



# OTTAWA

# PC NEWS

Vol. 15 No. 4

The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

April 1998

## Club News

## Change of venue for DTP SIG *by Bert Schopf*

The next DTP SIG meeting on April 14th will be the last at our host facility, Griffin Computer Training & Consulting. I would like to thank specifically Griffin President, Ken Smith, who, for several years, provided us with a comfortable and accessible venue (and coffee!).



Vorton Technologies have agreed to make a special offer to SIG members who want to obtain Photo Zone (or Tidal Zone), the image cataloguer that Michael Vlught demonstrated at the March meeting.

The April 14 meeting will be an open desktop publishing Question and Answer session. This meeting is also a must for anyone interested in making a presentation at the DTP Showcase for the May OPCUG General Meeting. Join in and let's show what we can do!

As Chairman of the OPCUG, I will be concentrating my future efforts on booking speakers for the General OPCUG meetings. I have found in the past that there was often a duplication of efforts that made little sense—a speaker booked for the DTP SIG would have spoken also to the General Meeting the previous week. I feel very confident that the OPCUG will attract top-calibre presenters in the coming months.

The DTP SIG is dead, you say? NO WAY! Far from it—we will continue to meet as an active SIG. Instead, we will meet like

many other SIGs: on Wednesdays, directly after the General Meeting presentation at the Museum. I'd like to open up the structure of the meetings as well. Perhaps our members could make short presentations to the group each month or we could alternate member presentations and field trips. The new PUB II and OPCUG web page will offer new "virtual meeting" possibilities. There are many options.

One thing is certain: the DTP SIG will continue to act as the focus for those interested in the hardware/software, design/typography, and tips/techniques that are relevant to desktop publishing. Above all, we will continue as a network of "Users helping users."



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Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998**



# Come out and see PUB II

by Chris Taylor

PUB II, the replacement for the old PUB BBS is installed and running. It is still undergoing some minor revisions in structure. Although all the files have been transferred to the new machine, the majority of them must still be added to the database. I expect by the time you read this article that the structure will be more stable and most of the files will be available.

The new hardware has arrived; with Bill Vandijk's assistance, it was running in a couple of hours. For those who love technical details, PUB II is running on a Pentium 200 MMX with 64MB RAM and a 4GB hard disk. The OS is NT Workstation 4.0. Quite a step up from The PUB that ran DOS on a 386/40 with 4MB RAM and a 1.2GB hard disk.

The basic capabilities you enjoyed with The PUB are still present with PUB II but the ways to accomplish tasks have changed considerably. Some features are completely new. Considering these two criteria, I decided it would be useful to present PUB II to the entire membership at the April meeting. I only hope that the meeting date of April Fools' Day is not significant!

I intend to demonstrate all the access methods for PUB II. They include:

- dial-up access using a regular terminal program such as Telix or HyperTerminal,
- dial-up access using the Wildcat! Navigator and a standard web browser (It works without Internet access!),

- access from the Internet using a standard web browser,
- access from the Internet using the Wildcat! Navigator and a standard web browser,
- access the file areas from the Internet using FTP, and
- access from the Internet using Telnet.

That's a total of six access methods; each one of them has its advantages and disadvantages. Believe me—there is an advantage to using a character-based method or FTP; if you are sceptical, come out and challenge my assumptions!

In addition to demonstrating the access methods, I will also show you how:

- you can send and receive Internet e-mail using PUB II,
- you can search for messages and files,
- you can use some tips and tricks to help you use PUB II more effectively while saving time and effort.

We are all in a learning mode right now. Maybe you can show me some tricks that I didn't know. That is, after all, the OPCUG's motto: "Users helping users." Come on out and let's have some fun learning together. Hope to see you on the first of April.



## Calendar

| Meetings                   | Date                                                 | Time and venue                                                                                               |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OPCUG General Meeting      | April 1 <sup>st</sup> : - Presentation of PUB II     | 7:30 p.m. - National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.                                |
|                            | May 6 <sup>th</sup> : - DTP SIG presentation         |                                                                                                              |
| DTP - SIG*                 | April 14 <sup>th</sup> - Q & A<br>- May presentation | 7:30 pm - Griffin Computer Training Centre, 275 Slater St. (at Kent)                                         |
| Ottawa Paradox Users Group | Third Thursday of each month                         | 6:15 pm - Inly Systems, 1221a Cyrville Rd.                                                                   |
| FOX Pro/Developers SIG     | To be announced                                      | 7:15 pm - Sir Jean Talon Building<br>Conference room, Tunney's Pasture,<br>Holland Ave. (north of Scott St.) |

\* *Last time at this venue* - following meetings will be held at the Museum of Science and Technology, after the General Meeting.



# Vorton Photo Zone

by Bert Schopf

On March 10 the DTP SIG welcomed back Michael Vlugt, of local software company Vorton Technologies, to demonstrate the highly efficient and useful graphics file management utility suite Photo Zone.

Vorton Photo Zone is a set of powerful graphic modules used for file viewing, file conversion, slide show creation, image encryption, photo album creation, image cataloguing and image management.

With increasingly affordable hard drive space on home systems and the booming growth in web page creation, more people are collecting digital images. People are also taking advantage of the increased functionality and reasonable prices of digital cameras, scanners and printers. Professional designers and casual home users alike want to spend their time developing ideas: not doing tedious image retrieval and conversion.

Photo Zone's intuitive, easy-to-learn interface, powerful tools, and extensive list of supported file formats enable users to handle any collection of graphic images with ease and speed. Photo Zone combines value and performance not only as a stand-alone application but also as a complement to any existing graphics-based software program.

## Features

Its Runtime Slideshow Player can generate a single, compressed, executable file that can be sent to anyone. The recipient requires neither the application, from which the slide show was developed, nor any special software to display the images. Additionally, recipients on their own local systems can manipulate or save the individual images.

Users can create, save and display dynamic slide shows of their images and audio clips; these elements can be sequenced and hundreds of transition effects can be incorporated. Images can be manipulated in any supported file format from any disk drive or directory on the system. Enhanced features include: improved compression, thumbnailing, photo album creation and cataloguing.

File encryption is supported and slideshows support encrypted image transmission.

Photo Zone offers batch or multi-file conversion ability. Users have options to convert formats, compression ratios and resolution. Advanced conversion controls provide JPEG compression preview and allow simultaneous adjustments of brightness, contrast, sharpness, rotations, autotrim, grayscale and encryption. Conversion scripts can be generated and applied to other conversions.

Fifty of the most popular file formats are supported including: EXIF (compressed and uncompressed), FPX (JPEG, Variable and Single Colour), BMP (OS/2 Type 1 & Type 2), GIF (regular, animated and interlaced), JPEG (regular and progressive), CAL, TIP, EPS, CMP (regular and compression), CUR, FXS, ICA, ICO, IMG, JTIF, MAC, PCT, MSP, PCX, PNG, PSD, RAS, TGA, WMF, WPG and many more.

Photo Zone's File Acquire pulls up images from the user's choice of source; it supports TWAIN (for most scanners), and EXIF or FlashPix digital camera formats.

Photo Zone includes an Internet Bandwidth Sampler—an invaluable utility for developing Web Pages. Users have the advantage of previewing images as if they were being downloaded to a computer at different transmission rates.

Photo Zone retails for \$69.00 SRP and is available through several Ottawa-area retail outlets. Vorton has offered, through a local software dealer, a special, time-limited rate for OPCUG members. Details of the special offer will be available at the next DTP SIG meeting.

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## OPCUG's most successful SIG!

Questions you were always afraid to ask? Tips you are dying to pass on to interested friends? Come and join us for chicken wings, a drink and some friendly chitchat. After the General meeting and sig meetings are over, there is always the welcoming atmosphere of the PIGSIG.

The location is the "Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe, right behind the MacDonalds. They have a menu, but most people seem to favour the wings, which are very tasty and a bargain at \$.20 ea.



# Home Made Secret Agent Missions—Remember Get Smart

by Bob Herres

I'm sure many members have young children & grandchildren. This is a zero cost project that I really enjoy about once every 3–6 months. Make your young friend a Secret Agent Mission! This is a series of hidden clues, that



lead to other clues; at the end, there may be a parcel with a small toy, tool, or game as a reward.

To begin, set up a simple letterhead: for example, Control—The World Spy Agency For Good, "From the Desk of the Chief of Control To Agent 86... An important parcel is missing... I need your help..." A subliminal motive of my "missions" are to promote reading skills, although it seems that both the "Agent" and the "Anonymous Chief" have a lot of fun with these things. The mission intensity can be tailored to suit agents from 4–14 years old but the fun can be enjoyed by agents of all ages. If the mission becomes too complex for a younger agent, simply offer some assistance before it becomes too frustrating. Preparation

may take longer than the mission itself but it is relaxing and done in advance. Take your time setting up these missions, but never mention the topic until the mission is ready and all the clues are in place!

## Sample Clues:

- Good Work Agent 86. You have solved the second clue. You must seek out the next clue... Our information shows us that your home has many carpets. Your next clue is under the edge of a carpet that greets you when you arrive home. Good Luck Agent 86.
- (Under your front door mat put the following message) Great Work Agent 86. You are our best Agent! We need your skills to seek out the third clue... Go to a large container that supplies energy for a canine member of your home. Look inside this container. Here you will find the next and final clue.

I'm sure you get the idea. The March Corel demonstration sparked my imagination. Clues were often found on floppy disks that included nifty "Control" presentations—complete with the Mission Impossible theme as midi files. I'm sure it would impress Don Adams!

I urge you to use your computer skills to set up a Mission for a Secret Agent you know. Just don't tell anyone that the "Anonymous Chief" has as much fun as the "Agent!"







WINDOWS

## DUNC PETRIE'S CORNER

BEGINNERS



### The times they are a-changin'

You want to buy a new computer. What are the current trends? Are there surprises?

- MMX is here to stay and the classic (non MMX) machines have disappeared. There is already a new MMX/2 specification.

- The 3.5 inch floppy lacks adequate capacity; its imminent demise would not provoke surprise. There are numerous contenders to replace it - Imation LS120, Iomega Zip, Sony 200. Who wins; who loses?

- Microsoft is circulating a Windows 98 specification. Most significant is the elimination of the ISA expansion slot. This presumes that PCI or USB equivalents will be available. Historically, new technology has arrived late and early iterations were bug prone. Some of your current expansion cards would become frisbees.

- The "age of the bus" has arrived. System buses will increase to 100 MHz. For the same CPU clock speed, an increase in the bus speed can increase performance dramatically. USB should become mainstream with Windows 98.

- Firewire likely remains a few years away from widespread implementation.

- Video will migrate totally to AGP and improve both 2D and 3D quality and capability. Although it has barely arrived, higher speed and capacity versions are already forecast.

- OpenGL is rumoured as a replacement for Microsoft's DirectX and its subsets.

- RAM must be upgraded to work with higher bus speeds although the present SDRAM can extend to 100 MHz. Rambus is one entry; it can synchronize with buses to 600 MHz and 1GHz is predicted.

- Storage is a mixed bag. Can hard drive capacities continue to increase? Probably... and prices will continue to drop. While the death of CD-ROM is predicted, it will remain until DVD is sorted out. Speeds beyond the present 24x/32x are unlikely and of limited benefit. CD-R (possibly CD-RW) is a niche backup alternate within its capacity range since the media cost is minimal. Backups aside, the technology

does offer some intriguing uses. Removable media will increase in capacity and decrease in price. Currently, a 1 GB drive (Syquest's Sparq) costs \$200 (all US list prices) and \$60 a cartridge; Castlewood's Orb intends to offer 2.16 GB for the same price and \$30 per cartridge. There is an over-4 GB removable media monster announced but not yet shipping.

- Tape drives have increased their capacity to match that of hard drives (or at least a multi-GB partition) and new software promises ease-of-use by treating the tape unit as a disk drive and assigning it a drive letter. However, to date, the two major categories of drives face a paradox: Travan drives are inexpensive but their media is comparatively costly; DAT is the reverse.

- Multimedia capability, and the games that in large measure exploit it, will continue to advance. MPEG 2 in theory should deliver smooth-scrolling, full-screen, movie displays. Hardware is the initial approach; video board hardware integration is possible and some software surprises are rumoured.

- Sound cards are migrating to the PCI bus and waveguide synthesis (physical modelling).

- Printers will continue to improve output speed and quality while lowering prices. For the high end, Adobe's PostScript 3 and Hewlett Packard's PCL 6 will dominate. Adobe's PrintGear is a printer language alternate, that offers features without the cost of PostScript, for the home and small office environment.

- Disturbingly, a new machine may hold a rude surprise for the uninformed. Interrupt Requests (IRQs) service essential system features (keyboard, external ports, disk drive controllers, etc). Of those remaining free, the most frequent contenders are video and sound cards (network and SCSI cards are others). The latest iterations of do everything, multimedia-oriented, 3D video and "awesome" sound cards may usurp all the remaining free IRQs. How do you add your favourite toy? You don't!

Enjoy your new computer...





## Where has all the memory gone

You have 32 MB of RAM... A corollary to the maxim that: "Work expands to fill the time available." must be: "Applications expand to consume all available RAM... and then some!" Your new computer is loaded with 32 MB of RAM: enough to simulate the birth of the universe. Why does your disk drive churn all the time? Are you curious? Consider:

- Windows 95 needs about 15 MB
- A system utility (in my case, Norton Utilities System Information) needs 4 MB
- Microsoft's Intellipoint Mouse software uses 1 MB
- Norton System Doctor uses 3.5 MB.
- Microsoft Word 95 uses 9.54 MB (I don't know about Word 97 but I suspect it is even more.)
- An installer/uninstaller (For example, Quarterdeck's CleanSweep needs 10 MB.)
- Then, you have your favorite information manager (PIM) that requires... well, who knows?
- You have several icons in the System Tray portion of the Taskbar—you guessed it.

Where has all the memory gone... gone to programs every one (with apologies to Pete Seeger)? The disk activity is a product of virtual memory: a reserved area (AKA swap file) on the hard drive for Windows' activities. Your computer lacks adequate physical memory to hold everything; instead, Windows is continually swapping program components to place a program segment that is immediately

required into RAM and code that is latent into virtual memory.

Some activity is also related to Windows' dynamic resizing of the swap file. For Windows 95, this part is user manageable. Double-click on Control Panel and then double-click the System icon. Click the Performance tab and then the Virtual Memory button. Activate the "Let me specify my own virtual memory settings" and in the maximum box set the amount as two (minimum) or three (preferred) times the amount of physical memory - your 32 MB system would like about 100 MB. Although not essential, I suggest that you also specify a minimum. Click "Yes" to respond to the warning and reboot. Recent evaluations of Windows 98 suggest that Microsoft has constrained that operating system's demands - a change for the better.

For those fortunate enough to have more than one physical hard drive (not multiple partitions on a single physical hard drive) it makes sense to place the swap file on the non-Windows bearing drive. That way, calls to programs will occur separately from swap file activities.



## Tweak Windows 95B

Curiously, the default installation of Windows 95B (OSR2) does not invoke an important performance enhancer: Direct Memory Access (DMA). Enabling DMA allows your computer to access the IDE-based hard drives and CD-ROM without using the main processor as an intermediary. First, determine the version of Windows you are running. View your System Properties by clicking on the System icon in the Control Panel. Look for the Windows 95 version; it must read 4.00.950B. The Windows 95B default bus mastering drivers must be installed in order for this to work. (This is usually the case but the bus mastering feature is turned off.) Enable DMA with this sequence.

1. Open the Control Panel.
2. Click on the System icon.
3. Select the Device Manager tab.
4. Open the Disk Drives icon by clicking the plus sign at the left.
5. Highlight your hard drive then Click properties.
6. Click the "settings" tab and check the box next to "DMA".
7. Repeat for any additional hard or CD-ROM drives.
8. Restart the system when prompted to effect the changes.





## Deletable Windows 95 files

Gain space on your hard drive by deleting non-essential files. Windows 95 installs numerous files that are peripheral to its operations; other temporary files are created as a result of various Windows processes. You can delete the files with these extensions from your system and gain some breathing space.

- **CHK**—Scandisk backup files are created if lost clusters are found when you run Scandisk. In almost every case, the data within them cannot be accessed by the casual user. New ones could be created by future Scandisk uses and can also be deleted.

- **GRP**—Program Manager Group files are holdovers from Windows 3.1x; if you never use Program Manager as your user interface, why keep these around? They will not be recreated but an install program could create new ones.

- **GID** are related to Windows' Help files; when you run a Help file, it creates a "GID" to make future accesses to that particular help file quicker. Convenience aside, they consume a lot of space—particularly if you frequent the Help files. You must delete these regularly since they are recreated with every Help file execution. (Some applications may create hidden GID files; examine file attributes if necessary to locate them.)

- **FTS** are also related to Windows' Help files. When you perform a search with a Help file, these are created to make all future searches quicker. They reappear each time you do a search in a .HLP file. Scan regularly and delete them.

- **CNT** are the Help files that provide the tables of contents when you launch certain Help files. If you don't need a table to help you navigate through a Help file, delete these. Unlike GID and FTS files once deleted they are not recreated.

- **AVI** are a movie file format; in this case a series of Windows 95 tutorials. For new users they may warrant a matinee. Once you know how to use Windows 95, delete them and regain the hard drive real estate.

- **MOV** are another movie file format; delete them if their content is not useful to you.

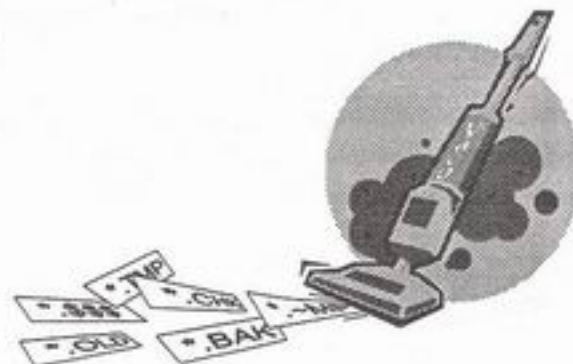
- **TMP** are temporary files; Windows creates these files to assist many processes. When you exit Windows they are erased. However, improperly exiting Windows will prevent a proper cleanup. Typically, they can be found in the \Windows\Temp\ folder. Delete them from DOS mode (not a DOS window); otherwise you risk interfering with a current Windows process. Windows is not the sole creator; many programs create temp files to speed up processes.

- **~MP** are also temporary files; see the previous explanation.

- **BAK** are older versions of an existing file. When a new version of a program comes along, sometimes it renames the old version with a BAK extension. Be careful when removing these files. Save a copy in an obscure directory; if no calls are made for it after several weeks of using the current version of the program, you can probably safely delete it.

- **OLD** are files with a similar history to BAK files; treat them similarly.

- **\$\$\$** are usually files like BAK and OLD. On occasion, however, they are essential. Treat them like the BAK files.



## Use Doskey in a Windows 95 "window"

If you were a devoted user of Doskey at the DOS command line prompt you can enable this feature automatically each time that you open a DOS window within Windows 95.

1. Right-click the MS-DOS icon on your Desktop.
2. Select Properties; then click on the Program tab.
3. Type: Doskey>Nul in the Batch File box.
4. Click Apply.
5. Click OK.

If you also want to use Doskey macros then replace the Doskey>Nul line above with Dmacros.bat. Then, create the batch file, Dmacros.bat, with the following lines:

```
dir $1 /S/P
Doskey FF=dir \%1 /s
Doskey Typ=Type $1 $B more
```





*Ottawa PC News* is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members. Deadline for submissions is four Saturdays before the general meeting.

## Group Meetings

OPCUG normally meets on the first Wednesday in the month, except in July and August, at the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meeting times are 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

## Fees

Membership: \$25 per year.

## Mailing Address

3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6

Telephone answering machine ..... 723-1329

## Web address

<http://opcug.ottawa.com/>

## Bulletin board—the PUB (BBS)

Up to 33.6 kbps V34 ..... 228-0665

## Chairman

Bert Schopf [blackbird@cyberus.ca](mailto:blackbird@cyberus.ca) ..... 232-8427

## Treasurer

Willem (Bill) Vandijk [bvdijk@igs.net](mailto:bvdijk@igs.net) ..... 256-3054

## Secretary

David Reeves [dleeves@iname.com](mailto:dleeves@iname.com) ..... 723-9658

## Membership Chairman

Mark Cayer [cayemar@statcan.ca](mailto:cayemar@statcan.ca) ..... 823-0354

## BBS Sysop

Chris Taylor [ctaylor@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:ctaylor@nrcan.gc.ca) ..... 723-1329

## Newsletter

Duncan Petrie (editor)

[gdpetrie@trytel.com](mailto:gdpetrie@trytel.com) ..... 841-6119

Julie Dustin (assistant editor)

[micropro@fox.nstn.ca](mailto:micropro@fox.nstn.ca) ..... 823-1552

(Mr.) Jean Vaumoron (layout)

[vaumojav@magi.com](mailto:vaumojav@magi.com) ..... 731-7847

## Publicity

Duncan Petrie [gdpetrie@trytel.com](mailto:gdpetrie@trytel.com) ..... 841-6119

## Facilities

Bob Walker [skywalk@istar.net](mailto:skywalk@istar.net) ..... 489-2084

## Beginners' and Windows SIG coordinator

Duncan Petrie [gdpetrie@trytel.com](mailto:gdpetrie@trytel.com) ..... 841-6119

## DTP SIG coordinator

Bert Schopf [blackbird@cyberus.ca](mailto:blackbird@cyberus.ca) ..... 232-8427

## Fox SIG coordinator

Andrew MacNeill

[FOXSIG@meistermacneill.com](mailto:FOXSIG@meistermacneill.com) ..... 851-4496

## Internet SIG coordinator

To be announced

## OS/2 SIG coordinator

(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire ..... Please contact via PUB

## Paradox SIG coordinator

John Ladds [1adds@statcan.ca](mailto:1adds@statcan.ca) ..... 951-4581

## Directors without portfolios

Chris Seal [c\\_seal@fox.nstn.ca](mailto:c_seal@fox.nstn.ca) ..... 831-0280

Terance Mahoney [terancep@cyberus.ca](mailto:terancep@cyberus.ca) ... 225-2630

## Prize winners from the March meeting *by Mark Cayer*

A thank you to Tom Vair, from Corel Corporation, for the mouse pads and other goodies he distributed at his Corel WordPerfect Suite 8 presentation.

A BIG special thanks as well from both Raymond Martineau and John Middleton who each were winners of a copy of WordPerfect Suite 8!

A special thank you to Gerry Graham for the donation of five daisywheel printers. Two were "adopted" at the general meeting and the others have found good homes.



## Reuse, recycle

Bring your old computer magazines, books, or any other computer paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the general meetings, and leave them in the area specified. If you don't bring something, you may want to TAKE AWAY something of interest, so look in on this area. Any item left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to the... recycle bin.

