



OTTAWA

PC NEWS

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The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

May 1998

Club News

Coming up

by Bert Schopf

Last month's presentation on the Pub II by Chris Taylor was great (despite some slight technical difficulties). The content was relevant to all our members—after all, the Pub II is for our members and is maintained by our members! Several people who missed it are already asking for an encore session.

What is most important is that it is a good display of our creed: "members helping members."

Continuing this trend the members of the club's Desktop Publishing Special Interest Group (DTP SIG) will make a series of mini-presentations at the May 6 OPCUG General Meeting. We hope to impart some useful tips and inspire you to experiment with the software that you have probably installed already on your computer.

- H.J. "Clem" McClemens will review the *revolution in typography* in the past 20 years—sprinkled with some timeless tips on layout, design, and typography.
- Jean Vaumoron will demonstrate the range of *digital image manipulation* using DTP tools—going from an original scan through several layers of metamorphoses to reveal not only a finished image but also the creative process.
- Bert Schopf will walk you through a typical *desktop project* from concept to final printing—revealing along the way tips and tricks for popular drawing, imaging and page layout software.

Other DTP SIG presenters are slated to show but remain unconfirmed at this time. In any case, prepare to be enlightened, entertained and dazzled by the mouse jockeys of the DTP SIG!



For anyone who doesn't know, your e-mail address on PUB II is `first.last@opcug.ottawa.com`, where "first" and "last" are the first and last names of your logon id for PUB II. Be sure you have your account on PUB II working before you attempt to use this e-mail address.



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Next meeting:

WEDNESDAY, May 6th, 1998

DTP SIG notes *by Bert Schopf, DTP SIG Coordinator*

The April 14 DTP SIG meeting was an open forum with cross-table chatting on a variety of topics including: motherboards, browser wars, cut and paste techniques, "stitching" raster images together, and effective use of the (still pretty new) Mustang interface on the Pub II. Chris Taylor's presentation last month left us wanting even more!

Join us for the DTP SIG's new meeting venue and time—right after the General Meeting on the first

Wednesday of the month. Also planned in June is a DTP SIG field trip to a local printer to see how publications make it from your computer screen to a printed "hard copy."



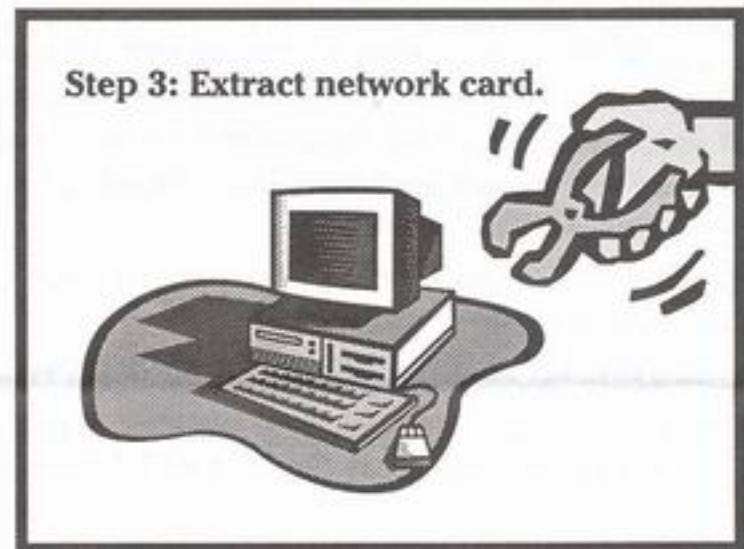
Club News

Oops! *by Chris Taylor*

Oh, well... I always said that I didn't get along very well with hardware.

I showed up over 30 minutes early for the April 1st presentation on PUB II. I figured that would be plenty of time to get my machine set up and running. Well, about 8:00pm, Bert suggested I switch to talking about PUB II while he and Bob Walker tried to get my machine working. It was a puzzling problem; it worked correctly in safe mode but hung in Windows normal mode.

About 8:15 they figured it out. I have a network at home and it appeared that Windows 95 didn't like the fact that the network was not available. As soon as we removed the network card from device manager, Windows 95 booted. Thanks, Bert and Bob, for the diagnostics: I apologize to the membership for wasting 45 minutes of your time.



Calendar

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	May 6 th : - DTP SIG presentation	7:30 p.m. - National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
	June 3 rd - HTML for dummies (some basics of putting together a Web page)	
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 Conference room, Tunney's Pasture, Holland Ave. (north of Scott St.)
PIG SIG	May 6 th After all the other SIGS - All questions, be they serious or not	"Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe

Browsing effectively by Micheline Johnson

At the April Internet SIG meeting, David Reeves spoke on efficient browsing and searching on the Internet.

Coincidentally, the following day, Jim Carroll (co-author of the Canadian Internet Handbook) was a guest on "Ontario Today" on CBC Radio One. His topic was: "Searching on the Internet." Visit CBC Radio's web site at: www.radio.cbc.ca/radio/regional/ottawa/onttoday/daily/index.htm for additional details.

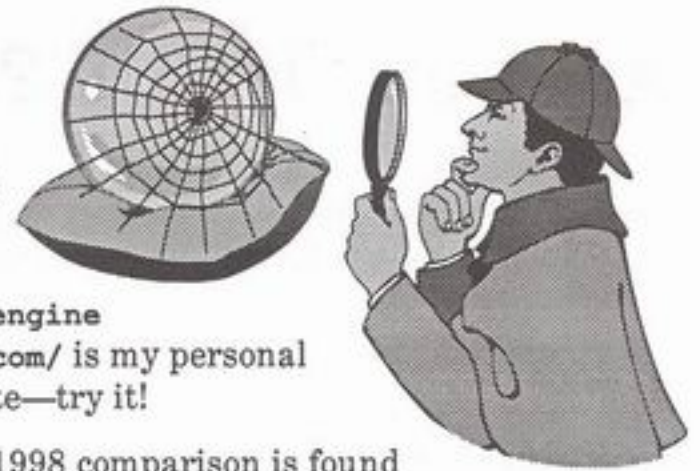
Jim referred to some interesting web documents that could assist your web searches.

- ✦ Visit instruct.uwo.ca/gplis/601/week7/ for the notes from a University of Western Ontario course on browsing.
- ✦ Willie W. Webfoot's *A Consumer's Guide to Search Engines*, www.imagescape.com/helpweb/www/seek.html, offers: a boolean search primer, literature about search engines, a tutorial for finding information, tips for popular search engines, assorted search tools and techniques, and a bibliography.
- ✦ An alternate site, Willie W. Webfoot's *Searching For Information On the World Wide Web, A New Surfer's Guide*, at www.imagescape.com/helpweb/www/search.html, includes annotated links for common browsers (for example, Alta Vista and Yahoo) and many unique sources: for example, Tradewave Galaxy, the World Wide Web Virtual Library, the Clearinghouse for Subject-Oriented Internet Resource Guides, the World Wide Web Worm, The Weekly Bookmark, The Internet Sleuth, Starting Point and URouLette.
- ✦ Dr. T. Matthew Ciolek's, *Annotated Guide to WWW Search Engines*, www.ciolek.com/SearchEngines.html, includes information about: multi-threaded (meta) search engines, comparisons of simple search engines and various query systems.
- ✦ *Scientific American's* March 1997 article, "Special Report: Searching the Internet", by Clifford Lynch, may be found in full at: www.sciam.com/0397issue/0397lynch.html.
- ✦ The May 1996 article in *Internet World* by Gus Venditto, "Search Engine Showdown", may be found in full on the web at: www.internetworld.com/print/monthly/1996/05/showdown.html. Indeed, this particular issue of *Internet World* is a special Net Search Guide issue; visit www.internetworld.com/print/monthly/1996/05/toc.html for articles that also address scams, agents and news services.

- ✦ The Search Engine Watch site at

searchenginewatch.com/ is my personal favourite—try it!

- ✦ A Jan. 1998 comparison is found at: www.cnet.com/Content/Reviews/Compare/Search2/?dd.



Since your needs are unique, why not create your own search engine web page and access it from your own browser? Create links to your favourite search engines and include the actual keyword search forms (without the ads or graphics). An example of a compact multi-search form page can be found at: www.itools.com/find-it/.

However, do not overwhelm yourself: a mega-search could have too many entry forms and take forever to load and render. Instead, I prefer to use meta-search sites. These are multi-threaded search tools, with a single keyword or phrase entry form, that simultaneously send your query to a multitude of search engines. You are spared the necessity of implementing separate searches on multiple browsers and save considerable time. There is a price: the success of a meta-search is related directly to the sophistication and clarity of the logical operators.

My own web site MetaSearch page, www.storm.ca/~michline/metasrch.shtml, contains search forms that link to ten commercial MetaSearch Sites (Acroplex, Cyber 411, DogPile, Highway61, Inference Find, Mamma, MetaCrawler, MetaFind, ProFusion and SavvySearch). Use the features and sample results included to choose between these sites. Try out a few of them. [Metasrch.shtml](http://www.storm.ca/~michline/metasrch.shtml) is too large and too slow for everyday use. Instead, extract the search entry form of the site you prefer and add it to your own browser search page.

Instead of using a commercial meta-search site you could install a meta-search client on your own PC. Jim Carroll recommended Quarterdeck's WebCompass 2.0. You can download a demo from www.quarterdeck.com and try it.



Are you "InCtrl"? by Alan German

At the recent Windows 95 SIG meeting there was a lively discussion, followed by some messages on The PUB, about problems with uninstalling software. The suggested solutions included:

- ✦ using the Add/Remove Programs facility in Windows 95,
- ✦ using a commercial de-install software program,
- ✦ deleting the sub-directory containing the software,
- ✦ living with unused DLL files scattered throughout the system,
- ✦ ignoring redundant INI and Registry entries,
- ✦ merely removing program sub-directories and INI files, then editing the Registry (back-up first, please), and
- ✦ performing a periodic re-install of the entire operating system and applications to provide a pristine system.

Add/Remove is problem laden and provides no true record of what actually occurred. Consequently, selecting Remove won't always remove every file. Deleting files and directories on a best-guess basis is prone to catastrophic error.

While commercial programs are an option, there is a less expensive approach. Check the file area of The PUB, in *File/Utilities/PC Magazine*, for V15N13.ZIP. This is the freeware PC Mag Utility, InCtrl3. In a typical software installation, InCtrl3 records the initial contents of the hard drive and monitors the software installation process. It provides a report of the files that were added, deleted, or modified and records changes to both INI files and Registry entries. This information can be stored in a report file to provide a long-term record of the software installation process. To uninstall the software simply review the stored report and manually reverse the installation process.

InCtrl3 itself is extremely well-behaved during its own installation. Extract the files from the archive into a sub-directory, answer a few configuration questions and the program is ready to use: no complicated installation routine here!

When you run InCtrl 3 it prompts for: the installation file to be used, the name of the software being installed, and a name and location for the report file that it will produce. A standard set of Windows navigation buttons and dialogue boxes makes the process painless.

InCtrl3 moves to the background and, in a small on-screen window, gives a continually updated display of its monitoring of a software installation routine. When the installation is complete, the report can be viewed immediately or saved for later review.

An example of a portion of the report (432 file entries were actually recorded as additions) from the installation of an HTML editing package is given below:

Installation report: Homesite *[Editor's note: header abbreviated to save space]*

FILES AND DIRECTORIES ADDED: (432)

c:\Program Files\HomeSite2

c:\Program Files\HomeSite2\ASP.dat *[Editor's note: numerous other entries were edited to conserve space]*

FILES CHANGED: (2)

c:\Program Files\McAfee\VirusScan\Avconsol.ini

c:\WINDOWS\user.dat

NO CHANGES MADE TO C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM.INI...

NO CHANGES MADE TO C:\WINDOWS\WIN.INI...

REGISTRY KEYS ADDED: (7)

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Classes\.hsp

[Editor's note: other entries were edited to conserve space]

Evidently, the report listing is comprehensive; users should be able to uninstall completely this package without difficulty!

InCtrl3 is another classic utility program from the fine programmers at PC Magazine and, as usual for their software, the price is right.

Chris Taylor, our PUB II sysop has kindly provided a few observations and cautionary notes about InCtrl3.

Windows may tell you that not all components could be removed and you must eliminate the rest manually. Often there are files (for example, data) that the installation program will not delete because it did not create them or the file was in active use when the uninstall program was run.

Chris recommends: run the regular uninstall routine and then look at the INCTRL report and determine



Continued on page 5

what remains. However, be very cautious since it is easy to disable unintentionally other programs. Consider this scenario: you install program A, which installs a new file (call it whizbang.dll) in the System directory. Next, you install program B, which also requires whizbang.dll; however, seeing that it is already there it does not re-install it. Now you de-install A. Referring to your InCtrl3 report you notice that whizbang.dll was left behind and you delete it manually. The result: surprise... program B stops working!

Allow the regular un-install routine to do it's job. When you install a program it notes the presence of previously installed files and adds a counter to the registry (or

increments an existing counter). During an un-install, this counter will be decremented. In theory, when it reaches zero, the uninstall routine at this point knows that there are no longer any programs using this file and it is safe to delete it. If you don't let the un-install routine run, this counter will get out of synch with reality. Of course, this assumes all players are playing the game properly.

[Editor's note: InCtrl3 is a 32 bit program that is suitable for Windows 95 and NT. InCtrl2, is 16 bit, making it suitable for Windows 3.1x users. Please see further commentary in the Windows Sig on PUB II.]



Club News

Old PUB items for sale by Chris Taylor

Now that PUB II is in operation, the old PUB equipment is surplus and will be auctioned. Submit your bids: in person to Chris Taylor at meetings, by mail to the Group's mailing address, by answering machine message, or a message on PUB II. For PUB II, please submit it through Messages to the Sysop conference area. The deadline for personal submissions (in writing) is the break at the June general meeting. Submissions through mail or message must be received not later than 4:00pm 3 June 1998.

The equipment will be auctioned off in six lots.

• Lot 1: 4-port DigiBoard

DigiBoard DigiCHANNEL PC/4—a non-intelligent 4-port digiboard. Provides 4 serial ports through a single 16-bit ISA slot. 16450 UARTS. Drivers included for UNIX SYS V, Windows 3.x and OS/2 v1.0 and 2.0.

• Lot 2: 8-port DigiBoard

DigiBoard DigiCHANNEL PC/8—a non-intelligent 8-port digiboard. Provides 8 serial ports through a single 16-bit ISA slot. 16550 UARTS. Drivers included for UNIX SYS V, Windows 3.x and OS/2 v1.0 and 2.0.

• Lot 3: Micropolis SCSI drive and controller

Micropolis 1588 SCSI 760MB hard disk and Always IN-2000 ISA SCSI host adapter. This is a full-height 5.25" drive.

• Lot 4: 386 Computer

Full tower case with 220W power supply. 386/40 motherboard with 4MB RAM. 14" TTX mono monitor and video card. 5.25" and 3.5" floppy drives. No drive controller and no hard disks are included.

• Lot 5: Toshiba SCSI drives and controller

Two Toshiba MK538FB 1.2GB SCSI drives with Adaptec 1542CF ISA SCSI host adapter. These are standard sized 3.5" drives.

• Lot 6: USRobotics Sportster 33.6 Modems

There are three of these modems. Bids should be per modem. Specify if you are bidding on more than one.



Club life

Reuse, recycle

NO, this had nothing to do with Chris Taylor's article... just a coincidence.



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.





WINDOWS

DUNC PETRIE'S CORNER

BEGINNERS



Windows 98

By now I am sure everyone has heard that Microsoft has announced that the Windows 98 launch date is 25 June 1998. Remember, the descriptions that follow are at worst rumour and at best beta; corporate decisions may change the contents before the launch date.

Assuming that Microsoft has its way, the browser metaphor will be an integral part of the Desktop. Webcasting, or push technology is integrated and the Start Menu will contain web components. The Taskbar options will be expanded. Overall performance will be increased and new hardware supported (some is already supported in Windows 95 OSR2): for example, FAT 32, USB, CD-R, DVD, IRdA and multiple displays. Except for displays, they will follow the more robust Win 32 Driver Model appropriated from Windows NT. The Registry is supposed to have an automatic repair facility.

However, if you have a stable version of Windows 95 and you are not planning on adding hardware that needs the latest drivers, do you still reap any benefits? Reviewers of Windows 98 suggest that reasons to upgrade may include:

- simplifying reinstallations—avoid installing Windows 95, then the service patch, followed by assorted utilities,
- better crash protection (less frequent but not an end)—more stability due to code refinements, more detailed configuration settings and Registry tweaking, automated Registry repairs,
- continual checking of system file integrity—individual reinstallation of damaged system files instead of a full reinstallation of Windows,
- FAT 32 now official—probably all implementations of DriveSpace have disappeared,
- disk defragmentation wizard—not only automating a manual process, but also decreasing the time it takes to launch applications by placing all the code for an application in contiguous space on the outer tracks of the drive,



Drawbacks: FAT 32 must be installed and this process is slow on large partitions with a lot of applications.

Benefits: Programs load faster: particularly those employing a lot of ancillary files.

- slightly faster—courtesy of fine tuning for components and a tightly controlled swap file,
- fewer start problems—a system agent can skip corrupted drivers,
- telephone support enhanced,
- improved notebook support—primarily power management,
- additional or improved hardware support—for example, AGP, USB, DVD and IRdA (system level implementation reduces the chances of buggy drivers),
- scripting host—automates assorted system actions,
- additional diagnostic utilities,
- multiple displays—a power user feature, and
- configuration cloning—for multiple PC installations (both the operating system and applications).

Given the commercial success of the Windows 95 Plus! Pack, rumours suggest that an updated accessory

Continued on next page

Parallel Port Switch

Today's parallel port must act as a "jack-of-all-trades": not only to attach a printer but also to employ a wide variety of new peripherals. The mix could include: multiple printers, scanners, removable media disk drives and digital cameras. You must also consider the type of parallel port connection; devices that require a bidirectional connection must have an EPP or ECP parallel port.

To support these devices you require a bidirectional cable that meets the IEEE 1284 specification. Although

nominally a parallel cable, more of the pins are activated to carry the additional signals.

Now, the nub of the matter: how can you switch between the various devices? Many current versions of these peripherals have a pass-through connection; however, some lack this connection—often printers—and others might refuse to respond from various locations on a daisy chain. Convenient physical access to the parallel port is another consideration.

There are two important conditions: first, the switch must not introduce voltage or current spikes during switching and, second, the switch must meet the IEEE 1284 specification. While no device is immune to power transients, laser printers are particularly susceptible. For example, Hewlett Packard (HP) specifications for their printers are most stringent concerning that criterion: damage caused by an improper switch will instantly void the warranty! Manual switches, the long-standing "standard," while less expensive, are transient prone and may suffer make-before-break connections that would effectively short circuit the involved pins. In addition, few—if any—meet the second specification. An inexpensive option is an electronic switch.

I have been using a Belkin Bitronics Data Switch. This is an inexpensive, manual, bidirectional (connects two devices to one computer or two computers to one device), IEEE 1284 compliant, electronic switch that is warranted to meet HP's specifications. The device is compact (about 4.25 × 2.50 × 1 inches) and does not require a power supply (optional accessory) for most installations. Although the switching mechanism is electronic the actual device selection is manual; to move between devices you must push a button. There is a LED indicator to identify the active attachment. Admittedly, this demands minor effort; however, it avoids the necessity of operating system aware software drivers and another link in the chain.

For me, the device has worked flawlessly; my parallel port is connected to a Zip drive and its pass-through connects the switch to two printers.

Belkin includes the switch, an IEEE 1284 compliant cable, thorough instructions (including Plug and Play and troubleshooting information) and a warranty card.

Windows 98 (continued from page 6)

package will be available at the launch of Windows 98. Some of the goodies could include:

- a new, easier to use setup,
- McAfee VirusScan, including six free updates,
- Lose Your Marbles (a game, I presume),
- Microsoft Picture-It Express (presumably limited features; more intriguingly, what about the current add-in Wang/Kodak Imager?),
- Microsoft Deluxe CD Player (Web enabled),
- added cleaners (a type of agent) for the clean-up program,
- new branded and non-branded themes (Including Peanuts, Cathy, Garfield), and
- Active Desktop Themes.

Depending on the capabilities and pricing of the Plus! Pack it is difficult to determine "money's worth" but the Windows 95 version add-on package enjoyed brisk sales at the outset. Many of its features went mainstream as Microsoft gradually posted them to its Website.

Microsoft's discussions with Apple have caused tantalizing rumours suggesting that Microsoft is on the brink of implementing a much-improved, easier-to-use colour standardization protocol. By calibrating monitors, software and output devices the colour viewed on the monitor would be more consistent with the final product. Will it surface? Who knows—but Apple and MacIntosh have "been in this game" from the beginning.



OTTAWA PC NEWS

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.

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Thanks to our Sponsors and Helpers

Magma *by Chris Taylor*

The OPCUG.OTTAWA.COM address and suitable web space are provided free to the OPCUG by Magma which owns the OTTAWA.COM domain name.

When I began testing e-mail with PUB II, I started by using just the IP address of our server—206.47.37.30. It worked most of the time but some mail servers incorrectly assumed that 206.47.37.30 was actually a domain name. As a result, the e-mail would not work with those sites.

I approached Magma and asked if they would mind putting an MX (Mail Exchange) record in their DNS for the OPCUG.OTTAWA.COM domain. That way, anyone who sent e-mail to that domain would have it re-directed to the SMTP daemon on the PUB II server. Magma agreed to do this, and again there was no charge. Thanks to Magma, we now have Internet e-mail on PUB II working very well.



Microsoft Canada *by Chris Taylor*

When we decided to run PUB II on NT Workstation, I approached Microsoft's Ottawa office to see if they would be willing to donate a copy for such a worthy cause. They readily agreed and provided a full retail license version of NT Workstation 4. Thanks Microsoft!



Special thanks to...

Nortech Laser Cartridge of Stittsville (831-8817) who serviced the OPCUG laser printer used for labels and other club duties. The laser printer has not been given a "tune-up" since it was bought and was due for a good maintenance check.

