procedures for creating image files is pretty much unchanged in this release. It is easy to navigate and you are led, wizard-like, through the process. DI4 continues with the DI3 tradition of saying low compression delivers 40% compression and high compression delivers 50% compression. I continue to find that, for my files, I get closer to 28% and 35% respectively. Speed seems to have improved slightly — between 5% and 15%.

DI4 introduces the ability to image directly to a CD-R or CD-RW drive. You can have image files span multiple disks automatically. With DI3, unless you had DOS drivers that allowed you to access your CD-R or CD-RW drive, you had to image to a hard disk and then you could copy the image files to the CD-R or CD-RW media.

You can now create images directly to hidden partitions. While not a critical feature, this can be handy. Depending on your configuration, you may want to leave the partition you use to store images as hidden to avoid the problem of drive letters changing on you. With DI3, you could have the program hide the partition after you created your image file. Now you don't need to remember to set this option.

Windows Me is now supported. Windows 2000 users still need to boot the computer from a DOS boot disk, even if the partition you want to image does not have any open files. This is a minor annoyance, but one wonders why it is necessary.



Drive Image includes an Image Editor that allows you to perform operations such as splitting/joining, compressing/decompressing and password protecting image files, as well as restoring files or partitions. DI4 has a new, revamped Image Editor that is much easier to use than the version included with DI3. The new interface looks similar to Windows Explorer. The left-hand tree pane makes it much simpler to restore files and folders from an image.

When you register DI4, you are given the opportunity to download a copy of DataKeeper from the PowerQuest site. Don't bother. What you get will be DataKeeper 3.0. On the DI4 CD-ROM there is a copy of DataKeeper 4.0.

Minimum system requirements are Intel 386SX, 16MB RAM (32MB for FAT32 or NTFS), 8MB disk space, Win95/98/Me, NT 3.51 or 4.0 Workstation, Win2K Professional, DOS 5.0, or OS/2. Note that Server versions of WinNT/2K are not supported.

As always, PowerQuest has a special price available for user group members. While the list price is US\$69, you can order it on-line at www.ugr.com/order for US\$30. You will need to use the order code UGEVAL00. Given that they tack on a US\$10 shipping charge, you may be able to find it cheaper around town.



What's going on in the Internet SIG?

by Bob Gowan (I-SIG Coordinator)

The Internet SIG continues to attract a loyal following of experienced web surfers and relative newcomers, together with occasional participants seeking an answer to a specific question or telling us about their latest discovery. At recent meetings our topics have ranged from discussions of what options are available when one fills the web site space provided in a standard internet service account to explanations of how some of the new features on the OPCUG web site were implemented. We have answered questions on setting up computers to share internet access, provided suggestions on how to obtain more meaningful results on web searches (e.g., www.google.com) and where to obtain up-to-date weather forecast information (e.g., www.intellicast.com or www.weather.com).

The topics covered since our summer break are far too numerous to report on in a periodic newsletter column so this one will focus on two sites that particularly interest me. Some of my information on both sites comes from discussions with OPCUG's webmaster, Brigitte Lord, and I am grateful for her contributions. Our readers are invited to point us towards other sites, to submit their own reviews or discussion, and most importantly, to join in our discussions either at the regular meetings or on the listserve. Details on how to join these are provided at the end of this article.

One of the new features of the OPCUG web site is the powerful search engine provided by Atomz (www.atomz.com). No additional hardware or software is required for you to add this search capability to your own web site. Atomz provides several templates so it is quick and easy to setup, yet it can be customized to meet your preferences. The Atomz.com search robot works its way through your site, following links from page to page, just as a user would do if they browsed through your site. While doing this, the robot indexes all of the text contained on your pages and stores the results on the Atomz server. Once the index is built, all you need do, to be able to retrieve search results, is add the Atomz search form to your web site. Best of all, the Atomz Search is free if your site has less than 500 pages. Just go to the Atomz.com web site, join, add a few lines of HTML to your site and in less than 5 minutes, visitors to your site will be able to find what they are looking for quickly and easily.

Atomz indexes the page title, keyword meta tag, description meta tag, and of course, the body of the page but they also provide a "target" meta tag which allows you to control exactly what pages are top-ranked for the most important words and phrases on your site. You are also able to monitor, by day, week and month, what your visitors are searching for on your sight using Atomz search reports, which rank



and graph searched words and phrases. When you make changes to your site content, you will have to visit Atomz.com to rebuild your site index (on demand) or you can have Atomz do an automatic rebuild of your index at the same time (which you choose) every week. They offer a range of advanced features that should suit most of your needs and preferences. And of course, Atomz offers, for a fee, premium services for business web sites and full enterprise search services.

From a web-based service for enhancing and maintaining your web site, we move to one for maintaining and enhancing your personal computer. BigFix (www.bigfix.com) provides a new software program that you download, which gives you a new kind of communication with the technical support industry. BigFix helps you keep your computer in top operating condition, by advising you of known issues, by fixing problems on your computer as they occur and correcting unstable situations before they become disasters. What BigFix provides is "relevance-targeted communication" between technical support organizations and consumer's computers. What makes it great for users is that they don't even have to phone technical support, nor, perhaps, even be aware of the problem in the first place.



Continued next page...

You are likely aware that computer and peripheral makers, software developers, and professional support services have compiled extensive knowledge bases of hardware and software problems which have previously been used mostly in a reactive way. Through BigFix, you can have free access to the most recent technical support information. All you have to do is surf into the BigFix web site, register to download the installer software, save it to your hard drive, and then run the downloaded file to install the BigFix software. The first time you run BigFix, you must be connected to the internet to configure the software and synchronize with the BigFix site. The software collects information on your hardware and software and then gathers from technical experts anywhere in the World Wide Web, all the support information, called Fixlet Messages, relevant to your configuration. When the latest Fixlet messages are downloaded via BigFix to your system, some will advise subscriptions to other Fixlet sites. You can select the ones that interest you and follow the instructions to subscribe. Each time you visit the BigFix web site, you will receive any new or updated Fixlet messages pertinent to your system. If you defer immediate action on a Fixlet message, it remains in the message listing as a reminder for future action.

BigFix currently provides recommendations on software bugs, updated drivers, viruses, security threats, privacy leaks and more. This approach should be attractive to more and more manufacturers and service suppliers because it allows them to diffuse technical support information and fixes automatically via the Internet, and to target just the computers that need them. Because it is so easy to use, and still leaves you in control of what fixes are implemented, BigFix should be of value to many computer users.

Other I-SIG members tell me that somewhat similar services are available from some major computer magazine publishers. I have not examined these so can make no comparison. I encourage readers to try out both of the services described and provide some feedback at the next I-SIG, which will immediately follow the main presentation at the December 2000 OPCUG meeting. As usual, other topics posted on our Internet SIG message area, and those raised at the meeting can be expected to make for another interesting meeting in December.

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 the 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 resubscribe using your new e-mail address.

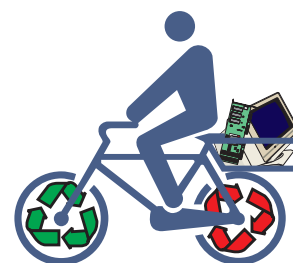


CLUB LIFE

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.



'One size fits all' not true when choosing DTP tools

by Ken Fermoye

As a writer specializing in specific areas — cars and RVs during the '50s, '60s and '70s, to computers since 1984 — I've been asked the same thing time and again: "What is the best _____?" Fill in the blank with car, van, camper, computer or whatever.

Since I began writing a desktop publishing (DTP) column for *Computer Currents* back in the mid-1980s, the most common query has been: "What is the best DTP program?"

My stock answer in all cases: "There is no one best of anything; one size does not fit all. A single person might be happy with a sporty roadster but a family of five needs a roomy sedan or minivan. By the same token, a publishing professional needs very different tools than the average computer owner."

In fact, in some cases, a full-featured word processing program might serve all of a user's DTP needs. Let's look at typical uses for publishing software, then try to match them with the tools available.

(One note: Things are complicated today by the growth of online publishing, which involves such things as hypertext markup language (HTML) coding and Acrobat portable document format (PDF) files. I will cover this area in a future column. For now, I'll concentrate hardcopy print output.)

First comes what I call "personal publishing." This includes creating greeting cards, holiday season letters, simple 2- or 4-page newsletters, and 1-page bulletins or flyers. Microsoft Home Publishing, any of the Print Shop-type programs or Microsoft Word let you combine formatted text and clipart or digital images, including photos, and flow text from column to column to produce this kind of work. If you want to explore Linux platform possibilities, check out Corel's offerings.

Next step up is production of more complex documents: 8- to 32-page newsletters or journals; long reports that require footnoting or indexing; trifold brochures; and anything that includes imbedded tables. I've long recommended Microsoft Publisher for such midlevel DTP work. It does everything that entry-level programs can, and it offers a lot of the features that high-end programs do.

I began experimenting with Publisher when it first came out. At the time, I was editing and producing newsletters for five clients. I was a devoted Ventura Publisher fan in those days, having used it since serving as a beta tester before Version 1.0 was released.

Switching the publications to Publisher was easy. I continued to use Ventura for the other newsletters because they demanded special pagination or other features that the first version of Publisher didn't offer. From the mid- to late-1990s, I found myself using Publisher for more and more newsletters as Microsoft added to its capabilities.

I recommend Publisher regularly in my presentations to DTP SIGs and Media Workshops. It is well-suited for User Group (UG) newsletters, and it is widely used for that purpose. The majority of the 100-plus UG publications I receive each month from groups that use my Ken's Korner column are produced by editors using MS Publisher.

In fact, if pressed, I would have to admit that Publisher comes closest to the "one size fits all" concept for the usual DTP chores of most SOHO users. And the price is right, about US \$100 for Publisher 2000 and US \$129 for Publisher Deluxe 2000, with rebates of \$20 in the retail boxed programs for users of earlier Publisher versions.

If your goal is to produce long documents, Microsoft Word may well do the trick. Recent versions include many of the features that made Ventura Publisher the program of choice for books, theses and lengthy reports during the '80s.

Microsoft Publisher is not the tool for professional publishing chores, and it is neither meant nor advertised to be the right choice for such work. When you move up to this level, suitable applications cost much more and are more difficult to master. Prices start at about \$500 and escalate from there. Add plug-ins that facilitate specialized tasks, and cost of a complete publishing package can run \$2000 and more. Companion software, such as high-end graphics applications (and their plug-ins), can more than double that figure.

Programs in this category include Adobe's PageMaker 6.5 Plus, FrameMaker and InDesign; Quark XPress; and Corel Ventura 8. The Adobe products and Quark XPress come in both Windows and Macintosh versions but Ventura is available for Windows only.



Content copying poses legal, ethical questions

by Ken Fermoye

The growing trend of copying content, especially from the Internet, disturbs many of us involved in the creation and use of material for newsletters and websites. In viewing hundreds of newsletters and websites in recent years, I've seen many examples of plagiarism, copyright infringement and downright theft of intellectual property. The same holds true on many of the group and personal websites I visit.

I'm not the only one concerned. Knowledgeable editors and UG officers, including APCUG (Association of PC User Group) representatives, told me they also view it as a problem.

Actually, everyone should be concerned. Unauthorized copying could create legal difficulties for a group; it certainly poses ethical questions. Closer to home, if you have a personal or business website, you should be aware of copying do's and don'ts.



I believe illegal content copying usually results from lack of knowledge, not malicious intent. Material is so readily available on the Web, and we're so accustomed to unrestricted access, that it's easy to assume everything on it is up for grabs.

I'm no expert on copyright laws but over the past 50 years I have learned practical rules of thumb that most editors follow. However, advent of computers and the Net has raised all sorts of new questions, both legal and ethical, about copyrights and "intellectual property."

That said, let me give you my views on the subject.

First, fair game for use in UG media includes articles written specifically for such purpose: my Ken's Korner pieces, Bob Click's Deals column and articles distributed by APCUG. Most UGs allow other groups to reprint material from their newsletters, subject to some restrictions. More free material is offered on Microsoft's Mindshare website, microsoft.com/mindshare/default.asp, and the User Group Network, user-groups.net.

Vendors' public relations releases also are legitimate freebies for use by editors and webmasters. A caution here: it may be a disservice to members to run such material "as is." It's a form of propaganda or

advertising, remember, and often gives a much rosier review than a product or service deserves. I sometimes use PR releases as a basis or background for columns, but I research and/or get hands-on experience to provide a balanced, more objective article.

Now for the no-no's.

Do not pick up magazine articles and reprint them in your newsletters or website without permission from the publication! The fact that they appear on a website does not mean they are public property.

The same goes for clipart, photos and illustrations. Unless specifically identified as available for use, free of charge, reprinting such material without permission is thievery. If you are a business owner, be aware that some material on the Web is available for reprint without charge to not-for-profit organization but not for commercial use.

Be sure to **read the fine print**, however on ANYTHING you reprint from the Internet. There usually are conditions attached. Some "free" material may not be used in publications that have a subscription fee, cover price or that contain paid advertising.

Quoting from external sources in articles or reviews is acceptable, if done judiciously. Use a short excerpt to illustrate a point but don't lift a significant number of pages and make it part of your article. Always identify such material by using quotation marks. Always give proper credit to the source.

Typically, publications (and books) contain language like: "All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by electrical or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing by the publisher."

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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 second 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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Copyrights ...continued from previous page

Often, in books, this phrase appears: “except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.”

Before using any material from a Website, **look for a statement** that says that content on the site is freely available for copying and reprinting. Then read the fine print to be sure you understand the conditions of use. Only then can you legally and ethically copy and reprint text or images in your group or personal newsletter or Website

If you don't find such a statement, look for a button or link marked “Copyright” or “Terms of Use.” In commercial Websites, such a link takes you to a statement, similar to the following, on “Reproduction of Images and Other Copyrighted Material Found on Web Sites.”

“You should be aware that it is illegal to reproduce or distribute copyrighted material without the permission of the copyright owner. Accessing images or text provided on Websites does not give you any rights to use them as you wish. Only the copyright owner, or the owner's legal agent, can give you permission to copy, distribute, or publicly display protected material. The copyright owner in most cases is the creator. Images are generally owned by the photographer; text is owned by the author.”

The wording may be different, but the intent is always the same: To establish legal ownership of the publication or website content, and to warn off those who attempt to copy any or all of the content that it is illegal to do so without specific permission.

You might say to yourself, “My newsletter only goes out to a few hundred people; they won't mind if I copy this one article or photo.” Not so! That's somewhat like, if not exactly analogous to, a counterfeiter saying, “I'm just going to print up a few hundred \$20 bills so [the Treasury Board] won't mind.”

Now the wrath of a copyright owner may not descend on you with the fury that the Treasury Board would bring down on a counterfeiter. Illegal copying could have embarrassing consequences if the copyright owner learns about the infraction and chooses to be hard-nosed about it. Even if there are no legal repercussions, improper reprinting of material casts an ethical shadow over any organization or individual that does it.

