



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

Volume 36, Number 6

June 2019

ARTICLE

Never give up

by Chris Taylor

Vendors can drive me nuts!

Early in 2018, I bought a Wacom Intuous CTH-490 pen tablet. The tablet itself is great. My only problem with it was the battery indicator that runs in the Windows system tray. It would report as much as 70% remaining battery when the tablet would suddenly shut down with a totally depleted battery. The battery life was actually much better than promised by Wacom; I got up to 14 hours of active use. But the tray icon indicator was always wildly optimistic.

I contacted Wacom support. They couldn't be nicer or more willing to help. Kudos to them for that. Over the next several months, they shipped me two replacement wireless kits and an entire replacement tablet. Nothing helped.

Finally, they sent me the latest model – the Wacom Intuous CTL-4100WL. The newer models use Bluetooth for wireless, which is nice. The older model used a dongle that occupied the only USB-A port on my laptop. I was less pleased that Wacom dropped support for touch; they now only work with the pen. I miss touch for some edge cases, but was willing to give that up if the battery life indicator worked. Battery life remained excellent at an average of 12 hours active use.

I was not pleased to discover that the tray icon for the new model did not

give *any* indication of battery life. Another email to Wacom. It turned out to be a bug in the driver. An updated driver fixed that and the tray icon now reports battery life accurately. Wacom added a warning that will pop up when battery life drops to 20%. Nice.

Wacom never admitted to a fault with the wireless components of the Intuous CTH-490 and in fact told me, "There have been no reports of problems with the battery life indicator"

Imagine my surprise when a December update to the driver had the following in the release notes;

CTL & CTH-480, 490, 680, 690: The battery life indicator for Intuos pen tablets is not correct. The battery life indicator may display more power than is actually available, leading to unexpected tablet power loss.

What you can do about it while we fix it: Use your pen tablet with a wired connection or charge your tablet more often than usual.



<sarcasm>Since I was the only person in the world to have experienced this problem, it is surprising that they saw fit to highlight it in the release notes. </sarcasm>

In truth, I have always been impressed with Wacom products. I use my CTL-4100WL when travelling and giving presentations. I have a larger Intuous PTK-640 on my desktop. Both make photo editing *much* easier and are useful in some other applications. Wacom tablets are the standard by which other tablets are measured, and for good reason. I just wish they had been willing to admit to a known problem.

Never give up holding a vendor's feet to the fire! We pay good money for their products and we deserve having them perform as promised.



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Annual Pizza Night and eWaste Event: WEDNESDAY, June 12th, 2019

June Raffle

Courtesy of Glasswire, we have a license for their namesake program.

Elite Edition Glasswire is a sophisticated firewall product that shows who or what your PC is talking to. It allows you to detect malware, badly behaving apps, and bandwidth hogs, then block their connections. It warns you of network related changes to your PC that could indicate malware. Glasswire can also alert you when new unknown devices join your WiFi.

For a review of Glasswire, see <http://opcug.ca/Reviews/GlassWire.html>

Glasswire Elite edition can be installed on up to 10 computers.

Tickets are \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten.

May Prize Winners

Our raffle prize winner of an xDragon Solar Power Bank was ticket seller extraordinaire **Wayne Houston**.

And due to the incredible **generosity of Lynda Buske** we had a door prize of a Canon Rebel SLR Camera. **Julia B.** was the lucky recipient.

Coming Up...

Wednesday June 12, 2019

Annual Pizza Night and **eWaste Event** followed by our speaker.

eWaste collection: 5:30 - 7 pm (see a list of accepted electronic items [here](#))

Pizza: 6 - 7:30 pm

Speaker: 7:30 - 9 pm

Q&A session: 9 - 10 pm

The pizza dinner is for members only and their guests. Come enjoy pizza, soft drinks/water, and dessert. This is an annual member appreciation dinner. Non-members can attend the presentation and Q&A portions of the evening starting at 7:30 pm.

This will be our first Pizza Night/eWaste event at the church. There will be no tent, but the church has an overhang at the main entrance that can provide shade for many people. Should there be rain, we hope to have permission to eat inside the church. There are also no picnic tables or outdoor seating, so we recommend that **everyone bring a lawn chair**.

Speaker: Cameron Bell, CEO CANImmunize
Topic: Vaccination Tracking App

Cameron Bell is the Chief Technology Officer of CANImmunize, Canada's national vaccination tracking app, and for the last 4 years has been the Lead Technical Architect for the Ottawa Hospital's Mobile Health Lab. Cameron wrote his first ever lines of code on the CANImmunize project, and 8 years later the app has been downloaded by over 250,000 Canadians. Among the other apps he has helped build is one that will tell you how long you are going to live, and another that aims to prevent sex assaults at music festivals. He will discuss how he got into computing, what he's learned building apps in the healthcare space, the emerging field of digital health, and some of the innovations we can expect to see in the near future!

September 11, 2019

Speaker: Chris Taylor

Topic: My experiences upgrading to a Solid State Drive (SSD)

June 12th is the last meeting before our summer hiatus. Have a nice summer and see you all in September!

For meeting updates and additional details, visit <http://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm>.

2019 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, June 12 th	7:30 p.m. at the Riverside United Church, 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Parking is free. OC Transpo bus #87 stops nearby. Visit http://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm for directions.
Q&A Session	Wednesday, June 12 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, June 12 th	10:00 p.m. (after the Q&A) at the Riverside Pub, 3673 Riverside Drive. Turn left onto Riverside Dr. from the Church.

ARTICLE

It's all about the speed by Chris Taylor

Universal Serial Bus (USB) 2.0 was introduced in 2000 and has a maximum throughput of 480 Mbit/sec. It was termed *high speed* to distinguish it from USB 1, which was called *Full Speed*.

USB 3.0 was introduced in 2008 and allows for transfer rates up to 5 Gbit/sec. Don't expect to ever actually achieve that throughput, but it is significantly faster than USB 2.0 in real-life scenarios. Using a USB 3 external hard drive, I see data transfers at least twice as fast on a USB 3 port. To distinguish it from USB 2.0, USB 3.0 was called *SuperSpeed*.

USB 3.1 and 3.2 increase the maximum throughput to 10 Gbit/sec and 20 Gbit/sec respectively. Both were named *SuperSpeed+*. Why wasn't USB 3.2 named *SuperSpeed++* or *SuperDuperSpeed*? For the purposes of this article, I will lump together all USB 3.x as *USB 3*.

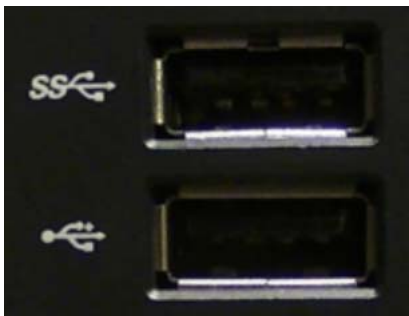
To maintain compatibility, the size and shape of the *Type A* port for USB 2 and 3 are identical. This led to confusion. Most computers have a mix of USB 2 and 3 ports. How are you supposed to know if you are plugging in a device to a USB 2 or 3 port? There are *usually* two ways to tell.

If you see a blue tab, it is USB 3.



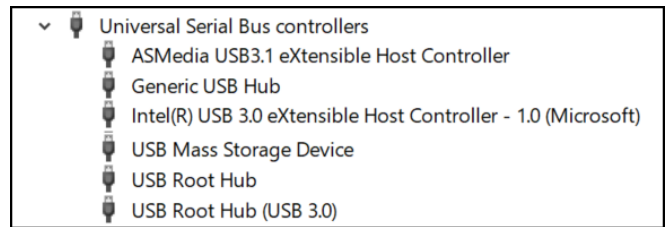
Blue tab means right port is USB 3

Not all manufacturers use a blue tab for USB 3 ports. Some use the *SS* (SuperSpeed) designation beside the port. If you see *SS* beside the USB symbol, it is a USB 3 port.



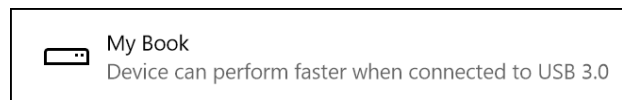
SS on top port means it is USB 3

Sometimes all USB ports have black tabs and none have the *SS* designation. That does not necessarily mean you have no USB 3 ports. In Windows, go to Device Manager and expand the section *Universal Serial Bus controllers*. If you see *USB 3* on any *host controller* or *hub*, you likely have at least one port that is USB 3.

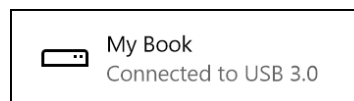


Then you have to figure out how to make sure fast devices such as USB 3 external hard drives or flash drives are connected to a USB 3 port rather than a slower USB 2 port.

Leave the device unplugged and go to *Settings | Devices | Bluetooth & other devices | Other devices* in Windows 10. Note the devices listed. Then plug in your USB 3 device. If you see a new entry like the following, you have plugged it into a USB 2 port.



On the other hand, if you plugged it into a USB 3 port, Windows will let you know.



I use my USB 2 ports for things that don't need the speed that USB 3 can give; mouse, keyboard, printer, drawing tablet, etc. I make sure USB 3 devices – especially external drives, where I can really notice the performance benefits – are plugged into USB 3 ports. I try to keep a free USB 3 port in case I have a USB 3 flash drive or camera that I need to use occasionally.

I decided to write this article when I discovered that *all* USB ports on the back of Lynda's desktop computer are USB 2! There are two USB 3 ports on the front of her computer. Not very convenient to have her external hard drive used for backups plugged into the front. Something to think about the next time you buy a new desktop computer.



PRODUCT REVIEW

MiniTool ShadowMaker Free *by Alan German*

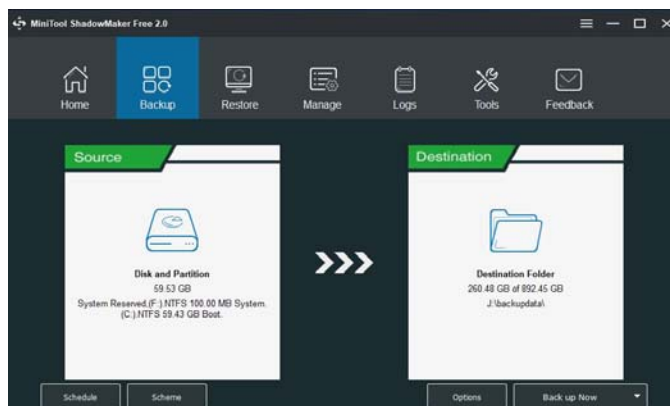
Both Chris Taylor and I have been strongly recommending various backup systems to members as almost a must-do method for protecting your computers and especially your irreplaceable data files. Each of us has their favourite disk imaging program so does the world need yet another piece of such software? Well, sure it does – when the product is Canadian made!

Enter ShadowMaker, a disk imaging system developed by Vancouver-based MiniTool Software Ltd. ShadowMaker is the latest in a line of disk utilities that includes Power Data Recovery, a program that was reviewed earlier and copies of which have been featured as prizes in our monthly raffles.

The current review takes a look at the major features of ShadowMaker Free which, as the name suggests, is the free version in a suite of programs that also includes Pro, Pro Ultimate, Business Standard and Business Deluxe versions. As with most such free software, ShadowMaker Free provides less features than its more powerful cousins; however, the available capabilities should be sufficient for many home users.

The free version allows images to be made of both disks and individual partitions, including options for incremental or differential images. In addition, backups of multiple files and/or folders may be made. Disk images may be restored in full, or mounted and browsed, allowing individual files and folders to be recovered. The program allows for scheduling so that multiple backups can be made on a regular basis. Bootable rescue media can be produced under WinPE (Windows Preinstallation Environment) a lightweight version of Windows which provides a familiar environment should use of the recovery media be required. An HTML help file, accessible from the main program window, provides clear instructions and graphics to explain all of the program's features.

As noted above, there are some limitations of ShadowMaker Free when compared to ShadowMaker Pro. For example, management of remote computers (machines on the same LAN) is not supported, the backup scheme (image retention/deletion) used to control the disk space occupied by backup files cannot be changed, and the WinPE rescue media can't be used to create or manage backups. In addition, support for various versions of Windows Server is only provided by the business editions of ShadowMaker. So, if you require any of these features, or licences for multiple machines, you will need to purchase one of the higher-level versions of the software.



The program has a user interface featuring a wizard system that allows any given task to be specified in a step-by-step manner. The first program window invites the user to manage backups for either the local computer or a remote machine (but, note that this latter option is not actually available in the free version). Connecting to "This Computer" brings up the main menu screen that provides large icons for Home, Backup, Restore, Manage, Logs, Tools, and Feedback.

Without reading the help file, the processes are not always completely intuitive, but trial and error seems to work well for those of us who just like to dive into programs without consulting the instructions. For example, the "Backup" option is clearly designed to create an image of a disk or partition from a source disk to a destination disk. But, what if we wish to make a backup of a disk folder or several files? The answer is to click on the "Source" window in which case a subsequent "Select Source" window offers "Disk and Partitions" or "Folders and Files". In either case, additional windows allow browsing and selecting the desired source material. The destination path is similarly determined. Then, a "Back up Now" button (with a "Back up Later" drop-down) commences the imaging process.

The program has a number of idiosyncrasies that don't appeal to my way of maintaining backups. Firstly, it doesn't allow the user to name the backup image. So, a full disk image ends up displaying a list of partitions to be included such as: System Reserved, (F:), (C:), DataDisk, (E:), (*),(*), ==> J:\z_images\MiniTool\{24be04ae-135b-4749-8cd5-1716a3f3fe20}. This essentially reflects the precise nature of the source and target components of the image, albeit in a very wordy manner. The actual image file is named: disk20180810000-full.mpi and is located on my backup disk at: J:\z_images\MiniTool\{24be04ae-135b-4749-8cd5-1716a3f3fe20}.

Sure, I am allowed to add "Full hard disk backup 10-Aug-2018" as a comment associated with the backup image but, this comment is only visible once a backup file has been selected to be restored and the Restore File Wizard implemented. Consequently, this is of little value in

(Continued on page 5)

MiniTool *(Continued from page 4)*

selecting a particular image from an entire list of such images. And, this comment is retained by the backup program and will be added to any future backup file unless the comment is deleted or overwritten.

A second issue is that, while most tasks issue static success messages in pop-up windows, for some reason when a backup task is completed, the program pops up a somewhat cryptic Windows notification that stays on the screen only briefly. And, by cryptic, I mean a message such as: The plan "Files to image: : System Reserved, (F:), (C:), DataDisk, (E:), (*),(*), ==> J:\z_images\MiniTool\{24be04ae-135b-4749-8cd5-1716a3f3fe20}" completed. Now, that is a cryptic success message!

The other oddity is that a round, on-screen button displaying the word "Good" is now displayed on the screen. Clicking on this button (to find out what it means!) identifies that it is an indication of the hard disk's status. In my case, I was delighted to learn that my 250 GB SSD has: Health Status: Good. MiniTool call this feature a "Floating Ball". However, the problem that I have is that the ball is floating! It's completely "disembodied" from the program while it could at least be part of the main program window. Also, there is no option to toggle it on and off, which would be my preference.

As noted earlier, restoring an image calls up a Restore File Wizard that uses much the same step-by-step method used for backups, albeit "in reverse". Clicking on the "Restore" icon brings up a window listing all of the available images. Once an image is selected, the wizard asks which portions of the image are to be restored. For example, an individual file from a folder may be restored rather than the entire contents of the image file. In addition, a target drive and folder may be specified where the restored file is to be saved, i.e. it doesn't have to be restored to its original location.

A very useful feature under the Tools menu is the ability to mount an image of a disk or a partition. The image then appears in File Explorer as a new (virtual) drive. The virtual drive is mounted as read-only and allows specific files and folders to be easily copied back to the original drive. Unfortunately, ShadowMaker doesn't let the user set the drive letter, and doesn't even indicate which drive letter has been used. This is a minor inconvenience since, by default, the drive letter used for the image is likely to be adjacent to that of the original disk. So, for example, the image of DataDisk (D:), my dedicated data drive, was mounted as DataDisk (E:). The mounted image is also easily determined by simply looking at Tools – Dismount where the only choice to dismount an image is E:\. Another oddity in the program is that, when the disk image is unmounted, it isn't immediately removed from the list of available drives in the left sidebar of File Explorer. But, clicking on the drive pops up a message indicating the drive is unavailable.

ShadowMaker Free likely offers all the features that a home user would use, albeit with a somewhat strange (to me) image naming protocol. But, if this isn't an issue for you, the package provides a viable backup solution for entire disks or individual files and folders.

Bottom Line

MiniTool Shadow Maker Free
(Freeware)
Version 2.0
MiniTool Software Ltd.
Vancouver, BC
<https://www.minitool.com/backup/system-backup.html>



Excel Sorting & Grouping

By Lawrence Patterson lawrence@opcu.ca

SORTING & GROUPING IN EXCEL

How many of you wanted to quickly sort and organize data, and though many of us have used Excel to build lists, we don't know what to do with them once you typed them in?

First, whatever list you're doing, segregate your data into bite size pieces. Examples being your first and last name, relationship, date of birth, etc., each entered into a separate column. And keep each row / record unique (use a dummy counting field if necessary).

Now that you have your data typed, do the following:

1. Select the contiguous range you want to include in your sort;
2. Click on the **Data** group and select **Sort**;
3. Decide whether you want to include headers or not;
4. Decide on the how many fields you want to base your sort on;
5. Review the Order you want each Column / Row sorted by.

With that done, let's use the Grouping function so that you can quickly visualize what's important to you at any given moment. Before we start, think of Grouping as a visual way of hiding columns and rows, with a handy marker to unhide with a click.

1. Select column(s) or row(s) that you wish to group;
 2. Click on the **Data** group and select **Sort**;
 3. Click on the **Group** button.
- you can add multiple nested groups

Now let's utilize shortcut keys and mouse clicks to do the following:

Ctrl+Home = Top left of active sheet
Ctrl+End = Bottom right of active sheet
-add Shift to select a range

Group Mode "**Plus**" symbol, expands, while the "**minus**" compresses / hides.

Take care.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Moving “back” to Vivaldi by Alan German

In an article, that was included in the September, 2018 newsletter, I extolled the virtues of the Opera web browser in meeting my baseline requirements for specifying the content of any new tabs, managing JavaScript, and displaying the progress of file downloads.

At the time, one minor annoyance with the use of Opera was its inability to display downloaded PDF files in an external PDF viewer, even though there was a setting that should have allowed this feature. Subsequent use of the browser identified a further, even more annoying issue whereby the browser failed to retain the window size on closing the program and reverted to a fixed window size the next time the browser was run.

The final comment in my original article was that *“Time will tell if Opera remains my browser of choice.”* In fact, time, and further use of the browser, have determined that it’s now time to move on – or perhaps move “back” – to yet another web browser.

My current choice of browser is Vivaldi (<https://vivaldi.com>). This is an interesting software package since it is essentially a “retro” version of Opera. Jón Stephenson von Tetzchner, one of Vivaldi’s co-founders, had originally been a co-founder of the Opera web browser. However, von Tetzchner did not agree with the direction taken by Opera’s development team, and in particular the removal of many popular features of the software. Vivaldi is intended to remedy such deficiencies and to reproduce the features of earlier versions of the other browser.



Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

This is one of the reasons for my indication of going “back” to Vivaldi. Using this browser maintains many of the features that I liked about Opera, but Vivaldi also provides past functionalities that I find particularly useful.

The name chosen for the browser reflects Antonio Vivaldi, a well-known Italian composer from the Baroque era. The name Vivaldi, therefore, makes the browser easy to remember.

However, the name is also quite appropriate since many of the most famous Italian opera composers (think Verdi and Puccini) lived and worked in the 1800-1900’s, while Vivaldi dates from the 1700’s. Thus, the concept of “going back” from Opera to Vivaldi seems to make sense. [I wonder if this is what the program’s developers had in mind when they named their browser?]

Vivaldi is easy to download and install, and it’s cross-platform, so in my case I can use the same browser for both Linux and Windows.

The first piece of good news is that browser remembers its window size so that, once set, there is no need to continually readjust the window to suit the user’s preference. The second item is that, in addition to being able to set the browser’s home page, a built-in feature allows this to be displayed whenever a new tab is opened. Thus, there is no need to install a third-party extension to provide this capability. In addition, a setting to support the display of downloaded PDF files in an external PDF viewer actually works in this browser. So, three out of three so far.

Like in Opera, the print menu is “hidden” in the browser’s menu system, requiring clicking on the Vivaldi logo in the top-left corner of the browser window and then selecting

File – Print. Fortunately, there is a Print extension available that provide a dedicated icon in the top-right corner of the browser window that opens the print menu directly.

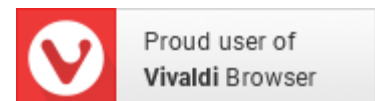
Interestingly, Vivaldi uses extensions that are available from the Chrome Store. So, the print utility is obtained by navigating to Menu – Tools – Extensions, clicking on the “hamburger” icon, selecting Open Chrome Web, searching for Print, and selecting Print for Google Chrome.

There is also no setting to toggle JavaScript on and off. However, a search for an extension related to JavaScript provides links to a number of packages, including JavaScript Toggle On and Off, the extension that I was previously using in Opera.

So, there we have it. All of the functionality provided by Opera together with some useful additions available in Vivaldi. It’s once again time to say *“Farewell past, happy dreams of days gone by.”* but, this time, perhaps we can add another Verdi quote – *“Let us turn to the past: that will be progress.”* (Letter to Francesco Florimo, January 5, 1871).

Bottom Line

Vivaldi
Version 2.3.1440.48
Vivaldi Technologies AS [NO]
<https://vivaldi.com>



OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 88 Compiled by Alan German

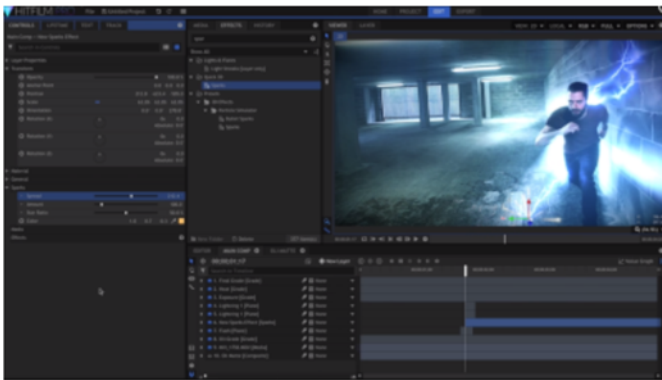
This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available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

HitFilm Express

Video editing, VFX, and all the power you need to make something cool. Take your first step towards professional-quality filmmaking with FXhome's free starter software: HitFilm Express. This program is perfect for students, YouTubers, and all beginner filmmakers.

Current Release: Version 11.1

Web Site: <https://fxhome.com/express>



AxCrypt

Easily encrypt your sensitive files using a password and strong encryption. Right-click integration with Windows Explorer makes AxCrypt the easiest way to secure individual files in Windows. Secured folders will automatically protect all included files. Available for Windows, Mac and Android. Previously reviewed: File Encryption with AxCrypt; Alan German; <http://opcug.ca/Reviews/axcrypt.htm>

Current Release: Version 2.1.1560

Web Site: <https://www.axcrypt.net>

Free Download Manager

Use this utility to split files into several sections and download them simultaneously using any type of connection at the maximum available speed. The utility will let you boost download speed up to 10 times, process media files of various popular formats, and let you drag and drop URL's directly from a web browser.

Current Release: Version 5.1.37

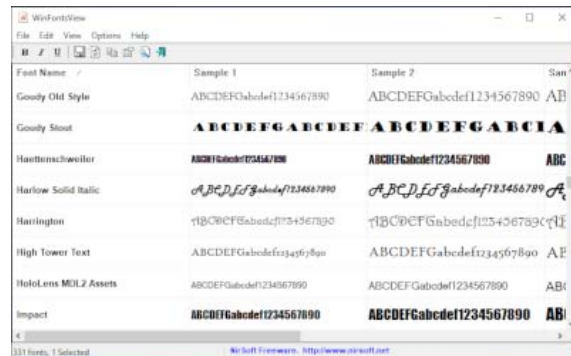
Web Site: <https://www.freedownloadmanager.org>

WinFontsView

This small utility identifies all the fonts installed on your system, and displays them in a simple table. Five samples of each font, are drawn in different sizes. You can view them as Bold, Italic, or Underline. Easily find the font that you need!

Current Release: Version 1.10

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/y7csk2yr>



PDFfill PDF Tools

A set of tools to merge, split, reorder, delete, encrypt, decrypt, rotate, crop and reformat PDF pages. Add headers and footers or watermarks. Convert image files to PDF.

Current Release: Version 14.0

Web Site: http://www.pdfill.com/pdf_tools_free.html

Socusoft Photo to Video Converter Free Version

Use this free tool to easily combine your digital photos with background music to create stunning MPEG-1 slideshows. It includes built-in transition effects and a high speed video converter engine.

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/ycxh44o4>

OpenTTD

OpenTTD is an open-source simulation game based upon the popular Microprose game "Transport Tycoon Deluxe", written by Chris Sawyer. It attempts to mimic the original game as closely as possible while extending it with new features.

Current Release: Version 1.8.0

Web Site: <https://www.openttd.org/en/>



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 Riverside United Church, 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Parking is free at the church. OC Transpo bus #87 stops nearby. Details at <http://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm>.

Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. followed by a Q&A Session until 10 p.m.

OPCUG Membership Fees: \$20 per year
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Follow us on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/opcug>

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Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Bring your old computer books, software, 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 under two years.

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.

