



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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October 2006

PRODUCT REVIEW

Microsoft Streets & Trips 2006 with GPS Locator *by Chris Taylor*

If I am ever stranded on a deserted island and can have only one book, undoubtedly, I want *National Geographic Atlas of the World*. I love maps. And that extends down to street maps. Maybe it has something to do with the “guy thing” of not wanting to ask for directions.

There are many options for accessing street maps for free, including Google Earth, MapQuest, and Microsoft’s Windows Live Local. Even the Ontario Ministry of Transportation offers downloadable road maps in Adobe Reader format.

With many free choices for maps, why would anyone buy a mapping program? For me, it was the richness I found in Streets & Trips (S&T) that attracted me. It provides street-level maps for almost all communities in Canada and the U.S.

For trip planning, S&T has some great tools. You can look up locations and S&T will zoom to that spot. Mark one spot as a starting point and another as the end and S&T will calculate the route and highlight it on the map. If you don’t like the route S&T calculates, you can highlight the route and drag it where you want. S&T recalculates the route to pass that way. You can mark an area you want to avoid. You can have it find the fastest route or the shortest route. It will even calculate the estimated time and gas costs.

You can easily change what landmarks are shown by S&T, choosing from 51 different categories including 15 dif-

ferent cuisines for restaurants. In all, there are 1.8 million points of interest.

Print options include overview maps, strip maps, turn by turn maps (which show close ups of places where you have to change direction), and you can print driving directions.

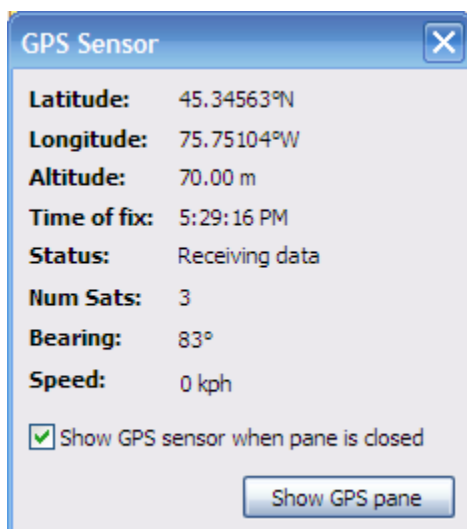
I like using free mapping sites on the Internet. But I like the idea of having all the data with me on my laptop’s hard drive. When I am on the road, I can look up new information, change my route, and find interesting areas nearby.

The full name of Streets & Trips with GPS Locator gives away the most fascinating thing about this version of S&T – the included Global Positioning System locator. This magical little two-inch square piece of plastic encases a GPS receiver; the *Pharos GPS-360*.

Just plug the six-foot USB cable into your computer, run S&T and bring up the GPS Task Pane. As soon as the receiver synchs up with enough satellites, it displays your current location on the map. As well, it displays your latitude and longitude, altitude, speed, and direction. Options include the ability to keep yourself centered on the map, rotate the map so your current direction is always upward on the screen, and having a blue trail show where you have traveled ([see screenshot, p.7](#)).

New to version 2006 is the ability to have S&T speak directions to you as you travel along a route. While this is a really terrific feature, it uses the generic speech engine built into Windows XP. This was puzzling to me. Because it is a generic voice engine, it will try to pronounce anything, even that magical word from Colossal Cave

(Continued on page 7)



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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, October 11th, 2006**

October Raffle

At the October meeting, thanks to the generosity of member Wayne Houston, we have a copy of **Microsoft Digital Image Suite 10** for raffle.

This easy-to-use photo editing software makes it a snap to quickly correct common image problems such as crooked pictures, lighting problems, skin blemishes, distracting objects or backgrounds, red eye, and much more. Digital Image also has enormous depth for those willing to roll up their sleeves and dive in.

Digital Image Suite comes with Digital Image Library for organizing and cataloguing your images.

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

September Raffle Winners

At our meeting of Sept. 20th...
our door prize winners were:

- C a copy of Suse Linux for **Bob Gowan, G.W. Leir, Brigitte Lord, Ted May, Ian Reid, Henry Sims**
- C a copy of Open Office 10 for **Morrie Konick, Howie Macumber, Frank Rogers, Lionel Wagner, Steve Whitwill**
- C and our 5 raffle winners, each receiving a copy of McAfee Virus Scan, were **Mike Charette, Alan German, Frank Rogers, Bob Thomas, Bob Whitla**

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to Novell and McAfee for the prizes.

Coming Up....

► October 11, 2006

Title: **"GPS applications for business and consumer use: navigation, tracking and outdoor recreational activities"**

Presenter: Mobile GPS Online, Ottawa, ON
<http://mobilegpsonline.com>

Abstract:

With the proliferation of inexpensive Global Positioning System (GPS) and Wireless Communication (WiFi) devices and widespread expansion in use of desktop and web-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) like Microsoft MapPoint and Google Earth, there are now many opportunities for small business and consumers to take advantage of applications that integrate these technologies.

Mobile GPS Online, a privately-owned, Ottawa-based company, has, since 2002, been working on system integration and application software development utilizing GPS, GIS and WiFi Technologies. With it's principal's 20+ years of experience in academic research institutions, high-tech companies and self motivated business and marketing development plus

close partnerships with several popular GPS hardware vendors and system developers, Mobile GPS Online has the expertise in GPS hardware and software to meet the needs of Navigation, Surveying and Mapping, Geographic Information System (GIS), Vehicle Tracking, Fleet Management, Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) and Personal Consumer Products.

Please join us for our October meeting: Dr. -Ing. Detang Zhong of Mobile GPS Online will present some of the newest, most popular and innovative applications of these technologies of interest to car owners, hikers, cyclists, parents, and other business and recreational consumers.

November 8, 2006

Tentative: Members' Presentations "Open Source Favourites"

Members of the OPCUG are asked to come forward with suggestions of any open source products they would like to present, or have someone present. These would be short (5-15 min.) presentations to show the variety and quality of recent open source offerings. Contact any member of the BOD with your suggestion.

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, October 11 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
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, October 11 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, October 11 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, October 11 th	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, October 11 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.

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

2006 OPCUG WORKSHOP

Computer Hardware and Home Networking *by Alan German*

This fall, OPCUG will be offering a full-day workshop on the dual topics of computer hardware and home networking. Club members who have spent considerable time researching advances in computer hardware, the problems – and solutions – associated with computer networking, will share their knowledge and expertise with workshop participants in two half-day sessions.

The morning session will focus on current – and future – computer hardware. What will you need to run Windows Vista? Will your current computer need upgrading? Which components? How do you change them? Want to burn DVD's? What is the difference between HD DVD and Blu-ray? Thinking of buying a new machine? Should you get Intel or AMD, 32- or 64-bit technology, single-core or dual-core CPU? Are you interested in home theatre? What sort of platform do you need? Our hardware expert will be available to discuss these and many other questions. Plus, he will build a computer from scratch – right before your eyes! So, not only will you know the details of the individual components, and where they fit inside the box, you will come away with the knowledge of how to install future upgrades yourself.

In the afternoon, our thoughts will turn to home networks. So, if you have

more than one machine, and would love to be able to easily transfer files or share an Internet connection, this session will show you how. What is network topography? What is a protocol stack? Should you be using cables or Wi-Fi? Our networking expert will describe the basics, and then go on to build a network, actually linking several machines together right in the lecture theatre. We will discuss Internet connectivity through high-speed modems and routers. We will take a look at wireless connections to our network and, in particular, consider the steps necessary to make the network secure.

We know that, for a big group, some of the details of our planned “hands-on” demonstrations could be hard to see, so we will be using closed-circuit television for a close-up view of all the action. You won't miss a thing!

Better yet, as a special bonus for workshop participants, we will be featuring draws for a number of door prizes, with a total retail value of over \$500. The major prize is a Linksys WRT54G Wireless-G Broadband Router. If you are lucky enough to win this fine device, you'll be sure that it works, as it will be used to demonstrate some of the features of wireless networking as part of the workshop! Other prizes promised to date have been donated by

O'Reilly Media – with more than a dozen books available on building,

repairing and troubleshooting personal computers and networks.

The workshop will be held at the Heron Road Community Centre (1480 Heron Road), on Saturday, November 18, 2006, commencing at 9:00 am and running through 4:30 pm. The registration fee is just \$50.00. This includes lunch and coffee breaks, a one-year membership in OPCUG (a \$25.00 value by itself!), and a better than a one in five chance of winning one of our fabulous door prizes. Registrants will also receive a CD-ROM containing all the presentations and associated reference information.

Attendance will be limited to the first 60 registrants so, if you wish to ensure your place at the workshop, send in your registration fee promptly. Complete details of the workshop, the door prizes, and a copy of the workshop registration form, are posted on OPCUG's web site at:

<http://www.opcug.ca>

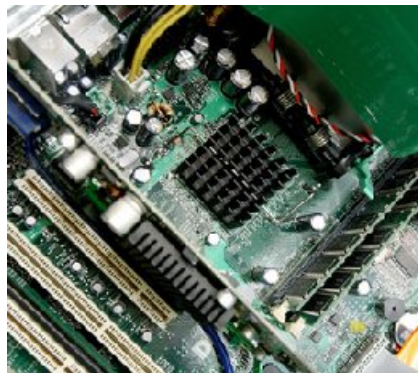
A copy of the registration form can be found on the back page of this issue.

Alan German is a research physicist who wants to know how to network dual cores in a CPU. He is a member of OPCUG's Board of Directors and can be reached via:

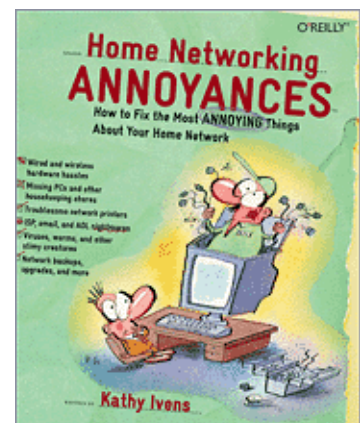
E-mail: workshop2006@opcug.ca



Networking prize & demonstration



Hardware demonstration



Various book prizes

PRODUCT REVIEW

Exploring Linux—Part 3 *by Alan German*

In the previous articles in this series we explored a couple of versions of a Linux-Live CD, and then went on to install a full version of Linux onto the hard drive. A suggested reference was the book, "Linux for Dummies", by Dee-Ann LeBlanc, which was noted to include a bootable DVD containing the Fedora Core 1 distro. In the present article, we take a look at installing this version of Linux - and some of the further trials and tribulations that were encountered with disk partitioning schemes.

Let me say up front that, if I had known what I was doing, installing Fedora Core would have been a snap. All the problems that I encountered resulted from my not properly understanding how to set up disk partitions, possibly that I have an old version of Partition Magic that perhaps doesn't fully understand Linux partitions, and probably that Windows chooses not to understand Linux partitions!

My initial plan was to wipe out the Linux partitions established by the previous installation of Ubuntu to regain the original unallocated disk space for the new installation of Fedora. However, when I booted into Windows, and tried to run Partition Magic, the message "Init failed : Error 117 Partition's drive letter cannot be identified" popped onto the screen. The user's manual suggested that the fix was to run Partition magic in DOS. However, I had recently read a PC Magazine article (Manage Partitions for Free with QTParted; Kyle Rankin; PC Magazine; pp.88-89; January, 2006) that indicated QTParted, a Linux-based partition manager, was freely available on the Knoppix Live CD. Well, I'm all for the use of good freeware and, in Part 1 of this article we found out (almost) everything there is to know about Knoppix Live, so this was too good an opportunity to miss.

Running QTParted from the Knoppix system menu provided a list showing

the two hard drives, /UNIONFS/dev/hda and hdc, present in my system. Clicking the mouse on the first of these produced a table of contents showing it to be "Drive C". Selecting the Linux swap drive and choosing Operations - Delete from the menu bar, followed by File - &Commit (changes to disk), produced the desired result of 341 MB of free disk space. Now for the first problem. The option for delete on the main Linux partition was greyed out, and I was unable to proceed further in setting up the disk. Shutting down QTParted and restarting the program did nothing to change the situation. Fortunately, shutting down Linux, rebooting, and re-running QTParted, did provide the option to delete the unwanted partition on the second time around. (Does anyone know why this happened/how it works?)

Now the second problem raised its grubby head. Rebooting the machine without the Knoppix CD produced a command line with a "grub>" prompt. Obviously, I had removed the Linux operating system by deleting the associated partitions, and the GRUB boot loader now didn't know what to do. Unfortunately, neither did I. I have no idea what one is supposed to do in response to such a prompt. My solution was to boot the machine using a Windows 95 startup disk, and run Boot Magic's configuration utility to enable this program to run Windows 2000 on bootup.

Once I had rebooted back into Windows, I tried once again to run Partition Magic. This time, the program detected error 114, which was indicated as being related to the extended (Linux) partition. But this was an error that the program said it could fix by writing a new EPBR record (whatever that is!) Since this sounded like a good idea, I let Partition Magic repair itself.

Now, for some reason, Partition Magic reported the original locations for the main Linux partition and the swap



drive as two quite separate areas of unallocated disk space. It turned out that Fedora wouldn't install with these two areas of free disk space. In order to obtain a single 4 GB chunk of unallocated space, I had to redistribute all the free space to a large existing partition, apply the changes to the disk, create a new 4 GB FAT32 partition, and then delete it. Finally, Partition Magic reported 4 GB of unallocated disk space - ready for a new installation of Linux!

As I indicated previously, I know very little about disk partitions and partition managers. There are no doubt much simpler, and certainly more elegant, solutions to the problems that I encountered. One of these days, I must read Partition Magic's manual!

So, at last, we can take a look at the business of installing Fedora Core 1. Booting up the installation routine from the DVD is quite straightforward, with a graphical display mode making the process very easy. The default keyboard selection was US English, and the installation program automatically recognized my PS/2 wheel mouse. The monitor configuration window provided a huge selection of manufacturers, and clicking on the maker of my display lead to a further long list of different models, so it was simple to pick the relevant display type. The main installation choice that had to be made was between a personal desktop, a workstation, a server or an "other" type of Linux system. The default was

(Continued on page 5)

Linux—Part 3 *(Continued from page 4)*

personal desktop, and was indicated as being suitable for home or office, so I went with that.

The disk partitioning screen provided an option for automatic configuration, which lead to a screen where I was careful to select the "Keep all partitions and use existing free space" option, and to check the box marked "Review (and modify if needed) partitions created". This created both a main Linux partition and a swap partition (510 MB) as did the earlier Ubuntu distro; however, Fedora also created a boot partition of 102 MB.

The installer provided some default options for a network configuration, these being a "Device eth0 - IP/Netmail DHCP" with the hostname being set automatically by DHCP. I wasn't exactly sure what these were to do, but they sounded about right, and so I pressed the Next button. Next on the agenda was a choice to enable a firewall configuration. Firewalls are usually good, so I went along with that suggestion also.

Many of the subsequent prompts were for items that had been seen in previous installations - language support, time settings, and the root password. The final choice was for the inclusion of the default software packages, Gnome, OpenOffice, Mozilla, Evolution, Instant messenger, sound and video applications, and games. Being greedy (and not really knowing what I wanted, and didn't want), I accepted all of the above.

The installer now got down to business, spending 10-15 minutes copying files from the DVD to the hard drive. Finally, a message offered congratulations on completion of the installation and required a reboot. A few lines of Linux commands were displayed indicating various processes were being shut down. The system then automatically rebooted and displayed the GRUB boot loader with choices for Fedora Core and DOS (i.e. Windows).

Selecting Fedora produces a few lines of installation text messages and then

the boot process switches into a graphical mode that displays an image of a computer and a progress bar. A "Show Details" option will display the stream of installation messages in a window should these be desired. The first time through the boot process, a welcome screen indicates that a few more steps must be completed to make the system ready for regular use. These include reviewing the license agreement, checking the machine's date/time settings, establishing a user account (username and password), testing the sound card (in full stereo!), and an option to install additional CD's (there were none with the DVD). The system then moves to the regular logon prompt screen for a username and password, and opens a relatively clean desktop.

The desktop has just three icons - one each for the home file directory, the trash can, and "Start Here", which opens Nautilus, a file browser. The menu bar appears at the bottom of the screen, with icons to run the Mozilla web browser, Evolution (an E-mail client), OpenOffice Writer, Calc and Impress, and Print Manager. A very appropriate graphic of a red fedora occupies the start button slot, and clicking on this icon opens up the usual wide assortment of built-in applications - the menu has accessories, games, graphics, Internet, office, sound and video, and programming applications. Other options include preferences, system settings, system tools, help, and search functions.

One interesting feature of the Fedora distro, and its seemingly comprehensive installation process, was that, although I had selected a 1600x1200 LCD display as my laptop's monitor, the program was actually running in a small "window" in the centre of the screen (as did Knoppix Live in Part 1 of this series). Clicking on the red fedora and selecting System Settings - Display, produced a prompt for the root password (since I was logged into my user account), and the option to change the display's resolution. This required logging out of the session, and then

logging back in, for the new setting to take effect. Finally - the Fedora desktop in all its glory!

In this series of articles, we have explored several flavours of Linux, or at least we have explored the mysteries of installing several versions of this alternative operating system. We have temporarily installed Linux-Live versions from both Ubuntu and Knoppix (Part 1). We have also installed Linux to the hard drive using Ubuntu (Part 2) and now Fedora Core (Part 3). There have been some glitches along the way, especially with respect to disk partitioning schemes and boot loaders, but the moral of the story has been that, with a few reasonable precautions (i.e. rescue and backup disks in place!) it's not too difficult to work around such problems and produce a functional Linux system. Now, as to how Linux actually works - well, that's another story - but, that needs a little more exploration!

Bottom Line

Linux for Dummies
Dee-Ann LeBlanc
5th Edition, Wiley, 2004
ISBN 0-7645-4310-5

(Ottawa Public Library Call No.
005.546 L445)

The Fedora Project
<http://www.redhat.com/fedora/>



CLUB LIFE

Book Review

Why not get a jump start on this year's contest for the best newsletter article? Thanks to the generosity of O'Reilly, we have a book just waiting for someone to write a review; **Don't Get Burned on eBay**. For details on the book, see <http://oreilly.com/catalog/dgbebay>

Not only will this book help you (as the sub-title says) avoid scams and escape bad deals, but you may just win a terrific prize in our contest. Top that off with the great feeling you will get from helping out your fellow OPCUG members with your opinion on this book and you just can't lose.

To reserve the book, send an email to BookReview@opcug.ca. First come, first served and you can pick up the book at the next general meeting.

**Don't Get
Burned
on
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How to Avoid Scams and Escape Bad Deals

O'REILLY®

Shauna Wright

PC World - 101 Fabulous Freebies

For those of you who still haven't checked out PC World's list of "fabulous freebies" (first mentioned in the June issue of Ottawa PC News), this is a reminder.



If you like free software - and if you really like free software that actually works - you should check out the article *101 Fabulous Freebies* that appeared in the May, 2006 issue of PC World (or its electronic equivalent on PC World's web site at: <http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,124883,00.asp>).

The article lists free utilities and web-based services in more than a dozen categories. And, these items are truly free – either freeware or open source – the list has no shareware listings, crippled distributions, or time-limited demonstrations!

The specific categories of software/services are: utilities and system tools; on-line search and reference services; collaboration and remote-access tools; business and productivity tools; communications tools and services; calendars and organizers; file sharing and storage services; security and anti-Spam tools; entertainment; web-based e-mail; blogging tools; RSS readers; and video sharing services.

With such a comprehensive list there has to be something for everyone. Many well-known web-based E-mail services are included, such as

Gmail, Yahoo Mail and MSN Hotmail. Some of the software packages have been reviewed recently in our newsletter, such as the FoxIt Reader, OpenOffice.org and Thunderbird. Other utilities have been mentioned on The PUB, demonstrated at club meetings, or discussed at SIG meetings, including PDF Creator, CCleaner, Firefox and Microsoft Windows Defender.

But, even more interesting to those who like exploring new software packages are titles like Free Download Manager, an add-on for Internet Explorer to resume interrupted downloads and schedule multiple file downloads; Project Gutenberg that allows you to browse electronic versions of more than 17,000 books; and, finally, the video sharing web site Revver, with which PC World says you may even be able to make money - Sure!

Streets & Trips *(Continued from page 1)*

Adventure game; XYZZY. As such, its pronunciation frequently leaves something to be desired. But S&T has a very limited vocabulary. I may be wrong, but phrases such as “Turn left in one point four kilometres”, “In two kilometres, continue straight” and “In three hundred metres, arrive at destination” seem to be about the extent of what it will say. S&T will not even attempt to tell you a street name to turn onto. As such, I think it would provide much clearer speech if it used canned sound snippets to generate the audible instructions.

That quibble aside, I love the GPS feature. The accuracy is quite good. If there are at least 3 satellites in view, which is normally the case, I find the position is accurate to within about 10 or 20 meters. With 5 or 6 satellites in view, the accuracy is about 5 metres or less.

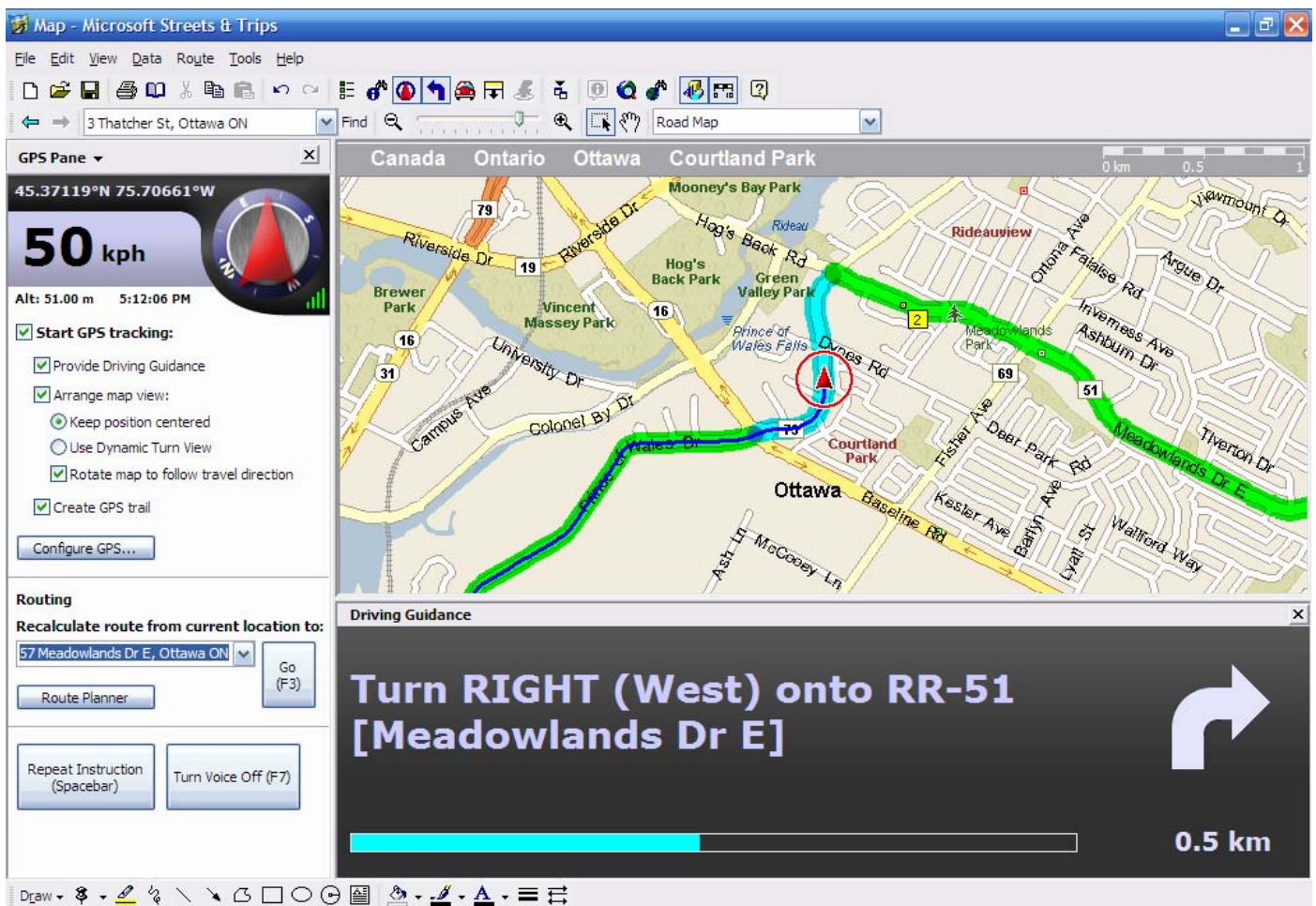
Even if not using the GPS interactively, having it with me when I am on a trip guarantees I will never remain lost for long. I can just boot up the computer, and in minutes, I will know where I am within a few metres. And I don’t have to ask for directions.

System requirements:

Windows 2000 or XP
(XP required for voice output)

Minimum disk space: 500 MB
(1.1 GB for full install)

Street price in
Ottawa - \$130



Screenshot: “On the way home”

OPCUG Workshop 2006

Saturday, November 18, 2006
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Heron Road Community Centre
1480 Heron Road, Ottawa, ON

Registration Form (Please print neatly)

Name: _____

Address (complete address,
please): _____

Tel : _____

(_____) _____

E-mail: _____

I wish to register for this workshop which includes lunch, the presentations and associated material on a CD-ROM, and a one-year membership in OPCUG.

Please find enclosed my cheque in the amount of \$50.00, made payable to: OPCUG.

Mail the completed registration form and your cheque to:

OPCUG Workshop 2006
3 Thatcher Street
Ottawa, ON, K2G 1S6

The OPCUG has established a Privacy Policy in compliance with government legislation. The purpose of the policy is to safeguard your personal information. Your workshop application constitutes your acceptance of this policy:
<http://opcug.ca/public/privacy.htm>.

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.

Fees: OPCUG membership: \$25 per year

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