



OTTAWA PC NEWS

Volume 20, Number 4

April 2003

20th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

OPCUG History Page *by Jocelyn Doire*

After months of work going through 20 years worth of documents, I'm happy to say that I finally completed the OPCUG's history page. To view it, please go to the OPCUG web page at <http://opcug.ca>, and click on the "History" button in the left frame.

The Group can be proud of its history; created soon after the release of the PC by IBM, it has seen the evolution of the computer, operating systems, modems, the internet, and so many other things.

If you go through the history page you will see how those changes affected the Group.

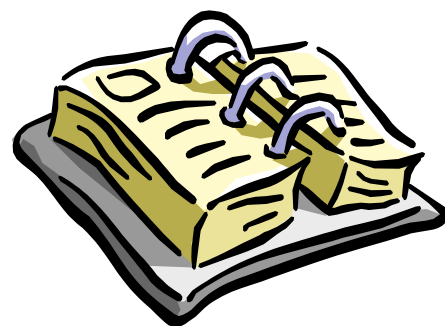
The need to communicate resulted in the rental of a Bulletin Board System (BBS), but with the reduction of the cost of computer and software, we decided to invest about \$8000 to setup our own BBS in 1988. It grew rapidly over the years and at one point had 6 dial-in lines attached. In 1997 we went one step further and became part of the internet.

In the early years, before the internet, members were craving software and the software library was the answer that the club provided; during the year 1987 we sold \$9255 worth of disks containing freeware and shareware, surpassing the membership revenues of \$6400 (Jan 1988). Gradually, though, with the introduction of the larger BBS and the

internet, members started to look elsewhere.

[In] 1987 we sold \$9255 worth of disks containing freeware and shareware, surpassing the membership revenues of \$6400.

The club was not always well though; in Feb 1997 after a gradual and serious decline of the membership, the club seriously questioned its future, and decided to form an "OPCUG Core Strategy Development Committee" to study what should be done to improve the situation and what direction it should take in the future. A few months later, in Oct 1997, the committee released a report that that recommended, among other things, the creation of a web site, an email system including a mailing list, use of the PUB as a file and bulletin repository and the establishment of a permanent connection to the internet. A survey indicated that 90% of the member had access to the Internet, but the committee recommended maintaining the dial-up access at the same time. This questioning injected a new life into the Group and many improvements.



The club had also some crises. For example in Dec 1989, the elections were contested; this resulted in hotly debated proposed constitution in Jun 1990 and finally an adoption in Sep 1990.

There have been a lot of people that helped as directors in the everyday

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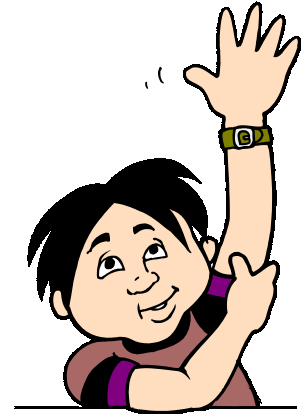
TRIVIA CONTEST! See page 2 for details.

Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, April 9th, 2003**

20th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Trivia Contest *by Chris Taylor*

We wanted to make sure the 20th anniversary celebration was a fun evening. With the help of Microsoft Canada's Ottawa office, who supplied a whole bunch of trinkets as prizes, we will be having a trivia contest at the April meeting. I put out a call to members for interesting computer-related trivia and have put together a wide range of questions. There are some easy ones and some hard ones. Some are from the history of the OPCUG itself, so you can increase your chances of winning if you read up on the history of the OPCUG at <http://opcug.ca/public/history>. There are 30 prizes in all, from *Microsoft Mints* to t-shirts.



April Raffle

Courtesy of the Microsoft Mindshare User Group Support Program, we have a copy of the book *Microsoft Windows XP Inside Out* by Ed Bott and Carl Siechert to raffle off at the April general meeting. This book, with over 1,200 pages will help you get the most out of XP. More information can be found at <http://amazon.com>. Valued at \$65. And if you don't win the book, we will be drawing a second ticket for a copy of *Microsoft Plus! Digital Media Edition* for Windows XP, which has a street value of approximately \$35. Raffle tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

Delphi SIG Revival

The Delphi SIG has been somewhat dormant recently. For those of you who have missed it, Martin Pagnan would like to restart it. He has invited all interested parties to contact him at mpagnan@cyberus.ca to suggest meeting times and places.



CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, April. 9 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
Internet SIG (I-SIG)	Wednesday, April. 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. Come and join our discussions!
Developers SIG	Wednesday, April. 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting, and occasionally at other locations in the region.
Orphans' SIG	Wednesday, April. 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Delphi User Group	TBA (see notice this page)	TBA (see notice this page: Delphi SIG Revival)

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

PRODUCT REVIEW

PerfectDisk 2000

by Chris Taylor

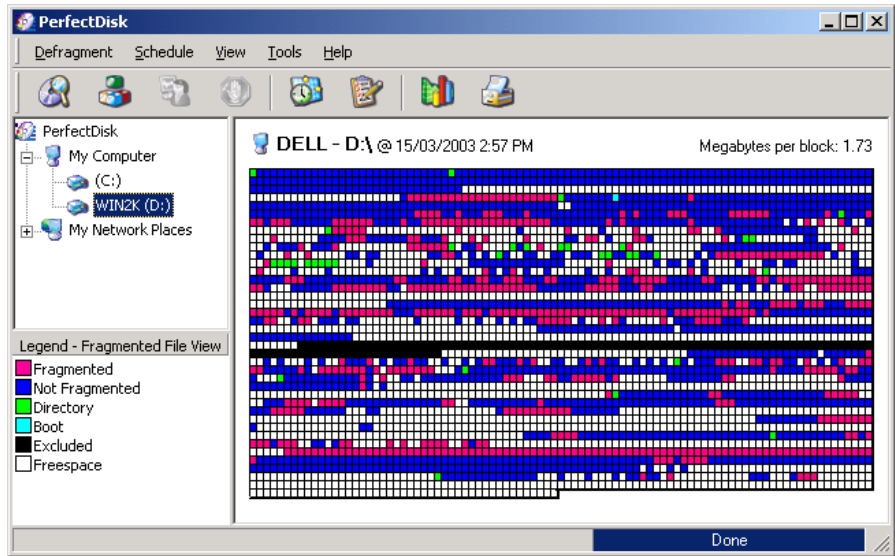
I have looked at a number of disk defragmentation utilities over the years. And you know, they have all been pretty good. Any of them, if used regularly, should help the performance of your machine. But I am always intrigued by new defraggers. What is it they are doing better? Are they faster? Do they do a more thorough job? Do they do it cheaper? Those were some of the questions I had when I came across ads in e-mail newsletters for Raxco Software's PerfectDisk 2000 v5.0.

Raxco's claims are impressive. They say they can defrag in a single pass, nearly full disks that other programs either simply can't handle, or take many passes to completely defrag. They say they will place files so as to help prevent future fragmentation. And they claim that PerfectDisk is the only program that completely defragments *all* data and system files.

[Raxco] claims...they can defrag in a single pass

Installation was simple and straightforward. Immediately after installing the program, I ran the update procedure to get the latest build. After updating, it displayed an excellent *What's New* file explaining all the changes in the interim releases. It even references bugs that were fixed. It is rare that a vendor is willing to be so open about bugs and Raxco is to be applauded for including this information. Unfortunately, the *What's New* file gets created in a temp directory, so it gets deleted after installation. As the file is an HTML file that opens in the browser, I noticed the odd location and snagged a copy before finishing the update. Ideally, this file should be created in the program directory.

The program layout is very easy to work with. The left pane has a tree listing of all local drives. As the program is designed to allow you to control PerfectDisk running on other machines, it also has an icon for *My Network Places*. Once you configure scheduled jobs, they also appear in this pane.



Badly fragmented disk

When you start an analysis or defragmentation, the right pane shows the disk partition. Details are updated as the analysis or defragmentation progresses. There are two available views. The *Smart Placement View* colour codes files according to how recently they have been modified. The *Fragmented File View* colour codes files according to whether they are fragmented or not. Both views show the location of free space, excluded files, directories and boot files. On NTFS disks, it also shows the location of the Master File Table (MFT) and other metadata files.

Smart Defragging

There are two modes PerfectDisk can run in. There is a standard *defragment only*, which defrags the files, with no regard for optimization of where files are placed or consolidation of free space. While this mode will certainly make accessing your current files much quicker, a disk using this mode of defragmentation will quickly become fragmented again.

The default mode is *smart placement*. By default, files not modified in the past 60 days are considered *rarely modified* and are packed together at the start of the disk. Files modified between 30 and 60 days ago are considered *occasionally modified* and are placed next on the disk.

Files modified in the past 30 days are considered *frequently modified* and are placed last on the disk. The date ranges can be easily changed. All free space is consolidated at the end of the disk.

Smart placement is a good way of keeping a disk defragmented. Because files that have not been modified in the past 60 days are not likely to be modified tomorrow, they will stay nicely

I was quite astounded at how fast PerfectDisk does its chores.

defragged at the start of the disk. Those files likely to become fragmented are all grouped together at the end of the disk. This makes subsequent defragmentation runs operate much faster.

Since my last defragmentation program did not arrange files according to how recently they were modified, PerfectDisk had a lot of work to do on the first pass.

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PerfectDisk *(Continued from page 3)*

The first run on a 35GB partition (Pentium III/933, 512MB RAM, Maxtor 5T040H4 DiamondPlus 40 Ultra ATA 7200RPM) took only 40 minutes, which is quite impressive!

After the massive amount of work was done arranging files the way PerfectDisk wanted them, subsequent daily runs generally took between 2 and 5 minutes. I was quite astounded at how fast PerfectDisk does its chores.

As with other defragmentation programs, there are some files that can't be defragged while the operating system is loaded. This includes files such as the swap or paging file. Directories can be defragged on-line for Windows 2000 and XP, but not for earlier versions of Windows. Under NTFS, areas such as the MFT cannot be defragged on-line.

For these operations, PerfectDisk has an offline mode. When you select this, on next boot up, and before Windows fully loads, PerfectDisk kicks in and defrags those areas of the disk.

There are a couple of things PerfectDisk does that I have not seen done by other defraggers. First, on NTFS volumes, it moves the MFT towards the middle of the disk. Since the MFT is accessed all the time, this can have a big impact on the speed of disk operations.

As well, PerfectDisk can optimize *all* the metadata on an NTFS volume. Most people know about directories and the MFT, but there are actually a number of files containing metadata. Just a few examples of these critical files: \$LogFile is the transaction logging file for the volume, \$BadClus contains a list of all clusters on the volume that have been marked as *bad* so they won't be used, and \$Quota contains information on disk quotas. On my 35GB main partition, it appears those metadata files (not even counting the MTF and directories) use about 70MB. I have to believe making sure they are defragged is a good thing!

Scheduling a defrag is a simple wizard process. You define which partitions you would like to defrag and whether you want it to be an online or offline defrag (or both). You set the timing for once, daily, or weekly. You can also set a frequency, e.g. every 3 days. Finally, you can set the maximum duration for online defragmentation if you are concerned about a defrag run taking too long and perhaps impacting on other processes.

Command Line

For those who like to run things from the command line or script with batch files, PerfectDisk has a complete command line interface. Through it, you can start or stop a defragmentation pass. This can be on any local partition

or a remote machine on your network that has PerfectDisk installed. You can obtain the status of any active operation on local or remote computers. And you can schedule an off-line defrag to occur on the next re-boot.

Perfect PerfectDisk?

Raxco claims, "PerfectDisk 2000 is the only defragmenter that does a COMPLETE defrag - All data files and all system files." So I was surprised that it left fragmented files, even after multiple passes. For example, even after three passes, on my 35GB partition, with over 11GB free space, it left a 272MB mpeg video file in 19 fragments. But it did completely defrag an 11MB Outlook Express mail file that was originally in 1,172 fragments.

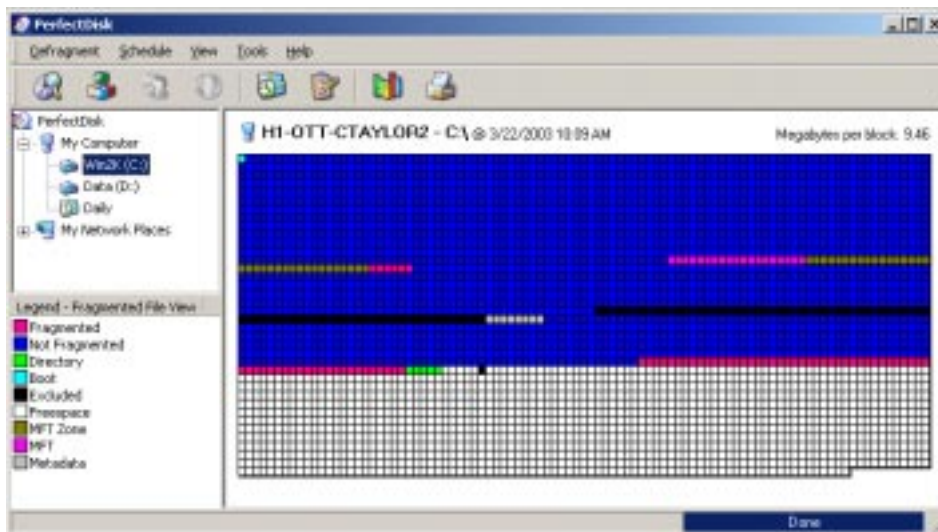
After a week or so of nightly runs, almost all files eventually ended up being defragged. But there are 2 files that seem to defy any attempt at defragmentation: a 617MB data file for Microsoft MapPoint, which remains in 14 fragments; and a 161MB file from Microsoft Digital Image Pro, which remains in 2 fragments. But, out of some 150,000 files, hey, that's not too shabby!

Make a Good Thing Better

I do have a few *wish list* items I passed on to Raxco. The documentation is OK, but not in the format I like. There is a PDF *Getting Started* guide which is excellent, but is, in fact, aptly named. Then there are all the details in the help files. I hate hunting through help files. I much prefer a complete manual in addition to help files. PDF format is fine. Many times, I have found obscure things by browsing through a manual that I never would have found in the online help.

I would like to see threshold control on scheduled jobs. I might have a nightly job that will run only if the fragmentation level reaches 3%, and a weekend job that will run regardless of fragmentation level.

Currently, there is no way to specify in a scheduled job if the defrag pass should be *defragment only* or *smart*



Almost PerfectDisk

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PerfectDisk

(Continued from page 4)

placement. It runs in the same mode as the last time the program ran. If this could be specified, I might set the nightly job to *defragment only* and a weekend job to *smart placement*. I have been told this will be in the next release.

Notwithstanding the above, I found PerfectDisk to be incredibly fast and (almost completely) thorough. It is simple to work with and offers flexibility in its operation. I highly recommend this program to anyone looking for a good defragger.

PerfectDisk runs on any version of Windows from Windows 95 OSR2 and later. Windows NT requires SP3 or higher. Memory requirements are 16MB for the 9x kernel and 64MB for Windows NT/2K/XP. Disk sizes up to a terabyte are supported.

Prices: Workstation versions of Windows - US\$44. Server versions of Windows - US\$219. A *Personal Edition* is available that runs only on workstation versions of Windows. It doesn't include the boot-time optimization features, the command line interface or network support. It costs US\$35. My advice; spend the extra US\$9 and get the ability to do boot-time optimization.

If you are currently using Diskeeper, you can get a 20% discount on PerfectDisk. Just click the *Diskeeper Trade-in Program* link on their home page.

You can find out more information and download a 30-day trial version from <http://www.raxco.com>.



20th ANNIVERSARY

(Continued from page 1)

activities, over a hundred in fact, and I have tried to list them all in the history page, under the BOD link. There are also many other people and organisations that contributed in one way or another, and the names of many of them can be found on the "Friends" and "Honour Roll" web pages of the Group.

The Group has seen some big events also, for example the release of DOS 6 that attracted the largest crowd ever in Mar 1993.

Many clubs in the area have come and gone, but the OPCUG is still there and strong with over 150 members, meetings from a wide variety of presenters 10 months of the years, and a very active board of directors.

But, the history page is not perfect, I'm sure it has errors, omission, missing actors, grammar and spelling errors, and so on. Not being there for most of the events, often I had to guess the meaning of what I read, sometime I had to choose between conflicting description, other times I had to cross correlate partial info to try to find out what happened, and on top of all of that, I added my own bias. It's not perfect, and that's where all the actors of the club during those 20 years

are invited to help me to improve the history page. We have a copy of almost all the newsletters, but there are some missing Board of Director meeting minutes, so if you happen to have copies of any of the missing ones, I would be interested in obtaining copies. You can find the minutes in **Area 59 - Text - OPCUG - BOD Minutes**, or at

<http://opcug.ca/code/html-list+files?frames=n&area=59>.

My main source of information for the history page were the minutes of the Board of Director meetings, but there is so much more that the actors could tell us, please don't hesitate to tell us your stories by posting them into the "History" conference area of the PUB or emailing them to history@opcug.ca (after subscribing once with "subscribe history" in the body of a message to listserve@opcug.ca).

I hope you will enjoy the OPCUG's history page.

Happy 20th anniversary and long life to the OPCUG!

Truly yours,
Jocelyn Doire.

Word from the New Editor by Brigitte Lord

Now that I've taken the "graphic torch" passed on to me by former editor Bert Schopf, I appreciate the time required to produce this newsletter each month. Granted, I'm new at this, but I'm sure it took a good chunk out of Bert's free time. Thank you, Bert, for the many years of excellent work you donated to the club. And thanks for the time you took to design this terrific new template for the newsletter.

Many thanks to Dunc Petrie for helping me through the installation of Adobe Acrobat Exchange. The obscure concept of PostScript drivers needed to "distill" (convert) the newsletter into PDF format had me scratching my head at times.

Finally, thank you to Blair Crib of the Ottawa office of [Microsoft Canada](#) for generously donating a copy of **MS Publisher 2002**.

I encourage all members to subscribe to the electronic PDF version of the newsletter. Not only will you see it in splendid colour, you will often receive it days before the mailed out paper version. Instructions for subscribing to the electronic version are on the [back page](#) of this issue. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to open the PDF newsletter. This is a free download at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>.



WORLD AT LARGE

Windows XP

submitted by Milt Hull ; article from [Sacra Blue](#), newsletter of the [Sacramento PC Users' Group](#), December 2002—issue 245



How many people out there have upgraded or purchased a new system with Windows XP on it? Are you hearing tons of complaints about it? I hear comments all the time about how an upgrade did not work well or it does not work the same as a Win98 machine. Everyone is scared of it. Personally, however, I think it's the best operating system Microsoft has made so far to date. It works very well with every type of user. Let me explain a couple of reasons why I think so.

For example, let's look at Windows 98 in a home with several people using the same machine. First of all, it was very hard to create profiles so that each user could modify his or her desktop and file structure. Profiles could be set so that each user could have a custom background picture and other settings, but security could not stop one user from seeing the other users' files. Also, your kid could install something that could cause problems later on for everyone. Or, he/she could install so many games and programs that your hard drive is cluttered with files, you do not know what to keep and figure it's best to just start over.

For another example, different types of network connections caused problems for laptop users when you were at home, traveling, or at work. You had to setup hardware profiles for each environment, then choose that profile whenever you were in that environment.

Most of the complaints I heard about were upgrades and configuration with old hardware. Let's look more closely at XP. It is built from Windows NT technology and, of course, there are problems with hardware that only have drivers for 95/98 machines. This is because Windows NT/2000/XP has a completely different core operating system than Windows 9x. It was written by Dave Cutler, the father of VMS. So even though it looks like Windows, it only has a shell that looks like Windows. Every driver out there for Windows XP has to be written to that environment. This has always been a problem since Windows NT was released. Many hardware manufacturers created drivers for Windows 9x but failed to write one for the less used Windows NT system. Now, many years later, Microsoft has made it a little easier by creating a Universal Driver Model.

The Universal Driver Model lets the hardware manufacturer write one driver for their device, then the operating system adapts the driver to its internal structure. It's less expensive to write one driver than to hire more programmers to cover other operating systems. It will also take some time for Windows XP to gain support while old hardware becomes obsolete.

I personally have been bitten by that one with some little organizer that fit on my cell-phone by Motorola. It cost me a little over \$200.00 when it first came out and it downloaded all my contacts and Calendar and snapped right on the back of my Startac Telephone. The utility does not work in Windows XP and they do not plan on writing

any upgrades for it either. So, I only had it for a year when it became obsolete.

But let's get back to our previous problems we were talking about. Let's take the scenario about the family with one computer and many users. In WinXP, you can have one computer with several profiles and you are the Administrator. Only you have rights to install programs and you can hide your important files from prying eyes. Your system settings will never change because only you have control of the computer because you have set your kids as users with limited access.

Even in the second scenario, where you have a laptop with several types of network connections, WinXP detects the type of connection requested and allows you to dial-up, network to your LAN, or even sync with an IrDA connected CE device automatically. And WinXP has a much better interface for managing all those connections.

I would highly recommend upgrading to Windows XP just for the ease of use and the control you have over Win98. One thing I would recommend though, if you are concerned about security, I would highly suggest using the preferred NTFS file system. It has been proven over the years in Windows NT and Windows 2000 and has the capabilities of setting security and encryption on every type of file out there. Next month, I will talk about using that encryption and security and how you can lock out everyone else that uses your computer from seeing your files.



OPCUG Editor's notes: Please visit SPCUG's eBlue at <http://www.sacpcug.org/eblue/archives.htm> for the follow-up to this article in their January 2003 issue.



Rewind...

is in transition to a new historian. We look forward to its return in next month's edition of Ottawa PC News.

CLUB NEWS

Dial-up Access to PUB II *by Chris Taylor*

At one point, the OPCUG had six dial-up lines to our on-line services. As usage of the dial-up dropped, we dropped lines. By the time we switched over to PUB II, which included access from the Internet, we were down to two lines. As more and more people switched to Internet access, we dropped down to one line, where we have been for quite some time.

An analysis was recently completed and it turns out there were only 13 members of the OPCUG who used the dial-up line over the past year. An e-mail was sent out to each of them explaining that the Board of Directors was considering dropping the phone line, given that it cost the group about \$600 per year to provide dial-up access (we have to pay business rates) and it was felt that was a high price to pay for the few members who use the service. All 13 already had Internet access, so alternate means of accessing PUB II were explained.

Of the 13 who were sent an e-mail, 8 responded that they would not object to the dial-up access being dropped. The remaining 5 have not responded.

As of June 16th, the line will be removed.

The Board voted to remove the dial-up line. As of June 16th, the line will be removed. The Internet will be the only means of accessing PUB II. There are the Web, Wildcat! and Telnet interfaces for all services. FTP may be used to access the file areas. NNTP and the listserver may be used to access the conference areas. And POP3 may be used to access the *Private e-mail* conference area. Let me know if you have any questions about accessing PUB II.



March Prize Winners

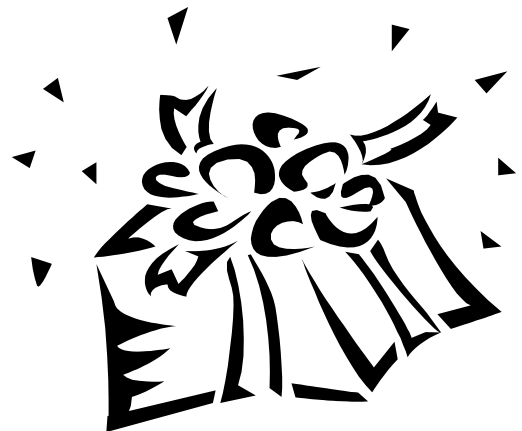
At the March 12th general meeting a number of prizes were up for grabs!

Claude Jarry won a copy of the McAfee Spam Killer software while Herb Kelland and J. Song received Calculators.

Brian McLeery and George Monson got McAfee Golf shirts... a sure sign of spring right??

On the raffle front Anthony Toscano and Bob Walker took home copies of Microsoft Money.

Many thanks to McAfee and Microsoft for the prizes.



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 next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada Science and Technology Museum, 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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Within a couple of minutes you will receive a confirmation message from the listserver.

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