FROM THE PRESIDENT

President's Report 2011 *by Chris Taylor*

Every year, I read a lot from people predicting what the coming year will bring. I read of the next coming revolution. How this will be the year that laptops í or tablets í or smart phones or í will finally kill off the desktop computer. Is this going to be the year for cloud computing? Or will it be the year for solid state drives? Do we ever save those articles and re-read them a year from now?

I like to take on an easier task. I reflect back up on the previous year. As they say, hindsight is 20/20.

The spring presentations were heavy on social media tools. In January, Andrea Wells and yours truly talked about how to take advantage of these tools without putting your privacy, computer health, and job in jeopardy. A great follow on in February had Bob Walker talking to us about the same sorts of tools in a corporate environment. In March, Rick Claus from Microsoft showed us what Microsoft is doing in cloud services. If you ever wondered about how one creates a blog, in April, Alan German showed us how simple it can be. In May, we had our first ever presenter over the Internet, as Google showed us their vision around mobile, social, and cloud computing. We wrapped up the spring season in June with a great presentation from Sylvain Dumas from McAfee on home theatre and the electronics that make it happen.

We kicked off the fall season in September with a wonderful presentation and musical entertainment as Roger Lanthier showed us how professional and amateur musicians are using electronics and the Internet to create, collaborate, produce, and perform. In October, we had another one of our popular sessions ó Member's Favorites with Alan German, Harald Freise, and me.

A year is not complete without home town Corel coming out to show us their latest and this year was no different with Evelyn Watts demoing the cutting edge features in the new version of their photo editing software Corel Paint Shop Pro x4. We wrapped up the year with a fascinating talk by Bill Wilson from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. Bill brought us up to date on how the Internet has been affecting privacy and how the Privacy Commissioner plays such a vital role in helping to protect that.

I would like to give a huge thank you to all who presented in 2011. I know it takes a lot of time and effort and it is truly appreciated by the membership. If you missed any of them, the presentation files for many of them are on The PUB.

Alan German matched his 2010 run of 20 articles for the newsletter. But that didn't prevent Andrew Petrovic, Jocelyn Doire and me from squeezing a few articles in. A really big thanks to Brigitte for putting together such a terrific newsletter month after month.

We were starting to get a little low on gifts for speakers, so we added a speaker gift. Literally. The shoX mini-speaker turned out to be such a big hit with members that we had to place a second order.

The OPCUG joined in the social media world in a small way this year. I promise if you follow @OPCUG on Twitter, you will not be swamped within inane drivel. You will get meeting announcements and other items of interest to the membership.

We continued to introduce the OPCUG to the Ottawa public through seminars on computer-related topics at the Ottawa Public Library. In 2011, we had 25 sessions at

8 branches with almost 300 participants. My thanks to the library event coordinators who made facilities & equipment available and took care of advertising and registration.

The OPCUG would not be on such sound financial footing without the support of companies who donate things we can raffle off. Thanks to Corel, Microsoft, Auslogics, Diskeeper, and Wondershare. And thanks to you folks for buying raffle tickets.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to extend my thanks to the Board of Directors for their tireless work. As well, Mark Cayer continued to serve as our Membership Chair and Jocelyn Doire continued his work in getting the electronic versions of the newsletter delivered. Former President, Bert Schopf kindly let us continue using his office for board meetings. All these people do their best to ensure the OPCUG continues to be here to live up to the motto *Users helping users*.

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Next Meeting: WEDNESDAY, March 14th, 2012

March Raffle

Courtesy of the Microsoft MVP program, we have a copy of Windows 7 Ultimate for the March raffle. This is the full version (not the õupgrade onlyö version) that can be installed on any PC. Valued at $350.

Still using Windows XP? Good as it was, XP is over 10 years old! Donøt wait for Windows 8! Move up now to Microsoftøs best operating system ever.

Tickets are, as always, a good deal at $1 for one, a great deal at $2 for three or the unbelievable bargain of $5 for ten!

Coming Up…

▶Wednesday, March 14th, 2012
Speaker: Michael Geist, Canada Research Chair, Internet and E-commerce Law, University of Ottawa
Topic: TBA

April 11th, 2012
Speaker: Pierre Roman, Microsoft Canada
Topic: Windows 8

June 13th, 2012
Pizza Night and Speaker (TBA)
Topic: National Capital Freenet (to be confirmed)

Check the OPCUG website for updates at http://opcug.ca and click on the MEETINGS button.

February Prize Winners

A bunch of people went home smiling after the February meeting of the OPCUG. **Bob Herres, Howie Macumber** and **Carlos Medina** each won a copy of the Kaspersky Internet Suite as a door prize.

As for the evening's raffle ... 4 copies of the Wondershare LiveBoot 2012 software were raffled off with **Bob Gowan, Harold McClemens, Jeff Dubois** and **Tim Hillock** being our lucky winners.

Congrats to the winners and thanks a bunch to our prize suppliers for the evening.

2012 CALENDAR		
Meetings	**Date**	**Time and Venue**
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, March 14th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the **Canada Science and Technology Museum**, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginnersø SIG	Wednesday, March 14th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux SIG	Wednesday, March 14th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, March 14th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguireøs, 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).		

PRODUCT REVIEW

Exploring Linux—Part 20 *by Alan German*

Well, my PowerPoint ó actually LibreOffice Impress ó presentation on the basics of Ubuntu Linux (http://opcug.ca/code/html-fdnld?frames=n&recno=5248512), given at the February meeting of the Ottawa PC Users' Group, went quite well. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the live demonstration of installing Ubuntu!

I had set up my laptop's hard drive as a single partition with Windows Vista. To demonstrate just how simple it is to install and use Ubuntu, I used a USB memory stick on which I had installed (using UNetBootin) a bootable version of the Ubuntu 11.10 distro. It was easy enough to show how to start up the õlive-CDö version of Natty Narwhal, and then navigate through the few setup screens in order to commence the process to install Ubuntu to the hard disk. I chose to establish a dual-boot format with Vista, and then left the software to run while I gave my main presentation on a second computer.

Finally, at the end of the presentation, the pièce de résistance ó restart the laptop and demonstrate how easy it is to boot into ó Windows!? Yes, that's right, the demo-gods were not smiling on me that evening ó or perhaps they were laughing! After a re-boot, the laptop failed to show the GRUB start-up menu, and booted directly into Vista.

A quick check using GParted from the bootable USB stick confirmed that the Ubuntu root and swap partitions had been created, as had the /boot/grub folder, and there was a reasonably-configured grub.cfg file. Clearly, the problem was that the installation had somehow failed to reset Vista's master boot record (MBR) to point at GRUB.

So, how to fix this little mishap? Once back at home, I tried my bootable Super Grub Rescue CD. Now, perhaps I have an old version of this software, but the only option that Super Grub

Rescue provided was to boot into the installed Linux system. While this let me use Ubuntu, and so confirmed that the installation was viable, it wasn't going to fix the boot problem.

I decided it was time to learn more about just how GRUB works, and how to manually fix boot problems. However, a Google search identified an Ubuntu Community document (https://help.ubuntu.com/community/Boot-Repair) discussing the use of Boot-Repair as õa small graphical tool to restore access to Ubuntu.ö Even better, Boot-Repair offered a "Recommended repair button to repair most frequent boot problems. (generally repair filesystems and reinstall Grub2).ö

This sounded like just what I needed. So, out with the idea of learning about the inner-workings of GRUB, and move along to try yet another boot-fixing tool.

Downloading and installing Boot-Repair was as simple as following the instructions in the Ubuntu Community document. Copy each of two commands that were provided, paste them into a Terminal window (recalling that one needs to use Ctrl-Shift-V as the keyboard short cut for pasting), and let each command work its magic.

In no time, I had the main Boot-Repair window on the screen. Sure enough, the "Recommended repair" button

promised that it õrepairs most frequent problemsö. Pressing this button, and waiting patiently while it did whatever repairs were indeed recommended, led to a request to restart the computer.

Now, the GRUB menu was immediately displayed, and the laptop would into boot into either Ubuntu or Windows Vista.

In addition, to the õquick repairö button, the advanced options for Boot-Repair allow considerable customization of the utility's operations, including backing up partitions, boot sectors and logs; repairing file systems; changing the location of the boot flag; restoring the MBR; and editing GRUB's configuration file.

Alternatively, the program offers a second button to run Boot-Info-Script, a trouble-shooting utility that will produce a very useful list of all the hard drives installed in the computer and information related to the boot-up process.

So, if you need to fix a boot problem, Boot-Repair may well be worth a try. And even if you want just a little more information about your system's hard drives, this little utility can provide the goods.

Bottom Line

Boot-Repair (Open-source software)
http://sourceforge.net/p/boot-repair

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2011/2012

Board Members

The Board of Directors was announced on February 9, 2011 at the Annual General Meeting. The Board selected positions resulting in the following slate of officers:

Chris Taylor, President and Systems
   Administrator
Gail Eagen, Secretary
Alan German, Treasurer
Bob Gowan, Special Events Coordinator
Wayne Houston, Privacy
Brigitte Lord, Webmaster and Newsletter
Morris Turpin, Publicity
Bob Walker, Facilities
Andrea Wells ó Meeting Co-ordinator

Board Meetings

The Board met 12 times on (2011) Feb14, Mar 14, Apr 18, May16, Jun 13, Aug 15, Sep 19, Oct 20, Nov 21, Dec 19 and (2012) Jan 16 and Feb 6.

Most of the discussion at meetings related to creating the program, ensuring raffle and door prizes for the meetings, and ensuring articles for the Newsletter.

Major decisions made:

- To continue to give presentations at various Ottawa Public Libraries
- To provide complementary memberships for one year to Board members, Mark Cayer for Membership and Newsletter mailings, Jocelyn Doire for electronic distribution of the Newsletter and maintaining the history pages on the web and to Bert Schopf for providing office space for Board meetings.
- To accept Richard Aylesworthøs comments and recommendations on the review of the financial records for 2010.
- To ask Jocelyn Doire to assist Andrea Wells in the Program Co-ordinator role due to Andreaøs pregnancy
- To ask Richard Aylesworth to review the Treasurerøs financial records for 2011.

Election

Bob Herres agreed for a fifth year to be Election Chair. Calls for nominations were done in the Newsletter and at meetings through the fall. Nine nominations were received by the due date of December 31, 2011. Since there were only nine nominations, no election was required. Thanks again to Bob Herres for taking on this role.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on February 1, 2012.

1. Election Results - Chris Taylor, President, announced that they were exactly nine nominations and thus the Board was acclaimed. The newly elected Board was announced: Board

Members for 2012/13 were:

Jocelyn Doire
Gail Eagen
Alan German
Bob Gowan
Wayne Houston
Brigitte Lord
Chris Taylor
Morris Turpin
Bob Walker

Chris thanked Bob Herres for once again carrying out the duties of Election Chair.

2. Chris said the Presidentøs Report would be published in the March Newsletter.
   (Editor's note: see page 1 of this issue)

3. The Treasurerøs Report for the calendar year 2011 was presented by Alan German.

Secretary's Report *(Continued from page 4)*

Alan stated that the report was published in the February, 2012 newsletter. He reported that the OPCUG is in good financial shape finishing fiscal year 2011 with revenue exceeding expenses by $93.68.

The major expense this year was the purchase of speakers as speaker gifts.

Alan thanked Morris for sales of raffle tickets.

There was one question regarding whether the cost of the newsletter included printing as well as mailing. Alan confirmed that both were included.

Alan thanked Richard Aylesworth for scrutinizing the Treasurer's financial records.

4. Chris said the Secretary's Report would be published in the Newsletter.

5. Chris thanked:
   1. Joceyln Doire for the electronic distribution of the Newsletter and for maintaining the history pages on the web site.
   2. Mark Cayer for his work on membership and mailing the Newsletter.
   3. Bert Schopf for offering his office space for OPCUG Board meetings.

Questions and Comments

Chris opened the floor to questions or comments:
   1. Membership thanked the Board for their efforts.
   2. Mark Cayer commented that it was mostly Board members who were giving presentations. Chris pointed out that there were several presentations given by others. He did ask members to volunteer to present or to suggest speakers.

3. Dunc Petrie asked if the OPCUG Board had considered advertising some of the presentations outside the club. Chris responded that Morris as Publicity Chair did send out notices to some contacts and asked members to suggest other contacts he could send information/announcements to.

4. Dunc Petrie suggested that posters be put up in libraries. Chris mentioned that we did send Newsletters to libraries. He asked Dunc to contact Morris to pursue the idea of posters.

5. Jeff Dubois asked whether the OPCUG would consider webinars. Chris pointed out that we had had one (Google) and there were challenges but that the Board would discuss this idea.

6. Mark Cayer thanked Board members for the presentations made at Ottawa Public Libraries and mentioned that this was a good way to publicize the OPCUG. Chris reported that there were 19 presentations lined up for the January to May time period.

7. A member asked if the OPCUG would consider expanding its topics to Androids and other smart phones. Chris stated that the Board would discuss this but if members had ideas for potential speakers to provide the names to the Board.

8. Mark pointed out that most Newsletter articles were written by the Board. Chris asked members to write articles, no matter how short

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Submitted by
Gail Eagen,
Secretary, OPCUG

ARTICLE

NAS for home - More than just a big hard drive

By Bill Wayson *bwayson@gmail.com*

My current long-term home computing project is to create a system where I can play any music I own on any suitable player in the house, controlling the playback using one of my highly portable Nokia Internet Tablets. Right now, I am in the midst of setting up centralized storage of all my music, most of which has already been ripped to disk. My goal for this part of the project was simply to buy storage that can be accessed by any device with access to my home network. But in the process of researching and setting it up, I have learned that such devices, particularly those designed for the small office and home office (SOHO) market, offer much more to me than just storage. This month, I will share what I have learned so far about the hardware I have chosen, the Synology DS411slim, and how I would like to use it.

I needed a central place that would hold all my digitized music and be accessible from anywhere in the house. I decided to look for a SOHO network area storage (NAS) device, since network-accessible disk storage is precisely what a NAS is designed to provide. Since this device might be left constantly running, I wanted one that would consume as little power as possible. I also wanted data protection since I didn't want to put gigabytes of audio onto the NAS only to lose it due to hard drive failure. I wanted RAID 5, which will withstand the failure of one of four drives with no loss of data.

With just these goals, I decided on the Synology DS411slim. Given its use of low-power 2.5" notebook drives, the DS411slim has one of the lowest power consumption specifications in the SOHO NAS market. Since it accommodates up to four drives, it supports most of the popular levels of RAID, including RAID 5, and the various types of data redundancy they provide. Shortly after ordering it, it dawned on me that this same device could store backups of important data, photos, email, and the like that are stored on our home PCs. I'd simply provide shares accessible to anyone on the network and copy data folders into them to back them up. I added this to my configuration goals for the NAS.

Once it arrived, I started exploring it and quickly learned of additional capabilities I could use. After setting up the NAS and connecting it to my home network, I experimented with its built-in audio server. The audio capabilities appear so nice and full-featured, I may make use of them rather than pursuing my original goal of using it as a remote disk that would be used by a small audio-playing PC I would build and connect to a stereo. The DS411slim's Audio Station will stream music across the network and is DLNA (Digital Living Network Alliance) and UPnP (Universal Plug and Play) compliant. DLNA and UPnP certification means that the device will work well with other certified devices, such as the Sony PS3 and Microsoft Xbox360, in a home media network. My Nokia N900 and N810, along with my wife's new Android phone, all saw and played music stored on my NAS with no configuration required. I liked that, and will investigate if it makes sense to leverage that functionality.

In the meantime, the NAS has many other features designed for use in the home that I might be interested in. My wife, Nancy, spends a good deal of time managing her photo collection. The Photo Station application simplifies storing, viewing, managing, manipulat-ing, and downloading photos and videos directly on the NAS. The DS411slim supports a variety of file sharing technologies such as shared folders, FTP, and peer-to-peer sharing services. You can create a web site on it, from the most simple of sites to a blog or a full-fledged e-commerce site. You can attach a USB web camera to the NAS for visual surveillance of your home and office.

Mobile devices, such as Apple and Android phones and tablets are supported. Apple fans will be interested in the DS411slim's ability to act as an iTunes server and an Apple Time Machine. On top of all of these and other services, the NAS can be configured to be accessible from the Internet in a secure manner.

The DS411slim is by no means unique in providing these kinds of applications and functions. Search the Web with SOHO NAS to discover a variety of similar products providing similar functionality.

For me, what started as a simple task of setting up accessible centralized storage on my home network has morphed into an interesting education into just how much further home NASes have gone. For my project of providing access to my music anywhere in my home, I've been given new options that I had not been aware of. It is icing on the cake that what drives the DS411slim, and many of its competitors, is Linux and open source software. For my NAS is really a small, special purpose computer that runs Linux as its operating system, provides its services using open source applications, and has a huge amount of storage available on it. It is a strong example of the power and versatility of free and open software.

OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 29
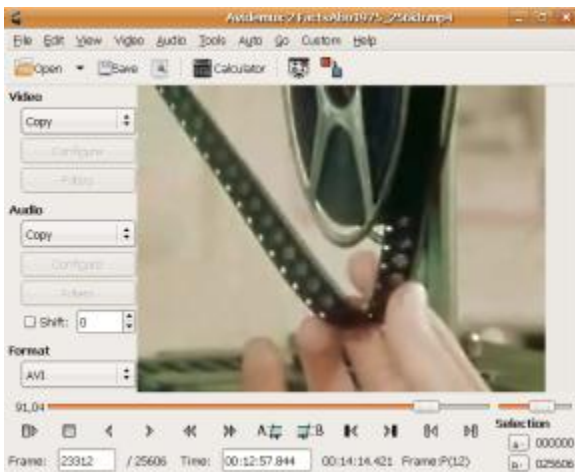
Compiled by Alan German and Bill Bradwin

This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available software is provided for the information of our members who may find one or more of the programs useful.

Avidemux

Avidemux is an open-source video editor designed for simple cutting, filtering and encoding tasks. It supports many file types, including AVI, DVD-compatible MPEG files, MP4 and ASF, using a variety of codecs.
Current Release: Version 2.5.5
Web Site: http://avidemux.sourceforge.net/

Duplicate Cleaner

You'd be surprised just how many duplicate files you could find forgotten in obscure folders. Duplicate Cleaner will deep scan for all types of files - photos, music, films/video, Word documents, etc. You name it and, if it appears twice on your computer, Duplicate Cleaner will help you find and remove it.
Current Release: Version 2.0
Web Site: http://www.digitalvolcano.co.uk

AbiWord

This word processor is similar to MS Word but, as an open-source package, AbiWord is free for downloading and use. The program will run on all popular computer platforms and can handle many file formats, including those for Word and Word Perfect.
Current Release: Version 2.8.6
Web Site: http://www.abisource.com/

Avira Free Antivirus

If you don't have virus protection, your PC could be infected with malware in a matter of minutes. Avira Free Antivirus 2012 offers basic protection against viruses, worms, Trojans, rootkits, adware, and spyware, and has been tried and tested over 100 million times worldwide.
Web Site: http://www.avira.com/en/avira-free-antivirus

Revo Uninstaller

Revo Uninstaller allows you to remove leftovers of programs that are already uninstalled, incomplete installations, and remnants of programs! It doesnøt even matter if the program, you want to remove, is not listed in the Windows Add/Remove Programs Control Panel applet.
Current Release: Version 1.93
Web Site: http://www.revouninstaller.com

Icy Tower

Icy Tower is a fun, short, yet addictive game, where your only goal is to gain as large a score as possible. Harold the Homeboy and his friends have decided to climb a huge tower. It's up to you to help them get as high as possible without falling down
Current Release: Version 1.5.1
Web Site: http://www.freelunchdesign.com/games.php?id=6

BlueStacks App Player

Run Android OS and apps on Windows PCøs or tablets - with instant switch between Android and Windows - no rebooting is required.
Web Site: http://bluestacks.com/

OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC UsersøGroup (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 Science and Technology Museum, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:3069:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) go until 10 p.m.

OPCUG Membership Fees:	$25 per year
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To cancel e-mailing, send a message in plain text to **listserve@opcug.ca** and type: **unsubscribe NewsletterTXT** or **unsubscribe NewsletterPDF**

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**. You might want to wait until you have successfully received at least one issue electronically before opting out from the printed version.

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Within a couple of minutes you will receive a confirmation message from the listserver.

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