PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2014 Year in Review *by Chris Taylor*

I feel truly fortunate for having served as your President for another year. Thank you to all for your support.

Thanks especially to our speakers, without whom the OPCUG would not exist. We enjoyed a wide variety of topics; alternative word processors, streaming media, Raspberry Pi, big data, spatial data & open data at the City of Ottawa, maker culture at the Ottawa Public Library, digital photo editing, Web comics, technical assistance to the elderly, and electromagnetic fields. Thanks to Mark Shainblum, Jeff Dubois, Don Isaacs, Bob Walker, Robert Giggey, Jason Barney, Mark Gelsomino, Brian Stagg, and Bob Sobol.

If you missed any meetings, you can find out more at http://opcug.ca/public/history/meetings.htm

I would like to thank those who contributed prizes for our raffles; the Microsoft MVP program with two copies of Windows 7 Ultimate, and MiniTool with two copies of Partition Wizard Professional Edition.

Unfortunately, we have been less successful in recent years in getting raffle prize donations. While this trend is expected to continue, anyone who can find a company willing to donate items suitable for raffles, please let a board member know. Six of this year's raffles prizes were purchased using Group funds. In all cases, the raffles brought in considerably more than the cost of the items.

Besides the normal Group business articles in the newsletter that most board members write, Alan German continued his prolific writing, contributing an as-tounding 24 articles! Why not give Alan a break and try writing for the newsletter. It's fun and not really that difficult. Just write on something related to computing you find interesting that you think others might enjoy.

Our newest member of the Board of Directors - Jeff Dubois - organized purchases of OPCUG-logoed clothing. In the spring we had various styles of shirts and hoodies along with baseball caps. For the Christmas season, Jeff (along with an artist friend) came up with a long-sleeved shirt featuring a snow person wearing an OPCUG toque.

We continued our successful presentations at the Ottawa Public Library in 2014, with Jeff Dubois, Alan German, and me giving various presentations. They continue to be of interest to the community. Given that I have seen faces at meetings who I first saw at library presentations, I think they help introduce the OPCUG to those in Ottawa.

In partnership with Evolu-TIC and CompuCorps, our eWaste event in June diverted 1.45 tons of electronics from the landfill and raised $218.18 for the OPCUG. We also got some good press about the event in the Ottawa Citizen and the Ottawa South News EMC.

When the Canada Science and Technology Museum closed due to building problems, Bob Walker, our facilities chair, had to scramble. With the help of the wonderful folks at both museums, we have secured space at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum for the foreseeable future.

In December, we held our silent auction with all proceeds donated to the Ottawa Food Bank. Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate, resulting in a very low turn-out. Nevertheless, we brought in $429 for the Food Bank. A big shout-out to O'Reilly, Jeff Dubois, Alan German, Bobbie Lister, Levi Vallières, and Lill Limoges, who contributed items for the raffle. Jeff donated an amazing 28 items! O'Reilly donated over $360 worth of books and then topped that by allowing everyone who came out to the auction to download an ebook for free from their site!

I want to extend a big thank you to the Board of Directors as well as Mark Cayer (membership chair), Bob Herres (election chair), Richard Aylesworth (who scrutinizes the books), and Bert Schopf (who generously allows the Board to use his office for Board meetings.) Without their hard work and generosity, the OPCUG would simply not exist.

Finally, thanks to all of you for continuing to support the OPCUG.

Next Meeting: WEDNESDAY, February 11th, 2015

February Raffle

For the February raffle, we have a **Microsoft Wireless 800 Desktop**.

Experience the freedom and convenience of wireless technology with this affordable keyboard and mouse set. Control a media computer while sitting on your couch, or conveniently stow the keyboard and mouse away without hassling with wires. You can roam up to 15 feet away with a strong signal. Or, you can take the mouse separately to use with a laptop while traveling-the tiny transceiver conveniently snaps into the bottom of the mouse when it's time to pack up and go. Setting up the keyboard and mouse is simple: just insert the batteries, plug in the tiny transceiver, and start typing!

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 February 11th, 2015
Annual General Meeting followed by:
Speaker: *TBA* (check the OPCUG website for updates at http://opcug.ca)
Topic: *TBA*

March 11th
Topic: Members' Favourites by OPCUG members *(to be confirmed):*
Speakers: Jeff Dubois: Kodi Enhancements: Streaming Live TV Content
       Chris Taylor: Photo to book
       Alan German: web site WYSIWYG

May 13th
Speakers: Jeff Dubois (OPCUG) and Fred Ennis
Topic: VoIP, (Voice over Internet Protocol)

June 10th
Annual Pizza Night and Speaker *(TBA)*

January Prize Winner

David Handley is now the proud owner of a Ubislate 7ci tablet after he won the raffle at the January 2015 OPCUG meeting.
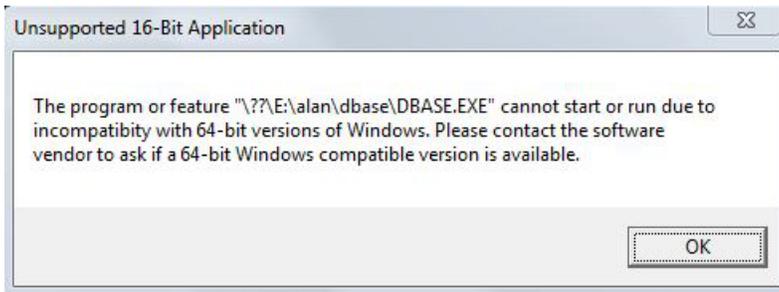
2015 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, February 11th	7:30 p.m. **Auditorium of the Canada Aviation and Space Museum**, 11 Aviation Parkway. http://casmuseum.techno-science.ca/en/index.php
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, February 11th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux / Open Source SIG	Wednesday, February 11th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, February 11th	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).		

PRODUCT REVIEW

DOS-in-a-Box   *by Alan German*

Do you have a need – or a desire – to run DOS programs? Perhaps you have some programs that you wrote many moons ago (like my Clipper-compiled, dBASE III, accounting program from 25 years ago!) Or, maybe you have some old games that you haven't played in a while. But, when you go to start these DOS programs on your new computer, running 64-bit Windows 7, you are presented with an error message that your program is an "Unsupported 16-Bit Application". In other words your version of Windows won't run DOS programs.

Well, that's not strictly true. Sure, 64-bit Windows won't run DOS programs natively, but you can work around this limitation by using a virtual machine. For example, you could install Virtualbox on your computer, set up a virtual machine (VM), install DOS on this VM, load your DOS program, and run it inside the VM.
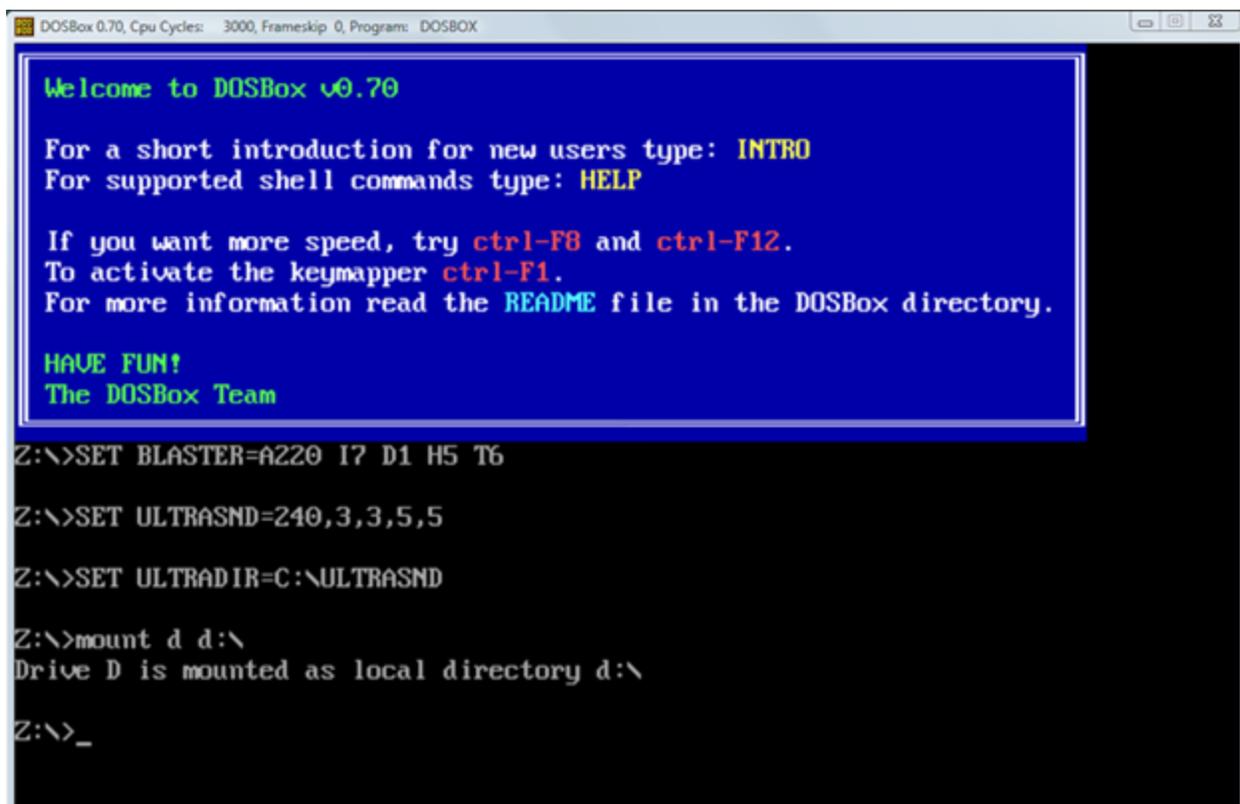
The major downside to this procedure is that you will have to find a copy of DOS to install in the virtual machine. If you can even find such a beast, it's very likely that your copy of DOS will be on 3.5" floppy disks – and your brand spanking new box doesn't have a floppy disk drive!

It turns out that there is a much simpler solution – install and run DOSBox. This software is essentially a dedicated virtual machine for DOS, and you will be able to run your old programs with relative ease.

By default, DOSBox loads with drive Z: enabled. This contains such old favourites as COM-MAND.COM and AUTOEXEC.BAT. However, DOSBox is much more useful if we point it to a real disk drive (or partition) by using the mount command. In the screenshot, you can see that I have enabled drive d: in DOSBox as the real drive D: (the data partition) on my hard drive.

Clearly, one can mount any Windows drive in a similar manner. So, for example, we could run a DOS program that is installed (loaded) on either the C: or the D: drive, or mount a CD-ROM and run software directly from the optical disk.

TREASURER'S REPORT – 2014

Alan German

The club's financial picture for the 2014 fiscal year has seen some improvement from the previous year. While, on paper, our annual deficit appears to be relatively high at over $1,100.00, this value is inflated due to accounting for donations made to The Ottawa Food Bank in both 2013 and 2014 as detailed later in this report. In fact, the club's Board of Directors took steps part way through the fiscal year to reduce our expenditures, particularly with respect to the newsletter, and this action has resulted in a healthier financial situation. The bottom line is that we continue to carry forward a reasonable surplus into 2015.

The asset picture for the past financial year is as shown on the following balance sheet:

Current Assets			
1000	Cash Account (TDCT)		1,499.58
1100	Investment Account (ING)		18,984.01
1200	Membership Float		40.00
1210	Petty Cash Float		14.50
1300	Membership Account (PayPal)		47.94
		Total Assets	**20,586.03**
Equity			
OPCUG, Capital December 31, 2013			**21,698.07**
	Total revenue		4,776.84
	Total expenses		5,888.88
	Net income		**-1,112.04**
OPCUG, Capital December 31, 2014			**20,586.03**

Figure 1. Balance Sheet for the 2014 Fiscal Year

While we spent approximately $1,100 more than we received in income during 2014, our total capital balance continues to be in excess of $20,000.

The income statement for 2014 is shown in Figure 2. The individual income and expense accounts for 2014 are shown, together with their equivalents for fiscal year 2013 in order to provide a comparison. A number of items are worthy of special mention.

There was a large increase in Merchandise Income resulting from the sale of clothing items; however, this was more or less offset by the increase in Merchandise Expense as this was not intended to be a revenue-generating exercise. Miscellaneous Income included $218.18 from the E-waste event, and a further $50.00 received as a referral bonus from Tangerine (previously ING Direct). The almost $600.00 increase in Miscellaneous Expenses resulted largely from a need to replenish our supply of speakers' gifts and the purchase of a number of raffle prizes.

TREASURER'S REPORT – 2014

		2014	2013	Variance
Revenue				
2100	Bank Interest (ING)	188.42	199.34	-10.92
2200	Membership Income	2300.00	2400.00	-100.00
2300	Raffle Income	967.00	805.00	162.00
2400	Merchandise Income	624.00	50.00	574.00
2500	Workshop Income	0.00	0.00	
2900	Miscellaneous Income	268.42	193.70	74.72
2910	Donation Income	429.00	504.00	-75.00
	Total revenue	4776.84	4152.04	
Expenses				
3100	PUB II Expense	964.90	1072.68	-107.78
3200	Newsletter Expense	1696.20	2343.15	-646.95
3300	Office Supplies Expense	11.13	8.63	2.50
3400	Bank Charges	59.40	59.40	
3500	Barbecue Expense	796.77	832.55	-35.78
3600	Facility Rental	180.00	180.00	
3700	Workshop Expense	0.00	0.00	
3800	Merchandise Expense	609.67	319.22	290.45
3900	Miscellaneous Expense	622.65	31.00	591.65
3910	Donation Expense	933.00	0.00	933.00
3920	Membership Expense	15.16		15.16
	Total operating expenses	5888.88	4846.63	
	Net income	-1112.04	-694.59	

Figure 2. Income Statement for the 2014 Fiscal Year

There was a reduction of $646.95 in the expenses relating to the production of the newsletter. This resulted from the Board of Directors making only electronic copies of the newsletter available to branches of the Ottawa Public Library, and a number of club members opting to receive the E-newsletter instead of hard copy. This enabled us to reduce the production run and hence the cost of the hard-copy newsletter, and also reduce the associated costs for postage. This change occurred in mid-year and so larger savings, over our historical expenditures for this item, should manifest themselves in 2015.

While it appears that our Donation Expense increased from zero to $933.00 in fiscal year 2014, this is an artifact of our cash-accounting system. The Ottawa Food Bank did not cash our 2013 cheque until January, 2014, while they deposited our 2014 cheque in December. As a result, both of these charges appear in the accounts for 2014, even though the income for the 2013 donation was received, and accounted for, in fiscal year 2013. All of the donation income from our silent auction is flowed through as a donation expense so this is actually a revenue-neutral item.

Finally, it should be noted that we have three new accounts this year, a petty cash account that is used to make payments for small expense amounts rather than using cheques, a PayPal membership account that is used to accept on-line payments, and a membership expense account that is used to track the fees associated with the PayPal transactions.

DOS-in-a-Box *(Continued from page 3)*

The other trick with DOSBox is that it uses a configuration file (dosbox.conf) stored in the main DOSBox folder (usually C:\Program Files\DOSBox). Multiple entries in this file control, a whole host of program features.
I found it particularly useful to change "windowresolution=original" to "windowresolution=1024x768" and "output=surface" to "output=opengl". These modifications enabled a somewhat larger window to be used for the main DOSBox program than that established by default.
Finally, DOS commands added to the last section of the configuration file are run automatically when DOSBox starts. Placing specific commands here can be very useful, for example to mount a disk drive/partition that will be used in subsequent DOS operations.
I have adopted this technique to mount my data disk each time I run DOS Box, and to transfer control to this drive. As you might guess, the commands at the end of the configuration file are:

[autoexec]
Lines in this section will be run at startup.
mount d d:\
d:

So, there you have it – the possibility of recalling a blast from the past! Run your old DOS programs on your brand spanking new 64-bit Windows computer using DOSBox.

Bottom Line

DOSBox (Open Source)
Version 0.74
Peter Veenstra, Sjoerd Harekiet, Tommy
     Frössman and Ulf Wohlers
http://www.dosbox.com/

OPCUG AND CASM FACILITY

As most of you are already aware, our long term meeting venue at the Canada Science and Technology Museum (CSTM) was closed suddenly due to mold problems the day after our last meeting there in the fall. Re-opening dates quickly started moving further and further out as more and more problems were found. When it became apparent that repairs would take upwards of $80M and could take well over a year, the government opted to combine the repairs with a major upgrade projected to cost well over $200M. Current plans are for the museum to re-open in 2017 as part of the 150th Anniversary of Confederation celebrations.

The CSTM is part of a museum group that includes the Canada Aviation and Space Museum (CASM) and the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum (CAFM). The Aviation museum stepped up to the plate immediately and gave us a space for our meetings. That said, the venue is a little crowded for our meetings and is in a relatively isolated location away from any evening bus routes, although members who wish to do so can fly to meetings using the adjacent airfield.

The larger theatre in the Aviation museum requires us to pay for their audio-video tech for each meeting, and the Agriculture museum venue just off of Prince of Wales Drive with good bus connections requires us to pay for after-hours security. We can't really afford either expense. Other suitable venues in Ottawa charge 'market' rates of from $300 to $1,000 per meeting.

The OPCUG Board of Directors has decided to remain at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum until the Canada Science and Technology Museum re-opens unless we can find a suitable, centrally located venue serviced by evening buses that charges less than $500 to $600 per year. If you know of any such facility please let the Board of Directors know.

Robert Walker
Facilities Coordinator
Ottawa PC Users' Group

OPCUG Free Software Guide – Part 54

Compiled by
Alan German

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.

Startup Tracker
Want to know what Windows is doing on boot-up? This utility will check the start menu and the system registry for items that load at startup. It will also list all the processes and services that are running. The results can be copied to the clipboard or stored in a log file.
Current Release: Version 3.9
Web Site: http://preview.tinyurl.com/y8wu8y

Metapad
This small, fast, and completely free text editor for Windows has similar features to Microsoft Notepad but with many extra (and rather useful) features.
Current Release: Version 3.6
Web Site: http://liquidninja.com/metapad/

Sizer
Use this app to resize the window of any application so that it occupies a specific size on the screen. Sizer runs as a terminate-and-stay-resident program. Right-clicking on any window pops-up a resizing menu.
Current Release: Version: 3.34
Previously Reviewed: Resizing Windows, Alan German, http://opcug.ca/public/Reviews/Sizer.htm
Web Site: http://www.brianapps.net/sizer/

Raw Therapee
Do you need an editor for the RAW images that you take on your high-end digital camera? Raw Therapee supports several different RAW formats and has many tools with which you can modify your images.
Current Release: Version 4.1.80
Web Site: http://rawtherapee.com/

OpenPuff
Use this open-source steganography tool to safely hide your encrypted data "in full view" inside a digital image, audio, or video file. Some time ago, Chris Taylor told us about this technique in a newsletter article entitled: "Hide in plain sight" (http://opcug.ca/public/Reviews/Steg.html)
Current Release: Version 4.00
Web Site: http://preview.tinyurl.com/3hdd4qy

Panda USB Vaccine
This anti-malware solution protects removable devices, such as memory sticks, MP3 players, and digital cameras from malicious codes that modify the AutoRun file.
Current Release: Version 1.0.0.18 Beta
Web Site: http://preview.tinyurl.com/cwyzxn

Exact Audio Copy
This utility will extract audio tracks, or even parts of them, from a CD to your hard disk. A built-in editor lets you delete sections, apply fade in/out, reduce noise, and much, much more.
Current Release: Version 1.0 beta3
Web Site: http://www.exactaudiocopy.de/en/

Dexpot
Want multiple desktops for your Windows system? You need Dexpot. This software will provide up to 20 individual workspaces that you can quickly switch between. You probably don't need any more!
Current Release: Version 1.6.14
Web Site: http://dexpot.de/

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 7:30 p.m. **Auditorium of the Canada Aviation and Space Museum**, 11 Aviation Parkway, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) go until 10 p.m.

Parking is available at the museum for a flat fee of $3 after 5pm. Limited street parking is available for free. Details at http://opcug.ca/public/regmtg.htm

OPCUG Membership Fees:	$25 per year
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(vacant)

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Reduce, Reuse, 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.

Any items left over at the end of the meeting have to be taken back home by those who brought them in.