



OTTAWA PC NEWS

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March 1999

Software Review

SyGate *by Chris Taylor*

It is not all that unusual these days to find homes with more than one computer. As well, many people have found numerous benefits networking their home computers together. You can share printers and files, play games over the network and more. Modern operating systems make networking relatively simple and straightforward. (If you disagree, let me know and I will consider some articles on Windows networking.)

One thing Windows networking has not made easy is sharing a modem. This generally translates into the machine with an Internet connection (in other words your computer!) being in highest demand. You can turn to Proxy Servers or Network Address Translation (NAT) to get your computer back.

Both Proxy Servers and NAT start with the same basic idea. They are software components that run on a machine with an Internet connection, which may be a dial-up modem, ISDN line, cable modem, or ADSL modem. Client computers on your network pass requests for Internet services to the Proxy Server or NAT gateway; in turn, these requests are sent to the Internet. Packets coming in from the Internet are accepted by the Proxy Server or NAT gateway and passed on to the appropriate client computer. Only the computer acting as proxy or NAT gateway needs a valid Internet-routable IP address. Other computers on your LAN are assigned IP addresses set aside for private networks.

Proxy Server headaches

Proxy Servers are somewhat complex beasts. I used to use WinGate 2.1d from Deerfield Communications. The server portion was fairly straightforward to configure. Clients were a bit more difficult. You must configure your software to work through a Proxy Server. In some cases, this is simple: for example, Internet Explorer has a menu option that directs it to use a Proxy Server. Other programs were neither easy nor possible to use through a Proxy Server. I could never configure Microsoft Outlook to work through WinGate 2.1 to access an Exchange Server. Another problem I had was being able to access multiple news servers. The first one was relatively easy to configure. Subsequent news servers, while possible, were a pain to configure. I

never did manage to get Telnet to work through WinGate.

I read on an Internet mail list that NAT was easier and more capable: I went looking. WinGate 3.0 had just been released, but I had a

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Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, March 3rd, 1999**

Talk to your computer... it talks back!

by Bert Schopf

"Computer: Take a memo and make some fresh coffee." Ever watch the old Star Trek episodes where a computer instruction would be carried out with a simple voice command? Voice-to-computer technology has now hit the mainstream, both in the office and home. Come to the March 3rd OPCUG General Meeting and check out this technology!

We are pleased to welcome Corel Corporation and Newtech Home Automation to demonstrate these new technologies. Corel incorporates Dragon System's NaturallySpeaking voice recognition technology into their WordPerfect product for enhanced voice/text functionality. Imagine all the keystrokes you could save by having your PC take dictation for you.

Dragon NaturallySpeaking is a large-vocabulary, continuous-speech, dictation system. It takes about an hour to install and

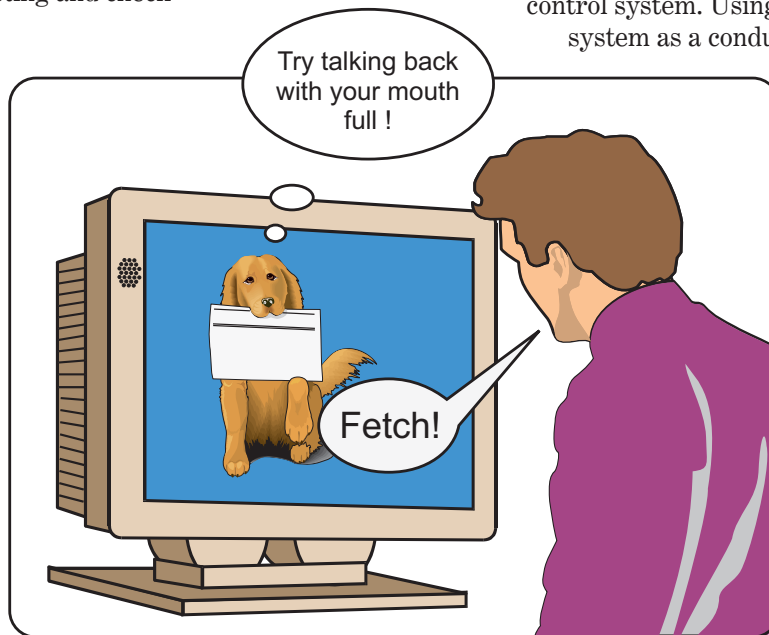
then train the software to recognize an individual's voice characteristics. Multiple users can be set up on the same system.

Serge Perras of Newtech will also demonstrate HAL 2000, a voice-activated computer-based home automation control system. Using a home's existing electrical system as a conduit for commands, you can control

lighting and other electrical devices through voice commands.

Because the system is tied into your computer, you can have it plugged into electronic information services that can be retrieved by voice questions ("Computer: what is today's weather forecast? 'How is traffic on the 417 West?'"). HAL 2000 can be activated from stationary microphones placed in the home or by wireless lapel microphones—"Beam me up, Scotty!"

Come and talk to these computers—and bring a friend!



Calendar

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	March 3 rd : Voice recognition See Coming up article above. April 7 th : Vorton Technologies	7:30 p.m. - National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
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 (or is it WING SIG?)	March 3 rd After all the other SIG's - All questions, be they serious or not	"Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe

recommendation of SyGate 2.0 from SyberGen Inc. and I decided to try it. By the time you read this, version 3.0 should be available.

SyGate

You install the software on the machine with the Internet connection; it must be running Windows 95, 98, or NT4.0. SyberGen lists the minimum system requirements as a 486 with 16MB RAM and 10MB disk space. If you hope to use the machine for anything more than just SyGate, I think a more realistic minimum is 32MB RAM—my recommended minimum for running any 32-bit version of Windows. Other computers on your LAN can be running just about any operating system as long as they have a TCP/IP stack.

I was surprised at how easy it was to set up SyGate. You must specify the connection type since permanent connections such as ADSL or cable modem are handled differently than dial-up connections. If you are using ADSL or cable modem, you need two network cards in the SyGate gateway machine. One connects to the ADSL or cable modem and the other to your internal LAN. If you use a dial-up connection to the Internet, you specify the DUN connectoid to use. Optionally, you can set a time-out value and the SyGate machine will hang up the connection after a period of inactivity.

After that, you configure TCP/IP on each machine on your LAN. The SyGate manual gives very clear instructions. Since SyGate has a DHCP server included, you don't even have to assign most TCP/IP settings—just by telling each client computer to use DHCP and the IP address, the SyGate machine sets the Network Mask, Gateway, and DNS. If you prefer, you can disable the DHCP server and set all TCP/IP settings manually. Again, the SyGate manual provides very clear instructions.

At this point, you should be able to run virtually any Internet application from any machine on the LAN. If a connection to the Internet is not open, the SyGate machine will establish one automatically. If you are concerned about the possibility of automatic connections being opened and left open, you can turn this feature off.

The most difficult area for me was to reconfigure my Internet apps to cease using a proxy server. That is the beauty of a NAT gateway. You simply configure most applications as if you have a permanent connection to the Internet and they work! I tested e-mail programs (accessing both POP3 and Exchange Servers), FTP clients, Telnet clients, PING, News

readers, Network Time Protocol clients, a WinFrame client, and more.

I originally had some problems accessing my Exchange Server. Once I added the NetBIOS name of my Exchange Server to my HOSTS file (which was not required when accessing my Exchange Server from the machine running SyGate) I was able to connect to my Exchange Server. Keep this in mind when using a program like SyGate. Even though most programs should work fine, you may run into some programs that act differently under SyGate. Another example is ICQ: it will require a few special settings that are detailed in the SyGate manual.

SyGate includes a monitor that you can use to see the traffic flowing to and from client computers and the Internet. You can also enable and disable SyGate, but I found that disabling SyGate disabled the Internet connection on the SyGate machine. Only a re-boot could re-enable it.

It is really nice to be able to use all my Internet applications from any computer on the network. The nature of many Internet connections tends to be “bursty”—short spurts of lots of traffic followed by extended periods of little or no traffic. This lends itself well to sharing a connection. Even a 28.8Kb dial-up connection may be shared by several users. In many cases, users will not notice that they are sharing the connection.

You can download SyGate from www.sygate.com. The version you download will allow you to transfer 75MB of data, which should be enough to verify if it works for you. The 23-page User Guide is available in HTML and Adobe Acrobat formats.

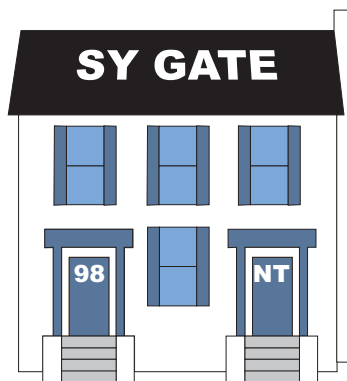
You can register your copy of SyGate to unlock it for unlimited traffic. All licenses are for simultaneous connections and a user on the SyGate machine is never counted. Prices in US dollars are: 3 users - \$49; 6 users - \$99; and unlimited - \$199.

Membership has its rewards

OPCUG members can get a 15% discount by registering at www.sygate.com/oem.htm and entering “ZX0398” (that's ZX'zero'398) as the OEM code.

If you want to read more on NAT, it is defined in RFC1631 and is available in the Internet file area on PUB II as RFC1631.ZIP

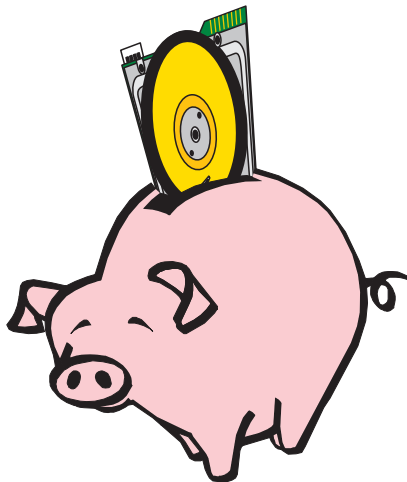
Maybe now, you can get back on your own computer sometimes.



Saving Disk Space *By Chris Taylor*

If you dual boot a computer between Windows 95/98 and Windows NT 4, you can save some disk space by having both operating systems share the same virtual memory. In a time of multi-gigabyte hard disks, this may seem trivial, but why waste the space?

Start in Windows NT. Right-click on My Computer and choose Properties. Select the Performance tab and then click the Change button in the Virtual Memory section. Set the Initial Size and Maximum Size to the same value. If you don't know what value to choose, a reasonable choice is anywhere from 1.5 to 2 times the size of your physical RAM. (If you want to start what is sure to be a lively debate, post a question in the General Messages conference area on PUB II asking what is the best size for a swap file.) Make sure the paging file is on a FAT partition. Click on OK and allow the computer to re-boot.



Go into Windows 95/98. Right-click on My Computer and choose Properties. On the Performance tab, click on Virtual Memory, and choose the radio button, "Let me specify my own virtual memory settings." Set the Minimum and Maximum values to the same values you chose in NT and make sure "Hard Disk" is set to the same partition you used for the NT paging file. Click on OK and let Windows restart.

Edit SYSTEM.INI in your Windows directory. In the [386Enh] section, add or edit the following lines:

```
PagingFile=x: \pagefile.sys
```

```
PagingDrive=x:
```

where "x" is the drive you selected above.

Save the file and re-boot. There is a chance you will still have a file called win386.swp (the old Windows 95/98 swap file) on your disk. If so, you can safely delete it.



Quick tip

Recycle Old Floppies

With the advent of 3.5 inch disks, users have put their stash of 5.25 inch disks and storage cases in areas where spiders lurk. Before throwing the old treasures away, they might want to reconsider their actions. There is a viable use for the extinct media packaging.

One complaint with CDs: there is no way to label them. Worse, they are often packaged in a thin cardboard or clear plastic envelope that offers little or no protection for the disk. Here, users can put their old 5.25 inch floppies to good use.

Recycle

Using a paper cutter or scissors, cut off a small sliver from the edge of the disk jacket and remove the floppy disk media. Inside you will see a lint free cloth that is attached to the disk jacket. The cloth was designed to allow the disk

media to spin freely in the jacket without scratching the disk surface. Slip the CD into the sleeve jacket and label it using those old floppy disk labels.

Use the original floppy disk paper (or better, the indestructible Tyvek®—"house wrap"—variant) envelope as protection for the areas of the CD-ROM that are still exposed in the read-write heads area.

The large floppy storage cases make ideal "data vaults." Road warriors can use the ten disk storage boxes as no-cost carriers for essential material.

[Editor's Note: Reprinted from The Personal Computer Club of Toronto (PCCT) newsletter: Read.Me, December 1998. The article appeared previously in The Tacoma-Seattle Area Microcomputer Users Group newsletter.]



**PLEASE
RECYCLE!**



Corel Capture By Joan Latchford (PCCT)

[Editor's Note: This article seemed like an excellent idea for club members who purchased the user-group version of the CorelDraw 8 suite that lacks any user manuals. Hidden gems—as distinct from useless “Easter eggs”—are worth exploring; why, you may even discover that you do not require a separate application.]

Though I have owned and used CorelDraw since version 3, I have never had the time to master a fraction of its innumerable features. Feature-rich programs defy any normal, working individual to explore fully every option.

However, tucked away on the menus under titles like “plug-ins” or “utilities” or in the index of a program’s manual you may often find hidden gems.

Corel Capture 8 is such a feature. If you have done the full install of Corel 8, go to Start... Programs... Corel and you will find it on the flyout menu nestling under Graphics Utilities. For an application that will capture entire screens or specific areas (with or without flyout menus extended) in rectangular, elliptical or freehand format, it boasts a remarkably modest interface that is the approximate size of a Microsoft Word Toolbar, with similar drop-down menus.

Options

The Source menu allows you to define selection criteria: Current Window, Client Window, Animation Window (Yes, Corel Capture will record your on-screen actions as animation files.), Full Screen, Current Object, Rectangular Area, Elliptical Area or Freehand area.



To the right is a menu for choosing the hotkey (F2-F7), or a user-defined combination, to initiate a “capture.”

These drop down menus are followed by a series of icons that control the destination and quality of your capture: the clipboard or an icon of a disk with an arrow beside it. The latter opens a fly-up dialog box with a choice of 13 graphic file formats: the default is Corel’s .CPT format. This wide choice of formats can save you a great deal of juggling with programs such as HiJaak or Graphic Workshop.

Output options

The printer icon will direct your capture to your default printer; another down arrow will let you choose any printer driver on your system including: Adobe Distiller Assistant, Adobe PDF Writer and WinFax. The final icon gives you control over colour depth; it ranges from black and white to 16.7 million colours although some colour options are not supported by every file format. Capture offers a Resampling icon to deal with unsupported formats.

[Editor's Note: Joan Latchford is the editor of Read.Me, the newsletter of The Personal Computer Club of Toronto (PCCT). This article originally appeared in the February 1999 issue.]



Another Useful Utility

Corel ## files by Jean Vaumoron

Illustrating a text, be it a mere newsletter, used to be reserved to the artists among us. Electronic publishing has changed all that, even if it is mostly for the worse. Being a “clipartist” is now the privilege of many, and we all have fun doing it. Fun, yes, but for one major task: finding the right clipart. Yes, it is probably hiding there in this CD, lurking as XYZ3421.cdr, hidden in an unlikely subsection.

Well, the good people at Corel have thought about this and described all their files with a few chosen words. Try this: in the Windows



Start Menu, click on Find (what else!), leave the file name blank and go to the second line “Containing”. Type “friend” for example and designate the drive containing your clipart CD. Sure you will find FRIEND01.cdr in the PEOPLE\Misc section, but the search will also point to POSE194.cdr in the PEOPLE\Humorous section. It certainly saves minutes of frustrating search!





WINDOWS

DUNC PETRIE'S CORNER

BEGINNERS



Software bargain!

Painter 3

Several years ago, Fractal Design (since absorbed by MetaCreations, of Kai Power Tools fame) introduced a paint program that provided not only novel creative capabilities but also distinctive packaging—a gallon paint can. Painter has evolved (currently, it is version 5.5) and remains a unique, high-end program with creative options that are unmatched by any other products.

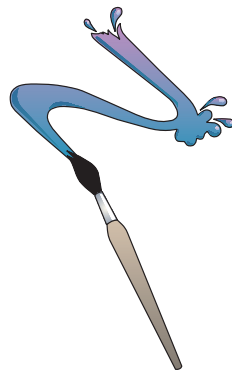
While there are many paint programs (or pixel editor—don't confuse these with a vector, or "draw" program like CorelDraw), few offer the range of artistic options—media textures (for example, canvas and paper: the latter with definable grain and grain-direction), media (for example, pencils, chalk, watercolours, oil, gouache, and more), an unlimited array of brushes (also user-definable), artistic rendering (for example, Van Gogh, impressionist)—that are included in Painter. Until recently, Painter's Image Hose was unique; however, equivalents are now available as Corel's Photo-Paint Image Sprayer or Paint Shop Pro's Picture Tubes.

For those who desire programs that support their artistic endeavours but don't want to spend the "big bucks" that are usually demanded, here is an appealing alternative. Yes, there are shareware paint programs; however, most have

feature-sets that are deficient compared to Painter 3. Assuming that you register (that is, pay), any of these products—regardless of the breadth and depth of their feature sets—will be more expensive. The leading contender, Paint Shop Pro, version 5, previously the leading shareware product in this category, has become a commercial product. While there is a free, trial version on their web-site, I believe that it will time-expire.

Instead, for the sum of 18-20 dollars (Canadian!), purchase a copy of the British magazine PC Format. Included on the CD-ROM is a full version of Painter 3 that will not time-expire and has the full feature set; nothing is disabled! In its prime, this program cost about \$500 Canadian. You even get a 125 page user's guide (an Adobe Acrobat, PDF document, in colour) and several tutorials.

As an aside, third-party texts are available as residuals. I found Painter 3 Complete, by Karen Sperling (ISBN 1-55828-459-1), for \$4.99 at a local retailer—my local Shoppers Drug Mart.

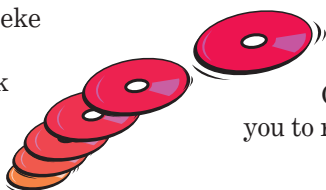


Windows 95 tip

Warp speed CD-ROM

Under Windows 95, the apparent maximum performance system settings for a CD-ROM are a large supplemental cache and quad speed or higher optimization. To eke that last bit of performance from an IDE/ATAPI CD-ROM drive, try this. Unfortunately, this trick does not work with SCSI drives.

- Backup the Registry and then open Regedit.



- Navigate the Registry to
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\System\Current
ControlSet\Control\FileSystem\CDFS.
 - Write down the numbers associated with
Cache Size, Prefetch and Prefetch tail to allow
you to return to the presets if necessary.

Continued on next page

Bring a guest to OPCUG!

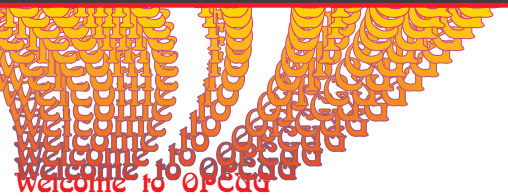
Our club is all about users helping users. It stands to reason that the more users we have in the group, the more knowledge resources we will gain, which benefits everyone in the club!

All club members are encouraged to bring along a guest to one of our meetings. Many of you are already doing this—good for you! This grassroots approach introduces computer enthusiasts to the OPCUG who might not otherwise consider attending a meeting.

What's in it for you? Well, apart from making your club meetings a more vibrant experience, you could win something! Every guest you bring into the March, April and May meetings gives you one ticket on a special draw to be held at our June meeting. Prizes so far include CorelDraw 8, Partition



Welcome to OPCUG



Magic 4, and a free year's club membership. When you come to a meeting, see the contest registrar at the door with your guest. Sign your guest in and you will be given a ticket which you hold onto until the big June draw.

The guests you invite are under no obligation to take out a membership (but they may anyways if they like what they see!). Plus, if your guests do take out an OPCUG membership by the end of the May meeting, you qualify for an extra three tickets. You can bring more than one guest to any meeting. Your guests are invited to attend General Meetings and the SIG sessions afterwards. OPCUG reserves the right to restrict presenter's draw prizes to OPCUG members only.

E-mail your net-buddies. Talk to that guy or gal in your office who is always talking in bits and bytes. Bring your neighbours, bring your cousins. Hey, bring your barber if he's into computers!



Dunc Petrie's corner (continued from page 6)

Warp speed CD-ROM (continued)

- Double-click on Cache Size; edit DWord will open. Switch to decimal values. In decimal, the values are likely close to 615-620. Triple the existing value; add that amount to the existing value (becomes approximately 2476 decimal) to triple your cache. You might be able to go higher (more below).
- Repeat the above to access Prefetch. In decimal, the likely value hovers around 228 (assuming you have set the optimization speed as "quad or higher"). Adding decimal 56-58 to the existing value will increase the optimization by a factor of two. Using the base value of 228 as an example, a setting of 340-347 would equate to an eight-speed (8x) CD-ROM. Once again, you can try higher settings; however, they should be consistent with the speed of your CD-ROM drive.

- Important: do not attempt to adjust the Prefetch tail value. Any changes normally retard performance.
- Reboot your system to incorporate the changes.

A few additional comments are necessary. Do not attempt to utilize this trick with Windows 98 or NT. The ceiling for improvement is device dependent: some drives have more headroom than others. The only certain way to detect the results of any changes is to run before and after benchmarks. This can prove—to say the least—time-consuming.

To date, this has been tested on a single six-speed (6x) machine with modest results.



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. 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/](http://opcug.ottawa.com/)

Bulletin board—the PUB (BBS)

Up to 33.6 kbps V.34 228-0665

Chairman

Bert Schopf bert@blackbirdpcd.com ... 232-8427

Treasurer

Darryl Baker dbaker@msn.com

Secretary

David Reeves dreeves@iname.com 723-9658

Membership Chairman

Mark Cayer cayemar@statcan.ca 823-0354

BBS Sysop

Chris Taylor ctaylor@nrcan.gc.ca 723-1329

Newsletter

Duncan Petrie (editor)

gdpetrie@accglobal.net 841-6119

(Mr.) Jean Vaumoron (layout)

vaumojav@magi.com 731-7847

(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire (distributor, electronic version):

Jocelyn.Doire@opcug.ottawa.com

Publicity

Chris Seal cseal@istar.ca 831-0280

Facilities

Bob Walker skywalk@iname.com 489-2084

Beginners' and Windows SIG coordinator

Duncan Petrie gdpetrie@accglobal.net . 841-6119

Fox SIG coordinator

Andrew MacNeill andrew@aksel.com 851-4496

Fox SIG web page: www.aksel.com/foxsig

Internet SIG coordinator

Bob Gowan gowanb@inac.gc.ca

OS/2 SIG coordinator

(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire; please contact via PUB:

Jocelyn.Doire@opcug.ottawa.com

OS/2 web address: <http://os2.ottawa.com>

Paradox SIG coordinator

John Ladds ladds@statcan.ca 951-4581

Director without portfolio

Terance Mahoney terance@cyberus.ca ... 225-2630

(Mr.) Jocelyn Doire Jocelyn.Doire@opcug.ottawa.com

Club life

Reuse, recycle

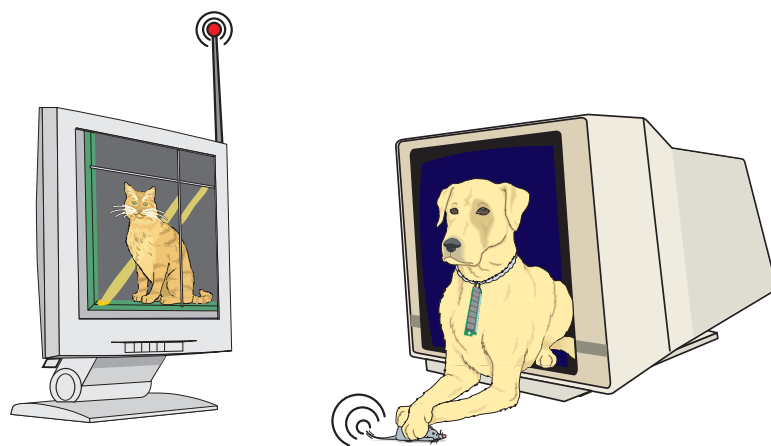
Bring your old computer magazines, books, or any other computer paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the general meetings, and leave them in the area specified. If you don't bring something, you may want to TAKE AWAY something of interest, so look in on this area. Any item left over at the end of the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



Fly West



The "Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe, for chicken wings and a drink after the General meeting: may be the best and most informative SIG meeting of the evening. See you there!



Don't you get bored with technology after a while?

Club News all about Club Life!

To receive the newsletter by e-mail, send the message "subscribe Newslettertxt" or "subscribe NewsletterPDF" (without quotes) to listserve@opcug.ottawa.com.



Did you know that the PDF issue was in color?

