



OTTAWA PC NEWS

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The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

June 1999

Software Review

ToggleMOUSE *by Chris Taylor*

The Microsoft IntelliPoint driver allows you to wrap the mouse cursor around the side of the screen. Just about every mouse driver provides adjustable mouse trails, acceleration and double-click speed. You can download hundreds of free animated and static mouse cursors from PUB II or the Internet. There is a shareware utility that provides a mouse odometer to log your mouse mileage.

Thus, I decided to look at Ottawa-based Toggle Software's ToggleMOUSE v4.4.6. I thought... what's so special? Well, it turns out it provides all of the above and an impressive array of additional features. ToggleMOUSE, which is available for Windows 9x and NT,

Spicy Computing

For those who think variety is the spice of computing, there are 247 unique mouse cursors organized into 23 themes. Many of the cursors are animated, especially the busy cursors. There

Continued on page 5

INSIDE

Coming up:

<i>June meeting</i>	2
<i>Meeting calendar</i>	2

Club news - Club life

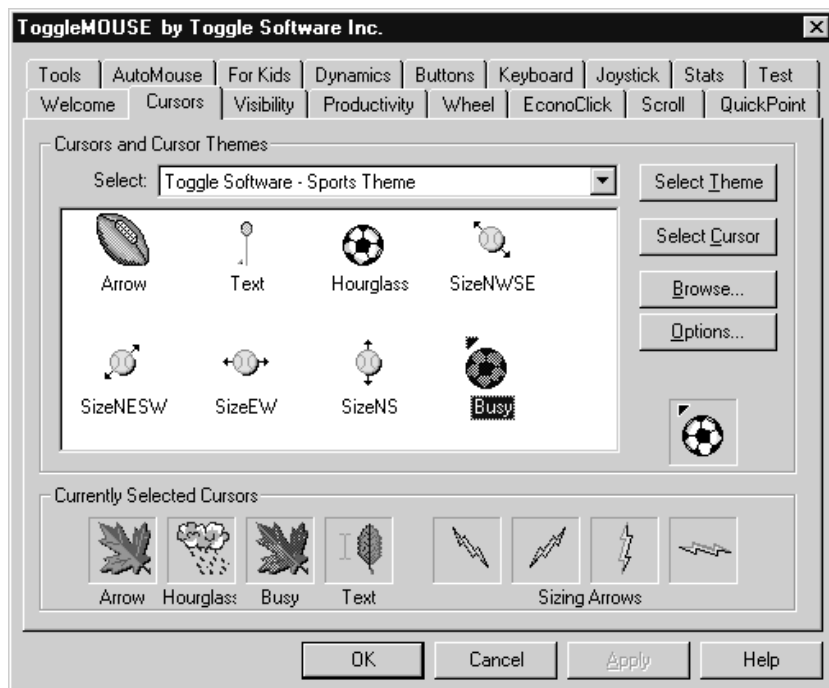
<i>Corel Road Show</i>	3
<i>The "Bring a Guest" Draw</i>	3
<i>Fly West</i>	3
<i>Reuse, recycle</i>	3

Tips and tricks

<i>Scanning, and then what?</i>	4
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Dunc Petrie's corner

<i>Identifying expansion cards</i>	6
<i>Scrolling in Word 97</i>	6
<i>ScionImage</i>	7
<i>Installing the upgrade as full version</i>	8



does not replace your existing mouse driver. It loads via your startup group and resides in the system tray. A single click on its icon in the tray opens the configuration screen where you choose from 17 tabs packed with options.

Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, June 2nd, 1999**

June 1999

Our June meeting will feature a brief presentation on ToggleMouse (see sidebar) and then will shine the spotlight on talent within our midst: our own members.

Among members presenting will be **Jean Vaumoron** (who made a very memorable graphic presentation last year), **Chris Taylor** (documenting the “indispensible” Windows Commander utilities), **Doug Terry** (Y2K patch installations), and **David Curling** (a website case study on information architecture).

These members’ presentations will be short but sweet and showcase the diverse talents and interests of our membership.

Graphics presentation

Going through the motions of creating two pictures: this is a step-by-step account of how bitmap, vector and 3D drawing programs can be used to enhance a photograph.

We shall look at how a photograph of two paintings in the National Gallery can turn into a surreal scene as one of the nudes from a painting jumps into the real world and turns into a Gallery visitor under the eyes of yet another unreal visitor.

In the next picture, the woods just outside Ottawa gradually turn into a background for a vector-based drawing. Merging the autumn background and a black and white foreground creates a new reality.

Togglemouse

Do you own a basic two-button mouse? Would you like to enjoy the document scrolling feature of the latest Internet aware versions? How about... (let your imagination be your guide)? What you need is not a new mouse but ToggleMouse. Don Leclair and Brian Qureshi from Toggle Software, a local company, will demonstrate the “unbelievable” that this software can extract from your own basic two-button mouse.

Don't forget that we will be drawing prizes for the “bring a guest” contest at the June meeting too!

Have a wonderful summer!

See you in September.



Calendar

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	June 2 nd : ToggleMOUSE and Members See Coming up article above. Next meeting : to be announced	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?)	June 2 nd , after all the other SIG's - All questions, be they serious or not	“Good Times” cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe

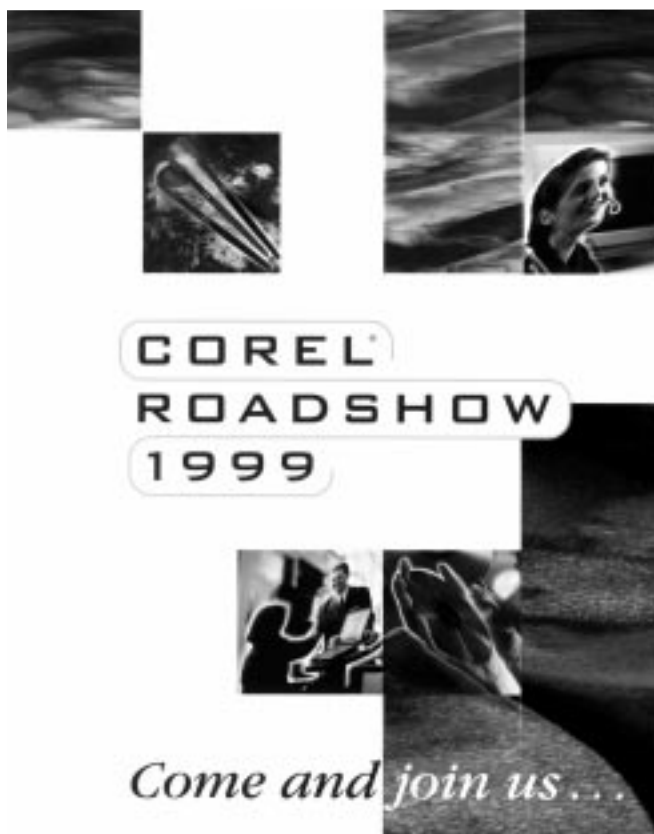
Corel Road Show Participation

The Corel Road Show 1999, to introduce CorelDRAW 9 and WordPerfect Office 2000, will be held on 4 June 99 at the Ottawa Congress Centre, commencing at 8:30 a.m.

Corel has kindly invited the OPCUG to participate; the club will have its booth set up and staffed.

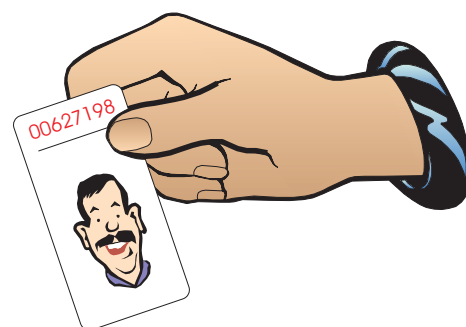
Corel's previous Roadshows have consistently provided a lot of fun and great (and numerous) door prizes that have included free Corel balloon rides.

If you can make it, do not miss this event! However, you must register on Corel's website (www.corel.com); select Events (on the menu bar), then navigate to Corel Roadshow and the registration/sign-up page.

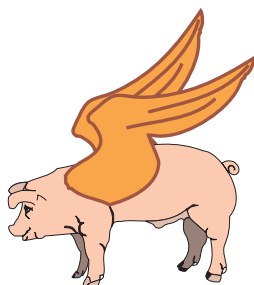


The "Bring a Guest" Draw

During the last few meetings any club member who brought a friend or friends to a general meeting received a ticket for a big prize draw. Well, the big event has arrived. Be certain to be present—and bring your tickets—for a chance to win one of several fabulous prizes!



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!



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.



Scanning, and then what? *By Jean Vaumoron*

A scanned photograph is a good starting point for a graphic design. It more or less guarantees that the final product will look right, with a perspective that feels comfortable, as well as proportions achieved without calculations and without lots of trial and error for the non-artists among us.

Scanning

Whether a photograph is intended as a basis for a drawing, or used as it was originally intended, the first step is of course to scan it at a suitable **resolution**, based on your final objective, and **really square** on your scanner so that you don't have to spend hours correcting this one-degree angle that makes everything look really weird. You do your calculations, juggling with lpi, dpi, and you make sure that your hard disk has enough real estate to accommodate the quality of your dreams. Let us assume that you have mastered this art and let us move on to the next step.

Cleaning up

Your photograph is now on the computer screen, and it is good enough not to be erased on the spot. You already know that you might have to adjust contrast, tones, etc. and you remember that *each operation will degrade the picture*. Going back is impossible unless you have saved, at each stage of transformation, a separate file that constitutes your safety net. What is the first operation you should do? Well, **Clean up** of course! This is the single operation which you certainly do not want to repeat... and will have to do anyway. You cannot escape removing these white or black dots, or these strands of fibre you never knew were floating around your scanner when you placed your photograph on the glass after a careful cleaning.

Automatic or Standard?

Lots of softwares are available to clean up these defects. Their main disadvantages are that they are as blind as a bat and absolutely unable to think. A speck of dust can be blurred out and the resulting mess resharpened, but the program has no knowledge of the surrounding texture, lighting conditions, edges, etc. and, worst of all, it will apply that treatment to the whole picture for no valid reason at all. The results obtained are generally spectacular until you take a closer look at picture quality and general degradation.

The standard procedure remains the good old fashioned hand method. One word of caution though: that white speck of dust on uncle Ned's nose stands out so much that nobody can possibly miss it! It looks like the only flaw of an otherwise perfect picture. Well, look twice! Start by defining with your zoom tool a rectangle that is approximately one fifth you picture height and one fifth of you picture width, in one corner of the main picture. Blow it up to full screen and start counting. You may have something like twenty little defects which would eventually convey an impression of sloppiness to your work of art.

Which tool?

How do you get these defects out? You may be tempted to use the smudge tool to paint over the damaged area; this is the worst thing you could do. You will just introduce

blank areas without any texture and deface your picture with "watercolour"-like wet wavy lines.

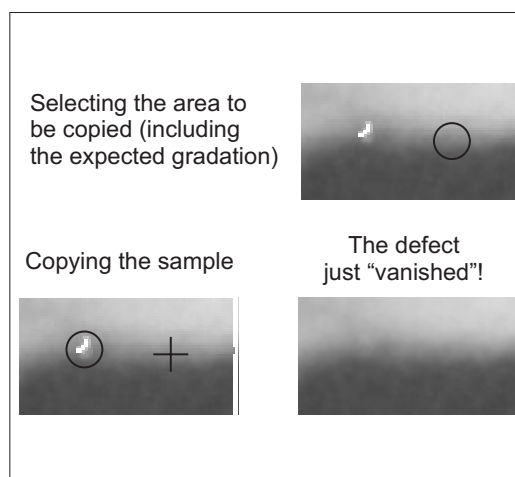
There is only one tool that will work: one that lets you pick a small area that has the same texture, the same brightness and the same tone as the damaged area and copy it over the offending feature.

Naturally, this tool is called different names, like Cloning tool in PhotoPaint and Rubber stamp in PhotoShop, but it works exactly the same in both programs. It just copies a round sample of your image surface (always use fuzzy edges to hide the limits of the

"patch up") to the area you click on. The area you copy **from** is designated by a cross and the area you copy **to** by a circle (the symbols are the same in both programs so I assume there was a breakdown in communications, but at least the commands are different: Alt-Left-click for Adobe and Right click in Corel to designate the area to be copied).

How to

Although you can drag your mouse to copy a large area, this tool should be used in **successive touches** and not in continuous sweeps, for two reasons. First, what is copied is not what you see on screen but what was there at the time you started pressing the mouse button. If you bring the cross over an area which you have already "cleaned",



Continued on page 5

Scanning, and then what? (Continued from page 4)

the software will copy what was there before you covered it over, i.e. the original damaged area. The second reason is that copying an area of random dots near its original location creates an artificial duplication which breaks the overall random arrangement and can sometimes become much more visible than what you were trying to cover up.

Saving

When you have finished cleaning this rectangle, move to the next rectangle along a line, clean up, go down one when you

reach the end of the line and work on the next line. Save at each line end! When you have finished, crop your picture to eliminate all uneven edges and unwanted parts. Why do this now and not before? ... Because unwanted parts of the picture may be good sources of copy material to cover what you want to hide.

Save this cleaned up picture and make it a read only file so you are not tempted to save any other modification over it. Now you can begin your real artistic work!



Toggle MOUSE (Continued from page 1)

are high-visibility cursors: great for laptop computers and fun themes like sports, music, vegetables, and nature. You can easily mix and match from various themes as well.

Features available to help you find your mouse cursor include mouse trails, a hot key to move it to the centre of the screen, and an option to make it move to the default button of a dialog box. If that's not enough, you can make the pointer flash after you haven't moved it for a while or add a hot-key that pops up a pointer to the pointer. If you can still manage to lose your mouse pointer, it may be time to give up your computer!

For productivity, there is a myriad of options. You can add single-click options to desktop items and list boxes, change the middle button on a 3-button mouse to a double-click, enable screen wrap and make windows active simply by pointing at them. A really nifty option I love is one that makes the mouse cursor disappear as soon as you start typing. Just move the mouse to make it reappear.

Wheel-less Wheels

If you feel left out because your mouse does not have a wheel to enable scrolling, ToggleMOUSE comes to the rescue, adding horizontal and/or vertical scrolling features to almost any application with a regular mouse. And if you do have a wheel mouse, you can set Ctrl-wheel to switch you between open applications. It can also add wheel scrolling to applications that are not wheel-aware.

Quick access to frequently needed items is a key feature of ToggleMOUSE. You can pop up a clock/calendar at the pointer and set hot-keys for 20 pre-defined functions such as starting Notepad, closing the active window, and logging off the computer. If you find yourself often minimizing applications so you can access desktop items, ToggleMOUSE can provide a menu of all desktop items simply by moving the pointer to the top-left corner of the screen.

If you miss the recorder feature included with Windows 3.x, ToggleMOUSE provides a mouse and keyboard recorder. You

can elect to run a macro a single time or loop through multiple times. You can even adjust the speed of playback.

If you want to set aside your mouse, you can use your keyboard as a mouse. Choose from the numeric keypad (you can restrict it to work only if the numlock is on or off) or the Ctrl key in combination with I, J, K, and M. The number of screen pixels moved per keystroke is adjustable. You can even use your joystick as a mouse if you want!

If you do training or demos, there is a really nifty feature that adds a tooltip at the mouse pointer that tells if you clicked, right-clicked, or double-clicked.

ToggleMOUSE is available for the bargain-basement price of \$27.50. Registered users are entitled to free upgrades forever. You can download a full-featured 30-day evaluation version of ToggleMOUSE from Toggle Software's web site at www.toggle.com or PUB II (togmouse.exe in the Miscellaneous Utilities file area.) For \$27.50, you can get a registration code to unlock the software. Toggle Software can be reached at 237-4475.

Membership Privilege

Don Leclair and Brian Qureshi from Toggle Software will be coming to the June OPCUG meeting. If you buy a copy at the meeting, you can get it for \$20.00 and they will throw in a copy of ToggleDISKSPACE, a \$20 value. ToggleDISKSPACE will help you manage your disk space. There are 15 different reports, history tracking, Internet cache management, disk performance tests, and more.

ToggleMOUSE has such an impressive array of features that every user is bound to find at least a few features that will make using the computer easier, more efficient, and more fun. Do yourself a favour and take the 30-day trial version for a spin.





WINDOWS

DUNC PETRIE'S CORNER

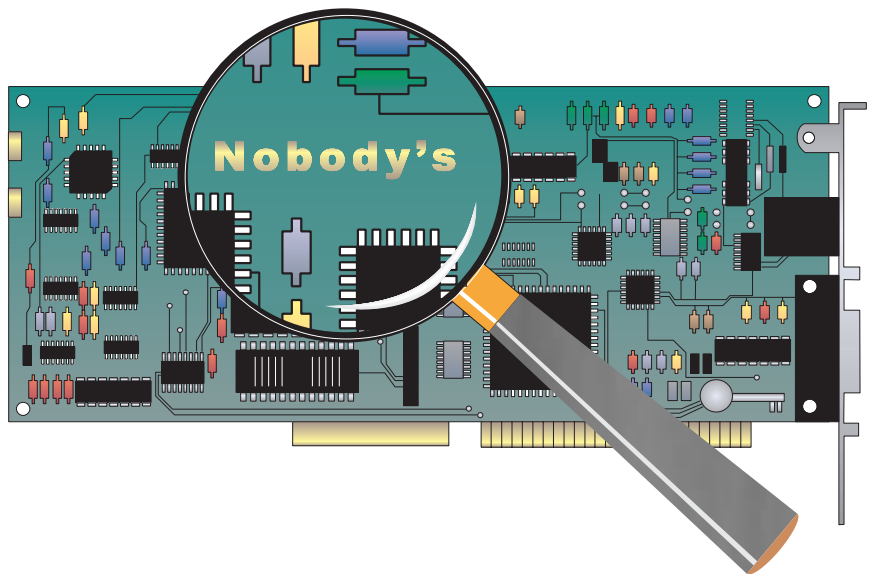
BEGINNERS



Hardware tip

Identifying expansion cards

Do you want to identify a “swap meet special” expansion card? Some cards must have proud manufacturers—they identify their card and often include their own name! Some will include their identity by accident on one of the integrated circuit chips. The rest... well I just don't know. Somewhere on the card you will find an FCC ID number. Jot it down and head to: www.fcc.gov/oet/fccid/ and search the database for your manufacturer. Use the ID number as the keyword.



Software tip

Scrolling in Word 97

Using the slider (on the right side of the application window) to navigate within a long document using Word 97 provides unsatisfactory cursor control. As you move the cursor nothing will happen—the document does not move on-screen—until you stop. Then, the cursor jumps to this new location. Unfortunately, only experience or “guesstimation” will locate the cursor in the approximate zone.

Would you like smooth-scrolling text that follows lock-step with the cursor movement?

This will require editing the Registry. You are advised to backup your Registry before you continue. Close Word 97.

Open the Registry Editor (Regedit.exe). Navigate to: HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Office\8.0\Word\Options. Right-click on Options. Choose New... and then, String Value. Enter the String Value name as LiveScrolling. Double-click it and a dialog box will open. Enter the value 1 (the numeral, not a lower case letter) in the corresponding box. Close the Registry. Start Word: rebooting isn't necessary.

This tip works for only Word 97 in either Windows 95 or 98.



Get the Picture and ScionImage

At the April meeting Jean Vaumoron's Graphics SIG enjoyed an enthusiastic launch. Anyone who wants to join the fun will need some digital imaging software. For those on a budget you do have freeware options. These are full-featured applications; they are not watered-down demonstrations, shareware with de-activated modules (until purchased), or time-restricted (number of days or uses) offerings. Unlike my previous suggestion (March 1999 newsletter) for a low-cost image editor (Painter 3), you will not have to search the magazine racks for a magazine and CD-ROM combination that had already disappeared (embarrassingly for me) into the ether. Instead, this is "realware" that club members (a benefit of membership!) can download from the files area of PUB II.

Image Management Software

Get the Picture from Telepix Imaging Inc., Saint John's, Newfoundland was a commercial product; however, when it was replaced with a newer program (FotoPoint) the company generously offered it as a free download. Once you have installed the software application on your hard drive you will have to go to Telepix' website (www.telepix.com) to obtain an individual unlock code.

Get the Picture was designed as the first "goof-proof" digital image management software product. Use the on-line Photo Wizard to guide you step-by-step. The archive does include extensive help files; the company does not provide support (the program is discontinued, after all) and there is little, if any, support material remaining on its website.

Its integrated technology allows you to capture images (from digital cameras, scanners and many fixed or removable storage devices), save, find, view, convert or print images readily and store them in electronic photo albums. Other modules enable image compression, slide shows and even e-mailing images. Over 40 different image formats, including PhotoCD and Flashpix, are supported. Combine images with other data (personalize each image by adding text information or attaching a sound clip) and transmit the composite across the Web. Individual images or entire albums can be password protected.

Manipulate images between libraries using OLE drag and drop; other features include the ability to flip, rotate and zoom any image. A built-in batch processor automates a variety of routine tasks. Get the Picture uses a powerful database engine to provide fast search capabilities. This program is devoid of image editing functions; however, read the following section.

ScionImage

Originally created as NIH Image (NIH is the National Institute of Health located in Bethesda, Maryland.) the program was used for medical imaging on Macs. System requirements are modest: a Pentium processor, Windows (95, 98 or NT), 32 MB of RAM and an 8-bit video card. Microsoft's DirectX (no version specified) is required. Scion Corporation (www.scioncorp.com) offers the PC version as a free download. The Mac site (<http://rsb.info.nih.gov/nih-image/>) has some additional documentation that might prove useful.

The program offers the usual image editing toolset (for example, brushes, eyedropper, zoom) and features (for example, sharpen, contrast, and histograms, TWAIN scanner support); even many of the Adobe Photoshop plugins are supported. A scripting language offers batch processing of images. Video capture from digital cameras and VCRs is supported; animations can be created as QuickTime movies.

The scientific origins of this program are thinly disguised in certain areas. On startup on my computer, the program appeared as several, seemingly-unrelated, boxes on screen. You must drag the main window to create your background canvas—something every other image editor/paint program does automatically. For my first foray I thought that the program had failed to initialize correctly. The manual—and other, more technical documents—are written for the technically-oriented and tend towards sparseness. ("As a scientist, you already know this stuff—right?")

Some of the features will likely stump the casual user. For example, Fourier Transforms offer an original, technically sophisticated, and extremely powerful method to manipulate images. It can readily achieve results that would be painfully slow and labour intensive in all other programs; however, this power does demand, at least initially, "techie" knowledge and skills. Another example: surface plot massages image data to portray a 2-D image as a 3-D surface contour. These are reminiscent of those exotic graphic representations of mathematical equations to "warp space."

Leaving the exotica aside, however, neither detracts from the program's abilities as an image editor nor does it diminish the value for money.

For the adventurous

In closing, there is another alternative. Linux users have the GIMP! This program is readily available for users of that operating system and promises to be "Photoshop for Linux." Better, it is claimed that it offers all the power of Photoshop

Continued on page 8

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.

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Dunc Petrie's corner

"Get the picture" (continued from page 6)

with none of its cost. I have not personally used this program; I understand that it has devoted followers. An extensive users' manual is available for download; like all things Linux it is in a process of continual upgrade and improvement. A quick look at Amazon Books (www.amazon.com) lists at least two commercial titles.

Join the fun!



Windows 98 tip

Installing the upgrade as full version

Sooner or later you will want or need to reinstall Windows 98. If your system has the full version, you have no problem. If you purchased Windows 98 as the upgrade to Windows 95, then you will use a lot of time simply to install Windows 95 to provide the basis for the upgrade. Or, must you?

Try this workaround. Assuming that you have formatted your destination drive (presumably C:\), then perform these steps.

- Boot your system from a boot diskette: either a Windows 95/98 startup disk, or a DOS bootable diskette.

- Create a file in the root directory of C: drive named "ntldr" (without the quotes). This file has one absolute restriction: it must not be zero bytes in length; however, the contents are immaterial. Use a text editor to create a file that holds some text; "rem" is adequate (without the quotes) but avoid any leading spaces.

- This should bypass the check for a previous version of Windows. It fools Windows 98 Setup to believe that Windows NT is present.



Club News all about Club Life!

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