



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Reviews of pdfFactory and pdfFactory Pro

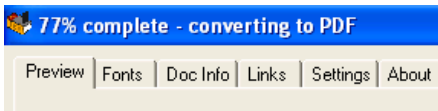
by Eric Clyde, I-SIG coordinator

For a number of reasons, the pdf format has become a popular way of providing documentation and other information in the last few years. Authors can be sure that the viewers are seeing exactly what was intended, no matter whether the file is being viewed on a Macintosh-, Linux-, or Windows-based computer. This can be important, also, when planning to have something printed elsewhere, as I have learned through some bad experiences – what appears and prints nicely formatted on one computer will not necessarily appear the same way on another computer or with a different printer! Also, as will be seen below, the resulting file size can be much smaller than the original document, an important consideration when downloading from or exchanging files via the Internet.

The software firm, Adobe, developed Acrobat to produce pdf files. It is a great tool and is very versatile but, at a cost of \$299(U.S.) for the standard version and \$449(U.S.) for the Pro version, is much too expensive for the casual user who just wants to produce the occasional pdf file. Fortunately, Adobe wanted the format to become a de-facto standard and published the specifications for the format so that other developers would be able to create compatible, if less versatile, applications.

pdfFactory, like other similar programs, works by pretending to be an

additional printer attached to your computer. When installed, pdfFactory, like other similar programs, sets up a new printer driver. It is easy to use. To produce a pdf file of a document as it appears on the screen, start to print it, but select pdfFactory as the printer. Almost immediately a preview screen appears showing approximately what the final product will look like. If the original document is lengthy, the percentage completion of the final pdf file is shown as the conversion progresses. (Note that only part of the top of the screen is shown here for legibility).



There are a number of options. [Fonts] shows the fonts used in the document. If there are unusual fonts which intended viewers may not have, these can easily be embedded in the final product. Otherwise the intended user's machine may substitute another font, which may not give the intended effect or appearance. However embedding will increase the size of the resulting pdf file.

[Doc Info] allows the setting of attributes, such as keywords, to be written into the final product.

[Links] If there are URLs and email addresses in the document, this option allows a choice of how these will appear.

[Settings] allows for a number of

global options, such as the number of "Autosaves" in which results of previous sessions are saved automatically.

At the bottom of the screen the following tabs appear:



[View PDF] loads Adobe Acrobat and shows the final product.

[Save] saves the final product.

[Send] allows you to send the pdf file by email.

[Help] provides ... help!

[Close] aborts the whole process.

[Print] allows you to print the pdf file on your printer.

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Next Meeting: **Wednesday, September 8th, 2004**

September Raffle

At the September meeting, thanks to the generosity of Microsoft Canada, we have a copy of Digital Image Suite 9. If you have a digital camera, or want to manipulate any other images, this is a powerful, simple-to-use image editing and cataloguing pair of programs. For my review, see the May issue of the newsletter - <http://opcug.ca/public/articles/0405.pdf>.

Besides getting a chance on this terrific prize, priced locally at about \$140, you will help keep membership dues low.

Raffle tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

Missing your "T's" ?

At the March 2004 general meeting, some of our members did not receive a free T-shirt and signed a list to get one later. Unfortunately, those "T's" were available in limited supply only for that particular promotion, so our speaker, Josh McPherson, was unable to get more. When we announced this at our June 2004 meeting, Corel's Michel Daw generously offered to provide T-shirts for those who missed out in March. I will have the Corel shirts at our September 2004 meeting. If you will be able to attend the September meeting, and DID NOT receive a shirt in March, please e-mail me (bob.gowan@opcug.ca) before September 7, 2004, and I will set one aside for you.

Bob Gowan
Program Co-ordinator

Coming Up...

September: Speaker TBA (check our website—<http://opcug.ca>)

October: Gord Hopkins - Digital Image Processing - "Selections and Masks"

November: Ian Stewart - GMC Guardian Mobility Corporation - Global Positioning System applications

December: Harley Bloom & associates - BMT Bloom MicroTech - 6th Annual Christmas Wish List

Speakers Wanted

"We should have more member presentations" is amongst the most common feedback we hear from our audience. We would like to do this, but we can't leave it all up to a few members. Perhaps you can help us out. Do you have a favourite software that you'd like to tell us all about - or foolproof procedures for minimizing spam or backing up your critical data? It doesn't have to be a full-length presentation. If we get several members willing to give shorter talks, we can combine them in a members' presentations evening. Remember, "Users helping Users" is what it's all about. If you can help, please email me (bob.gowan@opcug.ca) with your name, topic/title and time needed.

Editor's note: You may have noticed in the article above that the September speaker is still TBA (as of August 24). Please help out your club in these situations by offering to present future topics. It will be much appreciated (and you may find it a rewarding experience after all!).

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, September 8 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, September 8 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. Come and join our discussions!
Developers SIG	Wednesday, September 8 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting, and occasionally at other locations in the region.
Orphans' SIG	Wednesday, September 8 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Digital Imaging SIG	Wednesday, September 8 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Delphi User Group	TBA	TBA
PIG SIG (Wing SIG)	Wednesday, September 8 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (formerly Shoppers' City West)

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

PRODUCT REVIEW

A New Keyboard and Mouse by Chris Taylor

Even though I already had a Logitech Internet keyboard and a Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer, I decided to throw \$5 into the raffle at the June OPCUG meeting and take a chance on the Microsoft Multi-Media Keyboard and Wireless Intellimouse Explorer.

And I won!

I was a little leery about switching to a wireless mouse. First, I am really cheap and therefore did not look forward to buying batteries for a mouse. My past experiences with battery life in mice was...shall we say, less than stellar. And secondly, I was worried that I would lose it all the time under the heaps of junk I keep on my computer table.

My first concern may or may not be warranted. Microsoft touts this mouse as having "3x longer battery life". But longer than what? The web site has a line "Many users experience a half year of battery life!" Hmmm...does not sound so great to this cheapskate. At least it takes 2 double-A batteries, which are not too expensive. After three months, it is still going strong.

The operation of the mouse is exceptional. Very smooth and responsive. I have always liked Microsoft mice and when they moved to optical technologies I loved that I could get rid of my mousepads. Unfortunately, I discovered in my new computer room set-up that optical mice do not work on glass table-tops. Oh well, I am back to a mousepad.

There were a couple of things new to me for this mouse. The wheel rolls smoothly, rather than with clicks. It took a couple of days to get used to it, but I really like it. Also, the wheel is one of the new "tilt" models. You can scroll sideways by tilting the wheel from side to side. Personally, I have never really gotten used to using this feature. But it has never accidentally interfered with anything either.

The keyboard has some very nice features. Across the top is an array of buttons. There are buttons to open the *My Documents*, *My Pictures*, and *My Music* folders. There are buttons to launch your web browser, email program, instant messenger and media player. Finally, there are multi-media control buttons for play, pause, fast forward / reverse, volume up/down, and a mute button. Those I really like.

But then there is a weird dual nature for the function keys. All the function keys can either be used normally or for additional functions; *Help*, *Undo*, *Redo*, *New*, *Open*, *Close*, *Reply*, *Fwd*, *Send*, *Spell*, *Save*, and *Print*. You can toggle between the two sets of keyboard definitions with the *F Lock* key visible at the top right in image *Microsoft*.

If you normally don't use function keys, I suppose these can be really handy. But most keyboard jockeys use function keys a lot. So I find I always leave the function keys in their normal mode. What I really hate is that fact that when I boot the computer it *always* comes up with the function keys in the enhanced mode with the different definitions. I have not been able to find any way to get the computer to boot with the function keys in normal mode. I am glad I don't boot my computer very often.

But now I come to what I *really, really* hate about this keyboard. It would seem that Microsoft decided in their infinite wisdom that the keyboard needed to be a little bit narrower. So they decided to mess with the layout of the cursor movement keys above the arrow keys (PgUp, PgDn, Home, End, etc.). I happen to use the End key a *lot*. If I am making a correction to something, the next thing I am likely to do is return to where I was by using the arrow keys to get to the right line and then hitting the End key to move to the end of the line and continue typing. Take a look at the 2 images of keyboards. *Keytronic* is the layout of every sensible keyboard since

the 1980s. *Microsoft* shows the layout of the Microsoft MultiMedia Keyboard.



Standard layout

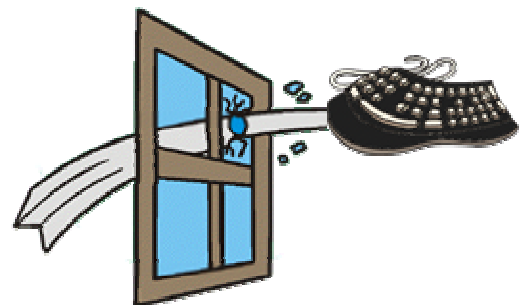
MultiMedia layout

Do you see the problem? Every time I go to hit the End key, I end up hitting the Delete key instead! And don't get me started on trying to get to the Insert key, which I use all the time to select files in the wonderful file management program Total Commander.

I tried to find someone at Microsoft willing to talk about why they saw fit to mess around with a perfectly good keyboard layout, but nobody ever got back to me.

I could get used to the new layout, but I work with computers all day. There are 4 computers I use *every* day and I am frequently logging on at other machines as well.

I am still using the keyboard and still deleting all kinds of stuff accidentally. At some point, I will probably throw the keyboard through a window or something. If anyone at Microsoft is reading this, if you will trade this keyboard for one with the keys laid out the way God intended, let me know.



Review of X1 Search coming

by Chris Taylor

If you find it a struggle to find specific files and emails on your computer, you might want to look at *X1 Search* from X1 Technologies – <http://www.x1.com>. I have written a review of X1, but it won't be published until the October issue of the newsletter.

Why the advance notice? X1 has reduced the price 25% through September 15th. Until then the price is US\$75. After that, the price goes up to US\$99.

Not only that, but X1 is offering members of the OPCUG a 20% discount off the web site price through the end of 2004. Contact me by email (see the newsletter [masthead](#)) for instructions on how you can obtain the extra 20% discount.

You can download a 15-day, fully functional eval copy of X1 from their web site to try it out and see if it does everything they promise.



What? No updates?

by Chris Taylor



Make sure the date is set right on your computer. I am subscribed to a technical mailing list for Windows issues. Someone had a computer that had been turned off for about 6 months and was then plugged back in. He went to the Windows Update site to get the latest security updates but the site reported that no updates were needed. Since the computer had not had any updates in at least 6 months, he knew that was wrong.

Another person on the mailing list suggested they check the date on the computer. Windows Update can fail if the date is significantly out.

The gent with the problem checked. Apparently the battery that maintains the date and time while the computer is off had gone dead and the clock had reset to January 1, 2000. Once he corrected the date and time, Windows Update listed 27 critical updates required and allowed them to be installed.

This problem is documented in Microsoft Knowledge Base article 826715 - <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?kbid=826715>



TIPS & TRICKS

Add a Safe Mode option to the Windows XP Pro Boot menu

by Morris Turpin

If you're experiencing a problem with Windows XP you might want to boot into the Safe Mode. Those who have upgraded from previous versions of the Windows operating system will have noticed that XP has no menu option at boot up time to allow you to select Safe Mode. If you have a good memory you might remember to press [F8] at just the right time. This will present a menu from which Safe Mode may then be selected.

Wouldn't it be a lot easier if Safe Mode were available right from the Boot menu? Here's how to do it.

Follow these steps:

- Open the System Properties dialog box ----- either right-click on the My Computer icon and select Properties or press [Windows][Break].
- Click on the Advanced tab then click the Settings button in the Startup And Recovery section.
- In the System Startup section, click the Edit button.
- When the Boot.ini file opens in Notepad, locate the line that ends with the /fastdetect switch.
- Highlight and copy that line, and paste it in the line below.
- Change the section on the line that reads WINDOWS="Microsoft Windows XP Professional" to WINDOWS="Safe Mode" and add the following to the end of the line: /safeboot:minimal /sos /bootlog
- Save the changed file in notepad, then close the file.
- Click on the Cancel button to close the Startup and Recovery window.
- Click on the Cancel button to close the System Properties window.

Now the next time you reboot your computer you will have the option to boot into Safe Mode right from the boot menu.



April Fool's Day Hoaxes

by Chris Taylor

I don't know how the rankings were decided, but the "Museum of Hoaxes" web site has a list of the top 100 April Fool's Day hoaxes of all time.

They lead off with "The Swiss Spaghetti Harvest", a BBC broadcast from 1957 that talked of the bumper crop of spaghetti due to a mild winter and the virtual elimination of the spaghetti weevil. A link to a BBC archive of the original broadcast is included.

In 17th place is "The Sydney Iceberg", which details how a local millionaire towed an Antarctic iceberg to Australia

to sell in ice cube sized chunks to improve the flavour of drinks.

There is the "15th Annual New York City April Fool's Day Parade" at number 20. CNN and Fox actually sent news crews to cover this parade in which there were to be floats such as "Where's Mars", built at a cost of \$10 billion, and "Atlanta Braves Baseball Tribute to Racism".

For the entire list, visit <http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/aprilfool/>



pdfFactory (Continued from page 1)

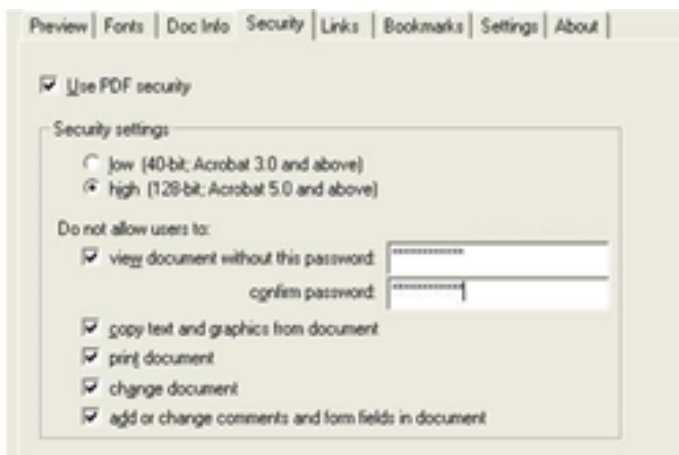
One of the documents pdfFactory was tested on was a fold-out brochure produced using Adobe Pagemaker. (There were six pages on each side of the foldout, and each side was prepared as a separate document). Camera ready input was to be emailed to a commercial printer. The documents used two type fonts, one of which was a calligraphic one and is not commonly available, plus various special characters and numerous jpegs. While the documents could have been sent in PageMaker format, the file sizes totalled almost 29 MB; in pdf format, they came to less than 600KB! The latter format had the additional advantage that the documents could be emailed to other people for proofreading – not too many people have access to PageMaker!

Other features are the ability to add or delete pages in the pdf file, and also to combine documents, even from different programs, into one file. In one test a Word Perfect document, a Quattro Pro spreadsheet, and one of the above PageMaker documents were easily combined into one pdf document.

pdfFactory is shareware. A trial version can be downloaded from <http://www.pdffactory.com>. Until it is registered it, the following note appears at the foot of each page: "PDF created with pdfFactory trial version www.pdffactory.com" Registration costs \$49.95(U.S.) The program is recommended. It is easy to use and is quite versatile.

pdfFactory Pro

The Pro version has some additional features, the principal ones dealing with security, bookmarks, and the ability to rearrange jobs. The security tab, as shown in the partial screen print below, allows various options, including that of requiring a password to view the document. The documentation points out, though, that password breaking programs are available and recommends lengthy and unusual passwords). It is also possible to prevent changes to or copying parts of the document or printing it out.

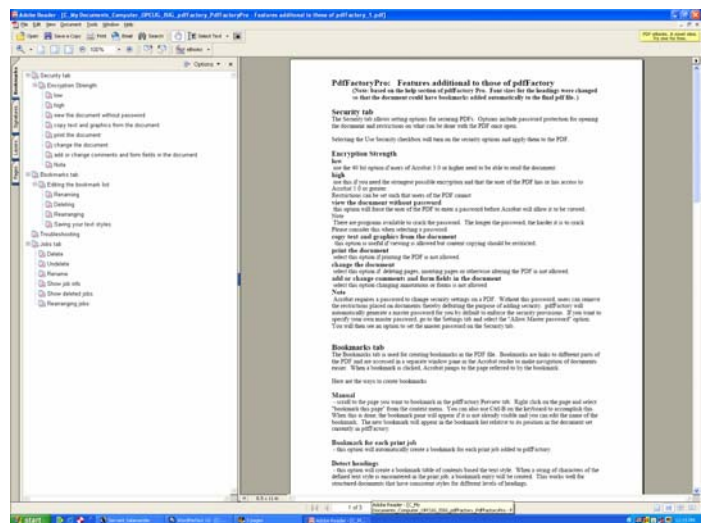


Some pdf files have two windows. The left one bookmarks (indexes) the text on the right. If a bookmark is clicked in the

left window, the appropriate part of the document is displayed in the right window.

pdfFactory Pro allows the making of such bookmarks. It can be done in two ways -- manually, or automatically by detecting headings, etc. In the manual method, each page to be bookmarked is looked at in the preview screen, and either right clicked and select "bookmark this page," or hit Ctrl-B.

In the automatic method, a consistent style has to have been used, e.g. headings and subheadings have to be either in a different size or font from that of the main text, and from each other. Part of a pdf file produced using this method appears below. As can be seen, the automatic bookmarking feature works very well.



pdfFactoryPro is also shareware. A trial version can be downloaded from <http://www.pdffactory.com>. Until it is registered, the following note appears at the foot of each page: "PDF created with pdfFactory Pro trial version www.pdffactory.com". Registration costs \$99.95(U.S.) Like pdfFactory, it is easy to use. Also recommended.



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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 ST04-003

There are some simple habits you can adopt that, if performed consistently, may dramatically reduce the chances that the information on your computer will be lost or corrupted.

How can you minimize the access other people have to your information?

You may be able to easily identify people who could, legitimately or not, gain physical access to your computer—family members, roommates, co-workers, members of a cleaning crew, and maybe others. Identifying the people who could gain remote access to your computer becomes much more difficult. As long as you have a computer and connect it to a network, you are vulnerable to someone or something else accessing or corrupting your information; however, you can develop habits that make it more difficult.

Lock your computer when you are away from it. Even if you only step away from your computer for a few minutes, it's enough time for someone else to destroy or corrupt your information. Locking your computer prevents another person from being able to simply sit down at your computer and access all of your information.

Disconnect your computer from the Internet when you aren't using it. The development of technologies such as DSL and cable modems have made it possible for users to be online all the time, but this convenience comes with risks. The likelihood that attackers or viruses scanning the network for available computers will target your computer becomes much higher if your computer is always connected. Depending on what method you use to connect to the Internet, disconnecting may mean ending a dial-up connection, turning off your computer or modem, or disconnecting cables.

Evaluate your security settings. Most software, including browsers and email programs, offers a variety of features that you can tailor to meet your needs and requirements. Enabling certain features to increase convenience or functionality may leave you more vulnerable to being attacked. It is important to examine the settings, particularly the security settings, and select options that meet your needs without putting you at increased risk. If you install a patch or a new version of the software, or if you hear of something that might affect your settings, reevaluate your settings to make sure they are still appropriate.

What other steps can you take?

Sometimes the threats to your information aren't from other people but from natural or technological causes. Although there is no way to control or prevent these problems, you can prepare for them and try to minimize the damage.

Protect your computer against power surges. Aside from providing outlets to plug in your computer and all of its peripherals, some power strips protect your computer against power surges. Many power strips now advertise compensation if they do not effectively protect your computer. During a lightning storm or construction work that increases the odds of power surges, consider shutting your computer down and unplugging it from all power sources. Power strips alone will not protect you from power outages, but there are products that do offer an uninterruptible power supply when there are power surges or outages.

Back up all of your data. Whether or not you take steps to protect yourself, there will always be a possibility that something will happen to destroy your data. You have probably already experienced this at least once—losing one or more files due to an accident, a virus or worm, a natural event, or a problem with your equipment. Regularly backing up your data on a CD or network reduces the stress and other negative consequences that result from losing important information. Determining how often to back up your data is a personal decision. If you are constantly adding or changing data, you may find weekly backups to be the best alternative; if your content rarely changes, you may decide that your backups do not need to be as frequent. You don't need to back up software that you own on CD-ROM or DVD-ROM—you can reinstall the software from the original media if necessary.

Both the National Cyber Security Alliance and US-CERT have identified this topic as one of the top ten for home users.

Authors: Mindi McDowell, Allen Householder

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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.

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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