



OTTAWA PC NEWS

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The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

October 2001

CLUB NEWS

Election notice *by Chris Taylor*

The OPCUG has a 9-member Board of Directors to keep operations running smoothly. The Board is elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting held each January or February.

In the November newsletter, I hope to have an article explaining why I find being on the Board a rewarding experience. I would certainly encourage anyone to become more involved in the operation of the OPCUG, and being a Board member is a really good way to do this.

But for now, I would like to ask for a volunteer to head up the election committee. It is a pretty simple job. What we need is a non-board member who is willing to accept nominations from the membership, verify that nominees accept their nomination, and oversee the election, should we have more than 9 nominations.

Please contact me or any other member of the current board, if you are willing to accept this position.



CLUB NEWS

Orphan SIG *by Chris Taylor*

Have you ever wondered about connecting computers together to make it easier to share files or a printer? How about sharing a high-speed Internet connection? Windows networking is actually pretty simple to set up. Costs can be as little as \$30 or \$40.

At the October Orphan SIG, I will be discussing what the options are and how you should decide what you require. Come on out and let's talk about the issues surrounding hardware, software and security.



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Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, October 10th, 2001**

COMING UP

October 10th

Microsoft presents Windows XP



Has Microsoft done enough to convince you to upgrade?
Is “product activation” an evil thing?
Can Windows XP really replace Windows 98SE for the gamer? Come out and see.

November: Intel and their latest roadmap. What should you be looking for in a processor? How soon is your current machine going to be obsolete? What is on the horizon at Intel? Jon Coxworth from Intel will be happy to try and answer these questions and more.

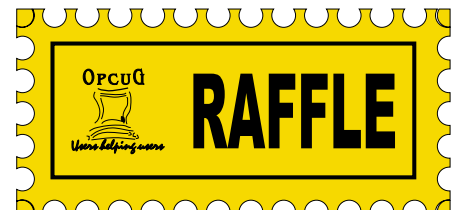


CLUB NEWS

Raffle prize

by Mark Cayer and Chris Taylor

In the September issue of the *Ottawa PC News*, there was a review of PGPfire 7.1. Thanks to the kind folks at Network Associates’ PGP division, we have a copy of the software which will be raffled off at the October general meeting. If you don’t have something protecting your computer from the black hats on the Internet, you need something. Why not buy some raffle tickets and see if you can walk away with a copy of PGPfire. As always, tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, and \$5 for ten.



CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, Oct. 10 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
Internet SIG (I-SIG)	Wednesday, Oct. 10 th	Come and join our discussions!
Developers SIG	Wednesday, Oct. 10 th	Immediately following the main OPCUG presentation, and occasionally at other locations in the region.
Delphi User Group		8:00 p.m. at Chapters Store in the Pinecrest Mall (at the Queensway)
Ottawa Paradox Users Group	3 rd Thursday each month	6:00-8:00 p.m. — Corel Bldg 1600 Carling Ave
PIG SIG (i.e., Wing SIG)	Oct. 10 th (after SIGs)	“Good Times” cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe

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

You've Got Mail ... You've Got Mail ... You've Got Mail

by Chris Taylor

Some people who are signed up to the OPCUG listserver have been receiving two or more copies of messages posted to the lists. I spent some time checking the SMTP logs on PUB II, examining headers of duplicate messages, and reading some messages from other Sympatico (our ISP) users. I think I have figured out what is going on.



Up until last spring, when PUB II sent email, it used its own built-in SMTP server to do a DNS lookup on addresses and send directly to the remote hosts. Things worked pretty well. Then Sympatico came up with the brilliant idea of reducing spam by forcing all Sympatico users to route email through the Sympatico SMTP server. (As an aside – I really fail to see how this is going to make a significant dent in spam. The front-line support people at Sympatico could not explain this either.) Failure to reconfigure our SMTP server to send all outbound mail to route through Sympatico's SMTP server would have meant no mail would have been delivered. So I reconfigured PUB II to comply.

Ever since the reconfiguration, some people have complained about sometimes receiving two or three copies of messages. My investigation up to this point leads me to believe that PUB II is not always getting the proper responses from the Sympatico SMTP servers and therefore backs off and tries again later. But it appears that, at least sometimes, the Sympatico server actually *did* receive the message and proceeds to deliver it.

Unfortunately, I don't think there is anything I can do to correct the situation. I do know that, as I write this on September 22nd, Sympatico has been having some severe problems with their SMTP servers. It is so bad that, when I call the support number to complain, a recorded message comes on right away with some lame excuse about "mail slowdowns due to high volume of access at this time." Maybe if they only processed messages once, they wouldn't have such high volume! Hopefully they are working to fix the real problems.



Erratum

The article in the September newsletter on Image Search Engines (page 5) should have shown some images that were lost in the hardcopy and PDF versions. Please see:

<http://www.storm.ca/~michline/Articles/ImageSearchEngines.html>



Diskeeper 6 SE

by Chris Taylor

I have always been a believer in the benefits of using a disk defragmenter. There is plenty of evidence that overall performance of your computer can be significantly impacted by heavy file fragmentation. It just makes sense — if the disk heads have to move to dozens or hundreds of different areas of the disk in order to read or write to a file, it is going to be slower than if all parts of the file are in one contiguous section.

Some of the impact may go unnoticed. You might be pausing at that moment anyhow, thinking about what you want to type next. But certainly there are times when you are specifically waiting for disk operations to conclude before you can continue. While companies that make disk defragmenting software would like you to believe you can put off computer upgrades simply by ensuring your disks are defragmented, I prefer to look at it as helping to get the best performance I can out of my current hardware.

I have been using Executive Software's Diskeeper 5 for the last year and a half and wrote a review in May, 2000 (see opcug.ottawa.com/public/reviews/diskeep5.htm). They recently released Diskeeper 6 Second Edition (DK6) and I decided to take a look at the improvements.

Overall, not much has changed about the program. It is speedier and seems to be somewhat better at ensuring that free space on the disk is consolidated into a few large chunks rather than smaller, more numerous pieces, but essentially, the program acts the same as with version 5.

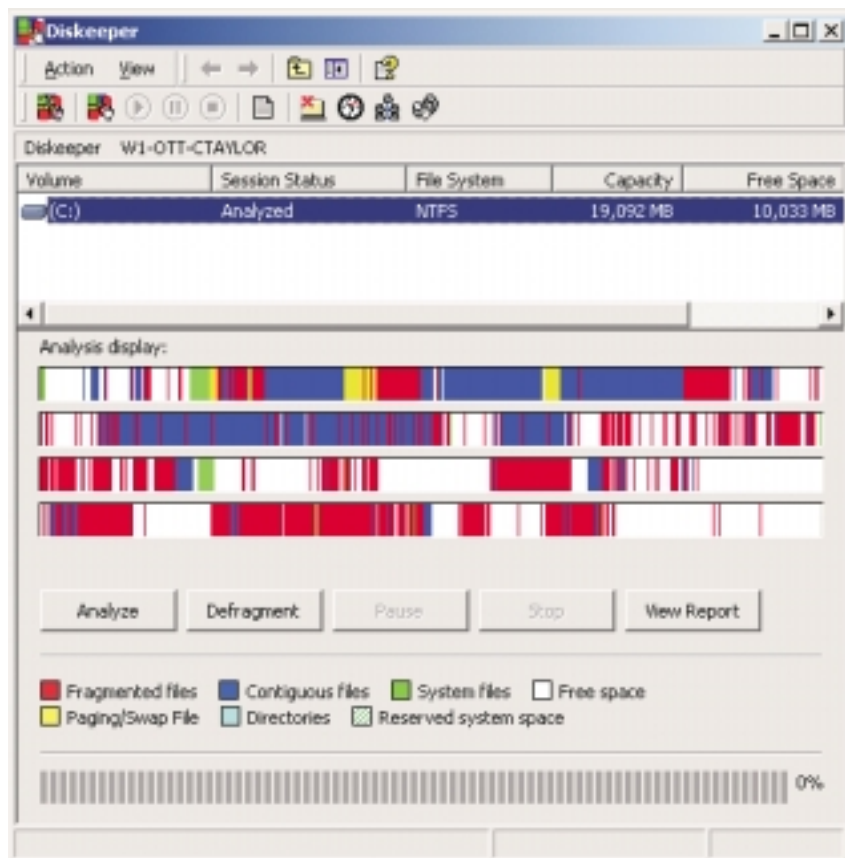
DK6 works on FAT16, FAT32, and NTFS partitions. The Workstation version runs on Windows 95(OSR2 or higher)/98/Me/NT Workstation (SP3 or higher)/2K Pro. The Server version runs on WinNT4 Server and Workstation as well as Win2K Server and Professional. NTFS volumes formatted with a cluster size larger than 4K aren't supported. DK6 requires DCOM and the Microsoft

Management Console and will install or update these components as required.

When you run DK6, a dual panel window opens. The top window has a text listing of your partitions with info on the file system, capacity, free space and percentage free space. When you select a partition, you can click the *analyze* button and the bottom window fills in with a map of the partition. Different colours are used to show fragmented files, contiguous files, system files, paging/swap file, directories, and (for NTFS volumes) reserved system space.

Once analysis is complete, a summary screen pops up telling you the total number of fragmented files, the number of excess file fragments, and the average number of fragments per file. This is followed by an assessment of how bad DK6 thinks this is.

Diskeeper typically wants a fair amount of free space to do its thing. If you get below about 25% free space, you will get warnings that you should free up space to allow effective defragmentation. I don't know about you, but now that 40GB+ partitions are not uncommon, being told I need 10GB free space for effective defragmentation seems a little excessive. Heck, the largest file I have on disk is only a couple of hundred megabytes.



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You can click a *View Report* button to bring up a more detailed report on what was found, including a list of all fragmented files (listing file name and path, size, and number of fragments), information on the structure of the volume and fragmentation in areas such as the paging/swap file, directories, etc.

Clicking the *Defragment* button in the main window starts the defragmentation process. If you have low disk space, you may find that there are still fragmented files after DK6 has run. Additional defragmentation runs may reduce the number of fragmented files. But, if you are finding a significant number of fragmented files at the end of a standard run, it almost certainly means that you should consider freeing up space on the volume, if possible. DK6 will rarely consolidate all the free space into a single chunk. Executive Software has determined that this will rarely result in any significant increase in performance. As long as free space is consolidated into a few large areas, that is good enough.

Once you have defragged all your volumes, you can keep them in good shape with the *Set it and forget it* mode. Through this feature, you can schedule DK6 to periodically run. As with previous versions, you can set it to a specific schedule, such as every 4 hours, daily at 3:00am, or Fridays at 7:00pm. DK6 adds a new option called *Smart Scheduling*. With this option, DK6 will automatically adjust how frequently it runs based on whether the number of fragmented files increases or decreases between defragmentation runs. Simple and effective.

There are a few disk structures for which Microsoft does not provide defragmentation APIs (application programming interfaces.) They are directory consolidation (all file systems under WinNT and FAT volumes under Win2K), Master File Table (MFT — only found on NTFS volumes), and paging/swap files. DK6 provides a boot-time defragmentation routine that can perform these operations before the OS completely loads. Boot-time defragmentation

performance has greatly improved over previous releases, but can take significant time to complete. Unfortunately, there is no way to know in advance just how long the operation will take. Be sure to allow for plenty of down-time, particularly if this is being done on production servers. You can interrupt the boot-time defragmentation prior to completion if you find you simply can't afford to have the machine off-line any longer. However, if you interrupt the boot-time defrag, it is recommended that you run CHKDSK /F, which is another boot-time operation that can take a long time to complete.

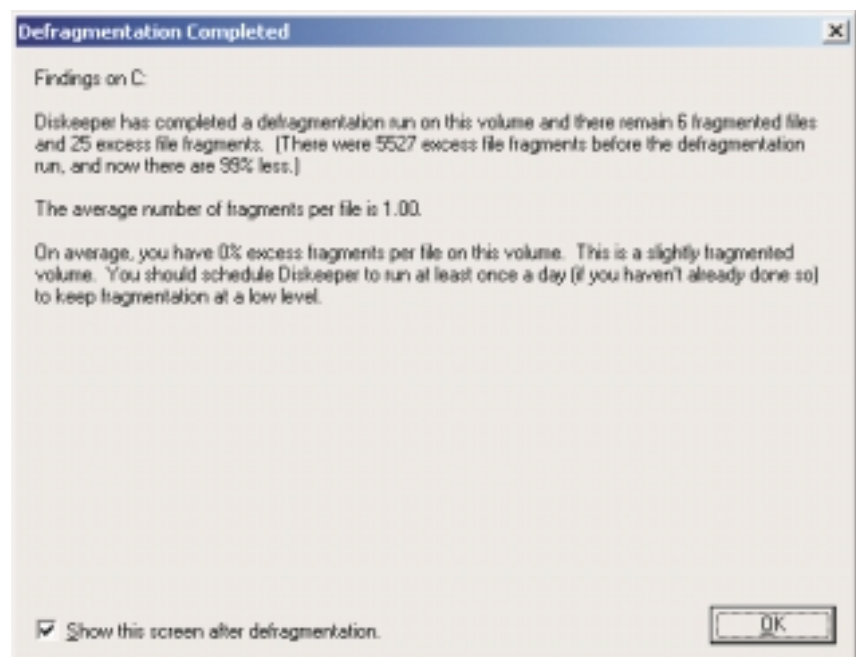
Once a complete boot-time defragmentation has been done, a feature called *Frag Guard* helps keep the paging/swap file and MFT defragmented. As well, should they become fragmented, you can optionally configure DK6 to automatically perform a boot-time defragmentation during a time of day that you specify.

DK6 provides excellent logging capabilities. You can select from nine different categories of information to be logged. Under Windows NT/2K, the information goes into the Application Event log. Windows 95/98/Me log to a regular disk file.

In previous reviews of Diskeeper, I dealt only with the Workstation version. For this review, I decided to try out the Server version to see how effective it is at taking care of multiple machines on the network. I installed DK6 Server on my Pentium III/933 running Win2K Pro and DK6 Workstation on a Pentium 200 running WinNT.

From my machine I was able to call up a list of computers on the network and connect to any running DK. The main DK interface then contained all the info on the remote computer and anything I did was

continued next page



Diskeeper 6 ...continued from page 5

applied to the remote machine. You can also select multiple computers from a list and apply *set it and forget it* options with a single click. I can say it is better than having to physically visit each machine to do this, but I have think *enterprise manageability* should go further. Since they are using DCOM to talk to the remote DK process, one simple thing they could do is create a console (character mode, command-line) program that had the ability to do anything the GUI can do. Then, by running commands, such as;

```
DK \gamma /defrag=cdef /prior=normal
```

you could have it start a defrag on a computer named gamma, for partitions c, d, e, and f, with priority set to normal.

```
DK \gamma /setandforget=smart,all,x-weekdays,08:00-18:00 /prior=lowest
```

might have it connect to the gamma computer, configure *set it and forget it* to all partitions, smart scheduling, run any time except weekdays between 8:00am and 6:00pm, and run at low priority.

Administrators love console utilities. They can easily be combined into batch files for complete automation. It can turn manual work in a GUI into a job that can be started in seconds and run completely unattended.

Another needed *enterprise* feature is one that can report on the level of fragmentation on all partitions in the entire organization. This can help you zero in on those machines that have unusually high levels of fragmentation to find out the reason why.

Almost every version of Windows has included a disk defragmenter. So why should anyone spend money on a third-party utility for defragmentation? The built-in defragmenters are generally short on features. They can't do things like defrag the paging/swap file or master file table. The defragmenter in Win2K (which is based on Diskeeper code) requires that you be logged in as administrator to run and can't (easily) be scheduled. They can't be controlled over the network without the addition of something like Winternals Defrag Commander. They don't allow you to set the priority level to minimize impact on other running applications. They do a decent, but basic, job. If that's enough for you, there is little need to spend money on Diskeeper. But if you want the best performance out of your computer, Diskeeper will ensure disk fragmentation is not what is slowing you down.

If you want to compare the performance of the built-in Win2K defragger with Diskeeper, Executive Software has just released a test program you can use on your own hardware to see the difference. It is available at www.diskeeper.com/diskeeper/test-for-yourself.asp.

A 30-day eval copy may be downloaded from www.execsoft.com. Street prices in Canadian dollars should be around \$75 for the Workstation version and (a rather steep) \$400 for the Server version.



OPCUG mugs and multi-tools

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Backwoods computer terminology

Log on: Make the wood stove hotter

Log off: Don't add no more wood

Monitor: Keep an eye on that wood stove

Download: Getting the firewood off the truck

Floppy Disk: What you get from trying to carry too much firewood

Ram: The thing that splits the firewood

Hard Drive: Getting home in the winter

Prompt: "Throw another log on the fire"

Window: What to shut when it's cold outside

Screen: What to shut in fly season

Byte: What flies do

Bit: What the flies did

Mega Byte: What BIG flies do

Chip: Munchies when monitoring

Micro Chip: What's left after you eat the chips

Modem: What you did to the hay fields

Dot Matrix: Old Dan Matrix's wife

Lap top: Where kitty sleeps

Software: The dumb plastic knives and forks they give you at the Big R

Hardware: Real stainless steel cutlery

Mouse: What eats the grain in the barn

Main Frame: What holds up the barn

Enter: City talk for "Come on in, b'y"

Web: The things spiders makes

Web Site: The barn or attic

Cursor: Someone who swears a lot

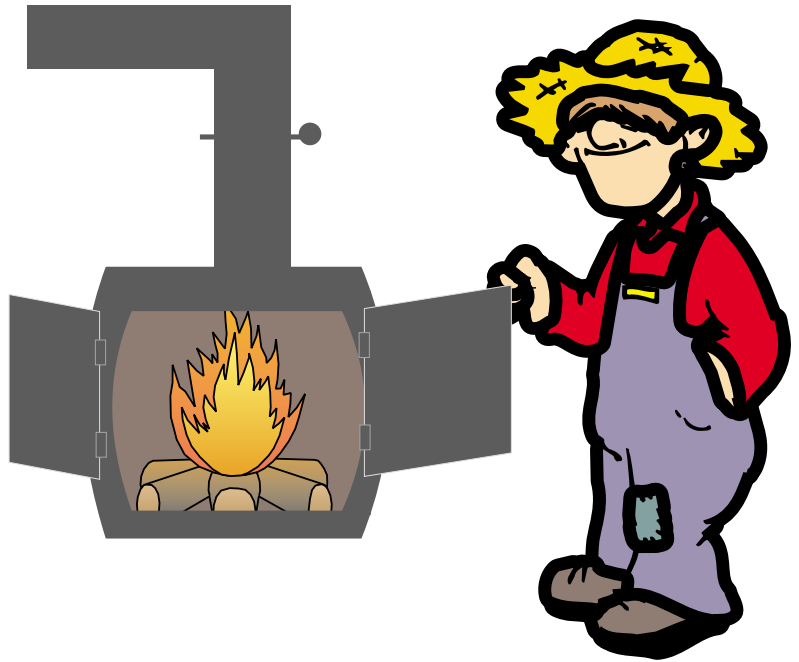
Search Engine: What you do when the car dies

Screen Saver: A repair kit for the torn window screen

Home Page: A map you keep in your back pocket just in case you get lost when picking burries

Upgrade: Driving up Barters' Hill

Server: The Mrs. at Donovan's who brings the jigs' dinner



Mail Server: The guy at Big R with grade 8 who brings fish

MS-DOS: Some new disease they discovered

Sound Card: One of them technological birthday cards that plays music

User: Buddy down your street who keeps coming over borrowing stuff

Browser: What they call you when your eyebrows grow together

Network: When you have to repair your fishin net

Internet: Where the fish get caught

Netscape: When a fish gets away

On-line: When you gets the laundry on the washline

Off-line: When the clothespins let go and the laundry falls on the ground



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 Saturdays before the General Meeting.

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

OPCUG annual membership: \$25 per year.

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“Announcements” is a low volume list that the Board of Directors can use to get in touch with the membership. Subscribers can expect at least one message per month — the meeting reminder that goes out a few days in advance of the general meeting. Other than that, the only time it is used is when the Board feels there is some important news that should be brought to the attention of all members.



CLUB LIFE

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Bring your old computer books, software, hardware, and paraphenalia 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 of less than two years old.*

You may **TAKE AWAY** any items of use to you. Stuff left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to the recycle bin.

