



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

Volume 24, Number 2

February 2007

PRODUCT REVIEW

FotoFusion Pro v3.7 *by Chris Taylor*

Digital photography is great! Taking pictures becomes “free”. If you don’t like the photo, you can delete it. This helps encourage experimentation. I know some of my better images have been serendipitous.

Once you decide to keep a photo, any number of image editing programs can help you touch up your photographs. It is a snap to straighten pictures, remove skin blemishes in portraits, adjust colour and lighting, remove objects, and even add textures or other special effects.

But when it comes down to your final printing or sharing, you are basically left with standard, old-style techniques. Don’t get me wrong...I have several of my photographs matted and framed. I think it is a fine way to display a finished print.

Recently, I came across a program that allows you to treat your finished prints...a little differently – FotoFusion from LumaPix. At its heart, FotoFusion is a program for making collages. The program makes it marvellously simple to grab a bunch of photographs and arrange them in various ways.

When starting, an Auto Collage feature helps you get set up. You are prompted for the photos you want to include. You can browse, view & select using thumbnails or a larger browsing window. You are then presented with a screen giving many of the broad options in FotoFusion such as overall

layout (jumbled or organized in columns & rows), size of the page, etc. Click Finish and your photos are imported and laid out on the Canvas. Everything you do in AutoCollage can be modified later.

But that just gets you a starting point. From there the fun really begins. An AutoCollage button re-arranges all the photos on the canvas. Just keep clicking until you get an arrangement you like, or one that is close. Then really start to dig in.

Just some of the things you can do with FotoFusion;

- Move photos from one frame to another.
- Crop photos
- Pan photos within their frames
- Rotate photos or frames
- Move, resize & overlap frames
- Adjust the size, colour & shape of the border around frames
- Adjust the space between frames
- Adjust the drop shadow on frames
- Move frames forward or backwards in a stack

While FotoFusion is not a full-fledged image editor, you can adjust images for brightness, contrast, colour, etc. It is great to have such controls right in the program to match characteristics of images or to add contrast between images. You can even adjust image opacity to allow the background or another

image to show through. You can add a texture or blur to images.

FotoFusion can also place text on your collage. As with other objects, you have amazing control over text. You can choose the font face, size, colour, style (bold/italic/underline/strikeout), alignment within the frame, opacity and degree of blur. Drop shadow options include angle and amount of offset, colour, blur, and opacity.

One very nice effect you can get with FotoFusion is to set one image as the background (the canvas) and lay other images on top (see [Parliament Hill, p.7](#)). And you are not limited to how FotoFusion first lays down your background image. If you unlock the canvas frame, you can zoom and pan the image to lay it down exactly how you want it.

You might think you need an enormous amount of memory to create a collage

(Continued on page 6)

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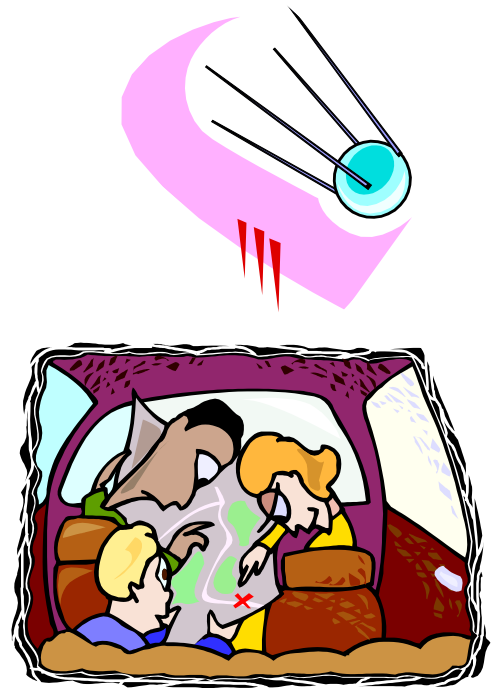
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Next Meeting: **THIRD WEDNESDAY, February 21st, 2007**

February Raffle

At the February meeting, thanks to the generosity of Microsoft Mind-Share, we will be raffling off a copy of **Microsoft Streets & Trips 2007 with GPS**. This nifty package not only has street-level maps and over 1.2 million points of interest for almost all populated areas in Canada and the U.S., but with the included GPS receiver and your portable computer, you can pin-point your location within metres, have the program speak out directions to you as you drive, mark a trail where you have been, and much more. Very cool! For details on this product (street value \$150), see <http://www.microsoft.com/streets/default.mspx>. You can also read a review on the previous release at <http://opcug.ca/public/reviews/s&t2006.htm>

Tickets are still only \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten. What a bargain!



Coming Up...

► February 21st (third Wednesday)

Topic: **Paint Shop Pro Photo XI**

Abstract:

Corel Paint Shop Pro Photo XI is the ideal choice for people who want extraordinary photos. Filled with one-of-a-kind photo tools sure to please anyone with a digital camera, a built-in photo organizer, and a Learning Center to help first time users get started, it's the easiest way to get professional-looking photos - fast!

Bio:

Evelyn Watts is a product specialist with Corel. She has extensive experience with software training, public speaking and spends much of her time on the road, visiting user groups, customers and delivering specialized training. She is known for her engaging presentation style and fun sense of humour. Evelyn has just recently returned from this year's APCUG conference in Las Vegas where Corel continued its support of the user group community as an annual sponsor.

June 13th, 2007: Annual BBQ; Speaker TBA

CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, February 21 st (third Wednesday)	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, February 21 st	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
IT-Pro SIG	Wednesday, February 21 st	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, February 21 st	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
PIG SIG (Wing SIG West)	Wednesday, February 21 st	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, February 21 st	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).		

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It was another successful year for the OPCUG.

Membership continues to be fairly steady. We ended 2005 with 236 members and 2006 with 241. Thanks much to Mark Cayer for keeping track of us all.

Financially, the Group is on very solid footing. The financial report is published in this issue of the newsletter and will be presented to the membership formally at the AGM in February.

We again enjoyed a wide variety of presentations at general meetings. Security was the focus of two presentations - Elliott Finkelman, host of Practical Computing radio show, talked about securing your home computer and I gave a presentation on securing a home wireless network. We had four product-focussed presentations from vendors; Adobe (Macromedia), Corel (WordPerfect X3 and CorelDRAW X3), Microsoft (Office 2007 beta), and Novel (SUSE Linux Enterprise 10). Two meetings looked at technologies; web mapping with scalable vector graphics, and innovative applications of GPS. We again had a popular "member presentation" night; Don Chiasson, Alan German, myself, and Harald Freise showed off some open source programs. We wrapped up the year with Harley Bloom from Bloom Microtech with his ever popular 8th annual Christmas wish list.

Our two SIGs – IT Pro and Beginners – grew to three when Don Chiasson formed the Linux SIG. All members are encouraged to participate in the SIGs.

The winner in the first annual OPCUG contest for the best newsletter article was won by Lionel Wagner for his article *Are you reay for Linux? Linux is ready for you*. You can read it at <http://opcug.ca/public/Articles/ReadyForLinux.rtf>. There are only a few months left in this year's contest. All are encouraged to participate.

Taking past feedback into account, the 2006 workshop had just two topics – computer hardware and home networking. The workshop was a resounding success with the highest satisfaction ratings from participants yet. Stay tuned for in-



formation around summer time regarding next fall's workshop.

In last year's President's Report I said, "I hope 2006 will be every bit as great as 2005." I think it was. I hope you found it great too. Happy computing one and all.

Chris Taylor

TREASURER'S REPORT



Ottawa PC Users' Group, Inc.
 3 Thatcher Street
 Ottawa, ON K2G 1S6
 Web Site: <http://opcug.ca>

Balance Sheet, 2006

Assets

Current Assets

1000	Cash Account (TDCT)	2,010.59
1100	Investment Account (ING)	19,719.58
1200	Membership float	40.00

Total Assets	21,770.17
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Equity

Owner Equity

OPCUG, Capital December 31, 2005	19,646.94
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Total revenue	8,149.34
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Total expenses	6,026.11
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Net income	2,123.23
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OPCUG, Capital December 31, 2006	21,770.17
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Total Equity	21,770.17
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TREASURER'S REPORT



Ottawa PC Users' Group, Inc.
 3 Thatcher Street
 Ottawa, ON K2G 1S6
 Web Site: <http://opcug.ca>

Income Statement, 2006

Revenue		2006 (\$)	2005 (\$)
2100	Bank Interest (ING)	570.34	370.11
2200	Membership Income	4,700.00	4,425.00
2300	Raffle Income	1,154.00	1,463.00
2400	Merchandise Income	0.00	0.00
2500	Workshop Income	1,725.00	1,550.00
2900	Miscellaneous Income	0.00	13.00
Total revenue		8,149.34	7,821.11
Expenses			
3100	PUB II Expense	1,257.16	1,386.17
3200	Newsletter Expense	3,370.08	2,555.64
3300	Office Supplies Expense	5.46	143.09
3400	Bank Charges	70.24	79.28
3500	Barbecue Expense	258.20	267.52
3600	Facility Rental	200.00	200.00
3700	Workshop Expense	864.97	616.17
3800	Merchandise Expense	0.00	0.00
3900	Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	144.89
Total operating expenses		6,026.11	5,392.76
Net income		2,123.23	2,428.35

FotoFusion *(Continued from page 1)*

with lots of images, but FotoFusion manages by working with a lower-resolution version of your images. It maintains a link to the original and when you render the final output, it reads the originals to get the best quality possible. This has a side-effect you need to be aware of. Because a collage project is always tied to the original images, if you modify an image using some other image editor and then re-open a collage that uses the image, you end up with the modified image.

Output options abound in FotoFusion. You can output a web page, a graphic file (JPEG, BMP, TIF, GIF, or PNG), or send right to the printer. There is even a built-in email function.

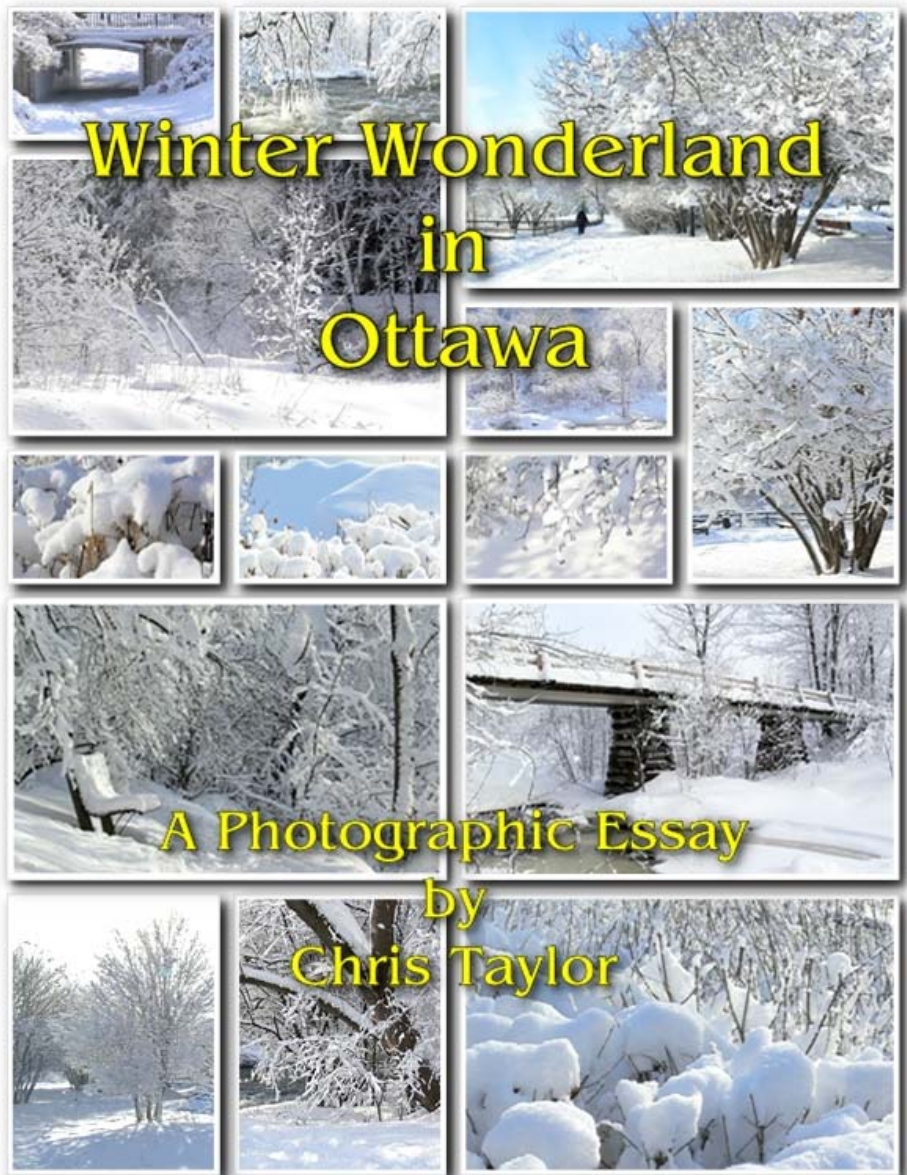
Each type of output makes intelligent guesses at things like resolution and compression. For example, when you choose to email a collage, FotoFusion suggests settings that will result in an image of about 130K, with a resolution no larger than 800x800 pixels. But if you want to produce a professional quality print, you can easily choose to output a 300 dot-per-inch TIF file, if you want. Parliament Hill, when processed for 300 dpi, produced a 20 MB TIF file.

There are some oddities to FotoFusion. To start with, it uses some of the strangest, non-standard controls I have ever seen. When you select a frame, you get two controls in each corner (one to crop the image in the frame and one to resize the frame itself), and two controls along each side (one to pan the image in the frame and one to resize the frame). As well, there are two controls in the middle of the frame for panning and rotating.

Add control keys (e.g. when using the rotation control, holding down Alt snaps rotations to 45 degree increments and holding down Ctrl rotates the image only, leaving the frame alone) and you can begin to see why it takes a little while to get used to using the program.

But once you get used to the controls, they are very powerful and put a lot of capabilities right at your fingertips. LumaPix calls this "dynamic resizing" and it reduces the dependency on menu options found in most programs. Tooltips pop up everywhere in FotoFusion...and are greatly appreciated!

All effects you apply are attached to the



frame you insert an image into, not the original photo. Let's say you brighten an image, increase the contrast, and apply a slight sepia tone. If you then swap photos between two frames, the image adjustments end up applied to the wrong photograph. I quickly learned not to swap photos in frames. Rather drag the complete frames around to adjust what photos appear where.

I am very impressed with FotoFusion. It is a really fun program to use and it can really make it easy to create attractive collages. The depths of the capabilities of the program are quite astounding.

I reviewed FotoFusion v3. v4 is in beta and about to be released. Those who buy v3 prior to the v4 release will get a free upgrade. More info, including comparisons of the features of the different versions, may be found at <http://www.lumapix.com>

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CLUB LIFE

Linux SIG *by Don Chiasson*

For the February OPCUG meeting, the Linux / FOSS (Free and Open Source Software) SIG will continue discussing Open Office. Last time there was an installation and demonstrations of the word processor and spreadsheet. This month will focus on the data base and presentation (i.e. Power Point clone) software. The data base will demonstrate importing data, queries to select data, and forms for presenting information.



FotoFusion

(Continued from previous page)

System requirements:

Pentium II, 350 Mhz,
64MB RAM,
3 MB free disk space,
Windows 98 or better

Version 4 will come in three editions:

Scrapbook Essentials -
US\$39.95

Enhanced – US\$119.95

Extreme – US\$299.95

The edition I reviewed (Pro)
maps to v4 Enhanced.



Parliament Hill

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
Mailing Address:	3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6	
Web address:	http://opcug.ca	
Bulletin board — PUB II (BBS)	http://opcug.ca/default.htm	

President and System Administrator

Chris Taylor chris.taylor@opcug.ca 613-727-5453

Meeting Coordinator

Bob Gowan bob.gowan@opcug.ca

Treasurer

Alan German alan.german@opcug.ca

Secretary

Gail Eagen gail.eagen@opcug.ca

Membership Chairman

Mark Cayer mark.cayer@opcug.ca 613-823-0354

Newsletter

Brigitte Lord (editor/layout) brigitte.lord@opcug.ca
(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire jocelyn.doire@opcug.ca
 (e-mail distribution)

Public Relations

Morris Turpin PR@opcug.ca 613-729-6955

Facilities

Bob Walker 613-489-2084

Webmaster

Brigitte Lord opcug-webmaster@opcug.ca

Privacy Director

Wayne Houston privacy@opcug.ca

Director without Portfolio

Ted May tamay@rogers.com

Beginners' SIG

Chris Taylor chris.taylor@opcug.ca 613-727-5453

IT-Pro SIG

Harald Freise ITProSIG@opcug.ca

Linux SIG

Don Chiasson

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OPCUG



Users helping users

Reduce, Re-use, Recycle

Bring your old computer books, software, hardware, and paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the General Meetings, and leave them at the table near the auditorium's entrance. Please limit magazines to publication dates of less than two years old.

You may TAKE AWAY any items of use to you. Stuff left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to... the recycle bin.

