



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

eMule *by Jocelyn Doire*

Quite often when you listen to the radio you tell yourself "Oh, I would like to get that song", and it's quite easy to go to any of the multitude of stores and get it for maybe \$15.

But there is nothing more convenient to get a song or other digital material than to start a Peer-to-Peer (P2P) program, type the title and/or the artist, wait a bit to get it downloaded and then be able to enjoy it as often as you want for free. No wonder that this type of activity is now one of the most popular uses of the internet.

It goes without saying that this free download has not pleased the audio and video industry, and they have been fighting very hard to stop it, resulting in hundreds of downloaders having to pay thousands of dollars in the US. In Canada, the industry has lost a few legal cases in the last few years, and as result Canadians are less likely to get sued over exchanged copyrighted material, but there is no guarantees, the legal status is evolving every day.

There is also the issue of paying people that have worked hard to create all that material, and to mitigate that, they are now collecting fees on every CD sold in Canada, among other things. Unfortunately there is no simple solution. For example, the same fee that can help big groups can hurt small ones, as my musician friend told me, because they are too small to claim that money, but have to pay more for CDs when they record their music.

Ok, enough preliminary discussion, lets talk about a P2P program that I find very well done called eMule which is available at

<http://www.emule-project.net>. There are a lot of P2P programs, such as Kazaa, Shareasa, Morpheus, Grokster, but some of the advantages of eMule are that it's an open source program under the GPL license, and does not have any spyware or other malware.

eMule starts by showing a list of servers that you can connect to. Contrary to older sharing software, eMule does not have one central server that can easily be shut down, instead it uses a multitude of servers distributed all over the world, none of which being the master, this makes the network extremely robust and almost immune to any attack, because even if many servers are terminated, the others will simply carry the load. In fact, as soon as you connect, you also become a server, and anybody in the world can get files from your shared directory (see Figure 1, p.6).

Once connected (click on the "connect" button at the top), probably the first thing you will want to do is a search for a song or an artist. Simply type the name as best as you can (you can boolean operators), and the program will list all the files that contain the searched words. You can limit the search to only audio or video for example, or to a specific P2P network, or again to a maximum size. Once you have found what you were looking for, simply double click on the file's name to start the download (see Figure 2, p.6)

The next step is to relax and watch the file(s) transfer. The top window will show what's being downloaded (see below for more info on the progress bar), and the bottom one lists what's being uploaded. If you right click on any downloaded file, you get the option to pause, stop, cancel, get more details, and more. A right click on any uploaded file will give the option to get more details on the uploader and the transfer, or to even send a message to that person (see Figures 3, p.6).

The time it takes to download a file will depend on many factors, including the number of servers you connect to, the connection speed, the size of the file, and also a credit system that rewards those that contribute the most to the network. Most of the time the download speed will be much less than the maximum speed of your connection.

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Next Meeting: **Wednesday, January 12th, 2005**

January Raffle

Thanks to the folks at **Microsoft MindShare** – the area within Microsoft that officially supports user groups – we have a copy of **Encarta 2005 Reference Library Premium**. It includes an encyclopaedia, atlas, dictionary, thesaurus, translation dictionaries, literature guides, “Encarta Africana”, and homework starters. New to this version is an encyclopaedia for kids and an online math tutor.

The winner will have the choice of either the CD version, which comes on 5 CDs, or the DVD version which comes on a single DVD. Both versions have over 68,000 articles and 1.8 million map locations. The DVD version has over 25,000 photos and illustrations (1,000 more than the CD version), over 400 videos and animations (100 more than the CD version), and over 3,000 sound and music clips (500 more than the CD version). As well, the DVD version includes 3D virtual tours, and virtual flights, both of which do not come on the CD version.

Whichever package is not selected will be raffled off at a future meeting.

More information about Encarta may be found at <http://www.microsoft.com/encarta>

As always, raffle tickets at \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.



Coming Up...

January 12, 2005

Rick Claus

IT Pro Advisor

Microsoft Canada

"New Technologies from Microsoft and what they can do for you."

It's the start of a new year so it's a good time to look at what's new with Microsoft.

Rick spends a lot of his time supporting both end users and home users and trying to demystify the computer and technology in general.

This session will include plenty of open Q&A time where the audience can ask a Microsoft technology advisor almost anything.

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, January 12 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, January 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting. Come and join our discussions!
Developers' SIG	Wednesday, January 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting, and occasionally at other locations in the region.
Orphans' SIG	Wednesday, January 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Digital Imaging SIG	Wednesday, January 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Delphi User Group	TBA	TBA
PIG SIG (Wing SIG)	Wednesday, January 12 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).

HARDWARE

My Life with a Handheld – Part 1 (2001-2004) *by Bob Thomas*

During the latter 1990's I had been keeping a casual eye on the handheld PDA and pocket PC. I had become very interested in improvements to remote (away-from-home) computing and was looking for a viable solution where I could avoid lugging my home computer around whenever I traveled. Laptops were the most likely candidate as well as the new emerging notebooks. But a new category, handhelds was also emerging. 'Form Factor' had become yet another important choice for mobile computing. [Form factor is the jargon given to indicate the size of the computing device, wrist watch sized being about the smallest available today.]

By 1999 the Palm Pilot was the darling of the industry, yet, for me, it lacked anything that compelled me to want to check it out as a possible addition to my computer stable. The Pilot's adaptability to new applications didn't appear to be one of its strong points. The couple of acquaintances I knew who were using them found them to be great for keeping their grocery lists, hair appointments, beaming address contacts and the like, but they weren't

being used for computing purposes.

Then my son introduced me to the pocket PC. Wow! Here was a small device, with a colour screen, obviously a Windows operating system going by the well known Microsoft Windows logo! Funny thing, the menus were located differently from the desktop version. Yet, as my son quickly showed me, by using a stylus for pointing and tapping (or by using the tiny buttons on the device) I could quickly and easily be playing the well known Windows games like Solitaire, going into the Pocket versions of Word, Excel, Outlook and Internet Explorer while switching relatively easily between them all.

Impressive yes, but it was a tiny device, tiny screened compared to my 17" desktop monitor, but with very good clarity and it had colour! Then I was shown what to me was a 'pièce de résistance'. He turned the device off. But I was still asking him a question about its features. So he pressed the power button and instantly the pocket PC was up, running in the same state as when it was powered down! Boy, did this ever beat the lengthy rebooting

process we all go through when our desktop PC's are powered up! Similarly, by doing what is called a 'soft reset' (equivalent to a Restart), it takes about 5-10 seconds to boot. Desktop systems should be like this!

Then my son played a bit of the movie he had watched on the pocket PC while on the plane, then some of the books he was reading with the Reader, followed by a PQView photo show consisting of the photos he had taken during one of his holidays. He showed me that he could check his office email from it by connecting its cradle to my desktop and 'synchronizing' the differences between the store of email on the pocket PC with the mail on his desktop out on the west coast. He told me that he could do it wirelessly or via a modem as well. He had sold me right then and there on this shirt pocket sized computer!

"Er, how much is it?" I asked gingerly since I, like most Canadians, do not have deep pockets. A \$1,000 Cdn to get the computer together with a battery-powered adapter sleeve (for use with other peripherals like modems, phones,

(Continued on page 4)

Member Services *by Chris Taylor*

Did you know there is a conference area on PUB II to publish services and specials that have been offered to members of the Ottawa PC Users' Group?

The conference area is named *Member Services* and can be accessed just like every other conference area. If you don't have an account on PUB II, see the October through December issues of the newsletter for information and instructions. They are all accessible through the *Newsletters* button at <http://opcug.ca>.

You can also subscribe to a mailing list linked to the conference area. In this way, you will receive a copy of anything posted to the conference area. It will be sent by email directly to your own email account. To subscribe, just go into your regular email account and send an email to listserv@opcug.ca. Leave the subject blank and in the body of the email, put the single line;

subscribe memberservices

Make certain your message format is plain text, *not* HTML or Rich Text. Within a few minutes you will receive confirmation of your subscription. From then on, whenever something is posted to the conference area, you will receive a copy via email.

What can you expect to see? Well, lately there have been lots of discounted software offers for a wide variety of utility-type software. As well, most of the time, the discount offers are accompanied by a request that a software review be written and published in our newsletter. The norm is that reviewers can request a complimentary, fully-licensed copy of the program.

If you are interested in reviewing such a program that is announced on the *Member Services* conference area, just send an email to chris.taylor@opcug.ca. First come, first served.

Handheld *(Continued from page 3)*

memory cards, etc.), a 256MB Compact Flash card (the largest available at the time), a 16MB Smart Media card and the PCMCIA sized adapters for these, and a set of screen protectors (for preventing scratching of the display screen). Thankfully the price for all these has come down a lot in the past three years!

Then Eric, my son, proceeded to show me a raft of games and songs he also had in this little device. Many of the old Commodore 64, Atari era games were there, the computer world having ported these over. Interesting for gamers, but I passed on them (unless there happens to be a good Bridge game, I mused). The songs were good and recent. I suspect they might have been a forerunner to MP3's. The Windows Media Player seems to play them all.

So I sprung for an iPAQ. I'm surprised how quickly the 3 years went by, recently marked by the expiry of my extended warranty. During the 3 years I had returned it once to have the battery replaced. It was hard wired in the early models. Today the customer replaces them.

Last month I needed to replace it again (The reason for this being my very frequent use of my 'baby'). You can only recharge a battery so many times. Replacement takes a day since there's a HP centre up above Mont-Bleu in Gatineau. Allow yourself 3 hours to back up and 3 hours to restore a completely filled system of user apps and files since the 'hard reset' required when this older model's battery is changed wipes out everything but the installed operating system.

I'm very pleased with the handheld, especially for reading my email and surfing the net while I travel (including keeping up with the OPCUG conferences that I subscribe to), showing family members photos or where they appear in the family tree (Pocket Genealogist is an excellent app). Reading the OPCUG Newsletters with Adobe Reader, using Pocket Informant (a

terrific, repeat award winning PIM for the pocket PC), Pocket Mechanic (for system maintenance), and the well-used Pocket Streets that lets me take detailed maps of the North American places I will be visiting when I travel are other excellent applications.

My experiences with wireless connectivity haven't been successful outside of my home network. It is another report in itself.

Although I'm very far from being in the 80 word per minute text entry category that others have achieved for pocket PC's without a keyboard, I've been more than satisfied doing text entry with my stylus and haven't felt a need to buy an add-on keyboard peripheral or a newer model with built-in BlackBerry-like keyboard. I also enjoy my handwritten notes, a feature that the tablet PC's now provide.

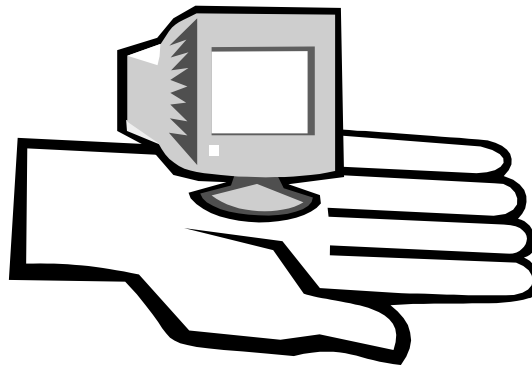
I did add a couple of freely available movies and some songs for relaxation. For the few times when I've had a chance, the Hearts, Minesweeper, and Reversi games, together with good old solitaire have been enough to make me forget about adding Bridge to the games arsenal.

Yes, the handheld is one of the better investments, one of the most rewarding purchases I have ever made! I heartily recommend that you give

them a fair consideration if you're looking for a mobile computing solution while keeping in mind that intermediate sized form factors like the OQO are emerging.

Now I need to get back to setting up my recently purchased Remote-control app that will allow me to control all the different infrared operated TV's, DVD/VCR's I want from my pocket PC. This is going to save me valuable 'remote hunting' time! Who knows, we may even get into zapper games! ;-)

Bob Thomas
OPCUG



February Speaker

February 16, 2005

In February, we welcome back Michel Daw of Corel Corporation. <http://www.corel.com>

This time, Michel will be presenting Corel's new "Paint Shop" family (formerly Jasc).

NOTE: February's meeting will be on the **third** Wednesday.

March Speaker

March 9, 2005

Speaker: Don Chiasson (Don C++),
OPCUG Member

Topic: Emulators

Abstract: The digital computers we know are universal computing machines: any machine can do any computation. Usually this means numbers, text or graphics, but it also means one computer can act as another, often called emulation. Emulation may be hardware or software,

though we focus on hardware; it may be done for research, for historical reasons, to replace legacy systems, for cross compiling, or just for fun. This talk covers a number of emulators that model minicomputers, mainframes and games. To provide details on the challenges of emulators, details are given on two systems: a Honeywell H316 minicomputer and a 36 bit mainframe, the DECsystem-20. For those who are interested, references are provided to resources available on the internet.

THE INTERNET

TinyURL by Bob Gowan

I get lots of emails in which the sender has included links to sites they find useful. Some of them are very long, and may end up wrapped into several lines.

Take for example, the URL for the MapQuest page showing a results of a map search of the street address of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology, where OPCUG monthly meetings are held:

```
http://www.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?
formtype=address&search
type=address&addtohistory=&country=CA&location=oSERMal
GvHEhp tdFVyhBDoo0sGzBLZhclp2loGv9l5jONoOU5e2%
2bHRTxcx5WY9Z5s7ggy5a umiG3WiOCD8OoeBBI24Fb1JMW
```

And imagine how badly that gets distorted when a message has been forwarded several times.

Certainly, it's feasible to cut and paste the various pieces of the wrapped URL into the address window of my browser, and some senders even warn me in their message to watch for wrapped URL.

But there is a better solution ! Enter TinyURL!™ - a web service created by Gilby Productions, located at <http://www.tinyurl.com>.

Enter a long URL to make tiny:

When I pasted the MapQuest URL into the dialog box on the TinyURL home page, and clicked on the "Make TinyURL!"

TinyURL.com

button, the page refreshed to display the following message:

"The following URL:

```
http://www.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?
formtype=address&search
type=address&addtohistory=&country=CA&location=oSERMal
GvHEhp tdFVyhBDoo0sGzBLZhclp2loGv9l5jONoOU5e2%
2bHRTxcx5WY9Z5s7ggy5a umiG3WiOCD8OoeBBI24Fb1JMW
```

has a length of 205 characters and resulted in the following TinyURL which has a length of 24 characters:

```
http://tinyurl.com/6qx8m
[Open in new window]"
```

Better yet, the tiny URL you created is automatically (for IE 4+) copied to your clipboard and all you have to do is paste it into the browser address window, or click on the "[Open in new window]" link and you will be redirected to the intended destination.

TinyURL.com claims to have created over 5.5 million TinyURLs and their site receives over 180 million hits/month. The service is free, and the tiny URL never expires.

But it gets even better. There's a link on the TinyURL home-page that you can click and drag to your Links toolbar, to create a TinyURL button. With this button on your toolbar, you can create a tiny URL for the webpage you're currently visiting with a single click. If the Links toolbar is not visible in your current browser setup, you can enable it from the View->Toolbars menu. Your bookmarks or favorites must allow javascript to enable the TinyURL toolbar button.



A Call for Newsletter Articles by Brigitte Lord, OPCUG newsletter editor

Do you dream of writing the next bestseller? Perhaps not, but if you can express yourself in writing, your club needs you!

Occasionally, there is a shortage of articles to publish in our newsletter. When this happens, I must find something to fill the pages of our newsletter. I can reprint an article from the internet, but it is much more satisfying when a member of our club chooses to share his experiences.

"What should I write about?", you ask. You can relay a computer experience, be it good or bad. Or write about a piece of software or hardware you like. Did you know that if you write a review of a piece of software that has been offered to the OPCUG, you can keep the software for free? (see the "Member Services" article on page 3)

So unless you don't mind seeing more white space in your newsletter, please volunteer. We can't promise you a bestseller, but you'll be left with a warm and fuzzy feeling from doing something worthwhile for your club.

Those interested can contact brigitte.lord@opcug.ca.

(Continued from page 1)

One of the strong features of eMule is the amount of statistics you can get for about any aspect possible, starting with the progress bar that is the most complex and informative I've ever seen. For example, it will show what's missing, what you got, how available is the data, what's downloading and more, all of this in a single progress bar (see Figures 4 and 5, below).

A lot of the features of eMule can be changed from the look of the user interface to the details of the connections and the securities. The help is also quite extensive and fairly easy to understand.

eMule is a beautiful program, starting with the very cool logo of a mule, with the choice of the colors, the extensive amount

of info available and the ease of use. I really think that this program is a great model to anyone who writes user interfaces. Not only is the program nice, but it also works very well, it's fast and as far as I can tell, has no bugs.

For more information on peer-to-peer network and how they came to exist, there is an interesting article on the How Stuff Works' web site at

<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/napster.htm>

eMule is available for free at <http://www.emule-project.net>.

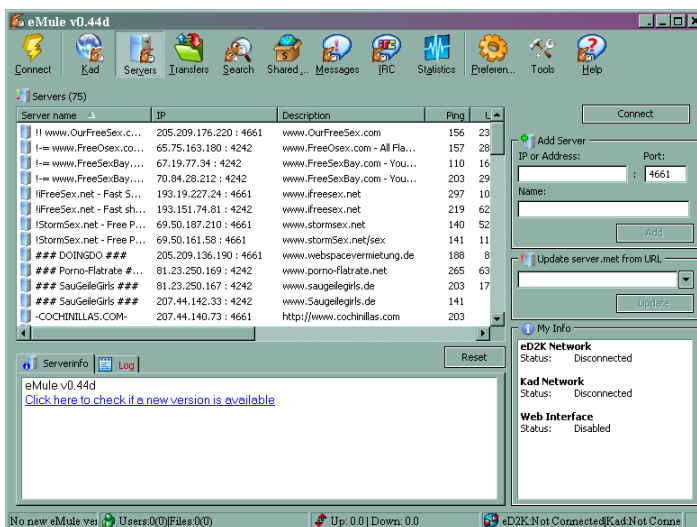


Figure 1. Servers

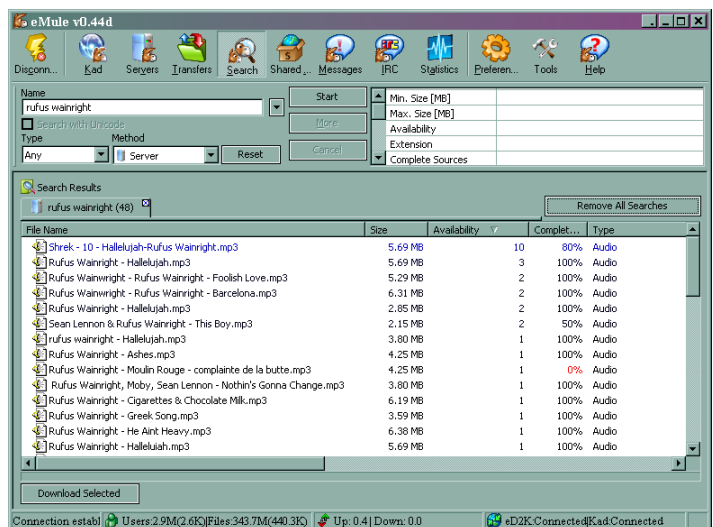


Figure 2. Search

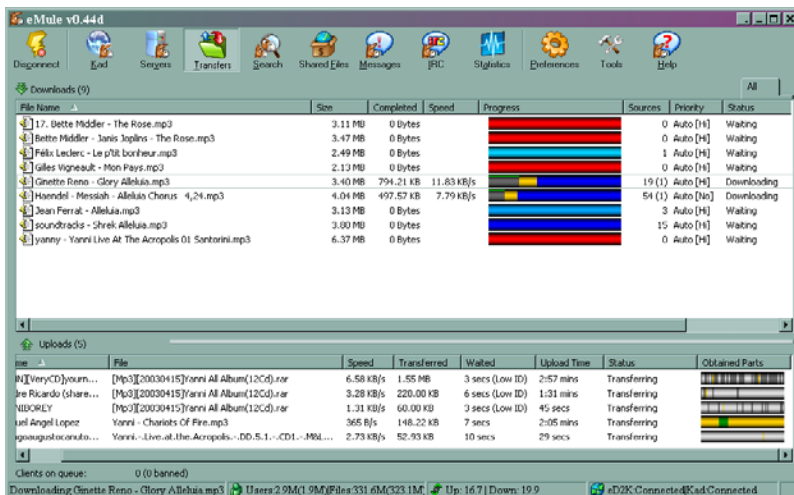


Figure 3. Transfers

Size	Completed	Speed	Progress	Sources
3.11 MB	0 Bytes			0
3.47 MB	0 Bytes			0
2.49 MB	0 Bytes			1
2.13 MB	0 Bytes			0
3.40 MB	794.21 KB	11.83 KB/s		19 (1)
4.04 MB	497.57 KB	7.79 KB/s		54 (1)
3.13 MB	0 Bytes			3
3.80 MB	0 Bytes			15
6.37 MB	0 Bytes			0

Figure 4. Downloads

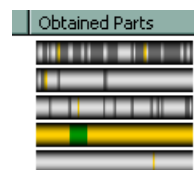


Figure 5. Uploads

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Internet News: More Google, Keyhole ... and Blinkx *by Eric Clyde, Internet SIG Coordinator*

The folks at Google are still busy trying to find new ways to help us get the information we need in easier ways. You may have seen the recent news items in which it was announced that a number of major research libraries were going to allow Google to scan the pages of books in their collections so that they can be searched on the Internet (via the Google search engine, of course!). While the objective is laudable -- just imagine -- all of the (presumably no-longer-in-copyright) pages of thousands if not millions of books in Oxford University Library, the New York Public Library, and several others available on line! Talk about being buried in information -- I hope the search engine can cope! The press release can be seen at http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/print_library.html.

There are lots of other programs being worked on but which are still in beta, i.e. they work, but some "are not quite ready for prime time," as the programmers put it. One that I find very useful is "Google Suggest". As you type your search, Google offers keyword suggestions in real time.

<http://www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en>

Another new beta is "Google Scholar" in which you can search through journal articles, abstracts and other scholarly literature. <http://scholar.google.com/>
Descriptions of these and many others can be found at <http://labs.google.com/>.

Another interesting recent development was the acquisition by Google of Keyhole Corporation of California. Their product, Keyhole, can be thought of as something like MapQuest, at least for parts of the United States, but using satellite photographs instead of maps. After signing on, a globe showing North America appears. You can enter in the street address, city and country, and the globe rotates and takes you there, or you can use the controls to move

around. There are also controls for zooming in or out, and for tilting the satellite image. While all countries seem to be included, some areas are shown in more detail than others. All images can show major physical details, such as mountains, lakes and rivers, plus major highways. Some show, in addition, city streets. (It would be helpful if the streets were named, but these are satellite images, not maps!) For some major centres, including Montreal, Toronto, London (England) and Paris, but not, unfortunately, Ottawa, individual buildings can be picked out as well. For cities in the United States, address searching can be done. I found the program amazing. It was almost scary, for example, to be able to pick out my daughter's house in Abbotsford, B.C! The download file is quite large - over 10 MB. The program costs \$29.95(U.S.) per year for personal use, but there is a seven day free trial period. <http://www.keyhole.com>

Blinkx (<http://www.blinkx.com>) is another useful and free tool which can search the web or your desktop for relevant information. Since it was recommended by sources whose opinion I respect, I decided that I had better check it out. Blinkx automatically indexes Word (but not WordPerfect), html and text documents, as well as Outlook, Outlook Express and Eudora (but not Mozilla Thunderbird) emails and attachments which you have saved. "Smart folders" can be set up to automatically assign documents to folders according to a criteria you set up. (Note: Since I don't use Microsoft Word, I haven't tried this feature, but I didn't find any negative reports.) These smart folders can also be used to find new blogs or other news items on subjects of particular interest to you. To test this, I set up a Smart Folder for Iraq, and a lot of new information. The default presentation for the hits is alphabetical by title, but I it is easy to change that to chronological order.

These are just a few of the items I came across during the month. If you would like me to cover other topics, you can contact me at eclyde@rogers.com.

December Raffle Winners

A number of people took home a variety of prizes at the December 8th meeting, courtesy of Bloom MicroTech. From network cables and laptop locks to disk drive cooler fans, there was a wide variety of goodies up for grabs and Mark Cayer, Tim Hillock, Brigitte Lord, Brian McCleery, Ronald McKay, Lois Merriman, Mark Merriman, Stuart Moxley and Derek Samaroo all went home with something. In Derek's case he won twice!

But the big winners of the night were Atulesh Nandi who took home a copy of "My DVD Media Suite" courtesy of Bloom MicroTech, and Dan Byrne who won the copy of "FinePrint V5.29" donated by the folks at FinePrint Software.

As well I guess presenter Harley Bloom was also a winner of sorts. The last we saw of him he had two or more folks offering to take his 21" monitor off his hands so he wouldn't have to carry it back to the car!

Many thanks to FinePrint Software and Harley Bloom at MicroTech for their generosity.

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 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 membership:	\$25 per year
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subscribe newslettertxt
to get the plain text version.

Or;

subscribe newsletterpdf
to get the Adobe Acrobat PDF version.

And, if you decide you do not need the printed version sent to you anymore, simply let Mark Cayer (membership chairman) know. He can be reached at general meetings, as well as by e-mail at Mark.Cayer@opcug.ca. You might want to wait until you have successfully received at least one issue electronically before opting out from the printed version.

To subscribe to the Announcements List, e-mail listserv@opcug.ca. Leave the subject blank. In the body of the message put:

subscribe announcements

Within a couple of minutes you will receive a confirmation message from the listserver.

“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.