



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Can we go to the next message? - Please! by Alan German

In previous articles I have documented my gradual shift away from “mainstream” software packages to open-source offerings such as Filezilla, an FTP client, and OpenOffice.org, a suite of office applications. Having successfully discovered that OpenOffice provided an excellent substitute for Word, Excel and PowerPoint, I decided it was time to seek a replacement for Outlook, Microsoft’s flagship E-mail client.

Given my previous favourable experiences with Mozilla products, I decided to try Mozilla Thunderbird in its latest incarnation as Version 1.5. Downloading and installing the program were entirely trouble free. Running the program revealed a well designed, and very colourful, graphical interface with the seemingly usual assortment of menus, toolbars with command icons, message folders and message display windows. The program was relatively intuitive to use and I soon had a link set up to my ISP’s mail server and was able to send and receive a few test messages.

This is where the fun started. I disabled the message preview pane, since I prefer to see the list of messages and then view each message in turn in a full window. However, when reading messages, I suddenly found that I didn’t know how to move to the next message. I couldn’t find a “Next” button, nor any description of where such a command might be located. Similarly, there was no “Previous” button with

which I could go back to earlier messages.

A somewhat strange feature of the program is that the help system is entirely web-based, so that without a live Internet connection, you won’t get much help. Even after going to the web, I found the usefulness of the available information to be somewhat mixed. There are excellent tutorials, with full-colour screen shots, on items such as installing the program and setting up accounts. Similarly, there is a seemingly fine tutorial on basic features and buttons. But, there didn’t seem to be any information on the “missing” buttons.

The “other” help system I often use is Google and this is where I eventually found the solution(s). Note the plural here. This is a multi-faceted problem. Firstly, it turns out that the Next and Previous buttons need to be added by customizing the toolbar of the message window. Right-clicking on the toolbar provides a pop-up box with various command icons that can be added by dragging them onto the toolbar. Included are Next and Previous buttons but, from the information gleaned from Google, these only function on new messages; they don’t work on messages that have been previously read. So, even though we could have buttons, they wouldn’t necessarily allow us to navigate through all messages in a given folder. Secondly, even though the next and previous options are not displayed, there are keyboard shortcuts

to these commands, namely F (presumably forward) to go to the next message and B (back) to go to the previous message. These commands were included in a tutorial on keyboard shortcuts; however, since there were no obvious buttons it didn’t occur to me to look for shortcuts. So, we now seem to have the capability of using buttons for new messages, but not for any that have been read. And, the beautiful graphical interface is useless for the latter, so that we must resort to using the keyboard.

But, let’s not give up on the program quite yet. A couple of somewhat cryptic notes on one of the chat pages turned up by Google provided further insight into the situation. One posting indicated that the unconventional functionality of the buttons was a documented bug which users should vote

(Continued on page 6)

Inside this issue:

<i>Calendar / Coming Up / Raffle</i>	2
<i>Review: Mozilla Thunderbird v.1.5</i>	1, 6
<i>Newsletter Contest Prize; How to Vote</i>	3
<i>Book Review: Internet Annoyances</i>	4
<i>Security: Tips for running a secure (enough) wireless network @ home</i>	5
<i>Your newsletter needs YOU!</i>	5
<i>SIG Bits and Bytes; PUB Talk</i>	7
<i>“Save your Money” with ING</i>	8

Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, April 12th, 2006**

April Raffle

At the April meeting, thanks to the generosity of Adobe, we have another copy of Photoshop Elements 3.0 for raffle.

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

"Helping people help themselves !"

T.A.P.P.: The Anti-Poverty Project

To donate used computers, contact Ron Kellestine
Tel: 248-9427 e-mail: ronkell@tapp.org.

Visit http://www.tapp.org/how_we_work.html

Coming Up...

Prize Winners

The prize winners from our February general meeting were:

Peter Hecht, John Middleton and Don Chiasson who each won a copy of a book on Virtual Crime. **Paul Louisieze, Bob Whitla, Claude Jarry and Nancy Schroeder** who each took home a copy of Ubuntu Linux. And the evening's big winner, attending her first ever OPCUG meeting, was **Christine Robitaille** who won the raffle prize of a copy of the WordPerfect Office Suite 12.

Thanks to the evening's presenter, Elliot Finkleman, as well as club members Ted May and Morris Turpin for the prizes.

Prize winners from the March 8 meeting included **Bob Herres and John Barnhardt** (John is a new member attending his first meeting... welcome John) who won Microsoft card/key lanyards.

The evening's big winner was **Gary Byron** who took home a copy of the book Google Hacks as a door prize, followed by winning the evening's raffle prize of PhotoShop Elements 3.0 software.

Thanks to Microsoft, O'Reilly Books and Adobe for the prizes.

► **April 12, 2006** — Dany Bouchard and Benjamin Campin of DBx GEOMATICS ([see speaker bios on OPCUG website](http://www.dbxgeomatics.com)) "Web Mapping with Scalable Vector Graphics" <http://www.dbxgeomatics.com>

In the exciting world of geographic information systems (GIS), desktop mapping has taken a critical role for managing and using spatial information for business. The introduction of this technology allowed companies to integrate spatial data and analysis in areas where location-derived information was simply not present. With a user friendly interface, desktop GIS users can develop applications of great value for business decisions by the click of a mouse. When merged with Scalable Vector Graphics publishing capabilities, this creates a suite of fully compatible, standard-based cartographic solutions.

Overall, the sophisticated graphic rendering and interactivity of SVG allow for a new generation of XML mapping that share high quality and a very rich set of cartographic styles. This non-proprietary, opened text-based technology leverages the power of shared geo-spatial data and applications.

May 10, 2006—Rob MacDonald, Corel Corporation: "Corel WordPerfect X3 and CorelDRAW X3" <http://www.corel.com>

June 14, 2006—Annual BBQ; Speaker: Rick Claus, Microsoft Canada; Topic: TBA; Newsletter contest winner announced

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, April 12 th , 2006	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
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, April 12 th , 2006	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, April 12 th , 2006	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, April 12 th , 2006	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Chances "R" restaurant, Baseline Rd. at Woodroffe Ave. (College Square Shopping Centre)
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, April 12 th , 2006	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd. (formerly Hooters')

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

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE CONTEST

The Prize

The winner in our contest will get a Microsoft Notebook Optical Mouse and Microsoft's Age of Empires III. The winner will be announced at the June 14th general meeting and presented with the prize.

Visit <http://opcug.ca/public/Articles/contest2005.htm> to see a current list of participants and their articles. See the article below for instructions on how to vote.

Good luck to our participants. The deadline for submission of contest articles is April 16th, 2006. Articles can be submitted to brigitte.lord@opcug.ca.



A contestant hands in his article on a PC (Personally Carved) tablet. I wonder...can an optical mouse carve stone?

How to Vote

Voting for the best newsletter article will be done electronically. Voters must be registered users of The PUB, the private side of the OPCUG website. If you are not currently registered, follow the instructions below (taken from p.5 of the [October 2003 newsletter](#)). These instructions are also posted on the OPCUG website at <http://opcug.ca/public/pubacc.htm#Create>. Register early so you can test your access well before voting time.

Creating an account on The PUB

As mentioned, the information [public] side of The PUB is freely available to anyone with a web browser at <http://opcug.ca>. However, to access conference and file areas, you must be a registered user. Registering is easy. The simplest method is through a web browser.

Browse to <http://opcug.ca> and click The PUB button on the left side of the screen. New information will appear on the right. Click the button labelled New User. Leave the radio button at the top set to Dynamic HTML and fill in the other three boxes. For name, use your real name, and separate your first name from your last name with a space, as in Sam Spade. Choose a password, plug it in the two remaining boxes, and click the Continue button. A dialog box will pop up asking you to log in. Do so using the exact same information you just provided. You will then be prompted to input a location you want to be considered from and whether you would like others to be able to page you while you are connected to The PUB. There is an on-line chat feature on The PUB that may be used, if users choose to.

Once you have completed this process, you are presented with the web interface to the private areas on The PUB. However, you will still have limited access. In order to have your account upgraded to member status, you need to send an e-mail to sysop@opcug.ca. Include your name as it appeared when you registered on The PUB, your postal address, and your membership number, if known. Once your membership has been verified, your account will be upgraded and you will have complete access to all member areas on The PUB. This generally happens within 24 hours.

Online voting will begin in the last week of April, the day after the electronic version of the May newsletter has been e-mailed. Voting will remain open until June 12th, 11:00PM. In the meantime, registered users can familiarize themselves with the online voting process at <http://opcug.ca/ques?BestArticle> and cast a few 'practice' votes (these will be deleted before the official voting period). In the last week of April, voters can check the online voting page to see if voting has officially begun.

So show your support and vote. And don't forget to be at the June 14th general meeting where we will announce the winner after our **annual BBQ**.

CONTEST FOR BEST NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

Internet Annoyances *a book review by Gary J Byron*

I have learned my computer skills the old fashioned way, by trial and mostly by error. I tend to stay with programs that work for me and rarely do I upgrade unless I really have to. That is why I still have Windows 98. So much so, I still run several DOS programs (remember those). Although I'm not anti-Microsoft, I tend to stay away from Microsoft products. Thus, I do not use Internet Explorer nor any flavour of Outlook. I will admit I do like Excel and use FrontPage 2000 as my web-page editor. I enjoy using Netscape because the nice thing about using an older browser is that there are very few of those annoying popups to worry about. Any website that this browser cannot handle, which is very few, doesn't need my business anyway. I learned from hard experience not to mess with the Registry for it sometimes might bite you. This is one area that you should leave to an expert.

Since I only have a low speed rural country phone line and no access to the Internet at work, my forays onto the Internet are limited and usually very brief—mostly grab my e-mails and leave. So when I volunteered to do a review of this book, I thought I could learn some much needed tricks about using the Internet more efficiently.

In perusing the book, it became quite apparent that the author has focused the book on the use of Internet Explorer, Outlook and other Microsoft products with very few side-bars on other like products. The book is written for an American audience in mind and uses for its examples many services that are not available within Canada. It also assumes that the user has good knowledge of the internal workings and programming of their personal computer and is comfortable playing with the operating system's Registry.

Although published in 2005, I have the general feeling that most of the information was valid from a time

around late 2003 or early 2004. This is a long time ago in computer world.

Although I had not the time to verify the links provided, most of the links lead to first-try-then-pay programs—another area that I tend to stay away from.

Now, there is the question of ethics in Chapter 1: Email and Spam Annoyances, on page 7. The author promotes the use of a spybot, but concedes that it probably will not work because of security protection that everybody should be running. Imagine your friends catching you using a spybot on them. Another more serious breach is in Chapter 3: Wireless Annoyances. The author talks about how to do "War Driving" in order to look for Hotspots and then the author gets very wishy-washy, in my opinion, on the legalities of using someone's open network that you might have found.

In summery; Did the book help me in using the Internet more efficiently? Sadly, it did not. For it was mainly focused on products and services that I do not use and promoted procedures that I would not try on my computer. It is a book that you might borrow from a library for a bit of good reading but not for laying out your hard earned money on.

Gary J Byron

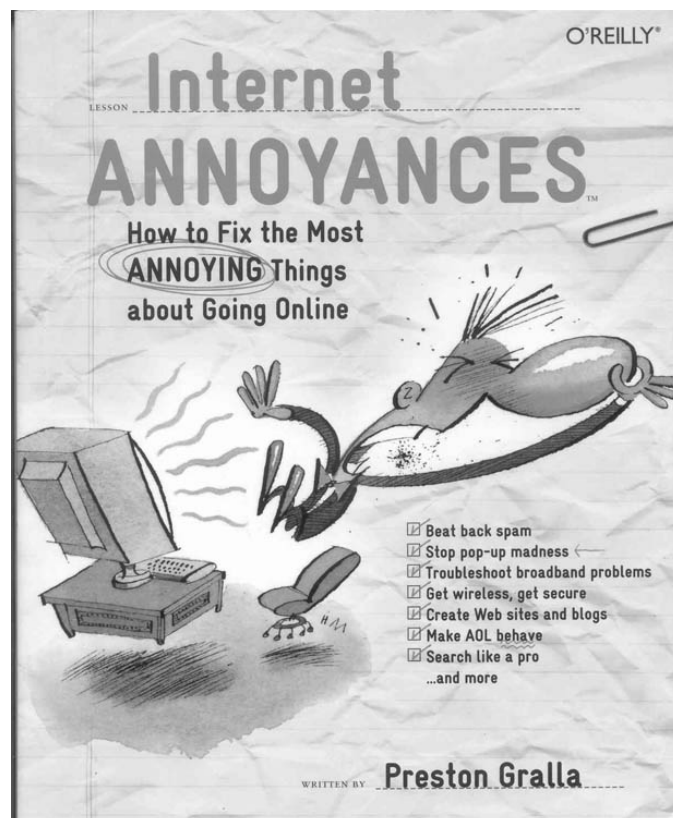
Available from O'Reilly Computer Books

1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol, CA, USA 95472

Toll Free: 800-998-9938

Online: <http://www.oreilly.com>

Cost (as of their fall 2005 catalogue):
\$24.95 US + shipping/handling



COMPUTER SECURITY

Tips for running a secure (enough) wireless network @ home by Chris Taylor

At the March OPCUG general meeting I gave a presentation on tips for securing a wireless network. This document is a summary of the main ideas presented at that meeting.

Wireless networks, precisely because they are wireless, present some unique security challenges. Your network extends outside of the physical boundaries of your home. Without appropriate security safeguards, at best you may provide free Internet access to neighbours. At worst, you may provide access to a spammer or a criminal who is intent on hiding his tracks by using your network.

But all is not lost. With standard off-the-shelf wireless routers, it is fairly simple to layer enough security to discourage all but the most determined cracker. A good rule of thumb is that you only have to be more secure than any nearby wireless networks. Fortunately, that is generally pretty easy.

There are four major aspects to securing a wireless network; how your network advertises itself, how authentication is handled, how encryption is handled, and hardware-level filtering.

The advertisement of your wireless network is known as the Service Set Identifier or SSID. The SSID is not really a security feature. It is just the name of your network. Make it unique so nobody accidentally tries to connect to your network because both of you left the SSID at the manufacturer's default.

Authentication is done through a shared-key approach. The access point (your wireless router) as well as all wireless network interface cards (NICs) have the same pass-phrase entered into them. Only those NICs that have the correct pass-phrase can attach to your wireless router. Make the pass-phrase

long and complex.

Encryption helps to ensure the data flowing on your wireless network remains secret. Wired Equivalent Privacy (WEP) was the first attempt at providing encryption. Unfortunately, it was very weak and has been broken. Tools exist on the Internet that will permit a WEP key to be broken in minutes simply by sniffing the traffic. With WEP, since the same key is used for encryption and authentication, once the encryption key is broken, you have also effectively given the cracker the ability to authenticate to your router.

Much better encryption is provided by Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA). WPA provides an encryption portion known as Temporal Key Integrity Protocol or TKIP. Stronger than WEP, TKIP also has the ability to automatically change the encryption key periodically. I suggest about every 60 minutes.

The final piece of the puzzle is MAC address filtering. Every network interface card has what is known as the Media Access Control or MAC address. It is unique world-wide. By telling your router to only permit the MAC addresses of your NICs to connect, you enhance your security greatly.

If you follow the recommendations above, will you be guaranteed safe from crackers? No. Encryption can be broken, given enough time and resources. MAC addresses can be spoofed. Pass-phrases may be guessed or discovered by someone with access to your computer. But keep in mind the "be more secure than nearby wireless networks" rule of thumb. If there is a nearby wireless network that is easier to break into than yours, why would a cracker bother going to the extra trouble of breaking into yours? Don't be the "low hanging fruit" and you should be fine.

The PowerPoint presentation, complete with speaker notes, that was used during the March OPCUG meeting is available in the "Text" file area (area 23) on The PUB. As long as you have an account on The PUB, you can download it from <http://opcug.ca/file/area23/wireless.zip>.

For instructions on how to register on The PUB, see p.3, "Creating an account on The PUB".



Your newsletter needs YOU!

Some years ago, our newsletter was produced by an editing team. Now, there is a lone editor, me, and I'm looking for people to assist me in producing material to fill all these pages. I need people to write regular (and occasional) columns like the one on [page 7](#) of this issue, with notes and such from the monthly SIGs. There can be a current events column or even a humorous one. I'm open to suggestions.

If you would like to be a member of such a team, contact me at: brigitte.lord@opcug.ca or catch me at the general meetings.

Brigitte Lord
Editor

Thunderbird v. 1.5 *(Continued from page 1)*

for if they wanted it fixed. This seemingly democratic process is evidently a “feature” of open-source software development, and one of which I was not previously aware. A second posting suggested installing the “Buttons!” extension.

A little more searching on Google provided more information about Thunderbird as an open-source program. Evidently, it is possible to include add-ons to the program. One such add-on is Buttons! 0.5.1, a package of buttons that can be included on Thunderbird's toolbars, and two of which were Next and Previous buttons that work “as designed”. The actual installation process is rather simple. Download an XPI file from the add-on web site, save the file to the Mozilla Thunderbird/extensions sub-directory, run Thunderbird, select Tools – Extensions – Install, and open the saved extension file. The installation routine complained that Buttons! did not support Thunderbird Version 1.5, since it had been constructed for earlier version of the program; however, the buttons worked fine with the new version. So, finally we have a mail client with the functionality we expect.

That seems quite a struggle for a program as popular and well used as a mail client. Nevertheless, it must be said that, with these add-on buttons in place, Thunderbird is a very competent mailer. It has all of the usual features of such programs and comes wrapped with an attractive user interface.

An address book lets you store names, E-mail and postal addresses, and multiple telephone numbers for your friends, relatives, and business contacts, with space for information for both home and work, and even a set of customizable data elements. There is a folder system that lets you categorize

mail in various ways, and a rule-based system for automatically filtering incoming mail. A menu button will define any given message as junk mail, and a set of junk mail controls facilitates automation of this process for the incoming mail stream. The program supports multiple identities, if you use several mail boxes for different purposes, and can be configured to get mail from a number of different mail servers at the touch of a button, if you happen to be mail server rich.

The help system is currently a bit light in its coverage, consists of a number of separate components (tutorials, FAQ's, tips, etc.), and has the added disadvantage of being entirely web-based. However, the program is generally very intuitive and most users who have previous experience with E-mail clients won't need help for most functions.

The current version of Thunderbird seems to be a bit of a work-in-progress; however, if you are willing to tweak the software just a little, as indicated above, it is a very serviceable product. Of course, if you are a keyboard-nut and don't mind using F and B to move around your various messages, the program works just fine “out-of-the-box”. And, as with all open-source software, you can't argue with the price!

Bottom Line

Mozilla Thunderbird Version 1.5 (Freeware)

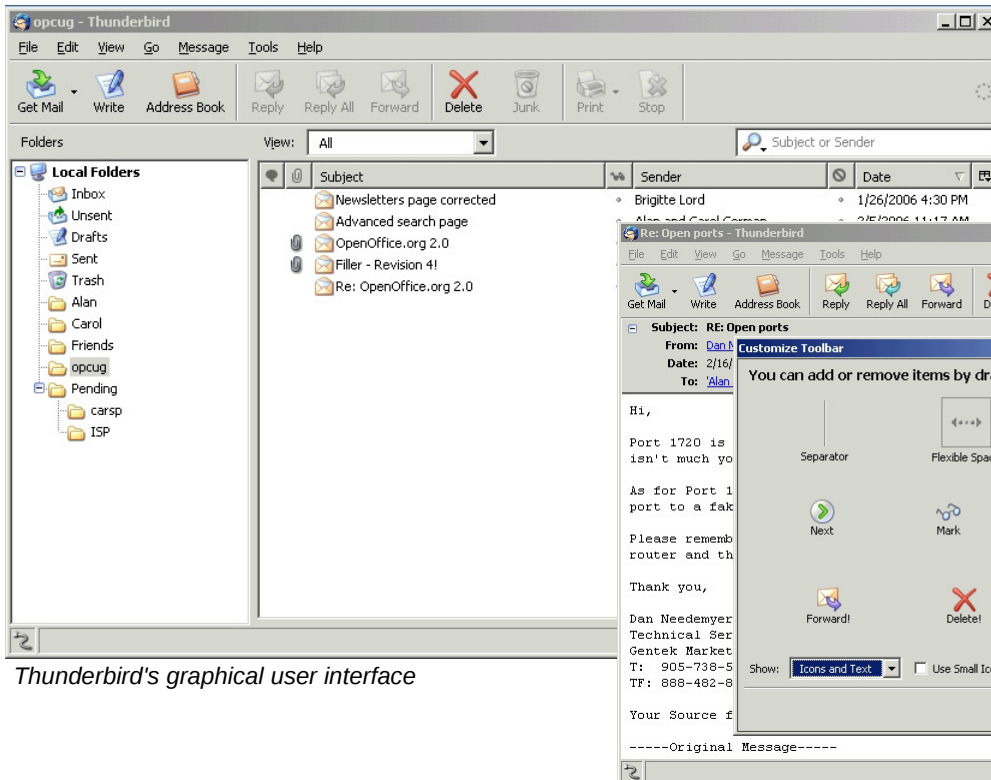
<http://www.mozilla.com/thunderbird/>

Next/Previous Buttons

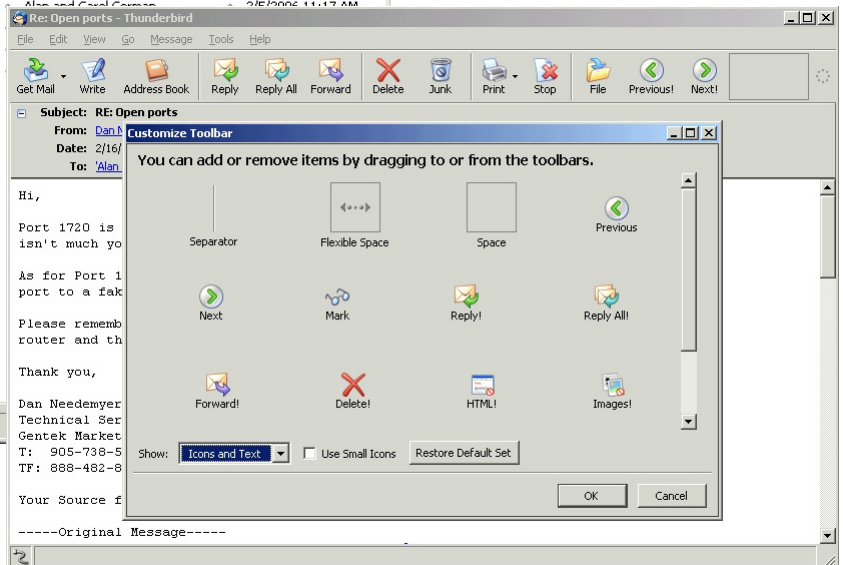
<http://www.mozillazine.org/talkback.html?article=6724>

Buttons! 0.5.1

<http://www.chuonthis.com/extensions/buttons.php>



Customizing the message window with drag-and-drop buttons



Thunderbird's graphical user interface

CLUB LIFE

SIG Bits and Bytes



Total Commander is a file manager for Windows, a program like Windows Explorer to copy, move or delete files. However, Total Commander can do much more than Explorer, e.g. pack and unpack files, access ftp servers, compare files by content, etc! Total Commander 6.54a is now available for download.

<http://www.ghisler.com>



freeCommander is an easy-to-use alternative to the standard windows file manager. You can take freeCommander anywhere - just copy the installation directory on a CD, USB-Stick or even a floppy disk. Copy, move, delete, rename files and folders, wipe files, built in file viewer, archive handling, calculation of folder size, folder comparison / synchronization.

http://www.freecommander.com/index_en.htm



The Internet's quickest, most popular, reliable and trusted, free Internet security checkup and information service. And now in its Port Authority Edition, it's also the most powerful and complete. Check your system here, and begin learning about using the Internet safely.

<http://www.grc.com/>

PUB TALK

Check out the new Microsoft Ultra-mobile PC, formerly the Origami Project, at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/umpc/default.mspx>

The Ultra-Mobile PC is a new kind of computer. It combines the power of Windows XP with mobile-ready technologies that make it easy to access and use your software on the go.

With small, lightweight, carry-everywhere hardware designs, you can connect and communicate, accomplish any task anywhere and at any time, and be entertained and informed wherever life takes you.

Regarding OpenOffice's spreadsheet, the key to deleting the content of a cell is "BackSpace", giving you the same result as the Del key in Excel.

Q. My daughter's computer keeps resetting its clock to the wrong date/time at bootup, after she has set it correctly. Anyone remember what causes this?

A. It looks like the battery on her motherboard is dead, but I would expect to see other problems such as an error message that said the CMOS data is corrupt, so I'm not sure. Anyway, here's something that could help to replace the battery:

http://www.ehow.com/how_113689_replace-pcs-battery.html

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 Sundays 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.

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Investors helping investors

As you may be aware, OPCUG maintains a savings account with ING Direct in order to generate interest on the funds that are not immediately required for day-to-day operations. In the past, the club has benefited from a programme ING has offered whereby anyone who is referred to the bank by us, and who subsequently opens an account, generates a bonus payment to the club of \$13.00. This is a win-win situation for both the club and the individual, since the latter also receives a \$13.00 bonus payment to their new account.

ING is once again making this "Refer a Friend" special offer to their clients. Their Investment Savings Account is currently paying 3.00% interest. So, if this rate appeals to you, and you are interested in opening an account with ING Direct, contact Alan German, OPCUG's Treasurer, using the E-mail address on the back page of the newsletter. Send Alan your name and E-mail address, and he will be pleased to make the referral to ING Direct.

Note that this does not commit you to actually opening an account; it merely lets ING send you information about their banking services. However, in order for you (and OPCUG) to receive the bonus payment, you must open an account of \$100 or more by June 30, 2006.

Every time you refer a friend or family member who opens an ING DIRECT Investment Savings Account... they'll receive a \$13 Bonus and you'll receive a \$13 Bonus!

