



Alan German & Chris Taylor

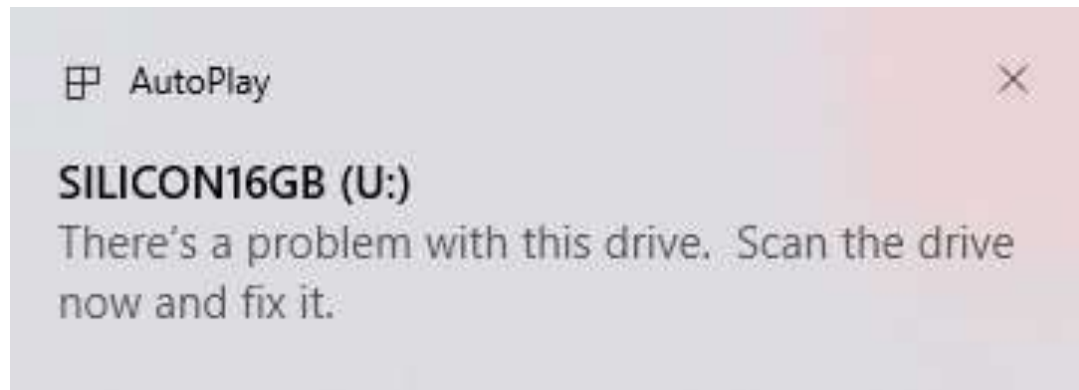
Ottawa PC Users' Group

March 29, 2023



Why is there nothing wrong?

- Windows often tells me that a USB flash drive has a problem



- But, when it checks, the drive is perfectly fine...



Microsoft Windows



Do you want to scan and fix SILICON16GB (U:)?

There might be a problem with some files on this device or disc. This can happen if you remove the device or disc before all files have been written to it.

→ Scan and fix (recommended)

This will prevent future problems when copying files to this device or disc.

→ Continue without scanning

 Error Checking (SILICON16GB (U:))



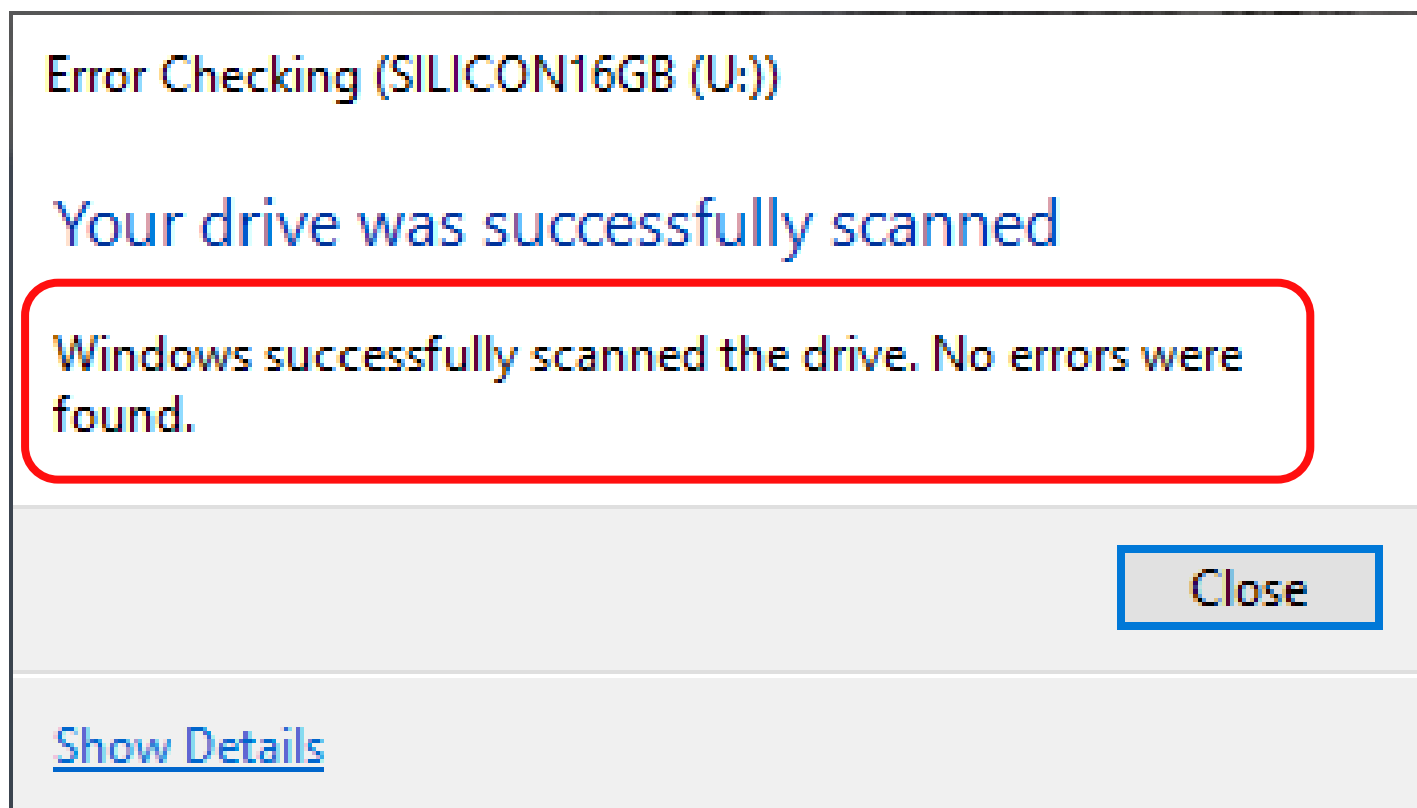
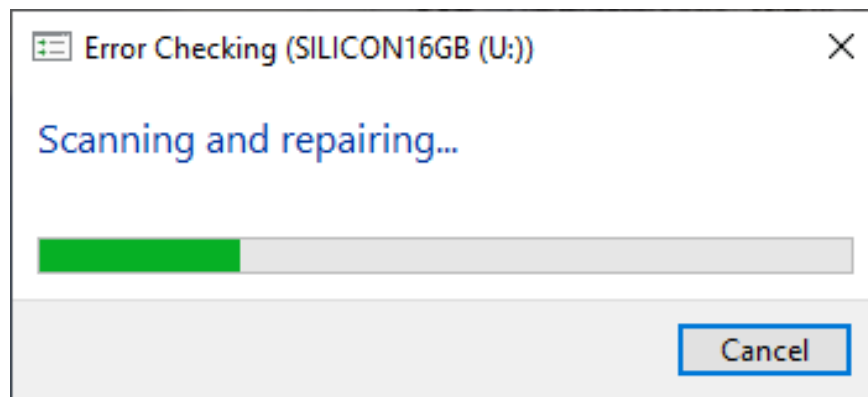
Repair this drive

We found errors on this drive. To prevent data loss, repair this drive now.

→ Repair drive

You won't be able to use the drive while Windows finds and repairs any errors. This might take a while, and you might need to restart your computer.

Cancel





A couple of options...

- Perhaps the drive had not been safely ejected
- A “dirty bit” may have been set

- A volume's dirty bit indicates that the file system may be in an inconsistent state. The dirty bit can be set because:
 - The volume is online and it has outstanding changes.
 - Changes were made to the volume and the computer was shut down before the changes were committed to the disk.
 - Corruption was detected on the volume.
- If the dirty bit is set when the computer restarts, `chkdsk` runs to verify the file system integrity and to attempt to fix any issues with the volume.

To query the dirty bit on drive C, type:

 Copy

```
fsutil dirty query c:
```

- If the volume is dirty, the following output displays: `Volume C: is dirty`
- If the volume isn't dirty, the following output displays: `Volume C: is not dirty`

<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-server/administration/windows-commands/fsutil-dirty>

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Bill Gates on AI



- Challenge to OpenAI
 - train an artificial intelligence to pass an Advanced Placement biology exam
 - make it capable of answering questions not specifically trained for
 - more than a simple regurgitation of scientific facts – must think critically about biology
- Thought it would keep them busy for two or three years
 - finished it in just a few months
- 60 multiple-choice questions – got 59 right
- Outstanding answers to six open-ended questions
- Outside expert scored the test
 - GPT got a 5 – highest possible score
 - equivalent to getting an A or A+ in a college-level biology course

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Highlights

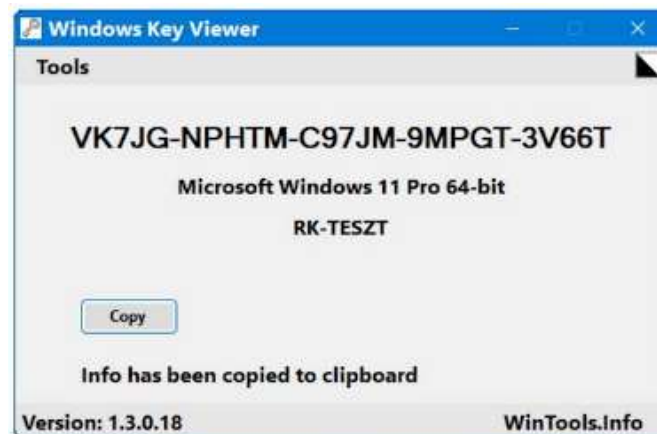
- Gates's definition of AI
- Productivity enhancements expected
- Healthcare improvements
- Education
- Risks and problems
- Next frontiers



Share

Windows Key Viewer

- I had a Lenovo laptop running Windows 8.1 and wanted to install a fresh copy of Windows 10
- The Windows 8.1 product key label (on the bottom of the laptop) was worn completely off
- Windows Key Viewer, developed by Peter Panisz (<https://www.wintools.info/index.php/windows-key-viewer>) worked as advertised, snagged my product key, and the machine is now running Windows 10...



Jeff Dubois

ARTICLE

Setting Up a New Computer – First Things First by Alan German and Chris Taylor

So, you took the plunge and purchased that shiny new computer full of all the latest gizmos. Now, you have the new machine at home and are wondering just where to begin exploring your latest toy. But wait, there are probably lots of things that you should do to streamline the experience and ensure that your new computer is secure against all perils. So, spend a little time and effort upfront

activation codes, etc. may prove to be necessary in any recovery effort. Our suggestion is to maintain the records in a word-processing document

<https://opcug.ca/Articles/2105NEWS.pdf>

Asus T100 Maintenance Log

Model No. T100TA-DH12T-CA

Serial No. E4N1BCxxxxxxxxxx

Purchased: Computers-R-Us

Date 29-Jul-2014

Warranty: 1 year parts & labour, on-site

Microsoft Windows 8.1

Product Key: 3VBMR- yyyy-yyyy-yyyy-yyyy

Microsoft Office Home & Student 2013

Product Key: JFCH6-zzzz-zzzz-zzzz-zzzz

F2 to enter Setup

Some really important information that should be recorded at the top of such a maintenance record includes the make, model and serial number of the computer; where the computer was purchased; warranty details; the version of the operating system in use and **its product (activation) key**; and similar details of any proprietary software that has been purchased and installed on the machine.



Fraud Watch

- March is Fraud Prevention Month
- Our Fraud Watch page lists examples of many scams with red flags to help identify them
<https://opcug.ca/fraud-watch/>
- Now we have one member's real-world experience with an out-of-the-blue E-mail...



A (Probable) Romance Scam



- A person creates a false identity and pretends to have romantic feelings for a victim to gain their trust and affection for the purpose of obtaining their money
- Fraudsters research potential victims online
- The fraudster usually fakes a scenario where they need quick money - a crisis!
- The scammer then requests money, cryptocurrency, gifts, or investments.

<https://www.grc.gc.ca/en/gazette/just-the-facts-romance-scams>

One member's recent experience

- I received an out-of-the-blue email from a "gentleman"
- His email was lengthy, detailed, explained who he was and how found me (an Ottawa meet-up group)
- He included pictures of himself



My "spidey" senses kicked in...



Unknown person to me



E-mail address and name were different



Overly-familiar in tone



Person not listed as part of group on which he claimed to have found me



"Middle of the night" hour the email was sent

However...

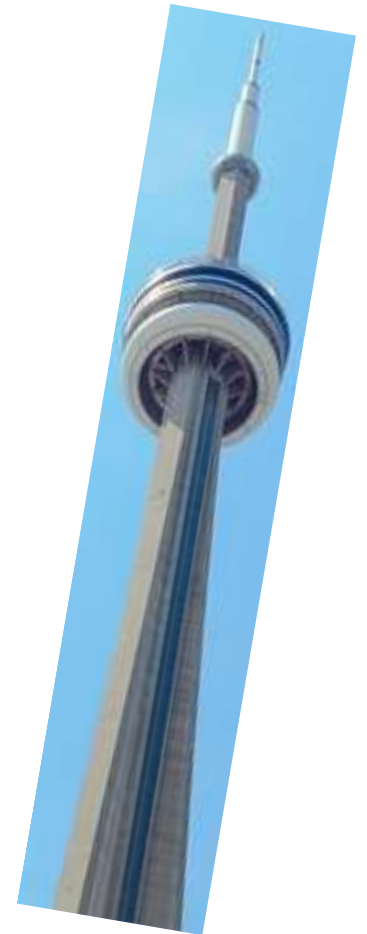
- Because the communication and details did seem possible, I wrote back asking for more information
 - Who are you?
 - How did you find me?
 - Where do you reside?
- I didn't provide:
 - my name
 - address
 - phone
 - nor the "requested photos of me"



More information

Over the course of the next few days, I received a couple of lengthy, detailed emails with:

- more "personal" life history (son, widower, genealogy), education
- work details (environmental engineer, consultant specializing in aquatics bidding on a contract with Chevron)
- lives in Toronto
- more pictures, and
- a link to his "Linked in" profile.



Second set of "spidey" senses!

- E-mail address and name now matched
- Overly familiar tone
- More pictures showing lavish lifestyle
- Hour of email
- Nature of details provided
- LinkedIn looked suspicious - no other apparent online presence



Thanks, but no thanks...

- I wrote back thanking him for his "interest"
- I wouldn't be able to write again due to busy life
- Commented about being approached in such an unusual manner
- Noted phishing, scammers, AI, etc.
- Added - *"One can't be too careful these days....."*

I received an "understanding" response and nothing further



Unusual Contact?

- The approach wasn't through a dating site
- I thought I had a limited/low on-line presence
- Something of this nature wasn't on my radar
- I read a few posts to see what I ought to do to double check my on-line persona and identify any security measures to further protect myself



Check-Up (on Me)

- <https://haveibeenpwned.com/> - Nothing unexpected
- Credit check and all accounts – All OK
- Changed my already-limited profile on Meet up to provide even less info.
- Deeper Internet search for my information – All OK



Check-Up on “Him”!

- Reverse image search on "his" LinkedIn picture
- The photo generated a hit on an Instagram account
- Perhaps based in Mexico
- Fascinating/ disturbing/ contrary content in Instagram posts of whoever "Gabriel" or "André" actually is



I'm pretty sure I was "romance scammed",
but I'll never know for sure.....

Should I be flattered? (Hee Hee)



MalwareBytes Newsletter

- The next day, my MalwareBytes' newsletter's first article was on a scammer who scams romance scammers
- I found her hilarious
- She now has a successful blog and book on the topic!



Becky Holmes hates spinach
@deathtospinach

I've recently been wooed by handsome soldier Thomson Smith

Just when I thought he had fallen for me hard enough to be a willing victim of cannibalism he disappeared

<https://tinyurl.com/y3p2xxpf>

Follow Up

Guess what.... a sequel!!!

- Gabriel or André or....? wrote about an hour ago
- I couldn't believe it
- I sent him my screen shot "research"
- Told him I wouldn't be writing anymore
- Asked him to stop writing me.
- We'll see if it ends up being a pesky trilogy!



UPDATE

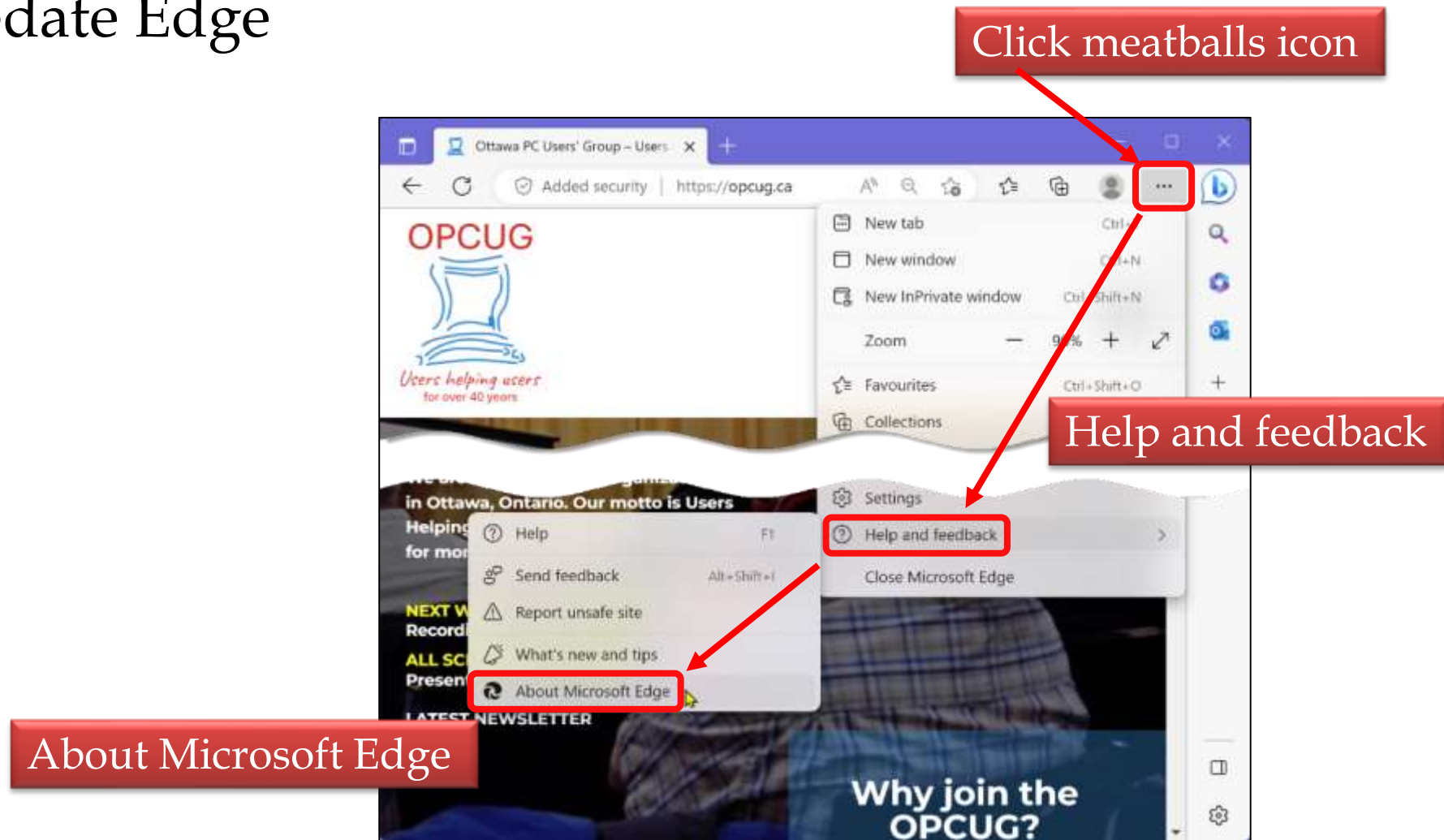


Bing *Discover* icon in Edge

- 2023-03-22 Q&A
 - ranted about Bing *Discover* icon in Microsoft Edge
 - detailed how to get rid of it using a registry edit
- Microsoft listened to someone who complained
- Quietly updated Edge
 - can now remove *Discover* icon through Edge Settings

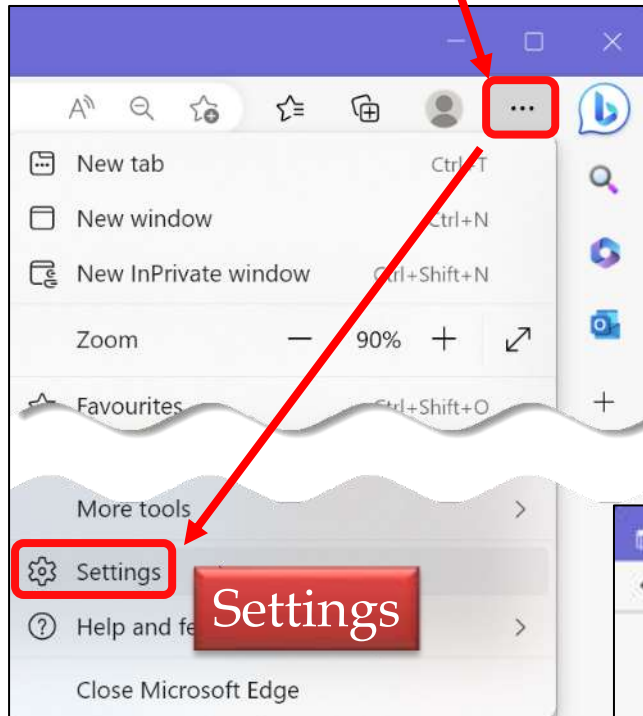


- Works in Edge 111.0.1661.54
- Update Edge

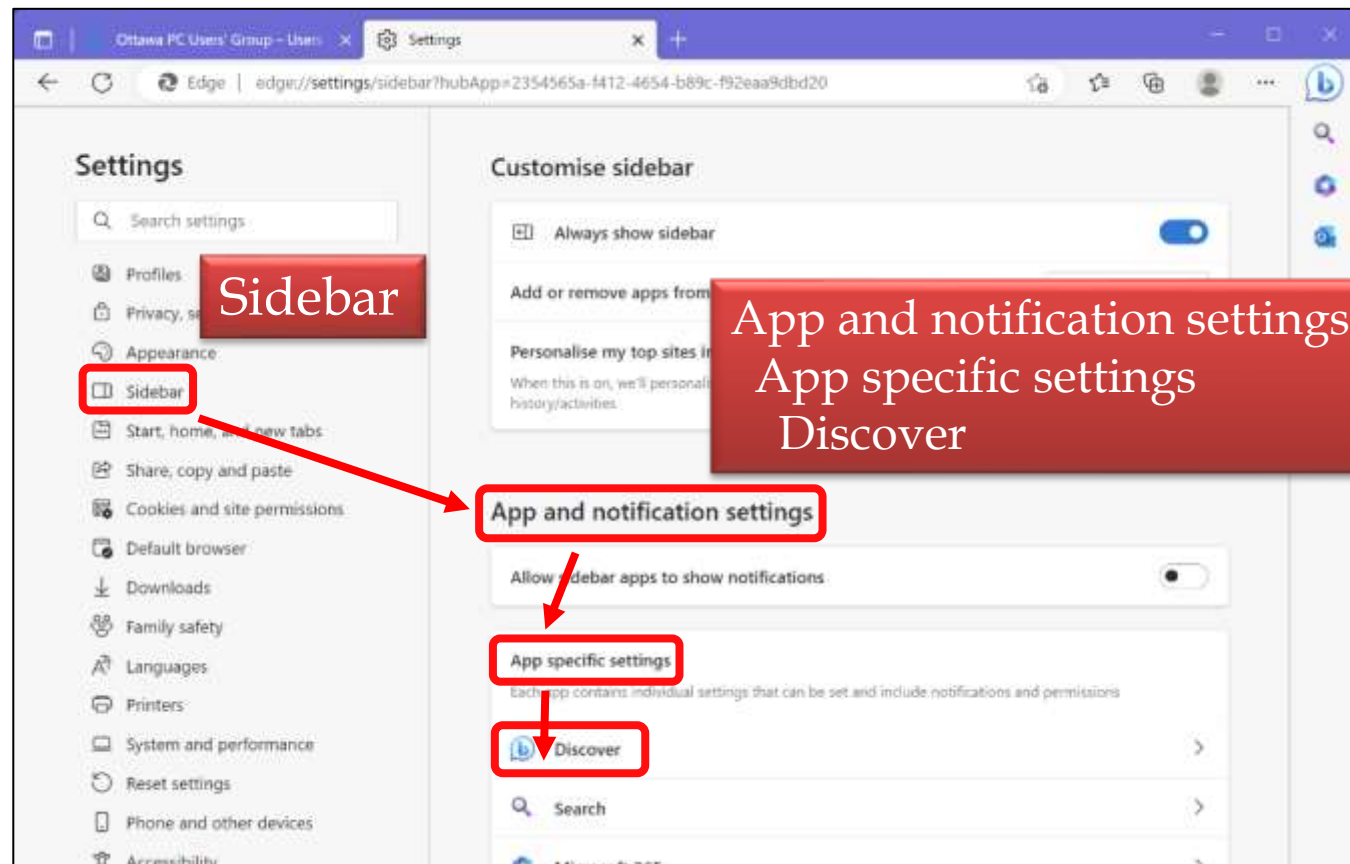




Click meatballs icon



Settings



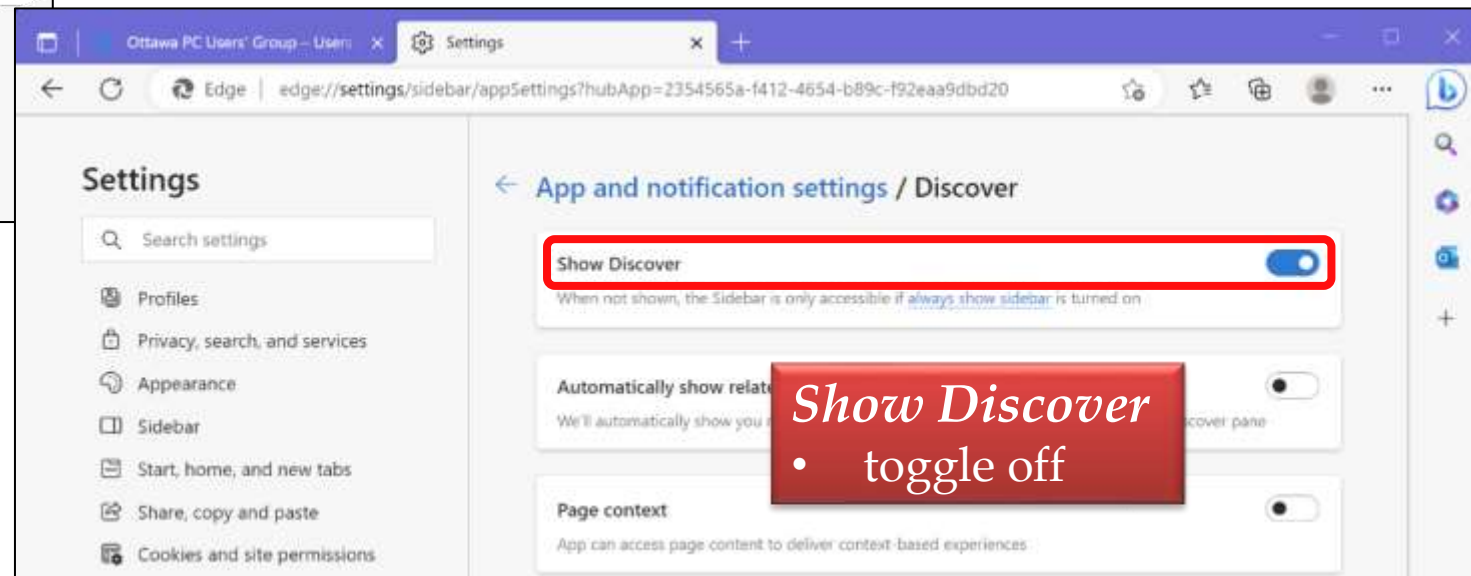
Sidebar

App and notification settings
App specific settings
Discover

App and notification settings

App specific settings

Discover

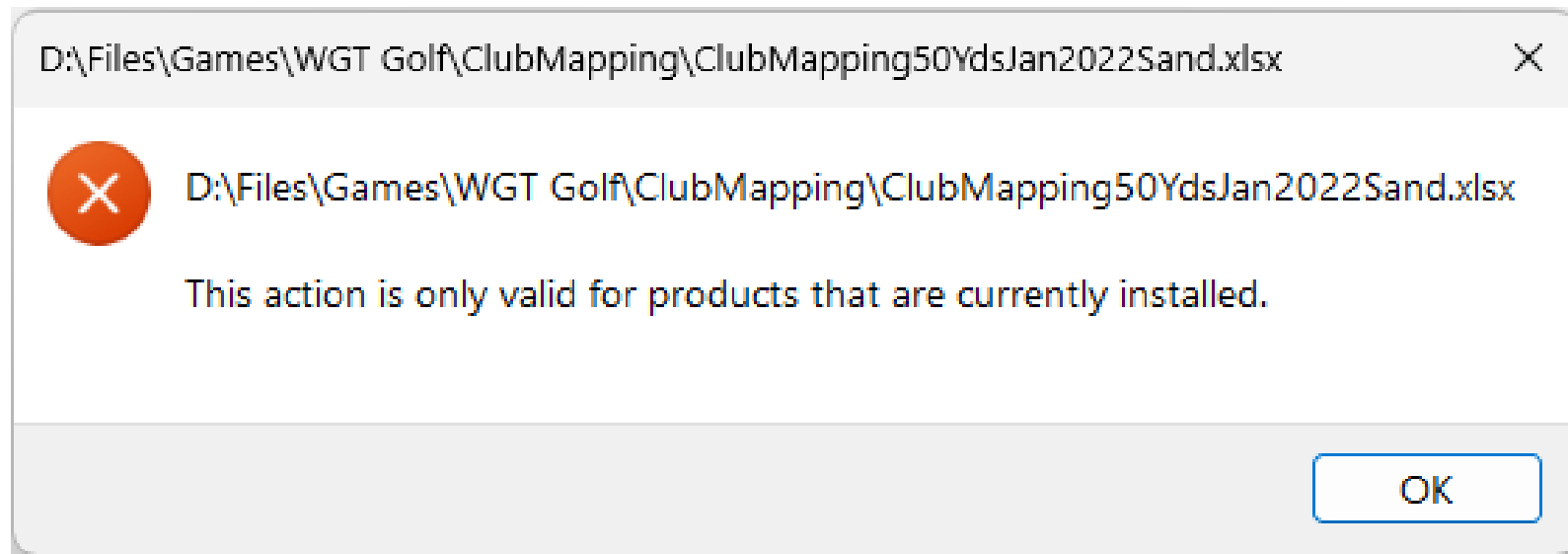


Show Discover
• toggle off

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Fixing Excel

- Ever since installing Microsoft Office, never able to open an Excel File from Windows Explorer by clicking on it.



- Able to open Excel and then open the file

Bob Herres

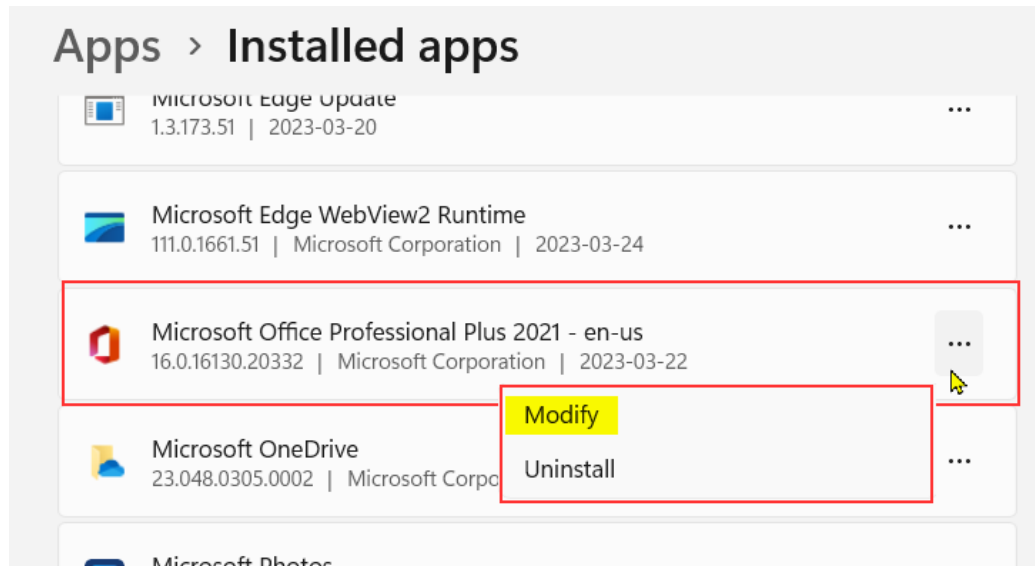
Windows 11 User



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Fixing Excel

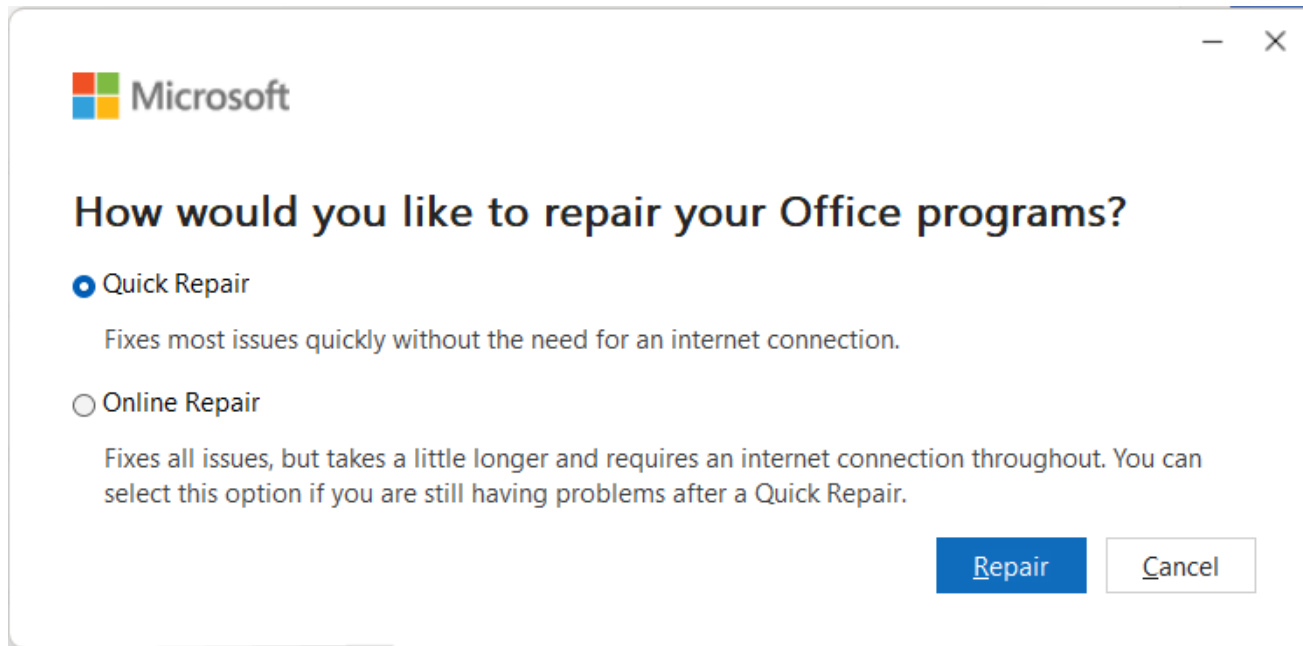
- Found a video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9n0GqV0pLEA>
 - go to *Settings > Apps > Installed Apps*
 - find *Microsoft Office*
 - click on the Ellipsis (...) & click *Modify* (not *Uninstall*)



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Fixing Excel

- Click *Quick Repair*

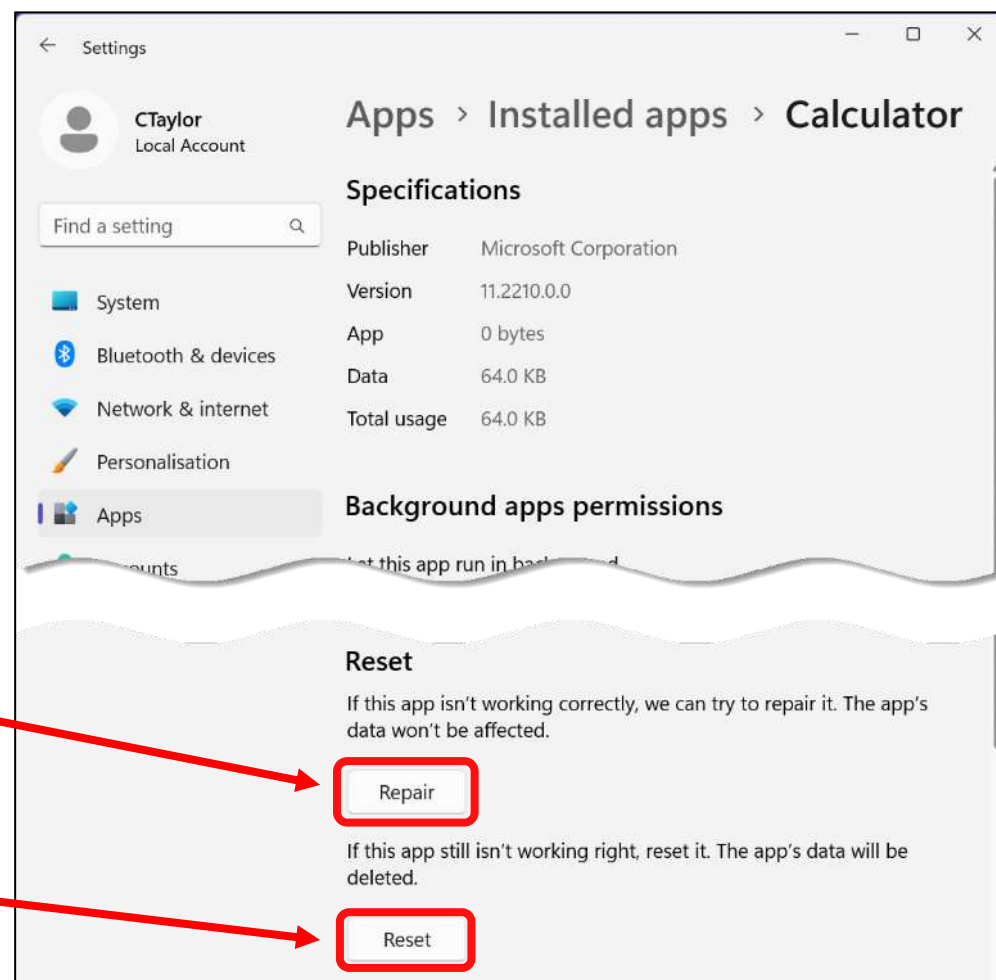
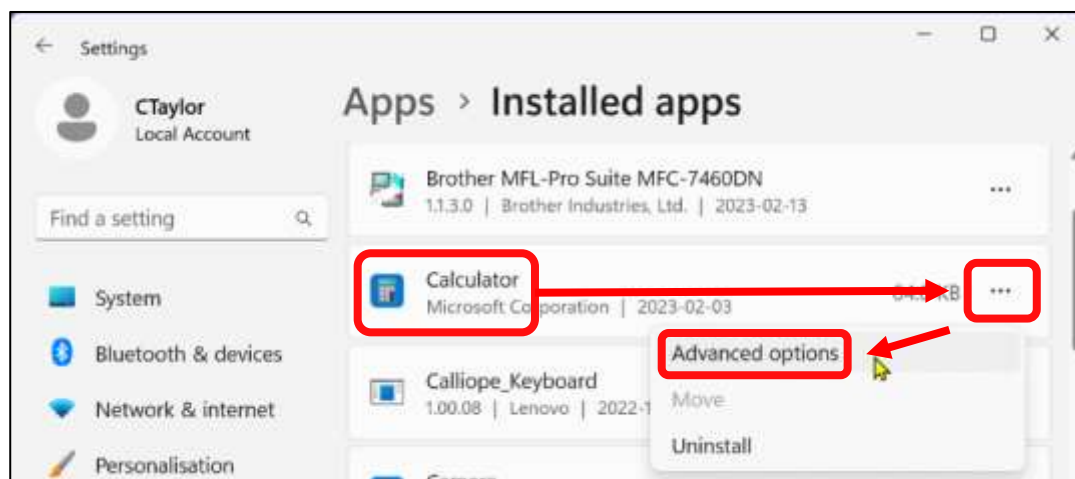


- Problem fixed!

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Fixing Microsoft Store apps

- All Microsoft Store apps should have *Advanced Options*



Try *Repair* first

- faster and less disruptive

If *Repair* fails, try *Reset*

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Fixing other programs

- If a program is not behaving correctly
- Many programs have an option to
 - repair/modify/reinstall...
- Try under
 - Windows 10 - *Settings* > *Apps*
 - Windows 11 - *Settings* > *Apps* > *Installed Apps*
- Within the program on *Help* menu
- Can also try uninstalling & reinstalling
 - make sure you have everything you need to reinstall
 - installation file/location
 - license keys (may not be required but you never know!)

Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS's)



Bob Walker, OPCUG

In the last session, we looked at surge protectors, which protect electronic devices including computers, battery chargers, modems, TVs, etc. from voltage spikes on the power line.

However, if you want to protect equipment that could be damaged by a sudden loss of power (e.g. a hard disk drive that's susceptible to data corruption), or critical gear that can't EVER go down (such as a CPAP machine, a ventilator or an oxygen generator), you shouldn't be looking at a surge protector at all. Instead, you need an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), most of which have built-in surge protection.

A UPS is also great for anyone who wants their home Wi-Fi, VOIP phone and internet to stay online during short power outages or brownouts.

Adding a UPS can keep you online and connected in case you need to reach emergency services or if you're in the middle of a round of your favorite online game.

Most UPS's are basically:

- a surge protector,**
- a battery,**
- a battery charger,**
- an automatic voltage regulator,**
- a cutover relay, and**
- a power inverter (which turns the battery's stored energy into usable power)**

all wrapped into one unit.

The size of the battery determines how long it can provide power, and the capacity of the inverter determines how much power it can put out at a time, often listed as volt-amps (VA) but more easily understood as watts (W).

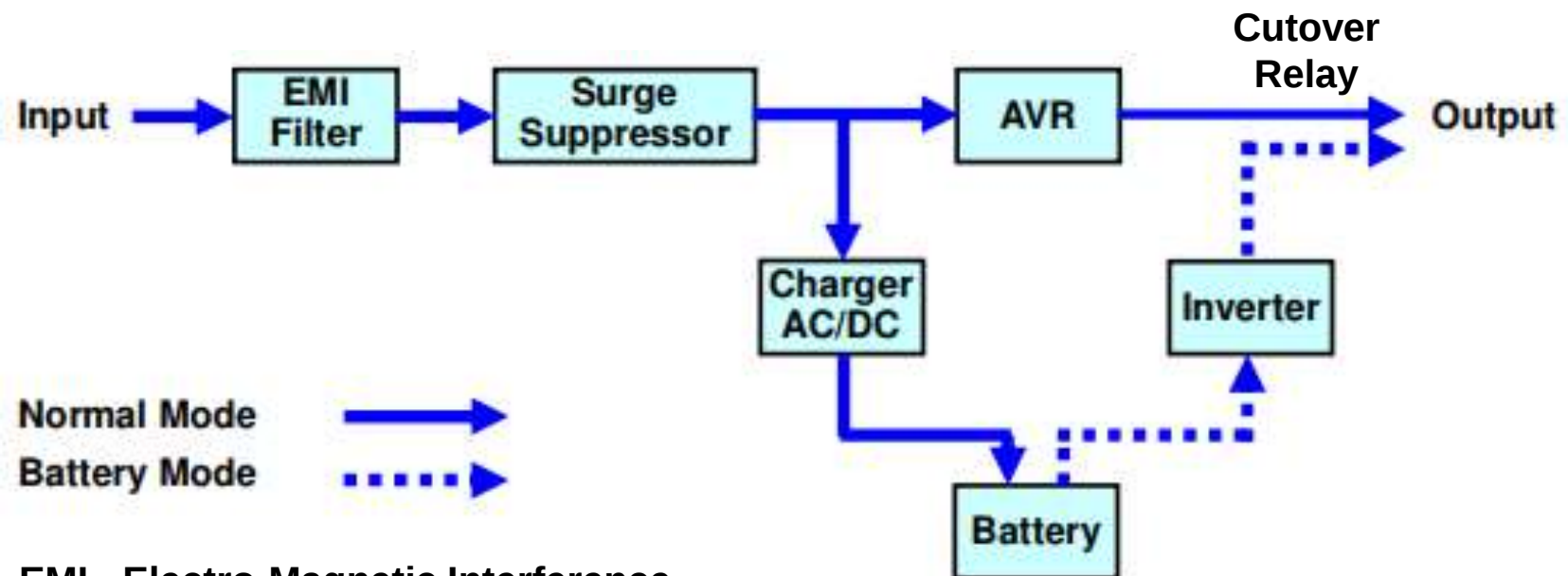
UPS's usually operate in one of two ways:

1 - The devices plugged into the UPS are always powered from the internal battery pack through an inverter, and power coming in from the line is used to keep the battery charged (usually cheap UPS's).

OR

2 - The internal battery charger and the devices plugged into the UPS are powered from the incoming power line until a power failure or a voltage drop (brownout), when a relay switches the devices over to an inverter powered from the internal battery pack (most UPS's).

Block diagram of a typical UPS



EMI - Electro-Magnetic Interference
AVR - Automatic Voltage Regulator

Larger UPS units with extra power and features can help keep home offices and workstations running during business hours, or at least long enough to save the work and safely shut down the equipment.

If you have a lot of important data on a desktop computer, an external hard drive or Network-Attached Storage (NAS), you may need a UPS to prevent your drives from losing data in the event of a sudden power outage.

For example, I live in the country where power failures and power 'winkies' are common events. I have two UPS's:

- 1. One powers my internet connection, wireless router, NAS, VOIP phone adapter, cordless phone system base station and cell phone repeater. This gives me ~90 minutes of service before I need to switch over to a generator or other backup power.**
- 2. The other powers my home theater system. The UPS protects against power 'winkies', and in the event of a full power failure gives me time to properly shut down most devices while keeping the PVR running.**

Most UPS's have some sort of audible alarm to indicate when the UPS is operating on backup power.

Some UPS's may have extra features such as:

- LCD panels to give status and other information,**
- power outlets for USB and/or 12 volts,**
- surge protection for phone, network and/or co-ax lines.**

Some UPS's, in combination with a USB connection to the computer and an app on the computer*, can trigger the computer to do a safe shutdown during a power failure if you are not there.

*** - Some of these apps may not be available for all operating systems (e.g. Apple or Linux)**

UPS Do's and Don'ts

- DO make sure the output capacity of the UPS matches or exceeds the power draw of the equipment plugged into it, and that it can power the equipment for the required time period.
- DO NOT plug a UPS into a surge protector, or vice versa. Aside from potentially overloading either unit and tripping a fuse or breaker, you also risk cancelling out the surge protection instead of doubling it up.
- You should NOT use an extension cord with a UPS (or a Surge Protector). If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is rated for 13 amps (14 gauge) or more.
- Using a UPS to power high-drain devices, like a space heater or curling iron, can damage its internal components, degrade its battery, and void its warranty.

UPS – Info & Reviews

- There is a great review of UPS's at:
<https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-uninterruptible-power-supply-ups/>. The review also has a lot of good general info on UPS's. For more info on the Wirecutter website itself see:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wirecutter_\(website\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wirecutter_(website))
- For even more info on UPS's, see:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uninterruptible_power_supply

Info On Other Backup Power Sources

I gave two presentations in 2021 on other backup power sources:

- Solar chargers

https://opcug.ca/qa_recordings/20210825_Solar.pdf

- Other Backup Power Sources

https://opcug.ca/qa_recordings/20210901_Solar_02.pdf

Questions and Answers

On Monday Alan forwarded some questions on UPS's to me. The next slides give the questions and their answers.

Q. What is the lifespan of Uninterruptible Power Supplies?

A. Lifespan is dependent on battery life. Typical battery life is 2 to 6 years, depending on the number of discharge/recharge cycles. You should test the battery condition at least once a year or so by unplugging the UPS from the wall outlet with your devices running. If the UPS doesn't power them for as long as you expect it to, it's time to replace the batteries. CyberPower, APC and other manufacturers sell replacement batteries, as do some third-party battery makers. Third-party batteries are usually available if the manufacturer can't provide them.

Like all electronics, the UPS unit itself won't last forever. But ideally, according to Wirecutter, you should be able to replace the battery numerous times before you have to replace the entire unit. That said, some manufacturers recommend replacing the UPS unit itself when it is time for the second battery replacement.

Q. Are the surge protection circuits in UPS power supplies more robust and longer lasting than the surge protectors in power bars? You mentioned that the lifespan of power bar surge protectors is only three to five years. I would rather not be replacing the UPS every three to five years.

In last weeks presentation on Surge Protectors (https://opcug.ca/qa_recordings/20230322_PowerPoint.pdf) it was pointed out that power bar type surge protectors didn't last forever, and I gave some info about this.

I couldn't find any comparable info on the surge protectors in UPS's. Keep in mind that if the surge protection in a UPS fails, it is the UPS itself that will likely experience the brunt of any damage.

The surge energy ratings of UPS's tends to be lower than the rating of the better surge protectors. I couldn't find further info on this, but I assume they depend on the power conditioning circuitry of the UPS itself to provide some of the surge protection.



**Any other:
Questions
Comments
Shares?**



Want to join OPCUG ?

Membership Year	Cost
2023-04 membership	\$ 20.00 *
2024-05 membership	FREE (until March 31 st)

Last Call !!!

** Current members will have their membership extended at no cost!*

Two years for the price of one!

<https://opcug.ca/join-or-renew/>

OPCUG



*Users helping users
for over 40 years*

April Meeting



Computer – It's all about the bits!

Stéphane Richard, OPCUG

April 12, 2023
7:30 pm



May Meeting

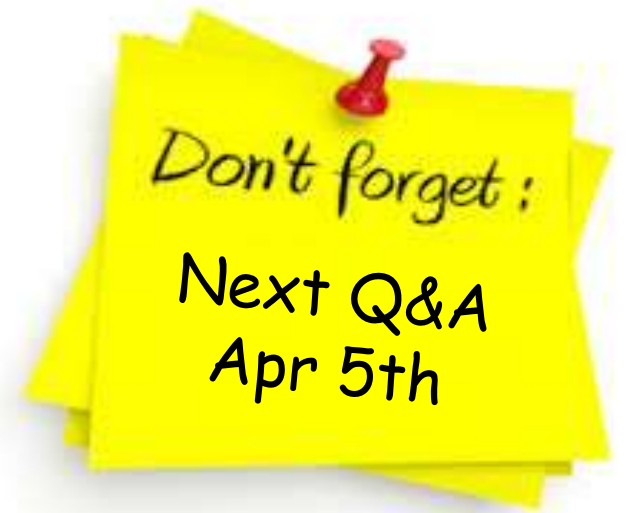


Members' Favourites

We need an outline of your
10-15 minute presentation on
any computer-related topic
(*or it could be short evening!*)

May 10, 2023
7:30 pm





**Send your questions,
answers, and topics
you wish to share to:**

SuggestionBox@opcug.ca