



OTTAWA

Happy New Year!

PC NEWS

Volume 42, Number 1

January 2025

ARTICLE

USB Drive Share via a Router *by Alan German*

My Bell Giga Hub modem features two external USB ports so I wondered if I could use one of these to host a USB drive and make this available over the wireless network. Sure enough, information available on the Internet, including documentation from Bell, suggested that a connection should be made to the network path `\\mynetwork`. However, Windows returned an error indicating that this path was not accessible. A query to networking-guru Chris Taylor suggested that `\\192.168.2.1` was more likely to be successful and indeed this proved to be the case.

Furthermore, I subsequently discovered that a USB share using this path could be accessed from Windows, Linux and Android. Consequently, my home Wi-Fi now provides me with a micro-version of a network attached storage (NAS) system that I can access from any of my computers booted into either Linux or Windows, and from Android smartphones and tablets.

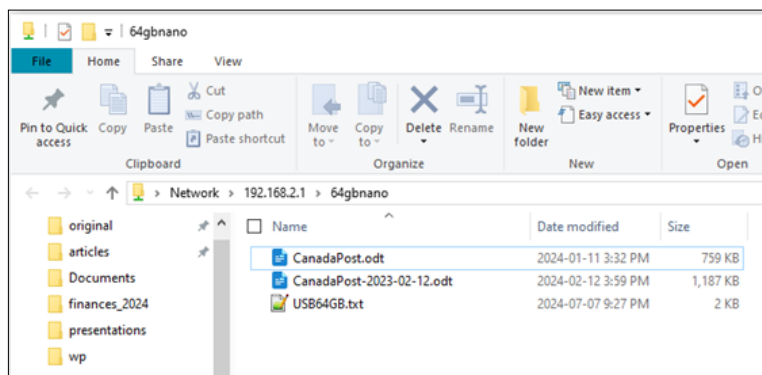


Micro-USB drive plugged into the Giga Hub modem

For anyone who has similar hardware and wishes to set up a USB share, the procedures for the three operating systems are provided below. The example uses a 64-GB nano-USB drive with the device name 64gbnano, but it will be obvious how to customize the commands for another system.

Windows 10:

In the search box on the taskbar, type *Run*. In the text box, labelled *Open*, type `\\192.168.2.1\64gbnano` and press OK. File Explorer will now open and display the contents (if any) of the USB drive.



Network share 64gbnano in File Explorer

Linux Mint:

In the address bar of Nemo, the file manager for Linux Mint, enter `smb://192.168.2.1/64gbnano`. Note that forward slashes are required for Linux systems. A dialogue box will now open requesting authorization. Click on the radio button to connect as *Anonymous* and press *Connect*. Nemo will now display the files in the network share,

(Continued on page 10)

Inside this issue:

Next Meeting / Coming Up / Calendar	2
USB Drive Share via a Router	1
One-on-one remote assistance update	3
BOGO Membership Drive	3
A word from Tom Trottier	4
Dead links and dud accordions	4
Photo Restoration	5
Trading Up to Linux - Part 4	6
Artificial Intelligence (APCUG)	8

Next Meeting: **WEDNESDAY, January 8th, 2025**

Next Meeting

Wednesday, January 8th

Topic: [AI Showdown](#)

Speaker: Bob Herres, OPCUG

Join us for The AI Showdown, an engaging and interactive presentation hosted by Bob Herres. This session will compare different types of AI tools and demonstrate their practical applications through real-world, everyday examples.

Bob will share valuable tips and tricks for getting the most out of popular AI tools while also introducing innovative platforms you may not have encountered before. The presentation is designed to be accessible and straightforward—after all, Bob has a knack for avoiding overly complicated solutions and focusing on what really works.

Why attend?

- Discover practical ways to incorporate AI into daily life.
- Explore both well-known tools and lesser-known innovations.
- Participate in an interactive, hands-on session.

Take advantage of this opportunity to deepen your understanding of AI and pick up new skills to make your tech experience even better. Mark your calendar and join us for this exciting event!

Bob Herres is an active member of the Ottawa PC Users Group (<https://opcug.ca>) with a passion for exploring artificial intelligence and sharing what he learns. Bob readily admits navigating new technologies can be challenging, so he believes in keeping things simple, practical, and enjoyable—a philosophy he applies to both learning and teaching AI.

This meeting will be via Zoom video conference.

Join us at <https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting>. The Zoom link will be live at 7:15 pm. The meeting will begin at 7:30 pm.

If the TinyURL link doesn't work, use:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92495560898?pwd=cDNCcVdZVVZVZ3hQNjZVDZNVHoxZz09>

The above link includes the meeting ID and password. However, if you are prompted for the information, use:

Meeting ID: **924 9556 0898**

Password: **opcug**

Coming Up...

Next weekly Q&A session:

Wednesday, **January 1st**, 2025

(Yes! New Year's Day!)



12 Feb

How to buy a PC (Chris Taylor, OPCUG)

12 Mar

Smartphone Essentials (*presenters needed - see next page*)

09 Apr

Canadian Internet Registration Authority (Arfi Hagi-Yusuf, [CIRA](#)) (*details to follow*)

14 May

Computers to the Moon (Mark Schulman, Central Florida Computer Society)

Visit <https://opcug.ca/#upcoming> to see all scheduled events.

OPCUG Presentations at the OPL:

Monday, 20 Jan, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Fun with fonts – the art and science of typography

(Chris Taylor), Orleans Branch

Tuesday, 21 Jan, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Armchair travel: Iceland (Lynda Buske)

Ruth E. Dickinson Branch

Thursday, 23 Jan, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Quick PC Tips: Enhancing Capabilities and Performance with

Free Tools (Chris Taylor), Centennial Branch

Visit <https://opcug.ca/mec-category/opl-presentations/> for the full list of OPL presentations.

2025 CALENDAR

Event	Date	Time and Venue
Next Monthly Meeting	Wednesday, January 8 th	7:30 pm via Zoom video conference: https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting To see all scheduled events, visit https://opcug.ca/#upcoming
Next Weekly Q&A Session	Wednesday, January 1st	Until further notice, Q&A sessions are no longer held after regular monthly meetings. Join us on all other Wednesdays at 7:30 pm for weekly Q&A .
Next OPL Presentations	(see Upcoming Events)	Visit https://opcug.ca/mec-category/opl-presentations/ for the full list of OPCUG presentations at the OPL.

CLUB LIFE

SMARTPHONE ESSENTIALS

All the Best Apps for your Smartphone

- March 12, 2025 monthly meeting
- Useful apps for smartphones and tablets
- Android or iPhone/iPad
- Showcase your favourite app
- Send the name of the app to:
SuggestionBox@opcug.ca
- First come – first served
- No duplicates!



Presenters needed!

Nominations for OPCUG Board for 2025

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 on the [back page](#) of the Newsletter and on the [website](#).

Nominations can be submitted via email to Lynda Buske, Election Chair, at nominations@opcug.ca.

Nominations must be received by midnight, December 31, 2024.

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

Lynda Buske,
Election Chair

One-on-one remote assistance update

In August, we asked at a Q&A session if anyone saw value in the OPCUG offering one-on-one remote assistance for problems that are too difficult to deal with at Q&A. There was overwhelming agreement, with 94% indicating a strong interest.

Over the following weeks, we developed the program: finding volunteers who were willing to provide such assistance and working on the processes that would help ensure it would run smoothly. *One-on-one Remote Assistance* was officially launched in September.

Requests for assistance have been made for four problems experienced by members: Google Drive not synchronizing files properly; sorting out duplicate files; backing up a computer prior to buying a new one; and migrating programs & data to a new computer.

Volunteers stepped up to help with the first three and the problems were resolved to the satisfaction of the requestors. For the fourth problem, after some discussion amongst the volunteers, the decision was made to deal with the problem at a Q&A session.

Volunteers agreed that remote access was not the best way to solve the problem and a discussion at Q&A could both resolve the problem and help the broader audience as well. The requestor was satisfied with that decision.



One-on-one remote assistance has been a great success. Both requestors and volunteer assistants have expressed enthusiasm for the program. The requestors have noted that, not only was their specific problem solved, but through the process they gained skills and confidence that will help them in the future.

If you are interested in being part of *One-on-one remote assistance*—either as a requestor or volunteer helper—review the details at <https://opcug.ca/one-on-one-remote-assistance/>.

Will you be the requestor or volunteer helper for *One-on-one remote assistance* ID# 2025-01?

Membership Drive (visit <https://opcug.ca/join-or-renew/>)



**Buy One,
Get One Free!**

Join OPCUG before March 31st

Pay \$20 for one-year's membership

We will give you an additional year's membership at no further cost!

Already an OPCUG Member?



Do not renew your membership !

Your membership expiry date will be extended by another year at no cost

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

A word from Tom Trottier

Alan German wrote a nice article "[Run a Chatbot on Your PC](#)" in the December issue using a computer with a 4th generation Core i7 CPU, 16 GB of RAM, and no GPU. It took 2 minutes to produce a simple python program - but it worked.

If you have a computer with a more modern CPU, more RAM and a GPU, you will experience much faster performance - so try it out!

If not, take note of Alan's other articles "Trading Up To Linux" in its parts so far.

*Editor's note: **Parts 1-3** of the series "Trading Up To Linux" can be found in the [2024 October to December](#) issues of the newsletter. **Part 4** is on [p. 6](#) of this issue.*

A word from the editor on dead links

It has been brought to my attention that some links in the newsletters (email addresses, Table of Content entries, URLs) are not live. I have noticed this when the newsletter is opened in a web browser or in an email client (such as *Mozilla Thunderbird*).

These occurrences are random and my recommendation is that you read the newsletter in a **proper PDF viewer**. There are many free PDF viewers. I recommend the free [Foxit PDF Reader](#).

To open a PDF file in a PDF viewer installed on your device:

In an email client: Right-click on the attachment and choose "Save as..." and go to the destination folder to open the file.

In a web browser: Right-click on the PDF file and choose "Save link as..." and go to the destination folder to open the file.

To **always** open a PDF file in a PDF viewer installed on your device:

In Thunderbird email client (may be similar in other clients): Go to *Tools > Settings > General*, scroll down to *Files & Attachments*,

find *Portable Document Format (PDF)* (you might have to scroll down) and from the dropdown chevron on the right choose a PDF viewer.

In Mozilla Firefox browser:

Go to *Settings* (from the hamburger menu ☰ in the top right-hand corner) and type *PDF* in the search box. In the *Applications* box, click on *PDF* and from the dropdown chevron on the right choose a PDF viewer.

In Google Chrome browser:

Open Chrome and type *chrome://settings/content/pdfDocuments* in the address bar. Choose "Download PDFs".

In Microsoft Edge browser:

Open Edge and type *edge://settings/content/pdfDocuments* in the address bar. Choose "Always download PDF files".

Sincerely,
Brigitte Lord

A word from the webmaster on dud accordions

Recently, the "accordions" (Fig. 1, 2) on our website are not always expanding. Not all browsers or users are affected. The issue can be resolved by clearing the browser cache or, more simply, by opening our website in a "private" browser window which ignores the cache (thanks to Chris Taylor for this tip).

A new accordion widget was recently released that works in affected browsers. I will be transferring all accordion content on our web pages (including [Newsletters](#) and [Past Reviews](#)) from the old widget to the new one in January. Until then, if you encounter a collapsed accordion (Fig. 2) that will not expand, try another browser or open our website in a private or Incognito window by right-clicking on a browser icon in the taskbar (Fig. 3).

Sincerely,
Brigitte Lord

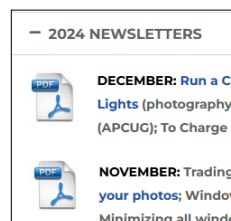


Fig. 1. Expanded accordion



Fig. 2. Collapsed accordion

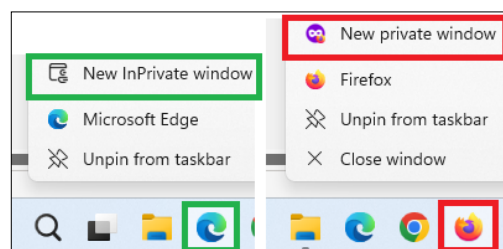


Fig. 3. Right-click on icon to access a private window in Edge or Firefox, or Incognito in Chrome (not shown)

THROUGH THE LENS

A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts. After the click of your camera, you're only half done!

Photo Restoration

by Lynda Buske

How many of us have a big Rubbermaid bin of old photos from parents and our own past? Well, I'm happy to say that the bin I have has been greatly reduced but it definitely took some time. Scanning old photos is such a tedious process that if you don't break it into chunks, it is easy to get discouraged. My strategy was to break down my family history into manageable sections. I scanned (1200 dpi is best) about 30 images dating from 1899 to 1930. After editing them, I created a hard copy photo book using Shutterfly. The following year I tackled 1940s to 1960s and the third year I did late 60s to early 80s. These made perfect gifts for my sisters and did not take up much space on their shelves.

I've written many articles on editing digital photos using free PhotoScape X (PSX) software. Please refer to archived articles at <https://opcug.ca/digital-photography/>. This article will highlight some of the techniques that are particularly useful when restoring scanned family photos.

Many old photos, both black/white and colour, fade over time. A good place to start with restoring images is to add some contrast to provide, in the case of a black/white image, some pure black and pure white areas rather than a sea of soft grey (<https://opcug.ca/Photography/PunchUpPhotos.pdf>).

Often old print photos have signs of wear. There may be spots or lines that will show up in the scanned version. To remove these, use the spot healing brush (under *Tools* tab) in PSX. You can drag the mouse over more than one spot at a time if the background is relatively homogeneous since the program will be looking for pixels in the area to use as a replacement for the dot or scratch line. With complex backgrounds, I find I get optimal results by doing a small area at a time. You can also use this tool to remove acne blemishes or reflections off eye glasses. In the paid version of PSX (\$60 CDN), there is a clone brush that allows you to remove unwanted objects (e.g. pop can in image below)

While you can sharpen the whole image (Adjustments/Sharpen), you may wish to concentrate on certain areas such as faces. Sharpening or whitening eyes can have a great impact as the viewer is drawn to faces first and then eyes. To whiten, click on *Colour* tab, then *Mask* to select a certain area (by dragging your mouse) that you wish to change. Then use the brighten slider bar. Teeth can also be whitened with the same process. To sharpen just the eyes, go to *Adjustments/Sharpen*, paint a *Mask* and then adjust the sliders.

For old coloured photos, it is sometimes difficult to restore the original hues and saturation adjustments can cause the image to look phony. My preference is to convert them to a black/white image so that people are focusing on faces rather than distracting clothing colours (see sample image below). Consider cropping all images to something tighter to focus on the importance of the people of your photos.

Original photo



Restored photo



Read all of Lynda's articles [here](#). See her [presentations](#) at the Ottawa Public Library (select **Lynda Buske** as **Organizer**).

ARTICLE

Trading Up To Linux – Part 4 by Alan German

In the previous articles in this series we have ascertained that our computer hardware is compatible with Linux, have conducted an initial exploration of the applications that come bundled with Linux Mint 22, and have installed Mint in dual-boot mode alongside Windows on the computer's hard drive. Now, having booted the computer into Mint from the grub boot menu, our first tasks are to enable the built-in software firewall and to bring the system software and the installed applications up to date.

Linux Mint comes equipped with firewall software, the *Uncomplicated Firewall* (UFW), but for some reason the developers have chosen not to enable the firewall automatically. This is easily rectified using a one-time operation that activates the firewall and maintains its availability through successive reboots.

Open the main menu, and navigate to *Preferences > Firewall Configuration*. Enter your Linux password in the pop-up dialogue box. The *Firewall* control panel now opens. Slide the *Status* toggle to the right (or simply click on the toggle) to activate the firewall. The grey shield icon will change to display green, white and red stripes, and the drop-down menus for both *Incoming: Deny* and *Outgoing: Allow* items will be activated (Figure 1). The latter two rules will be sufficient for most users so, unless you wish to establish specific rules, simply close the firewall window.

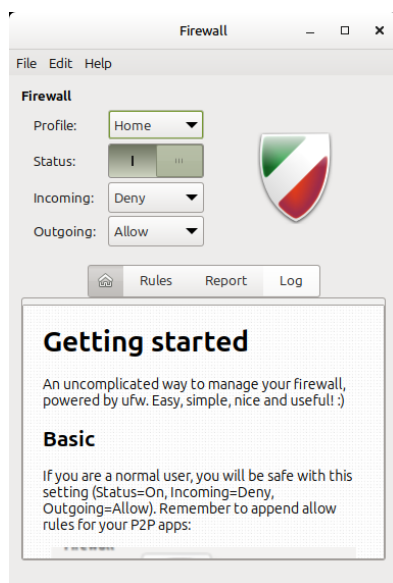


Figure 1. Linux firewall activated

An icon on the right end of the panel, in the form of a shield, indicates when software updates are available. The icon is small, probably grey, and somewhat inconspicuous. When software updates are available, the icon will stand out by virtue of an orange dot being displayed over the shield (Figure 2)

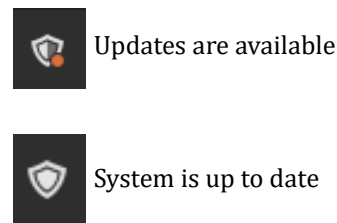


Figure 2. Software update icons

Clicking on this icon opens the *Update Manager*. The welcome screen recommends setting up system snapshots and applying all updates. System snapshots will backup certain system files and folders but will not backup personal data files. For my purposes, I don't use these snapshots and instead I make regular, full-disk, backup images, along with frequent backups of my dedicated data drive. So, to keep things simple, at least initially, we will take note of the advice regarding system snapshots but not take any action in this regard. Pressing the *OK* button brings up a second screen where a coloured band asks "Do you want to switch to a local mirror?" The default download location is a Linux Mint server and is perfectly adequate for obtaining updates so that using a local mirror is not required. So, once again, we will maintain the status quo and press the *No* button. Note that both of these choices can be subsequently changed using *Preferences* and *Snapshots* in *Update Manager's Edit* menu.

The main window will be populated automatically with a list of the updates available for both the Linux system itself and the installed applications (Figure 3). By default, all of the available updates are checked for installation. Note that this marks a major difference in the ways in which updates are handled by Windows and Linux. In general, Windows Update will install all updates as and when they become available. In Linux, we are notified that updates are available but have the option to install all the updates, any number of updates, or no updates according to our preference. The other thing to note is that, because actually activating the update process is a manual operation, the updates can be installed when most convenient for the user.

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Linux (Continued from previous page)

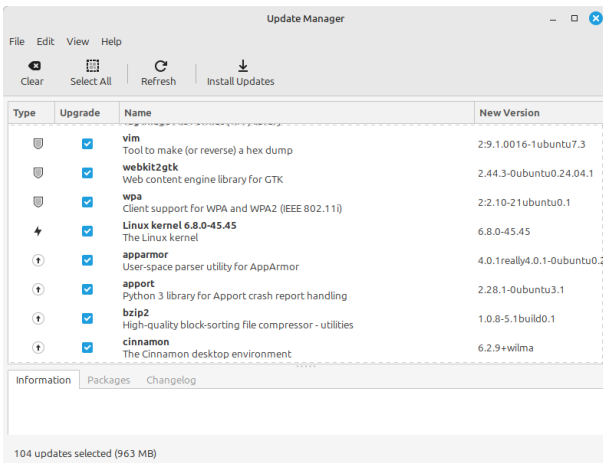


Figure 3. Update Manager

Updates are presented in three categories: security patches (shield icon), kernel updates (lightning bolt icon), and software updates (up-arrow icon). Security patches will fix known system vulnerabilities, while kernel and software updates generally provide new features and apply bug fixes. Note that the original recommendation for Update Manager was to apply all of the available updates. For those of us who do not possess detailed knowledge of the inner workings of Linux, this is sound advice and should be followed. So, my practice, and what I recommend to others, is to simply load *Update Manager* and press the *Install Updates* button whenever updates are made available.

Applying available updates is normally straightforward. A pop-up dialogue box requires the user's password to be entered to authorize the changes. The updates are then downloaded with a progress bar, the download rate, and estimated time to completion, all being displayed in a window labelled *Downloading Package Files*. A *Show individual files* link allows the details of the files being downloaded to be displayed. A similar window shows the progress on the installation of the updates. Finally, the message *Your system is up to date* is displayed.

Occasionally, and especially if updates are being made to the kernel, a secondary window will indicate *This upgrade will trigger additional changes* with a list of packages that are to be installed. This software is required to fulfill dependencies in the main updates and, once again, all changes should be accepted by pressing the *OK* button.

Updates to Linux are normally available on a frequent basis; however, the number of individual updates is usually small and installation is very rapid. For example, a recent update on my system consisted of 2 packages, with 3 MB of data to be downloaded and installed, and required 17 seconds for the update process to complete. Furthermore, rebooting is not usually required when updates have been installed. However, this will be necessary occasionally, especially when the kernel has been updated. The good news is that the system will only reboot once (as opposed to what can occur with that other operating system!)

Now that our system is fully up to date, we can focus on customizing the desktop and installing additional applications to make our Linux system functions in the way that suits our specific purposes. So, these will be our next tasks.



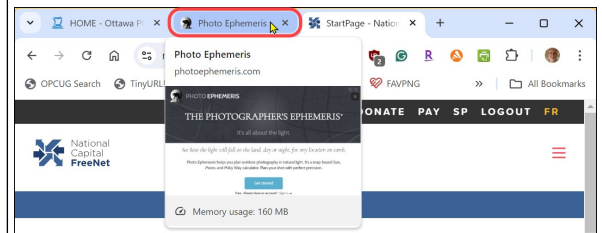
Quick Tip 69: Closing browser tabs

by Chris Taylor

You might know a few ways to close tabs in your browser. Keyboard mavens will likely prefer Ctrl+W to close the current tab, while mousers might prefer to click the "x" on the right edge of the tab, or right-click anywhere on the tab and choose *Close*.

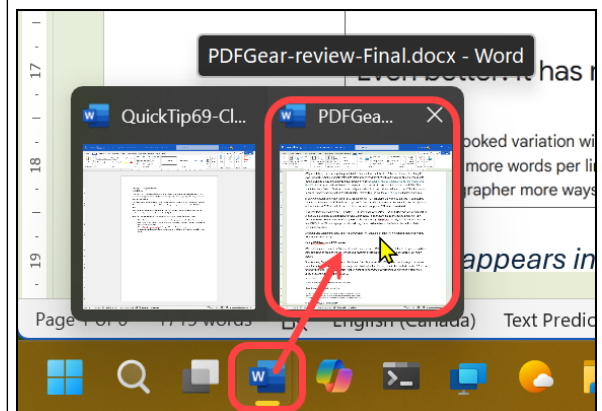
For pure speed of execution, I won't argue with the keyboard aficionados. But if you prefer the mouse, there is a fast method of closing a tab that doesn't require the precision of hitting the little "x" on the tab.

Hover the mouse cursor anywhere on the tab you want to close. Click the scroll wheel or click the middle button if your mouse has one. The tab will instantly close.



As a bonus *Quick Tip*, you can use this to close any program window.

Hover the mouse cursor over the icon for an active program on the taskbar. Move the mouse over the thumbnail that pops up above the taskbar. Click the scroll wheel or the middle mouse button to close the program.



You can also press Alt+Tab or Windows+Tab to display the task switcher. Move the mouse over the thumbnail of the program you want to close. Click the scroll wheel or the middle mouse button to close the program.



APCUG

Another Look at Artificial Intelligence

By Joel Ewing, President, Bella Vista Computer Club
Bits & Bytes, February 2024
<https://bvcomputerclub.org>

(For a general description of artificial intelligence, also see the article "What Is Artificial Intelligence" in the April 2019 edition of the BVCC Bits & Bytes at <https://bvcomputerclub.org/PDF/B&B/2019-04.pdf>)

Background

Although having a background in Computer Science, I do not consider myself an expert on AI; but like many, I have seen over the last decade the improved (but not perfect) ability of smartphones to translate the spoken word into written text, chatbots on the Internet and telephone call centers that can briefly make you think you have reached a human, and the fairly sophisticated behavior of "self-driving" cars, including some experiments with autonomous self-driving vehicles in restricted environments.

When in full "self-driving" mode, a Tesla car can recognize enough of the environment around it to sense and follow lane markings, sense other vehicle types and their relative speeds on all sides, interpret speed limit signs, stop signs, stop lights, a variety of warning signs, speed limit signs, adjust speed for sharp curves and slower vehicles, to make decisions on passing slower vehicles. When navigation mode to a destination is engaged, an extensive road map database allows it to know when to turn and what lane it needs to be in for the next turn, to suggest the optimal super-charger stations for long trips, and to automatically pre-condition the battery temperature for optimal charging speed before arriving at a charging station to minimize charging time. Yet with all that sophistication, Tesla's most important safety features are (1) monitoring the human driver for alertness and (2) alerting the human driver to take over if the road conditions go outside the bounds the automation can reliably handle. This is great for removing much of the monotony of long-distance driving on consistently marked interstate highways but not so valuable for city driving, where road repairs, obstructions, and local driving customs tend to demand more human interaction.

The topic of AI was recently raised in a professional computer-related online discussion list I follow. I have also been involved in a church-related Religion & Science group meeting on Zoom over several years that have discussed, among other topics, whether humans are the only life forms on Earth that are conscious or aware, AI, and whether machines could ever cross the thresholds of self-awareness and become aware and direct competitors of humans, possibly even a threat. Some of the following thoughts come from those discussions.

AI Current Capabilities

AI may easily surpass humans in the ability to analyze and deduce conclusions from a large amount of data and propose actions – it already has done that in some areas that are sufficiently limited in scope.

AI is already being utilized to assist in medical diagnosis, such as interpreting medical scans, where large scans may need to be analyzed tediously to look for minor anomalies.

Many Internet search engines utilize some AI techniques to improve the quality of the results. Some of the more interesting recent free Internet search additions are ChatGPT, BardAI, and BingAI, which can accept queries in natural language and return paragraph responses that appear appropriate, almost human-like. It is possible to request responses in the form of specific types of poetry (ChatGPT) or to request the creation of an image featuring certain objects (BingAI).

Without getting too much into details, at least two main techniques are involved under the covers for the deep learning of advanced AI: trained digital neural networks and large databases created by analyzing many natural language sources of information. Digital neural networks attempt to emulate the brain's design on a small scale. The idea is that you have a large number of nodes (neurons) that are interconnected to nearby layers of the network, but that each of the interconnections can be adjusted by giving a "weight" to each of the connection paths to determine what strength of incoming signals is sufficient to activate the neuron. To "teach" a neural network, you must supply many different combinations of input signals (on the left), for which the desired output (on the right) is known, and modify the weights so that the correct outputs are obtained for as many as possible, hopefully, all, input value combinations. This is a computationally expensive and, thus, energy-intensive process, but once the best weights are obtained, it is easy to replicate the neural network. The illustration on the right only has 23 nodes. A useful neural network may have thousands of nodes.

Neural networks are particularly useful for cases without clear written rules for arriving at the outputs, like pattern recognition of images and sounds, interpreting the ambiguous parts of natural language speech and text, and predicting large social system behavior like the stock market. While it can be hoped that a new combination of inputs not used in the training process will also produce reasonable outputs, this is not guaranteed and heavily depends on how the training data was chosen. Another drawback of neural networks is that there is no way to explain how they arrived at any specific output from some specific input.

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Artificial Intelligence *(Continued from previous page)*

It is clear from ChatGPT's behavior that it has access to an extensive database of contemporary and historical literature. Whether that does or should include those materials still under copyright protection is debated as to whether that violates fair-use restrictions. To be of greatest use, the natural language must be parsed to determine what is being discussed (nouns) and related descriptions (adjectives) and actions (verbs) and deduce further relationships. From that, it is possible to produce indexes and statistical probabilities of relationships. Applying a similar parsing to information requests, it is possible to either find sentences or paragraphs relevant to the query or (more complex) possibly construct "original" relevant sentences based on known associations with the query topic.

AI Limitations

One problem that needs to be addressed is that a considerable amount of data is loose in the real world, which is misinformation, and too much garbage in still produces garbage. Many humans have problems telling the difference between fact and fiction and between reality and conspiracy theories. Humans have biases in their data choices, yet they will choose the data sources to program future AI. This will inevitably cause some problems.

Every year, you find people, sometimes prominent people, that stumble across a parody or satire written in the style of a news article, mistake it for real news, and make a fool of themselves by calling others to take action against the alarming "news" they have just uncovered. Such humor is usually so over-the-top that it is easily recognized by ordinary people aware of current events. However, some still take it as factual, even if it is on a website like "The Onion," which is well-known for only publishing imaginary news releases.

One needs to understand that while AI can provide helpful guidance within the realm for which it has been trained, it is not infallible. If you ask a neural network to categorize an unexpected combination of inputs, it may make an incorrect identification. Suppose you ask an AI system trained from analyzed text about a topic that lacks accurate information. In that case, it may make incorrect inferences from data that it thinks are similar because they appear statistically related. Even if it has processed relevant information, it may not be able to accurately interpret context, implicit relationships, and time ordering of relationships. If you ask an ambiguous question ("Show me something like X"), the AI may not understand the distinction between creating something fictional that looks like "X" versus finding a fact like "X."

There have already been at least two instances reported in the news of a judge berating attorneys for submitting supporting briefs referencing legal precedents that didn't exist because some AI system created a plausible fictional reference to support their legal argument.

The general public is already indifferent to AI's limitations and abusing AI: asking questions of AI apps in areas where the AI is poorly trained and trusting without verification of fallible responses as being authoritative because a machine produces them. Some newsworthy cases of this abuse have been reported when fatalities result after owners of cars with AI autopilots requiring supervision find ways to entrust the AI with unsupervised autonomous driving, and a crash occurs when the AI encounters situations it is not designed to handle.

Could AI be Dangerous

Some theorize that if we could build a neural network of enough complexity – many orders of magnitude larger than possible today – at some point, a threshold might be passed. That creation might become self-aware and possibly worthy of being called sentient. What discoveries such a tool could make and create! The problems are multi-fold: If it has more knowledge than any human and can exercise creative thought faster than any human, its analysis of human history may lead it to the conclusion it should be the master, not the enslaved person, of humans. This has long been a persistent cautionary theme of science fiction writers. In the fictional Dune prequel "The Battle of Corrin," where sentient machines and humans have long been at war, there is a fictional quote from the sentient robot Erasmus: "Humans were foolish to build their competitor – but they couldn't help themselves." Suppose we were to succeed in creating machines that could truly approach the complexity and creativity of the human mind. Might they not also be subject to some of the same dangerous mental instabilities as human minds when confronted by conflicting "facts" or subtle design deficiencies? Fatal problems like those afflicted the fictional HAL 9000 in "2001: A Space Odyssey" and the M-5 Multitronic computer in "The Ultimate Computer" Star Trek episode.

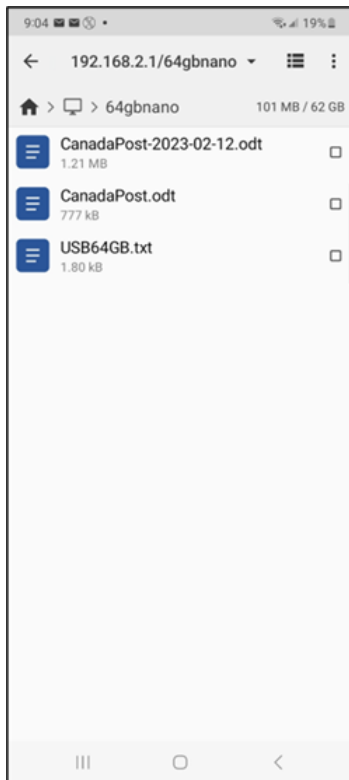
I don't think we are at any risk within my lifetime of finding a way to cross that threshold, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be concerned that AI in its present state has the capability of causing harm.

AI-based tools used by financial institutions to evaluate whether to approve or deny credit requests have been found to exhibit bias against granting loans to those in minority groups. The AI tools were programmed using data about

(Continued on next page)

USB Drive *(Continued from page 1)***Android 11:**

Using the Cx File Explorer file manager (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cxinventor.fileexplorer>), navigate to *NETWORK > New location > REMOTE > SMB*. Enter 192.168.2.1/64gbnano as the *Host*, check the box labelled *Anonymous*, and press *OK*. The file manager will now display the contents of the USB drive.



USB drive contents in Android's file manager

Conclusion:

Using this technique a reasonably-sized USB drive can be used as network attached storage for a home Wi-Fi system. Furthermore, the use of a micro-USB drive makes this drive fairly unobtrusive. The network share allows access to the same set of files for all connected devices and provides a ready mechanism to wirelessly copy files between devices.

[\(back to Table of Contents\)](#)

Artificial Intelligence *(Continued from previous page)*

loans that had been approved subject to historical biases against minorities. Without great care in programming, AI can be used to justify that there is no bias when the reality is that the bias was included in the AI programming and is just more hidden.

Another way we are already seeing AI being abused is by its use to create and spread misinformation on the Internet. While not perfect, it is already good enough to produce deep-fake video and audio and false news reports and control bots on social media networks that spread messages to promote and amplify division and hate. There is some hope that it may be possible to employ AI on the other side to detect and suppress such abuse, but that does require corporations to accept that responsibility.

Another area that should be a serious concern is the possibility that AI could be given the power to make and implement life-and-death decisions without adequate human oversight or just to propose actions that humans might blindly follow in a life-or-death situation. The science fiction genre is full of plots suggesting how badly this can go – possibly human enslavement or extinction.

When you grant AI the power to make decisions and take actions in the real world, most of us want "intelligence" involved, wisdom, and morality. Most of us want decisions made by others that impact our lives to be constrained by a moral compass of what is right and fair. We have no idea how to build that awareness into AI, and since there is no universal agreement on whose standard of morality to use, that may be an impossible task. Even if there was agreement on how to define morality and how to embed that concept into AI, do we trust fallible humans to consistently implement that design without error?

A legitimate concern is that if future AI regulation or its enforcement is inadequate, some individual or corporation with more power and money than wisdom may go rogue, ignore whatever AI restrictions are in place or commonly accepted, and create a dangerous AI device because of a belief it will enhance their short-term profit.

We must be very cautious about what kinds of decisions and actions we entrust to AI in the short and long term. We also need to research how best to enforce that caution. Perhaps future AI, appropriately applied, might even become part of the solution.



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).

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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. OCTranspo bus #90 stops nearby. Details at <https://opcug.ca/venue/>.

NOTE: Until further notice, all our events are via video conference.

Details at <https://opcug.ca/venue/>

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Q&A IS ON-LINE! Weekly!

Since the pandemic, the OPCUG has been holding weekly Q&A sessions in Zoom video-conferences.

Join us every Wednesday (except on regular monthly meeting nights) at 7:30 pm to discuss computer issues. Questions (and answers) on any computer-related issue are welcome. Or, do you have a favourite computer program or topic that you would like to share with the group? Send your questions, answers, or the details of what you would like to share to: SuggestionBox@opcug.ca

Everyone is welcome to attend Q&A sessions and to ask questions about their specific computer-related problems. Join us at: <https://tinyurl.com/opcug-meeting> (if you use the Zoom client, the meeting ID is **924 9556 0898** and the password is **opcug**).



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