



OTTAWA PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Active Tray 1.1

by Brigitte Lord

I've been using a nice little program for several months now; Active Tray by **Divcom Software** is a utility that deploys cascading menus of items like MY DOCUMENTS, CONTROL PANEL and MY COMPUTER from an icon in the System Tray. It comes pre-configured with common items, but you can easily change that and add other folders, individual files / documents, programs, or internet links. The program is basically a one-stop shortcut depot.

When I first installed Active Tray, it was under Windows 98SE which, as an OS, offered just a couple of cascading menus in the Start menu. It didn't cascade the all important MY DOCUMENTS, nor CONTROL PANEL.

Before Active Tray, I used a program that cascaded menus of my choice from the top portion of the Start menu (above the separator). That route was long compared to Active Tray which sits in the bottom right corner of your screen (already near your pointer) while the Start button is w-a-a-a-y over in the left corner.

Another item I like to have cascaded is the CONTROL PANEL. By default, Active Tray positions the CONTROL PANEL as a sub-item of MY FOLDERS, but I was glad when I could move it up in rank. Another item I promoted is MY COMPUTER. I then gladly removed MY FOLDERS from the tray list and was left with three cascading menus: MY DOCUMENTS, MY COMPUTER and CONTROL PANEL. I then added a few individual files and programs I access regularly.

Since last November, I have been using Active Tray under Windows XP Home

Edition. Although WinXP comes with more features than Win98 and cascades menus and items of your choice from the Start button, I still use Active Tray. It's lean and contains only what I want. The Start button already has many other items and functions.

These are some of Active Tray's many features:

- Support of any type of object (programs, documents, folders, internet links)
- Import of tray objects from Windows shortcuts.
- Flexible settings for each tray icon, menu and its items.
- Customizable keyboard shortcuts for quick opening objects from the tray.
- Popup menu for easy access to main functions.
- Customizable style of program and user tray menus.
- Friendly and easy-to-use interface.
- Multilingual user interface.
- Security option for locking change of settings by a password.
- Introduction tour for novices.

The Active Tray keyboard shortcuts are more flexible than those in Windows. It will let you choose a single letter (or digit) as a shortcut, but I don't recommend this as every press of the letter will launch the item across your screen. You can combine any letter or digit with the standard Ctrl+Alt that is used in all Windows keyboard shortcuts. But if you are running out of sensible keys using this combination (as I am), Active Tray allows you to use the Ctrl or Alt key alone with a letter or digit, but beware of using a combination that Windows uses such as Ctrl+P which launches the Print applet in

most programs.

If I could have one wish for this program, it is that folders could be opened as a whole. As it is, only items within a folder can be opened. Sometimes, I have to work with many files. This is the case when I am assembling the OPCUG newsletter. I rarely use the Newsletter shortcut listed in Active Tray because I invariably have to open the entire folder which holds dozens of newsletter files.

Active Tray is an award winning program that includes a comprehensive help file, user tips, and an introductory tour. From the main window are links to Divcom's e-mail and web support, program upgrades and online help. Such attention to detail gives Active Tray a very polished finish.

(screen shots on page 4)

Active Tray 1.1

File size: 934 KB

\$19.95 USD from *Divcom Software*

<http://www.divcomsoft.com/atray/>

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, April 14th, 2004**

April Raffle

by Chris Taylor

Antivirus software, while very important, is not enough by itself to keep your machine free of problems. And keeping your machine patched for vulnerabilities, while very important, is not enough by itself to keep your machine safe.

The third leg of the security stool that everyone should rest on is a firewall. If your computer does not present an attack surface when you are connected to the Internet, it will not be attacked. And that is the purpose of a firewall. If you don't have one, you should get one.

At the April general meeting, due to the generosity of McAfee Canada, we have a copy of **McAfee Personal Firewall Plus v5.0**. For more information about this program, see <http://us.mcafee.com/root/package.asp?pkgid=103>

Raffle tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten. Help keep your membership dues low and take a chance (or ten) on this prize, valued at approximately \$50.

Coming Up...

Peter Andrews / Softmap Publishing (2002) Inc / Digital Topographic Map of Southern Ontario

If you can find your way to our April 14, 2004 meeting, we're sure you'll enjoy the presentation by Peter Andrews of Softmap Publishing (2002) Inc. If you can't, then you really need to hear and see what he will be showing. Peter will be demonstrating the many features and potential uses of Softmap's digital topographic map series. Each package contains up to 200 topographic maps that are seamlessly joined to allow easy navigation and printing. They can be interfaced with GPS and you can customize by adding your own points, routes and areas.

Peter Andrews has almost 40 years of experience in map management and marketing; mostly with Natural Resources Canada. He established Federal Maps in July 1997, and purchased the rights to Softmap Publishing in 2002. Softmap currently offers full topographic map coverage at 1:50,000 and 1:250,000 scales for Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and B.C.

Visit <http://softmappublishing.com/>

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	WEDNESDAY, April 14 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.science-tech.nmstc.ca/english/index.cfm
Internet SIG (I-SIG)	WEDNESDAY, April 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. Come and join our discussions!
Developers SIG	WEDNESDAY, April 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting, and occasionally at other locations in the region.
Orphans' SIG	WEDNESDAY, April 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Digital Imaging SIG	WEDNESDAY, April 14 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Delphi User Group	TBA	TBA
PIG SIG (Wing SIG)	WEDNESDAY, April 14 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Woodroffe Ave. at Baseline Rd. (formerly Shoppers' City West)
Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).		

SIG EVENTS

Academy of Learning to address the Developers SIG

Tom Tracey of the Academy of Learning will be presenting a description of the various certifications and training that the Academy has available for today's computerists after the main OPCUG presentation on April 14th.

Bob Thomas



Digital Imaging SIG

by Chris Taylor

At the March meeting of the Digital Imaging SIG, we talked about difficult lighting conditions that can fool your camera into over or under-exposing the image. And we talked about strategies for working around the problem.

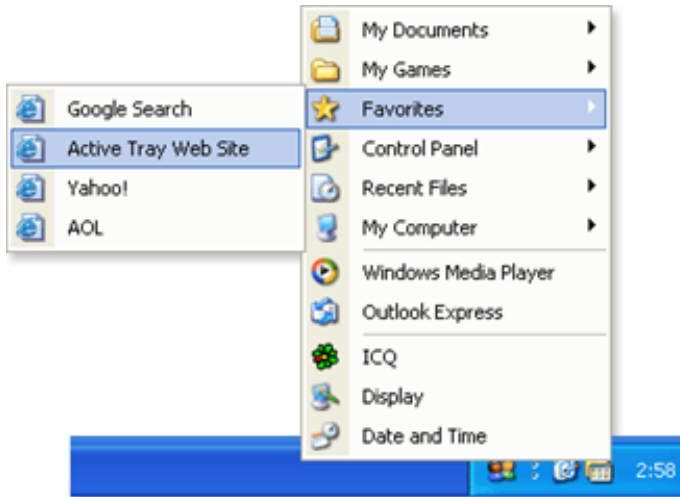
At the April meeting, we will continue the discussion about exposure. This month we will look at the relationship between aperture and shutter speed, how your camera determines the balance between the two when you are shooting in automatic exposure mode, and how you can influence the balance to get the effect you are after.

And Coming Up in May...

Tom Camps, President & CEO of Ottawa's BOLDstreet Inc., will be making a presentation on "Public Access WiFi" at our May 12th general meeting. With BOLDStreet Wireless Internet, "all your favorite features of the internet are at your fingertips." You could log into your company's virtual private network, read your e-mail, send instant messages and explore the web from BOLDstreet "hotspots" at numerous Ontario hotels, restaurants, coffee shops, bars, and highway rest stops. In his presentation, Tom will provide an overview of the "Hotspots" market and its business opportunities.

With over 20 years in the technology industry, Tom Camps spent more than a decade in leadership positions with a focus on building new markets before founding BOLDstreet. He was previously Vice President of Marketing at Coast Software, a website-testing company targeting the ISP, web hosting and telecom markets. Mr. Camps was instrumental in raising critical post-bubble VC financing for Coast. Before that he was the Vice President of Market Strategies for Cognos, the world's leading vendor of Enterprise Business Intelligence solutions. He has also served in various marketing and technical roles for BMC Software, Microstar and Andyne Computing.

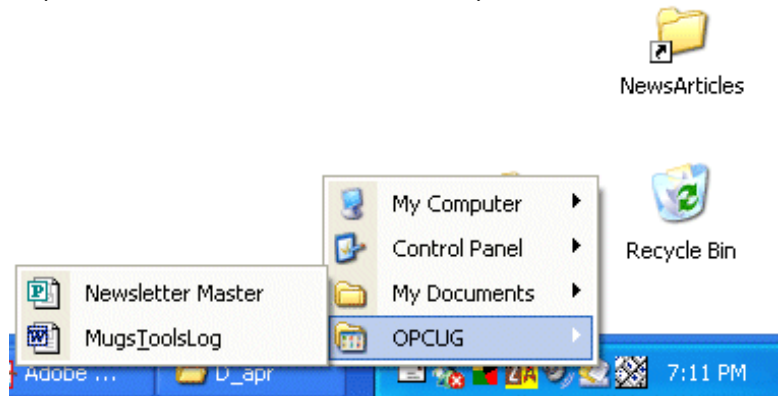
Active Tray 1.1 *continued from page 1*



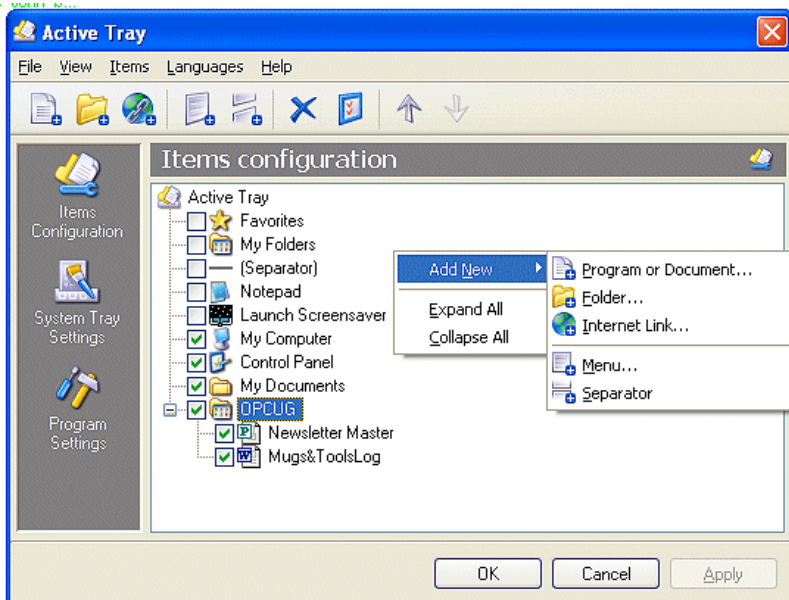
This is what Active Tray more or less looks like when you first install it (depending on programs and files present on your system). The varied items on display show the program's versatility. Items can be removed or others added by accessing the Main Window (see bottom screen shot).

Active Tray displaying some common items before customization (screenshot taken from Divcom's website).

At right, I have removed many of the default items shown above. What remains is a functional list of items that I access on a regular basis. There are many other items that I chose not to add because I already use Windows standard keyboard shortcuts for these (e.g. Notepad: Ctrl+Alt+N).



A rather lean Active Tray after customization.



This is the Main Window where items can easily be added or removed. Items with green checkmarks will be displayed. Those without checkmarks will not, but remain available for easy re-selection. All checked items here are displayed in the screenshot above.

Items can also be deleted.

Active Tray's main window where items can be added or removed.

CLUB LIFE

Board of Directors *by Chris Taylor*

In the call for nominations for the 2004 OPCUG Board of Directors only eight nominations were received for the nine positions on the board. Those eight were acclaimed. The board then put out a call for those willing to be considered for appointment to the ninth position.

Four members indicated an interest in being appointed; Tim Mahoney, who is one of the founding members of the Group and has been a board member in the past; Ted May, who was a board member last year; Harald Freise, long-time member and President of the Group for probably more years than he cares to admit; and Wayne Houston, who has been the election chairman for the last couple of years.

At the March Board of Directors meeting, a vote was held and Tim Mahoney was voted in as the ninth board member. Many thanks to all four for stepping forward and volunteering.



A typical meeting of the Board of Directors. (King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table—and a few guests).



Spot That Newsletter

by Chris Taylor

The OPCUG distributes complimentary copies of the newsletter to a variety of locations, primarily local libraries. We would like to gauge if we are getting any value from this expense. If you have noticed the OPCUG newsletter posted in any public place, please send me an email at chris.taylor@opcug.ca and let me know where you saw it. If you happen to know if it gets posted every month, that would also be helpful.

March Raffle Winner

The winner of our raffle was **Ted May**. Hope you enjoy your new copy of Microsoft Office 2003, Ted.

Thanks to Microsoft for the t-shirts to all in attendance plus the demo copies of MS Office 2003.



COMPUTER SECURITY

Good Security Habits

The following is reprinted with permission from **US-CERT** (<http://www.us-cert.gov/index.html>), the US Computer Emergency Readiness Team.

Cyber Security Tip ST04-001

Why is Cyber Security a Problem?

You've heard the news stories about credit card numbers being stolen and email viruses spreading. Maybe you've even been a victim yourself. One of the best defenses is understanding the risks, what some of the basic terms mean, and what you can do to protect yourself against them.

What is cyber security?

It seems that everything relies on computers and the Internet now — communication (email, cellphones), entertainment (digital cable, mp3s), transportation (car engine systems, airplane navigation), shopping (online stores, credit cards), medicine (equipment, medical records), and the list goes on. How much of your daily life relies on computers? How much of your personal information is stored either on your own computer or on someone else's system?

Cyber security involves protecting that information by preventing, detecting, and responding to attacks.

What are the risks?

There are many risks, some more serious than others. Among these dangers are viruses erasing your entire system, someone breaking into your system and altering files, someone using your computer to attack others, or someone stealing your credit card information and making unauthorized purchases. Unfortunately, there's no 100% guarantee that even with the best precautions some of these things won't happen to you, but there are steps you can take to minimize the chances.

What can you do?

The first step in protecting yourself is to recognize the risks and become familiar with some of the terminology associated with them.

Hacker, attacker, or intruder - These terms are applied to the people who seek to exploit weaknesses in software and computer systems for their own gain. Although their intentions are sometimes fairly benign and motivated solely by curiosity, their

actions are typically in violation of the intended use of the systems they are exploiting. The results can range from mere mischief (creating a virus with no intentionally negative impact) to malicious (stealing or altering information).

Malicious code - This category includes code such as viruses, worms, and Trojan horses. Although some people use these terms interchangeably, they have unique characteristics.

Viruses - This type of malicious code requires you to actually do something before it infects your computer. This action could be opening an email attachment or going to a particular web page.

Worms - Worms propagate without user intervention. They typically start by exploiting a software vulnerability (a flaw that allows the software's intended security policy to be violated), then once the victim computer has been infected the worm will attempt to find and infect other computers. Similar to viruses, worms can propagate via email, web sites, or network-based software. The automated self-propagation of worms distinguishes them from viruses.

Trojan horses - A Trojan horse program is software that claims to be one thing while in fact doing something different behind the scenes. For example, a program that claims it will speed up your computer may actually be sending confidential information to a remote intruder.

This series of information security tips will give you more information about how to recognize and protect yourself from attacks.

Authors: Mindi McDowell, Allen Householder

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INTERNET SIG

Internet Search Engines For Beginners, Part 3

by Eric Clyde, Coordinator of the Internet SIG

The first two parts of this series of articles discussed how search engines work in general, then went on to briefly describe some of the many ways in which to use Google, the most frequently used engine today. But there are dozens, if not hundreds, of others, as a search on “search engines ~URL” will demonstrate. Many of these, such as AOL and, until recently, Yahoo, use Google as the data for their searches, but have their own algorithms for deciding both the number of successful hits and the order of relevance, i.e. hits presented in order 1, 2, 3, e.g. in Google, may appear as 3, 5, 2 in another.

Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com>) is the second largest, claiming to index about three billion pages. However, some regard it with skepticism, since Yahoo now allows the payment of fees for indexing, which could, of course, bias the search results. (While Google allows advertising, it is independent of the search results.)

A very different and, to me at least, very interesting approach is used by Kartoo (<http://www.kartoo.com>) Search results are not presented in list form, but are grouped as in a diagram – difficult to describe, but well worth checking out.

Ask Jeeves (<http://www.askjeeves.com>) allows phrase searches, such as “information on Roslin Chapel and the Holy Grail,” in place of individual terms. There may not be as many hits as with other engines, but the results are usually all relevant.

Dogpile (<http://www.dogpile.com>) searches Google, Yahoo, Ask Jeeves, and a number of other services and the results can be given in order of relevance or by search engine.

A few other engines worth checking out are <http://www.alltheweb.com>, <http://www.aol.com> (for AOL members), <http://www.msn.com>, <http://www.mynetcrawler.com>, <http://www.rolist.com>, <http://www.teoma.com> and <http://www.wisenut.com>. AltaVista (<http://www.altavista.com>) was one of the first to be made available, but it has slipped badly in coverage. No doubt I have left out some favourites.

All of the above has described general search engines—you enter key words and hope for the best, usually with amazingly good results, I hasten to add that Google, Yahoo, and some others allow hierarchical searching, i.e. a list of major topics is shown. When one is selected, subtopics are listed, one of these is chosen, and so on, until the search results are presented. These can be highly relevant for topics that can be easily categorized.

There are also a number of more specialized engines which can be found by searching on, for example, “architecture search engines” on Google.

For more information on search engines, check out <http://www.searchenginewatch.com>.



Humour

The following is reprinted with permission from the North Texas PC News (August 2002), the newsletter of the North Texas PC Users' Group, Inc. (<http://www.ntpcug.org>)

1. If you have a lot of tension and you get a headache, do what it says on the aspirin bottle: “Take two and keep away from children.”
2. It's a very strange name they picked for “Social Security”. For what they actually send you, you can't afford to be “social” nor can you really feel “secure”.
3. It is hard to understand how a cemetery raised its burial cost and blamed it on the cost of living.
4. It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try and pass them.
5. If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.
6. The things that come to those that wait may be the things left by those who got there first.
7. Give a man a fish, and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he will sit in a boat drinking beer all day.
8. When you're swimming in the creek and an eel bites your cheek, that's a moray!
9. A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.
10. The only cure for insomnia is to get more sleep.
11. Everybody lies, but it doesn't matter since nobody listens.
12. I wished the buck stopped here. I could use a few.

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 membership:	\$25 per year
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