



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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ARTICLE

Updating Your Operating System and Programs by Chris Taylor

When a vendor finds problems in their software, they generally fix them. They then issue patches, which are usually free, especially if the fixes are security-related. Sometimes they just include fixes as part of a new version of the program, which may or may not be free.

Personally, I am most concerned about security vulnerabilities and strive to install security patches quickly. Programs that assist in dealing with security patches are known as *vulnerability management* programs.

I am much less concerned about non-security updates. If I don't apply them, I am not leaving my computer's security at risk. Software that handles any type of update (security and non-security) is commonly known as *update management* software.

Objections to updates

Some people are concerned about software updates because updates sometimes cause problems. I find problematic updates are not frequent, but they are far from unheard of.

A common refrain is, "I never agreed to let Microsoft update my copy of Windows." If you read the end-user license agreement when you installed Windows 10, actually you did.

6. *Updates. The software periodically checks for system and app updates, and*

downloads and installs them for you. ... By accepting this agreement, you agree to receive these types of automatic updates without any additional notice.

Security updates are important

As a general rule, I think automatic security updates is a good idea. When people have their computers patched quickly, it improves their security. It also improves my security because I am less concerned that their computer will be compromised and used to attack my computer!

I understand when security-savvy people want more control over updates. I like the idea of allowing others to be guinea pigs for a day or two before I apply updates. If there are problems with patches, this gives a bit of time for the vendor to find out and fix their patch before it affects my computer.

I wish non-security updates were clearly identified as such and made optional. With Windows Update, we are stuck with monolithic updates. I was going to call them "all or nothing", but because updates are mandatory in Windows 10, they are really just "all".

Beginning with v1903, Microsoft is allowing Windows 10 Home users to defer monthly "quality" updates, which can include both security and non-security updates, for up to 35 days. You will be able to postpone the twice yearly "feature updates" for up to a year.

Updating is one area where Linux shines in comparison to Windows. Typically, Linux checks for updates when the operating system loads. The *Update Manager* lists available updates for both the operating system and all programs installed using the *Package Manager* (the way programs are normally installed on Linux). The Update Manager identifies which updates are security-related and allows the user to decide which updates to apply.

Back to Windows. *Windows Update*, which is built into Windows, handles anything that needs patching from Microsoft. But what about all the other programs you have installed on your computer? Unfortunately, apart from some drivers, Windows Update won't help you keep them patched.

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Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, November 13th, 2019**

November Raffle

In keeping with the topic of the November meeting, we are raffling an elite firewall product, courtesy of Glasswire.

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.

Coming Up...

Wednesday November 13th, 2019
(NOTE: the meeting will take place in Room 6)

Topic: Scam Avoidance and Trust

Speaker: Lawrence Patterson, OPCUG

For as long as humans have been communicating with each other, scams have existed in one form or another. We no longer just have our front door or home phone to guard against, now the baddies have multiple ways of rendering the victim immediately susceptible to blind trust actions.

Join Lawrence Patterson (ISSO, ITIL; with two decades supporting people's personal / professional technology needs) as he reviews the significant difference between bind and wise trust, the various scam sources, tips to be aware of, details common to all scams and, most importantly, how to take control.

As we review the various scam methods, participants will be encouraged to speak out with their own examples as we all learn how to become more aware and protect our electronic and personal lives.

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

October Prize Winners

Our raffle prize, an X-Dragon Solar Power Bank, was won by **Widya Gunawan**.

And those fancy hearing protectors went home with **Mike Doyle**. Thanks to **Bob Herres** for donating these.

Hog's Back Bridge closed for repairs

This is a reminder to our members west of the Rideau River that the Hog's Back Bridge is [closed for repairs](#) until May 2020. There are other bridges that cross the Rideau River such as the **Heron** and **Hunt Club** bridges north and south of the church and the **Vimy Memorial Bridge** further south.



[Click image to view map](#)

2019 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, November 13 th	7:30 p.m. at the Riverside United Church , 3191 Riverside Drive, Ottawa. Parking is free. OC Transpo bus #90 stops nearby. Visit https://opcug.ca/regmtg.htm for directions.
Q&A Session	Wednesday, November 13 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, November 13 th	10:00 p.m. (after the Q&A) at Moose McGuire's Huntclub , 3320 McCarthy Rd. Map: https://goo.gl/maps/zAtCx9ZcxRVPtSY68

CLUB LIFE

December Live Auction

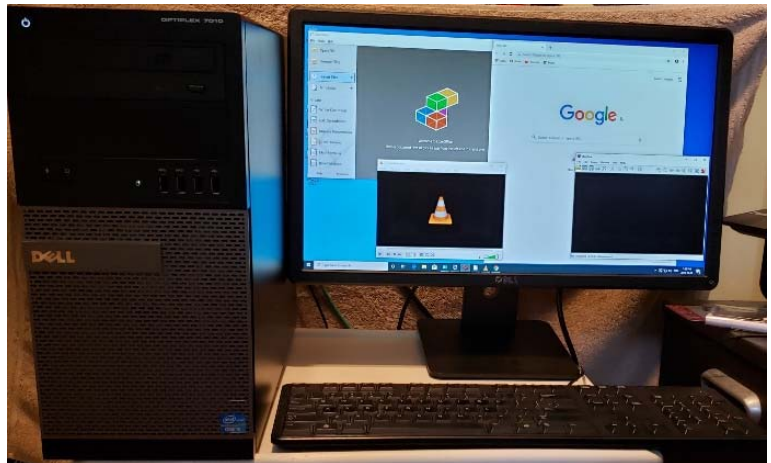
Due to a gracious gift, the OPCUG will auction a computer system useful for young or old for many years to come.

All proceeds will be donated to the Ottawa Food Bank.

The live auction will take place at our December 11th, 2019 meeting. The computer will go to the highest bidder at the meeting. The winning bidder must be present and make the payment at this meeting.

- Dell OptiPlex 7010 desktop
- Processor: Intel Core i5-3570, 3.4 GHz, 4 Cores
- RAM: 8 GB (expandable to 16 GB)
- Hard disk drive: 500 GB, 7200 RPM
- Optical drive: DVD writer DVD+ -RW
- Graphics: Intel HD Graphics
- Networking: Gigabit Ethernet
- USB ports: 8 (four on front & back, with each side having two USB 2 & two USB 3 ports)
- Video ports: 2 Display Ports
- Monitor: Dell E2214HB LCD, 22", 1920x1080
- Mouse and keyboard (wired)
- Software: Windows 10 Pro, Google Chrome, LibreOffice, Irfanview, and VLC.

Good luck to all!



Nominations for OPCUG Board for 2020

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 me or 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 October, November and December club meetings or by sending an email to nominations@opcug.ca.

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2019.

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

*Bob Herres
Election Chair 2020*

Troubleshooting Workshop by Alan German

On October 26, 2019 the club held a hands-on troubleshooting workshop at CompuCorp's Support Centre on Somerset Street. Seven people had registered for the workshop and four members of OPCUG's Board of Directors were present to offer assistance.

The majority of the problems that people brought to the workshop involved issues related to backup procedures. In most cases, the solution offered was to create a disk image on an external USB drive. Another important aspect of a solid backup system that was covered was how to make recovery media and check that this would be functional, i.e. capable of accessing the image backups, should a hard disk crash occur. Chris also took advantage of the availability of an LCD projector at the Support Centre to give some of the workshop participants a brief tutorial on file and folder backup using the File History feature built into Windows 10.

One interesting problem was with an external drive that contained so many partitions the backup program would not run. Disk Manager was used to remove most of the unwanted partitions and clean up the drive to the point where the backup software ought to have been rendered functional. However, running the backup program generated an error indicating that not enough resources were available. Given that this occurred towards the end of the available time for the workshop, a fresh boot was advised when the owner returned home, followed by re-running the backup program.

A glitch also occurred with the installation of Linux Mint on a Windows 10 computer to create a dual-boot system. The optical drive on the laptop in question didn't seem to be functional but – no problem – we could just boot from a Live-USB flash drive instead. That's where the fun really started. HP, in its wisdom, listed the options in the BIOS boot-order menu as USB drive, USB diskette and key, and USB floppy. The "obvious" choices were in that order but, of course, the computer only saw the flash drive as a USB floppy which was the last option we tried!

So, after multiple boots, we finally got Linux to run in a live session and went through the installation sequence. But, when we booted the machine into Linux, no Wi-Fi connection was available. The awful realization dawned – it was likely that this laptop's wireless card was not supported by Linux Mint. Sure enough, a quick web search revealed a number of people complaining about the very same issue with HP Pavilion laptops. The other bad news was that HP were offering no support for Linux on this model of laptop. However, the good news was that a wired connection (Ethernet) was available and that this was almost certain to work flawlessly. But, once again, we had run out of time to fully resolve the issue. So, the follow-up to the workshop is to try to identify a source for a driver for the wireless card on the laptop – or to find a different Linux distro that has one already built in!

Another interesting problem arose from a laptop that was shutting itself down, with the possible culprit being dust gumming up the interior works and causing the machine to overheat. The computer's owner had already tried using a can of compressed air, but wanted help in taking the machine apart in order to give it a more thorough cleaning. That was when Lawrence discovered that the laptop in question used more screws than he could count! But, with a little persistence, he and the owner fought their way into the bowels of the machine and used a compressor to blow out the cobwebs.

There was also a cautionary tale for all computer users when a non-working antivirus scanner was identified. The third-party program was found to be disabled, leaving the computer potentially at risk. The non-functional scanner was replaced with Windows Defender Antivirus which is currently receiving top-rated reviews in comparative tests. So, the moral of this story - do you know if your antivirus (and firewall) software system is active?

Not all of the issues that were identified at the workshop involved computers directly. One participant noted: *"I learned that I will never ever mount the outlets for a service bench down under the damn bench where a 10 year old could reach it easily, but an old fart full of arthritis had to use his camera to even see the darn thing... and getting down and back up, to wiggle the plug into the strip without actually seeing either, well that was a sight for sore eyes... and knees and legs, and back..."*

So, the outcome of the day was that some problems were solved, some were partially solved, some remain to be finalized, and some lessons were learned. Evidently, not even OPCUG's "experts" are capable of solving everyone's problems all of the time! However, they are not deterred. Some of the outstanding issues may resurface at future Q&A sessions and provide demonstrations of possible solutions to similar problems that other club members may have. Indeed, if you have any such computer-related problems, consult our Q&A web page (<https://opcug.ca/QandA>) and consider bringing your issue – and even your computer – to a future session.



Photo. credit – Eldon Gaw

Updating your OS *(Continued from page 1)*

Third-party Update/Vulnerability Management

Some vendors have updating capability built into their programs. The way it is implemented varies widely including: automatic periodic checks that apply updates; pop-up notifications when an update is available; and a menu option such as *Help | About | Check for updates*. Standards are wonderful – there are so many to choose from!

Secunia Personal Software Inspector (PSI) was a wonderful, free-for-personal-use vulnerability management program. It tracked over 20,000 programs for security vulnerabilities and applied patches automatically. Unfortunately, Flexera (the last owner of PSI) dropped the free version and now only has a version available for large organizations.

I keep searching for a replacement for PSI. So far, I have not found any program as comprehensive as PSI. However, there are a few free programs that do a little of what PSI did. For example;

Software Update Monitor

SUMo from KC Softwares (<https://www.kcsoftwares.com/?sumo>) is a free *update manager*, as opposed to my preference: a *vulnerability manager*. While it will identify programs on my computer for which updates are available, it does not let me know if the updates fix security problems nor whether the up-

dates are free. The free version of SUMo can't help you with the actual patching, but at least you know what programs are out-of-date. You can buy a lifetime license for SUMo for US\$30 which can do the actual patching.

Patch My PC

Patch My PC Home Updater (<https://patchmypc.com/home-updater-overview>) is a free program that keeps over 300 common third-party applications up-to-date on your PC. It lists all the programs it tracks and highlights in green the ones installed on your computer. Any that are out-of-date are flagged in red. Patch My PC can update most software for you. Like SUMo, Patch My PC is an *update manager* rather than a *vulnerability manager*.

VulnDetect

Some former Secunia (the company that created PSI) employees have been working for over a year on a replacement for PSI. There is no word on when the final product may become available but you can track progress and get involved in testing at their web site <https://vulndetect.org>.

I am willing to pay a reasonable fee for a good vulnerability management program. My search continues.



Microsoft's lifecycle support is consistent and clear...wait, what?

by Chris Taylor

As my memory serves me, after the debacle with the end-of-life for Windows XP, Microsoft came out with a clear and consistent support policy where all Microsoft business products, including all versions of Windows and Office, would be covered by 5 years of mainstream support (where anything can be expected to be fixed) followed by 5 years of extended support (where only security fixes would be guaranteed).

This held true through many versions of Windows and Office. For example, Windows Vista was released 2007-01-25 and extended support ended 2017-04-11. Windows 7 was released 2009-10-22 and extended support ends 2020-01-14. Office 2010 was released 2010-07-15 and extended support ends 2020-10-13.

Nice, clean and consistent. Up until Office 2019...

I was recently surprised to find out that Office 2019, which was released 2018-09-20, only offers 2 years of extended support. A bit of digging, turned up this gem! *“For Office on-premises products released after February 1, 2018, Microsoft will provide 5 years of mainstream support with 2 years of extended support as an exception to the 10-year Fixed-Lifecycle Policy term. This 7-year term will align with the support period for Office 2016.”*

I don't understand what *“alignment with Office 2016”* has to do with anything! I And I don't give a tinker's damn!

The lesson here appears to be that we cannot trust that Microsoft won't arbitrarily shorten its support lifecycle periods. If you want to be sure, check at <http://microsoft.com/lifecycle>

ARTICLE

Check your backups!

by Chris Taylor

You don't create backups for backups' sake. You create backups so you can recover." I recently relearned that lesson after my daily backups were incomplete for a week.

Backups are most effective when automated so they are done consistently. Manual backups may be forgotten or performed incorrectly. Almost all backup processes can be automated through simple shell scripting, Windows Task Scheduler, or scheduled tasks within your backup program.

With automated backups, it is important to receive notification of both success and failure. The reason for notification of failure is obvious, but notification of success is also important. If you don't get a "success" notification, *something* went wrong!

On May 8th, my computer received the Windows 10 feature update v1809. The next incremental backup notification told me the backup file was 21 GB, up from the normal 2-3 GB. This was expected, given the size of feature updates. However, the next day the backup file dropped to 630 MB. I found it odd, but the subject line of the email notification was **Success: CompleteDisk in Vulpecula** (*CompleteDisk* being the name of the backup task and *Vulpecula* being the name of my computer). The body of the email was;

Task name: CompleteBackup
Type: Local Incremental Disk Backup
Backup Status: Success

What to backup: 3 partition(s)
Backup Results: 2 partitions were backed up successfully.

Image saved location: S:\Backups\CompleteBackup
Image file name: CompleteBackup_20190509_Inc_v1.pbd
Image file size: 630.5 MB
Compression level: Normal compression
Started time: 05/09/2019 03:05 AM
End time: 05/09/2019 04:12 AM



After a week of backup files between 400 and 800 MB each, I had a nagging feeling that something wasn't right. I took a closer look and noticed two lines in the email; *What to backup* and *Backup Results*. Only 2 of 3 partitions were backed up. It turned out that the C: partition was no longer being backed up. That certainly doesn't sound like "success" to me!

I deleted the backup task and created a brand new one. From then on, my backups proceeded correctly. I did some tests and verified that I am able to recover files from each partition being backed up.

I was a bit slow to react to this failure. I lay part of the blame at the feet of the vendor of my backup software, but this points out the importance of not only doing backups, but also periodically verifying that the backups are running correctly and that you are able to restore files from backup.





Excel Tables: Formulas that make Tables tick (Part 2 of 3)

By Lawrence Patterson lawrence@opcug.ca

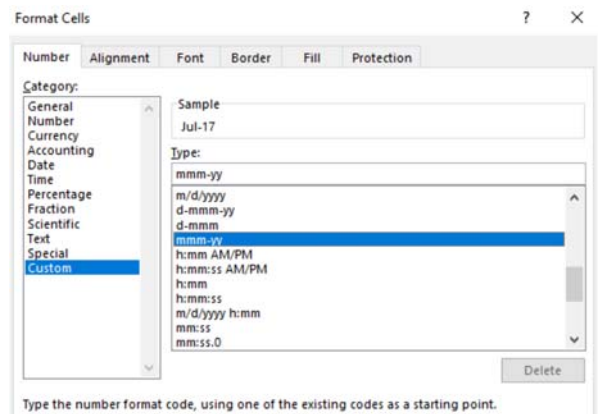
Now that you have a formatted list of data and can easily filter in on the critical items you want to review, let's take a look at a number of formulae favourites that allow you to quickly see the big picture. Taken my previous example, I've generated additional records to provide six months' worth / 66 spending transactions, that I wish to summarize in succinct data points.

One of my first go to, converting the date to the 1st of the month, so that I can start grouping by the month a transaction is posted in.

Date	Month	Amount	Who	What	Why
7/5/2017	7/1/2017	\$ 748.00	Staples	Computers	New Laptop
8/2/2017	Aug-17	\$ 549.80	Staples	Computers	New Laptop
8/30/2017	Aug-17	\$ 35.48	Staples	Computers	New Laptop
9/27/2017	Sep-17	\$ 63.87	Staples	Computers	New Laptop

In this case I've done two things:

1. Using the formula
`=VALUE(MONTH([@Date])&"/1/"&YEAR([@Date]))`, I've pulled the Month and Year from my `@Date` (yes, each of your columns has automatically been given a "Range" name), and using the same format that I would type them in as if I was entering them in by hand, and using "&" to concatenate the two values between "/1/", with final bit using the Value command to let Excel know that after the concatenate results are rendered, turn the results into a value, that is formatted as "7/1/2017" (if you switch the format to a Number, you'll see 42,017.00).
2. Next, we format the results, by selecting the Cells, Format, Custom, and select mmm-yy.



Having each record with the 1st day of each month allows us to display the months in calendar order whenever we apply a sort or filter (very important when we use PivotTable) and not sort by alphabetical order (such as Aug., July, Sept.).

My next go to, is utilizing SumIFS or AverageIFS to provide a snapshot of what's important by taking an average and total for a given vendor, or do I buy anything but coffee at Timmies.

Both SumIFS and AverageIFS use the same arguments, though using my Average column (hmmm, looks like I do like the food better at McDonalds) formula, I have three criterias:

`=AVERAGEIFS(T_MySpend[Amount],T_MySpend[Who],D2)`

1. `T_MySpend[Amount]` is the "average range" on what's going to be calculated;
2. `T_MySpend[Who]` is the "criteria range" on what I'll be filtering my average calculation on;
3. Finally D2 (or D3 or D4 depending the row I'm using) will be the "criteria".

				Average	Total
			McDonalds	\$ 24.00	\$ 144.00
			Tim Hortons	\$ 11.00	\$ 66.00
			Swiss Chalet	\$ 65.00	\$ 390.00

Date	Month	Amount	Who	What	Why
7/1/2017	7/1/2017	\$ 305.00	Loblaws	Groceries	Weekly Groceries
7/10/2017	Jul-17	\$ 365.00	Loblaws	Groceries	Weekly Groceries
7/17/2017	Jul-17	\$ 24.00	McDonalds	Dining	Date Night
7/18/2017	Jul-17	\$ 11.00	Tim Hortons	Dining	Snack
7/21/2017	Jul-17	\$ 65.00	Swiss Chalet	Dining	Family Get Together
7/29/2017	Jul-17	\$ 305.00	Loblaws	Groceries	Weekly Groceries
8/7/2017	Aug-17	\$ 365.00	Loblaws	Groceries	Weekly Groceries
8/14/2017	Aug-17	\$ 24.00	McDonalds	Dining	Date Night
8/15/2017	Aug-17	\$ 11.00	Tim Hortons	Dining	Snack
8/18/2017	Aug-17	\$ 65.00	Swiss Chalet	Dining	Family Get Together

Note the above is showing the first two months of my example, though I purposely entered my dining out costs the exact same \$ amount so that you can see the averages work and a quick calculation will tell you that I'm a habitual once a month type of guy.

Regardless of your requirements, you can see that by referencing column range names (Date, Month, Amount, Who, etc.) I can quickly create formulas covering my whole table (no second guessing if my formulas covered off my entire range of data).

One gotcha, sometimes using column references are not helpful, as they may present too long of a formula name or don't allow for formulas based on non-contiguous series of data. Example `=AVERAGEIFS(C7:C70,D7:D70,D3)` works just as well.

Take care.

OPCUG Free Software Guide—Part 92

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.

BackUp Maker

Use BackUp Maker to automatically store your data in password-protected, strongly-encrypted, ZIP files. Store your backups on an external hard drive, USB or DVD, or transfer them to a web server over FTP. Set scheduled backups, backup only new and changed files, create multiple backup generations, or split a backup across multiple data storage devices.

Current Release: Version 7.405

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/y5efeq96>



FreeRIP

FreeRIP MP3 Converter is an advanced CD to MP3 converter that reads audio files from your CD's and allows you to save them in a variety of digital formats including WMA, MP3, Ogg, Wav, or FLAC. The program is also an advanced MP3 tag editor, making cataloging your entire collection simple and easy.

Current Release: Version 5.5

Web Site: <http://www.freerip.com>

Zemana Antimalware

Use this utility to scan your PC in a fast and effective way for all types of malware and spyware. The software will detect and remove viruses, annoying adware, browser add-ons and toolbars, and any unwanted apps on your PC.

Current Release: Version 2.74.2.664

Web Site: <https://www.zemana.com>

Prisma

Prisma is a photo editor for your Android device that creates amazing effects to transform your photos into paintings. With more than 300 art styles, you can use Prisma's filters to make your photo look as if Picasso, Munch, or even Salvador Dali himself painted it for you!

Current Release: Version 3.1.2.366

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/h44rur6>



Tomboy

An open-source, note-taking application for Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X. Simple and easy to use. Allows for highlighting text, in-line spell checking, bulleted lists, undo/redo, and auto-linking web and E-mail addresses.

Web Site: <https://wiki.gnome.org/Apps/Tomboy>

PhotoPad Photo Editing Software

Easily edit your digital photos in all popular image formats. Crop, rotate, straighten and resize your photos. Adjust the colour balance, exposure, levels, brightness, contrast, and apply special effects. You can even merge multiple exposures to create stunning HDR photographs!

Web Site: <https://www.nchsoftware.com/photoeditor>

Fortnite Battle Royale

So what's the buzz with Fortnite? Find out by trying this free, player-versus-player game mode. One giant map. A battle bus. Fortnite building skills and destructible environments combined with intense combat. The last one standing wins!

Web Site: <https://tinyurl.com/y6z2g6wp>

Local Website Archive

No time to surf the web? Use this program to download entire web pages to your PC and read them at your convenience.

Current Release: Version 19.4

Web Site: <https://www.aignes.com/lwa.htm>

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 #90 stops nearby. Details at <https://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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How to get the OTTAWA PC NEWS by e-mail



Here's how to get the OPCUG newsletter by email:

Create a Google Account

Any valid email address can be used as a Google Account. Pick an email address you want to use and browse to <https://accounts.google.com>. Click *Create account* and follow the instructions.

Make sure your new Google Account is functioning properly by going to <https://accounts.google.com> and signing in.

Sign up for the OPCUG Google Groups

Browse to <https://groups.google.com>. If you are not signed into your Google Account, click the *Sign in* button at the top.

1. In *Search for groups or messages*, type *OPCUG*. The top of the search results will show Groups matching OPCUG. Click on *See all 3*.

2. Click on *OPCUG-Newsletter*, then click the *Join group* button. In the resulting dialog box, you can opt to change some preferences, such as;

- If *My display name* shows as your email address you can change this to something like *firstname lastname*
- Email preferences can be changed to only send daily summaries or not email you at all when new postings are made (meaning you must manually check at the web site to see if there are any new postings)

3. Click the *Join this group* button.

4. You will then see the list of postings that have been made to the group. Click on any entry to see the actual posting.

More detailed instructions on how to join this and other OPCUG Google Groups are found here:

<https://opcug.ca/GoogleGroups.html>

There are no issues of the newsletter published in July or August.