



OTTAWA

MERRY CHRISTMAS

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

SyncToy – File Synchronization from Microsoft

by Alan German

OK, so everyone knows that I'm a sucker for file synchronization utilities. So, when I found out that Microsoft was giving one away, I could resist taking a look. SyncToy follows in the fine tradition of PowerToys where useful utility programs developed by Microsoft's in-house programmers are made available outside of the Windows' operating system. While SyncToy is dedicated to the specific task of file transfer between two directories, it does offer a useful range of intelligent transfer options.

In most synchronization programs, one directory is typically named as the source and appears on the left of the program's main window. The second directory is named as the target and, as you might have guessed, is shown on the window's right side. SyncToy uses a somewhat different screen format and terminology. There are designated left and right folders but, depending on the transfer option selected, either of these can be the source or the target for any given file.

One option is to synchronize the two directories such that any new or updated files in one directory are copied to the other directory (i.e. file transfer occurs both ways). Similarly, renaming or deletion operations that have been conducted in one directory are repeated in the other. Thus, this option gives the best of both worlds - all the

most recent changes made to either directory are made to the other, and the files in the two directories end up being identical.

Another file transfer option is Echo, which copies new and updated files from the left folder (source) to the right folder (target), and repeats any renaming and deletion of any files in the right folder that have occurred in the left folder. This option essentially mirrors the source directory to the target, and hence is very useful for file backup operations.

The other options make your head spin! They're probably easier to follow if you think solely about the file directories being the left and right folders. The Subscribe option copies any updated files from right to left but only if the file name already exists on the left. No renaming or file deletion operations are conducted with this option. The Contribute option copies new and updated files from left to right. Renames on the left are repeated on the right. No deletions are repeated. In Combine, new and updated files are copied both ways, but nothing happens to renamed and deleted files. So, pick your poison. There has to be an option for everyone here - somewhere!

The good news is that SyncToy lets you assign multiple "folder-pairs" and each folder-pair can have different synchronization options assigned to it. And, not only can you choose one of the file transfer methods, you can also

specify which files should be included, how the file comparison should be conducted, if sub-directories are to be included, and if deleted files should be sent to the recycle bin.

Running SyncToy involves selecting a folder-pair from a pre-defined list. A Preview option runs the selected file transfer method and displays the results without making any changes to either directory. As noted earlier, the file display differs from most other synchronization programs. There is no two-panel display, with full listings of both directories, and the various changes identified with colours and arrows. SyncToy's display is pretty basic, with just a simple list of the files to be transferred, and each change, based on the prescribed options, having an action (e.g. New, Delete) associated with specific source and target folders,

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, December 13th, 2006**

December Raffle

Thanks to Corel Corporation, we have a copy of **Corel WordPerfect X3** for the raffle. Here are some of the features listed on the [Corel website](#):

Use the built-in PDF capabilities of WordPerfect Office X3 - Standard Edition to share your work easily - with everyone! Adobe® Acrobat® is not required to create these handy files. Now, it's easy to turn your WordPerfect, Quattro Pro® and Presentations™ files into PDFs.

Use online services and search provided in conjunction with Yahoo! to help complete tasks quickly.

Create sharp-looking documents quickly thanks to dozens of new or enhanced project templates, slide show backgrounds, fonts and labels.

Control access to sensitive comments and information in your documents using the NEW Meta-data Removal capability.

Raffle tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten at the door from ticket master Morris.



Ticket master Morris

Coming Up...

► **December 13th, 2006:** Harley Bloom of **Bloom MicroTech** will be here for his 8th annual Christmas Wish list.

February 21st, 2007: Evelyn Watts, Product Specialist, Corel Corporation **Topic:** TBA



CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, Dec. 13 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, Dec. 13 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, Dec. 13 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, Dec. 13 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, Dec. 13 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 A SUCCESS

A word of thanks from our President

I would like to thank you for attending the OPCUG 2006 Workshop on Computer Hardware and Home Networking. I hope you learned some new things that will help you to use computers more effectively. And I hope you will share your newfound knowledge with others in the spirit of the OPCUG motto, "Users Helping Users"

And I hope you had some fun too.

To all the new members, welcome to the Ottawa PC Users' Group. Half the fee paid for the workshop goes toward a one-year membership in the Group. If you are unfamiliar with the Group, you can find out more information at <http://opcug.ca>. I hope to see you all at the general meetings.

In particular, I would like to draw your attention to the next general meeting, which will be Wednesday, December 13th, at 7:30 PM. The meeting location is the Canada Science and Technology Museum, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. Harley Bloom, from Bloom Microtech, will be coming out for his 8th annual Christmas gift show. Always a really big hit, Harley will be showing us what's new in computing gear ranging from stocking stuffers to full gaming systems. And Harley usually has a few specials you can take advantage of.

For those who were looking for the source of the BGInfo program I used at today's workshop, the original web site (<http://www.sysinternals.com>) is now redirecting to the new home on the Microsoft site at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/sysinternals/default.mspx>. BGInfo is at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/sysinternals/Miscellaneous/BgInfo.mspx>. All the utilities that were distributed for free at the sysinternals site remain available and free now that Microsoft bought Winternals. Some terrific utilities are available there. Be sure to check them out.

I was negligent in my tardiness in thanking people who helped put together the workshop. By the time I remembered, some people had already left and many were on their way out, so allow me to rectify that by thanking them here and now. And so, in no particular order...

Vince Pazzamiglio has been a member for many years. He is a former Treasurer for the group and has presented at past workshops. His presentation today on computer hardware was entertaining as well as educational. I was captivated by his presentation. My warmest thanks to Vince. Oh, and if you would like to nominate yourself for the OPCUG Board of Directors for 2007, Vince will happily accept your nomination sent to vince@pizzamiglio.ca

Alan German is the OPCUG Treasurer. Alan took care of a lot of the logistics such as arranging the room, hounding the speakers to ensure presentation materials were completed on time, creating the master of the CD-ROM everyone received, and of course took care of the financial aspects of the workshop. Alan can be reached at alan.german@opcug.ca

Brigitte Lord not only does double-duty on the Board of Directors, but the two positions she holds down are pretty demanding - Web Master and Newsletter Editor. Brigitte kindly donated her time to ensure we were well fed today. Wonderful choices, Brigitte, and I think nobody went hungry. Brigitte can be reached at brigitte.lord@opcug.ca

Mark Cayer has been the Membership Chairman since ... forever, it feels like. He also takes care of mailing the hard copy newsletter. Mark is always willing to pitch in and help out at events such as the workshop, where he manned to registration table. Mark can be reached at mark.cayer@opcug.ca

Wayne Houston is the OPCUG Privacy Director. Wayne gave up his Saturday to pitch in and help out. He helped by bringing a lot of the little bits and pieces like duct tape and extension cords that are needed and helped with the setup and tear down. Wayne can be reached at privacy@opcug.ca

Jocelyn Doire is another long-time member of the OPCUG. He has been Secretary for many years. As well, he has been a SIG coordinator, takes care of the electronic distribution of the newsletter and has presented at past workshops. Joc helped out today with taking care of coffee and the evaluation forms. I hope you all got a chance to fill out an eval form. If not, send an email to Joc and I am sure he would be happy to send you an electronic copy of the eval form that you can fill out and email back. Joc can be reached at jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca

Gail Eagen is the newest member of the Board of Directors and has taken over as Secretary now that Joc is unable to continue in that role due to work conflicts. Gail helped out with the registration table today. Oh, and she brought the desk lamp. (Gail told me not to say, "Oh and Gail brought a lamp", so I couldn't resist. Sorry, Gail). Truly, thank you. All contributions to the smooth running of the workshop are truly appreciated. Gail can be reached at gail.eagen@opcug.ca

Bert Schopf is a long-time member of the OPCUG. He has been Chairman, Newsletter Editor, SIG Coordinator, has presented at past workshops, and generously allows the Board of Directors to hold monthly meetings in his office. Bert created the advertisement for the workshop that appeared in the newsletter and in the newsletter (see page 7 - <http://opcug.ca/public/Articles/0611.pdf>). Bert runs a business "Blackbird PCD" doing publication design. You can see his web site at <http://www.blackbirdpcd.com> and he can be reached at bert@blackbirdpcd.com.

Glenn Lisle is the Publisher and Managing Editor of Monitor Magazine. Glenn has generously donated space in Monitor for our ad as well as more detailed information about the workshop. Thanks very much Glenn. Glenn can be reached at editor@monitor.ca. Monitor Magazine's web site can be reached at <http://www.monitor.ca/monitor/>

(Continued on page 4)

Thanks from our President *(Continued from page 3)*

Marsee Henon at O'Reilly & Associates runs their user group program. Marsee saw to it that we were well supplied with a dozen terrific books on computer hardware and networking for door prizes. Thanks much to Marsee and O'Reilly. Be sure to visit their web site at <http://www.oreilly.com>. And don't forget - members of the Ottawa PC Users' Group get a discount of 35% on all books and DVDs. See

<http://opcug.ca/public/promos.htm#oreilly> for details on how to get the discount.

I, Chris Taylor, am the President of the OPCUG. Over the years I have helped out in a few other areas to do my bit to help the OPCUG run smoothly. I was happy to have an opportunity to share what I know about home networking. I hope you found it useful. If you have any questions that I might be able to help with, I can be reached at chris.taylor@opcug.ca

Another workshop comes to a close. I hope you all found it useful and a worthwhile way to spend a Saturday. This email address (workshop2006@opcug.ca) will remain active for a few more weeks and then will be permanently shut down. It is already beginning to receive spam and has only been active for a few months.

On behalf of all those who contributed to the creation and running of the workshop this year, I would like to extend my thanks to you for attending. It was a blast.

Chris Taylor
President, Ottawa PC Users' Group

Thank you MONITOR Magazine!

The 2006 OPCUG workshop was sold out once again - largely due to the coverage provided by MONITOR magazine. We know this to be the case by the flurry of registrations that arrive in the mail following the publication date of a new issue of the magazine!

On behalf of OPCUG's Board of Directors, and on a personal basis, let me extend our thanks to MONITOR Publisher and Managing Editor **Glenn Lisle** for helping promote our workshop.

Everyone had a great time at the workshop, as demonstrated by the results from an evaluation form that was distributed. The topics were very well received, the presentations were fabulous, and the handouts on CD-ROM will be extremely useful reference materials.

Many registrants indicated that they were looking forward to learning more at upcoming OPCUG meetings as a result of their brand new memberships in the club. So, overall, we think the workshop was a tremendous success.

Thank you again for your involvement in helping make it so.

Alan German
Organizing Committee
Ottawa PC Users' Group
Fall Workshop 2006

MONITOR magazine online: <http://www.monitortoday.com/>

Christmas Humour

(provided by Susan Gowan)



SyncToy *(Continued from page 1)*

occupying a single line. There is a check box for each file listed that can be left as "Active" or turned off to prevent the transfer or deletion from taking place. Pressing the Run button processes all of the active file transfers.

Depending on your intentions, and the options you have set, some care may be needed before committing to the previewed file transfers and deletions. For example when using the Synchronize function, files deleted in the right folder will be flagged for deletion in the left folder, rather than the still-available files in the left folder being copied to replace the deleted files in the right folder. Similarly, an updated file in the right folder will be set to overwrite the equivalent file in the left folder. Synchronize effectively looks at the newest action conducted on a file as the basis for its proposed action. If you are trying to keep the right folder as a backup of the left folder, you should select Echo rather than Synchronize.

As a partial safeguard, both delete and overwrite entries are displayed in red, to highlight these pending file operations. Nevertheless, at least initially, it would be prudent to check each line of

the file transfer preview display to ensure that the proposed action to be taken on the source and target directories is indeed that desired. In addition, there is an excellent set of help files that describe all of the program's operations, complete with exemplary screenshots. So, before you commit your data to SyncToy's actions, the help menu is certainly worth a visit.

The program provides options to change the file-synchronization method, and the other options that have been chosen, for any folder-pair that has been selected on the main screen. It also allows scheduling of a file synchronization task, and the ability to run a selected group of folder-pairs or all of the available folder-pairs in a single file-transfer session.

One minor downside of this program is that a comparison produces small hidden files – both named SyncToyDirectoryId.txt – in the two directories being included in the comparison. The program's operation hints at the existence of such files by indicating that it is retrieving prior comparison data. However, it isn't clear to me why any such information needs to be

stored. It shouldn't take an age to conduct a real-time directory comparison of whatever changes have been made recently. Still, for most users, these files will remain hidden and – being out of sight, out of mind – will not constitute any problem.

This review is based on an older release (Version 1.0.0.64) of SyncToy that runs under Windows 2000. Nowadays, Microsoft is positioning Version 1.2 of the program (SyncToy for Windows XP) as an adjunct for digital photographers (see: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/prophoto/synctoy.msp>).

Bottom Line

SyncToy for Windows XP,
Version 1.2 (Freeware)

Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/default.msp>



The Way Children See Things! *(provided by Sara Gelfand)*

NUDITY

I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a Woman in the convertible ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my 5-year-old shout from the back seat, "Mom! That lady isn't wearing a seat belt!"

HONESTY

My son Zachary, 4, came screaming out of the bathroom to tell me he'd dropped his toothbrush in the toilet. So I fished it out and threw it in the garbage. Zachary stood there thinking for a moment, then ran to my bathroom and came out with my toothbrush. He held it up and said with a charming little smile, "We better throw this one out too then, 'cause it fell in the toilet a few days ago."

OPINIONS

On the first day of school, a first-grader handed his teacher a Note from his mother. The note read, "The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents"

KETCHUP

A woman was trying! hard to get the ketchup to come out of the jar. During her struggle the phone rang so she asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer the phone. "It's the minister, Mommy," the child said to her mother. Then she added, "Mommy can't come to the phone to talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle."

MORE NUDITY

A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women's locker

room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, "What's the matter haven't you ever seen a little boy before?"

ELDERLY

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4- year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. The various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs, unfailingly intrigued her. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"
(more to follow in January)

PRODUCT REVIEW

Smart Boot Manager by Alan German

When playing around with various flavours of Linux, I ran into a problem trying to install the OS from a bootable CD-ROM onto my old desktop machine. Basically, the machine wouldn't boot from the CD. Since the BIOS was set up to go to either the floppy disk, or the CD-ROM, before booting from the hard drive, I figured that this old machine just didn't support booting from a CD. But, while researching the problem on the Internet, I came across a really neat little utility – Smart Boot Manager – that provided the solution.

Smart Boot Manager is an open-source package that weighs in at under 70 KB. While the basic instructions for using the program are displayed when you run the executable, I would recommend that you also download the program's 200 KB PDF documentation file. You will find that the program has a ton of features, including password protection, automatic searching for bootable drives and partitions, booting into a default drive after a specified delay, and even scheduling booting into different drives depending on the day of the week or the time of day. The pro-

gram is available in multiple language themes, each of which can be customized.

Of course, if you are like me, all you will need to know is “sbm -t us -d 0” which is the command to have Smart Boot Manager create a bootable disk with a US (i.e. English) theme on floppy drive a:

Rebooting the computer with this newly created boot disk in the floppy drive, produces an on-screen menu of choices of bootable partitions. In my case, the “CD1” menu item was my previously unbootable CD-ROM. Selecting this option did indeed boot the machine from the CD. Now, that's what I call a smart boot manager!

Bottom Line

Smart Boot Manager, Version 3.7
Release 1 (Open source)

Principal Authors: James Su, Minghua Chen and Christopher Li, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/btmgr/>

And yet more praise...

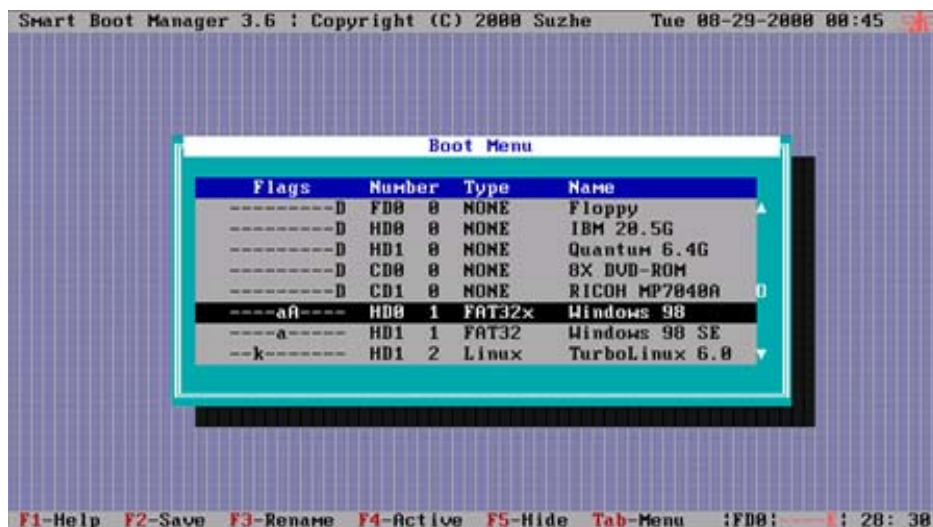
OPCUG's 2006 Workshop on Computer Hardware and Home Networking, held on November 18th, was sold out once again. Participants thoroughly enjoyed the event, as demonstrated by the glowing results from an evaluation form that was distributed. The two topics were very well received, the presentations were fabulous, and the handouts on CD-ROM will be extremely useful reference materials. Many registrants, especially the new club members, indicated that they were looking forward to earning more at upcoming OPCUG meetings. Overall, the workshop was a tremendous success. However, many OPCUG members worked hard to ensure this, and all deserve a pat on the back.

Vince Pizzamiglio's presentation on computer hardware was entertaining as well as educational. And, the computer he built from scratch, in front of a live audience worked at the first flip of the power switch!

Chris Taylor outlined the need-to-know aspects of networks and wireless security issues, and illustrated his points by setting up a working, two-computer network at the front of the room. Another instant success for OPCUG's hardware-challenged President! Alan German arranged for the room, created the master of the CD-ROM everyone received, took care of the financial aspects of the workshop, and tried to keep the video-camera focused on the components that Vince was waving in the air! Brigitte Lord kindly donated her time to ensure we were well fed. Wonderful choices, Brigitte; nobody went hungry.

Mark Cayer is always willing to pitch in and help out at events such as the workshop, where he manned to registration table. Wayne Houston gave up his Saturday to help out by bringing lots of needed little bits and pieces, like duct tape and extension cords, and also helped with the setup and tear down. Jocelyn Doire took care of coffee breaks, and the production, distribution and analysis of the evaluation forms.

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CLUB LIFE

Linux SIG - Plans for the December meeting

by Don Chiasson

The November Linux SIG focused on Open Source and Free Software. For December, we will focus on Linux, doing installs, particularly demonstrating how to do a dual boot system. We will have at least three systems on hand demonstrating details of installation.

The demonstration will also show that Linux gives you much more than just an operating system: office utilities, browsers, e-mail, calendar, code development, image editing, web server, media players, MythTV, firewall, messaging, finance, and more.

As well, we will show live disks, where you can run Linux without affecting your installed system in any way. There will be a burner so people can get a copies of a distribution they might be interested in. There will be a few copies of Fedora Core 5 (Red Hat), Suse 10.1, Ubuntu 6.06 and Knoppix 5.0. Please bring a blank DVD or make a small contribution to cover costs.

Follow-on issues to be discussed at Liam Maguire's.

November Prize Winners

At the November meeting, **Cornel Bierman** won our door prize of a Microsoft VistaBook, Hat and copy of the Beta 2 release.

Brand new member **Blaine Coombs** took home the raffle prize of a copy of Microsoft Money.

As well, all members in attendance were offered a free compact florescent light bulb courtesy of Project Porchlight and member **Andrew Macleod**.

Thanks to Microsoft and Project Porchlight for the donations.

Exploding Laptops

by Don Chiasson

There have been stories about laptop battery recalls. I assumed this meant they would overheat and might present a bit of a fire hazard. A video on YouTube shows the problem is potentially quite serious.

Folks at PC Pitstop (<http://pcpitstop.com/>) cobbled together a sacrificial laptop and forced a fault in one battery cell. The results are shown in this video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmPm-YV9vdA>

It is rather impressive how bad these battery explosions can be. Even putting them out, there is a comment about needing a class "D" extinguisher. (Note: A is paper, etc; B is flammable liquids; C is electrical; D is combustible metals.) Perhaps having a class B or C would at least keep the fire from spreading but not put out the battery.

Legal notice: IANAFF (I am not a fire fighter.)



Newsletter Contest

Just a reminder to members to consider participating in the Contest for Best Newsletter Article.

For details, go to:

<http://opcug.ca/public/Articles/contest2006.htm>

2007 Elections

Once a year, the OPCUG holds elections for the 9-member Board of Directors. We are once again coming up to this annual event.

I encourage all members to consider running for a board position or getting involved in some other manner in the operations of the OPCUG. If you want more information about what is involved, please talk to any current or past board member.

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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More praise... (Continued from page 6)

Gail Eagen helped at the registration table, and brought the desk lamp that was critical to our closed-circuit television production. Bert Schopf created the advertisement for the workshop that appeared in the club's newsletter and in Monitor magazine.

Speaking of Monitor, two external agencies also deserve our thanks for their support of our workshop. Glenn Lisle, the Publisher and Managing Editor of Monitor Magazine (<http://www.monitor.ca/monitor/>), generously donated space for our ad., as well as publishing detailed information about the workshop. And, Marsee Henon at O'Reilly & Associates (<http://www.oreilly.com>) saw to it that we were well supplied with a dozen terrific books on computer hardware and networking for door prizes. Special thanks to both Glenn and Marsee.

So, thanks to everyone who contributed to the creation and running of the workshop this year, and to all those who attended. It was a blast.

Alan German
Workshop Organizing Committee

How to get the OTTAWA PC NEWS by e-mail

Want to get the newsletter electronically? There are two formats available: plain text and Adobe Acrobat PDF. Simply send a message to listserve@opcug.ca. Leave the subject blank and in the body of the message, type:

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 mailed 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.