



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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PRODUCT REVIEW

Me and My Shadow *by Alan German*

Recently, I had a slightly-panicked 'phone call from a friend whose computer was refusing to boot. He was working on a scientific paper and was leaving for a conference in Germany in just a few days. His computer had a USB hub, bristling with memory sticks and external hard drives but, of course, he had been busy, and hadn't backed up his work for some time. Could I help?

Two things came to mind. Either, the hard disk had crashed, in which case the data files might be gone for good, or there had been a failure in some other hardware component in the machine and it might be possible to recover data from the disk.

The computer was in a sorry state. Lights came on in the front panel, fans roared into life, one of the two CD drives blinked incessantly, but neither drive would open and the computer's display screen showed absolutely no signs of life. Furthermore, the machine gave no POST-type beeps on the system's speaker, and did not respond to pressing function keys to access the BIOS or boot menus.

In an earlier conversation, Bob Gowan had told me how easy it was to install a spare hard drive in an enclosure, and hence turn the disk into an external USB drive. Now was the time to put this sage advice into practice. So, it was

off to the computer store to purchase such an enclosure. As Bob had indicated, installing the disk was extremely simple, connect a couple of cables, tighten a few screws, and - voila - an instant USB drive! Now, all we had to do was to plug in the power brick, and insert the USB connector into a spare port on a second machine. The green progress bar in Windows Explorer took a disconcerting age to run across the top of the window but, eventually, the complete contents of the 250 GB drive were listed. The final part of the process was to back up the relevant data files to another external USB drive. No more chances were being taken with this puppy!

So, that solved the immediate problem. But what of the future? Sure, we could replace the dead machine with a newer, faster, and more powerful computer, but how were we to ensure that when the next hardware failure occurs - perhaps this time to the hard drive itself! - that the important data will be backed up?

The ultimate solution may well be to add yet another machine and, as outlined by Rick Claus at our November, 2007 meeting, install Windows Home Server (<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/windowshomeserver/>) in order to provide a platform on which to back up all of my friend's computers, laptop in-

cluded, automatically, and on a regular basis. Folder synchronization programs, such as SyncToy (<http://opcug.ca/public/Reviews/synctoy.htm>) are fine, but they generally need the user to run them regularly - or even occasionally - to generate backup files. Clearly, my friend had failed the latter test! So, is there another option? Is there a folder sync program out there that will run automatically, preferably in real time, and duplicate my friend's work as it is completed?

Well, of course, the answer is a resounding yes. And, even better, there is a free solution to the problem - the "unregistered" version of Quick Shadow Backup. This utility promises to monitor one or more file folders on a drive and create on-the-fly backups to a second disk.

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Next Meeting: **TUESDAY, November 9th, 2010**

November Raffle (TBA)

Visit the OPCUG website for updates, <http://opcug.ca>, and click on the **MEETINGS** button.

Coming Up...

► **TUESDAY, November 9th, 2010**

Speaker: Chris Ellis

Topic: The State of Network and System Security

As the Internet continues to grow and evolve so does Cyber-crime. Cyber-criminals misuse the Internet everyday and continue to advance in their techniques making computer security one of the most important fields of the future.

At our November meeting, Chris Ellis, will present on how the threat landscape has evolved over the last 10 years. He will, also, address how cloud computing is improving detection rates, how the use of GTI (Global Threat Intelligence) is growing and will continue to grow, and how virtualization is impacting security.

Chris Ellis is from McAfee, one of the lead companies in the computer security industry.

October Prize Winners

Thanks to the generosity of Orleans Computers, members **Michael Benson, Jeff Dubois, Ken Franklin, Alan German, David Kelly, Howard Macumber, Mark Merriman, Donald Popadick, Bob Thomas and Brice Wightman** got to take home one of the keyboards or mouse available as door prizes.

The evening's raffle winner of a copy of Windows 7, courtesy of Microsoft, was **Gary Byron**.

Thanks to our prize providers and congratulations to all of the winners.

Also Coming Up...

December 8th, 2010

Topic: Members' Favourites Night

Speaker: Various OPCUG Members

(see article next page)

January 12, 2011

Topic: Social Networking

Speakers: Chris Taylor and Andrea Wells, OPCUG

2010 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	<u>Tuesday</u> , November 9 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	<u>Tuesday</u> , November 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	<u>Tuesday</u> , November 9 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	<u>Tuesday</u> , November 9 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).		

Members' Favourites

At least once a year, we like to have a Members' Favourites Night. This is a chance for the members to give a brief demo of a program or piece of hardware that they think is nifty and may be of interest to other members.

This is a chance for you to share. I bet everyone has something they think is a hidden gem. It can be free software or commercial. It can be something that you find useful or just plain fun. It can be a utility program, an add-in to a browser, a game or an input or output device. Whatever you want!

You don't have to make a big production. Just ten to fifteen minutes or so to stand up and explain what it is and why you think it is something others might want to look into.

This year we will be having Members' Favourites Night at the December meeting on Wednesday, December 8th.

If you are willing and able, please let the meeting coordinator - Andrea Wells - know at Andrea.Wells@opcug.ca

2011 OPCUG 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. We 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. Names are listed in the Newsletter and on the web site.

Nominations can be submitted to Bob Herres, Election Chair, in person at the November and December club meetings or by sending an email to nominations@opcug.ca.

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2010.

Please get involved. Please help the OPCUG continue in its role of Users Helping Users!

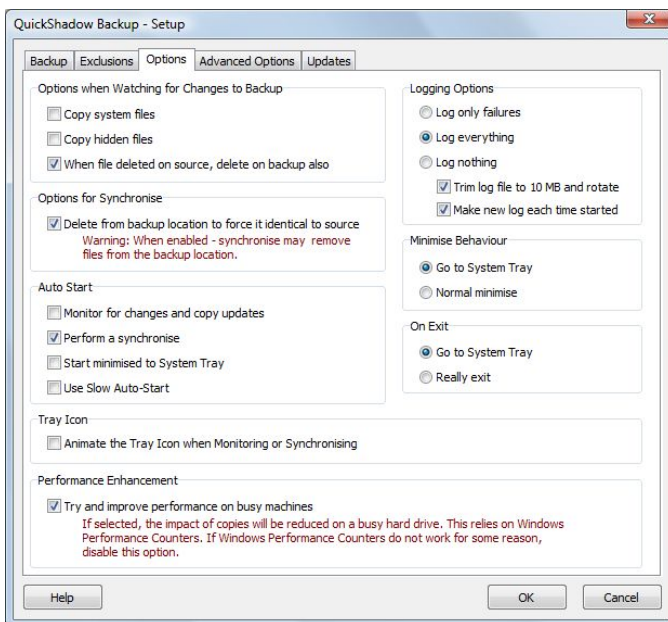
*Bob Herres
Election Chair*

	Ottawa Computer Stores With the demise of M2 magazine, Ottawa computer users lost a useful resource of advertisements for computer stores selling both systems and parts. OPCUG now has a web page that is intended to provide a similar service to members. The page lists area computer stores with web sites offering hardware and software items for sale. OPCUG does not carry advertisements for any commercial operations, and does not endorse any of the stores that are listed here. The links provided merely bring similar hardware and software outlets in the Ottawa area together on a single reference page. Click on the "Local Stores" button on OPCUG's home page to see our new web page at: http://www.opcug.ca/public/computer_stores/stores.htm
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Me and My Shadow *(Continued from page 1)*

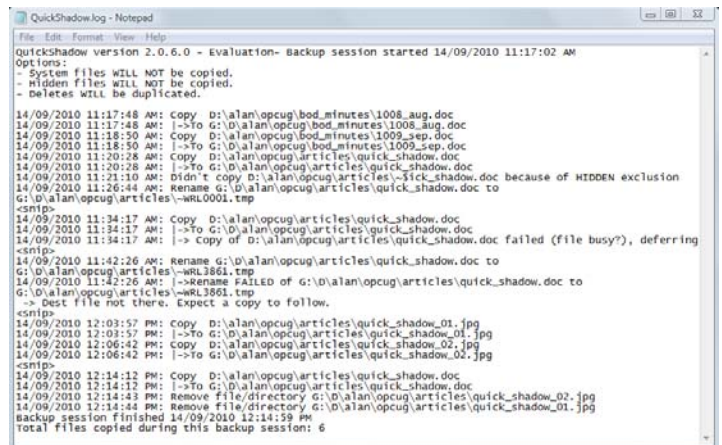
To test the system, I dug out an old 16 MB SD card that originally came with the purchase of a digital camera (and was quickly replaced with a 2 GB card) and inserted the old card into the built-in reader on my machine. While having insufficient storage for digital images, the card would be perfect for my test setup which was to backup a data folder with around 7 MB of files. Recycling at its finest!

The setup process was simple. I specified the path for the data folder to be backed up and the drive letter for the SD card, thus forming a "backup set" in Quick Shadow parlance. I also configured the settings on the options tab to have the program ignore any system and hidden files, to delete files on the target disk when the equivalent files were deleted from the source, and to log the program's operations. Finally, I clicked the button on the program's main screen to initiate the file monitoring and copying process, sat back, and waited.



The test initially consisted of downloading and storing a couple of files in one of the sub-folders being monitored. One of the files was an update to a previously-stored set of minutes of a meeting, and the other was a new file with the draft minutes from a more recent meeting. Then I started work on the document for the article that you are reading. This included creating a new Word file in a different sub-folder, grabbing a couple of screenshots of Quick Shadow's operations, packaging these into the final article, and then deleting the original image files.

As you can see from the screenshot of the program's log file, Quick Shadow did indeed store copies of the various files as they were created and updated, and deleted the temporary files once they were no longer needed. The log file contained many entries for deferred file copying and renaming operations (multiple similar entries were removed from the file used in the screenshot) presumably, because the source file was still open in Word. However, when the file creation and editing process was complete, the result was an exact copy of the entire file folder, including all the additions and deletions to the associated sub-folders. Perfect!



So, Quick Shadow Backup offers a real-time backup solution for important data files. The program comes in registered and unregistered versions. The unregistered program provides the basic functionality described here, and is available at no cost. The registered version (US \$25) has additional features, including the ability to specify up to ten backup sets, two-way folder synchronization, and management for multiple file versions.

Are your important files backed up? Do you do this on a regular basis? If the answer to either of these questions is no, perhaps you should consider an automatic solution such as that provided by Quick Shadow Backup.

Bottom Line

Quick Shadow Backup
(Registered - US \$25 and Unregistered - Free)
QuicklyTech: <http://quicklytech.com/>

ANNOUNCEMENT

Donald James Chiasson 1941-2010

The Board of Directors regrets to advise members of the death of Don Chiasson, on October 8, 2010, having succumbed to adrenal cancer at the age of 68.

OPCUG members will remember Don as an enthusiastic supporter of free software – especially in the “free speech” sense – although Don was also fond of telling us that it was also free as in “free beer”!

Don was instrumental in forming the Linux, Free and Open-Source Software Special Interest Group, and several of his presentations to the SIG are posted on the web site. He also served on OPCUG's Board of Directors, most notably acting as Meeting Co-ordinator, bringing us the interesting and varied series of guest speakers we have enjoyed over the past year.

For those who didn't know Don's background, here are a few edited highlights from his obituary, a document that has all the hallmarks of being penned by Don himself!



Don was born in Halifax and studied engineering at Saint Mary's University where he received the award for highest grade point average in engineering. He subsequently received an honours degree in electrical engineering, specializing in control systems, from Nova Scotia Technical College (now part of Dalhousie University). He also obtained a master's degree from the University of Hawaii, and a PhD from University College London (England).

Don worked at the Defence Research Establishment Atlantic (DRE – later DRDCA) conducting research in underwater acoustics and digital signal processing. There, he was responsible for the purchase of a DEC20 which revolutionized computing in the lab. He also worked at Maritime Command in Halifax, Maritime Forces Pacific Headquarters in Victoria, and finally at the Operational Research and Establishment (ORAE – later CORA) in Ottawa. Don worked on problems in electronic warfare and personnel demographics, and retired as Chief, Operational Research and Analysis in 1992.

Don kept very busy with friends, particularly breakfasts and pub lunches [Ed. - More free beer?], OPCUG, OCLUG, duplicate bridge, target handgun shooting, snow shoeing, border collies, movies and reading, cross-country biking, single malt whisky, photography, video games (XBox 360), and more.

Don is survived by his wife, Carolyn Ragan, five children, and five grandchildren.

It's been a wonderful life

Don”

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 (SIGs) go until 10 p.m.

OPCUG Membership Fees:	\$25 per year	
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“Announcements” is a low volume list that the Board of Directors uses to get in touch with the membership. Subscribers can expect at least one message per month – the meeting reminder that goes out a few days in advance of the general meeting. Other than that, the only time it is used is when the Board feels there is some important news that should be brought to the attention of all members.