



Alan German & Chris Taylor

Ottawa PC Users' Group

August 2, 2023



A long history

- Historically held after monthly in-person meetings
- Apr 2020 – COVID suddenly halts in-person meetings
- OPCUG purchased a Zoom Pro account to continue monthly meetings online
- Alan had an idea: weekly Q&A Zoom sessions
 - weekly Q&A would not be practical in-person
 - weekly Q&A made sense over Zoom
 - first held on Zoom April 29, 2020 with 21 people attending
 - stopped Q&A on regular monthly meeting night Sept 2021



Milestones on Zoom

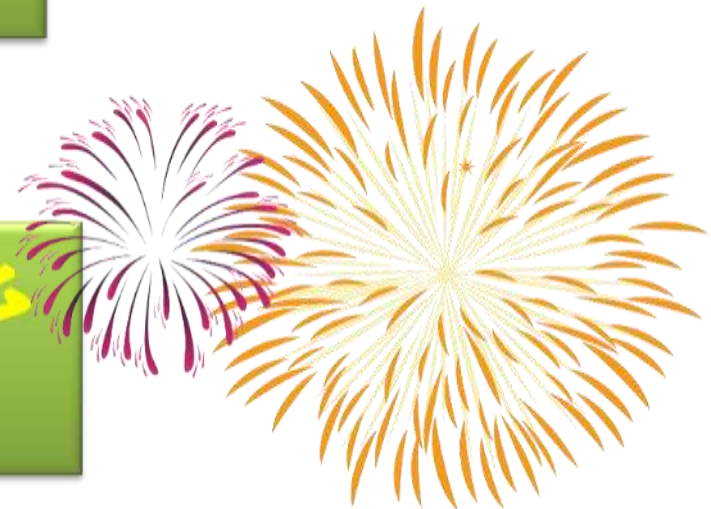
Passed 1,000 topics
on May 17th, 2023



We passed 5,000 participants
on May 31st, 2023



**TONIGHT WE ARE HOLDING
OUR 150TH Q+A**





A huge shout-out to



Those who shared their knowledge with others

- helping fulfill the OPCUG motto *Users helping users*

Those who asked questions

- we all know more than some but less than others

Those who attended

- would have been really boring if you hadn't showed up



Call to action

- We *often* find the proposed agenda really slim
- We need material if Q&A is going to continue weekly
- You know some things that others don't
 - a neat utility that maybe others don't know about
 - a great setting in software that helps you be more efficient
 - a service that has helped you out that others can use
 - a website with information others may not know about
- Why not share — as others have shared with you?
- Maybe someone in the OPCUG can help you
 - software or hardware is not working as expected
 - looking for a service
- Why not ask if someone has an answer to your problem?

Share

So, you want to be a programmer...?

- Automate tasks
- Cross-platform (Windows and Linux)
- Python and C
- Another option:
FreePascal
Lazarus (IDE)



<https://archive.opcug.ca/Reviews/Lazarus.html>

Free Pascal Lazarus IDE Program Tutorials

The Free Pascal Compiler is an open source compiler that is similar to Turbo Pascal and Delphi. This series covers command line programs made in FPC (Lazarus) and covers more of the basics than the Pascal App Series.

Free Pascal Lazarus IDE GUI App Tutorials

This tutorial series covers making GUI applications with Free Pascal / Lazarus. Many computer languages and compilers do not come with a way of creating an installer.

<https://www.schoolfreeware.com/Tutorials.html> *

** Also: C++, DosBox, Word, Excel, OpenOffice, SQL, VirtualBox, etc.*



Android Music Player

- I have finally purchased as SD card to put music files on my phone
- Now I need a reliable, simple, ad-free music player
- I currently use a Samsung A70
- Do you folks with all your wealth of tech knowledge have any suggestions for me?

Darlene Fitzgerald





Ask Mr. Google



best free android music player



<https://www.makeuseof.com> › Android

The 10 Best Ad-Free Music Player Apps for Android

The 10 **Best Ad-Free Music Player** Apps for **Android** · Musicolet **Music Player** · Omnia **Music Player** · Pulsar **Music Player** · Retro **Music Player** · Oto Music · Simple Music ...



Scroll down



Ask Mr. Google



best free android music player



<https://www.makeuseof.com> › Android

The 10 Best Ad-Free Music Player Apps for Android

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Scroll down

But...

People also ask

What is the free music player for Android without ads?



What is the easiest music player for Android?



What is a good audio player for Android?



What's the best app to play free music?



Is there a free music player without ads?



Is there a free music app without commercials?



People also ask :

What is the free music player for Android without ads?



Top 10 Free Music Apps Without Ads in 2023

- Amazon Prime Music.
- Slicethepie.
- Google Play Music.
- Deezer.
- Spotify.
- Audiomack.
- Jango.
- Pandora.

[More items...](#)



kamerpower.com

[https://kamerpower.com › top-10-free-music-apps-witho...](https://kamerpower.com/top-10-free-music-apps-witho...)

Top 10 Free Music Apps Without Ads in 2023 - Kamerpower

Groups

New conversation

My groups

Recent groups

All groups

Public groups

Starred conversations

OPCUG-Member-Forum

Conversations

Approved

Pending

Labels

People

Members

Pending members

Banned users

About

My membership settings

Privacy • Terms

Conversations Search conversations withi...

★ OPCUG-Member-Forum 62 members 1-30 of 4845

Previous page

This group provides a forum for OPCUG members to post questions and responses on any computer-related topics.

Micheline Joh... Large-scale optoelectronic processors – Deep learning wit... Jul 30 ☆

Ala..., ... Andr... 6 Q&A - Questions and share wanted! – It's Timid? =aw On J... Jul 29 ☆

Micheline Joh... Everything you need to know about Y... Jul 29 ☆

Micheline Joh... AI-Generated... Generated Influencers ... Jul 28 ☆

An... Computer stuff? – I'd be thrilled if a charity could ... Jul 28 ☆

Stewart Bruce What can I say? – https://www.youtube.com/shorts/vbz9... Jul 28 ☆

Willia..., Alan... 2 Re: [OPCUG-Member-Forum] Question on Android media pla... Jul 28 ☆

Stewart Bruce Sammy Video Player – Alan, I just dug the old phone out o... Jul 27 ☆

Alan..., Stew... 4 Question on Android media players – It is a weird thing. I ... Jul 27 ☆

Mich..., harv... 4 Why won't link open on my laptop? – Micheline, another o... Jul 27 ☆

OPCUG members only

<https://groups.google.com/g/opcug-member-forum>

Footer on home page at:
<https://opcug.ca>

Question on Android media players



Alan German <alan.german@opcu...

Jul 27, 2023, 12:41:55 PM (3 days ago)



to OPCUG-Member-Forum

The following question has been submitted to our SuggestionBox. Can anyone who plays music on their Android device, using a free media player, provide an answer?

I have finally purchased an SD card to put music files on my phone.

Now I need a reliable, simple, ad free music player.

Do you folks with all your wealth of tech knowledge have any suggestions for me?

I currently use a Samsung A70.



Built-in Samsung App

- That model probably has the built-in Samsung Video Player
- This app handles audio files nicely as well
- No need to add a third-party player unless you plan on adding an external DAC and going all DJ on us!



Stewart Bruce

Problem! - App not found on device (but it is available in the Galaxy Store)

Galaxy Store

Games

Apps



For all ages

Samsung Video Player

Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.

★★★★★ 8 User Reviews

Free

Install

Copy URL



<https://galaxystore.samsung.com/prepost/000003980724>



Music Player - MP3 Player

- I use an app called "*Muzio audio and video player*" from the Google Play Store
- You can do just about anything with it
- It has a built-in sleep timer, equalizer, tagging, etc.
- Categories include audio, video, audio books, favourites, play lists, etc.
- And, there is so much more...
- I really like it!

Bill B

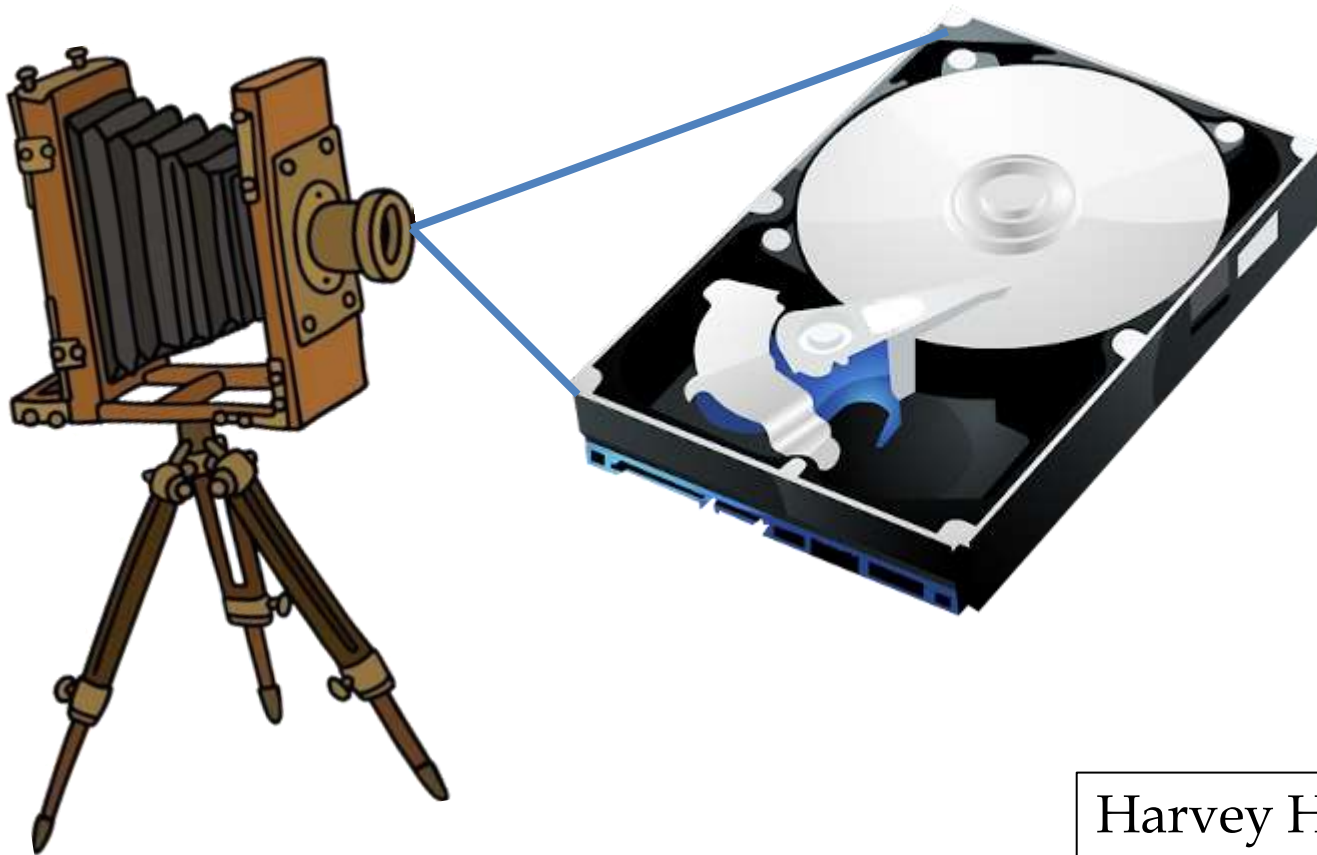


<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.shaiban.audioplayer.mplayer>



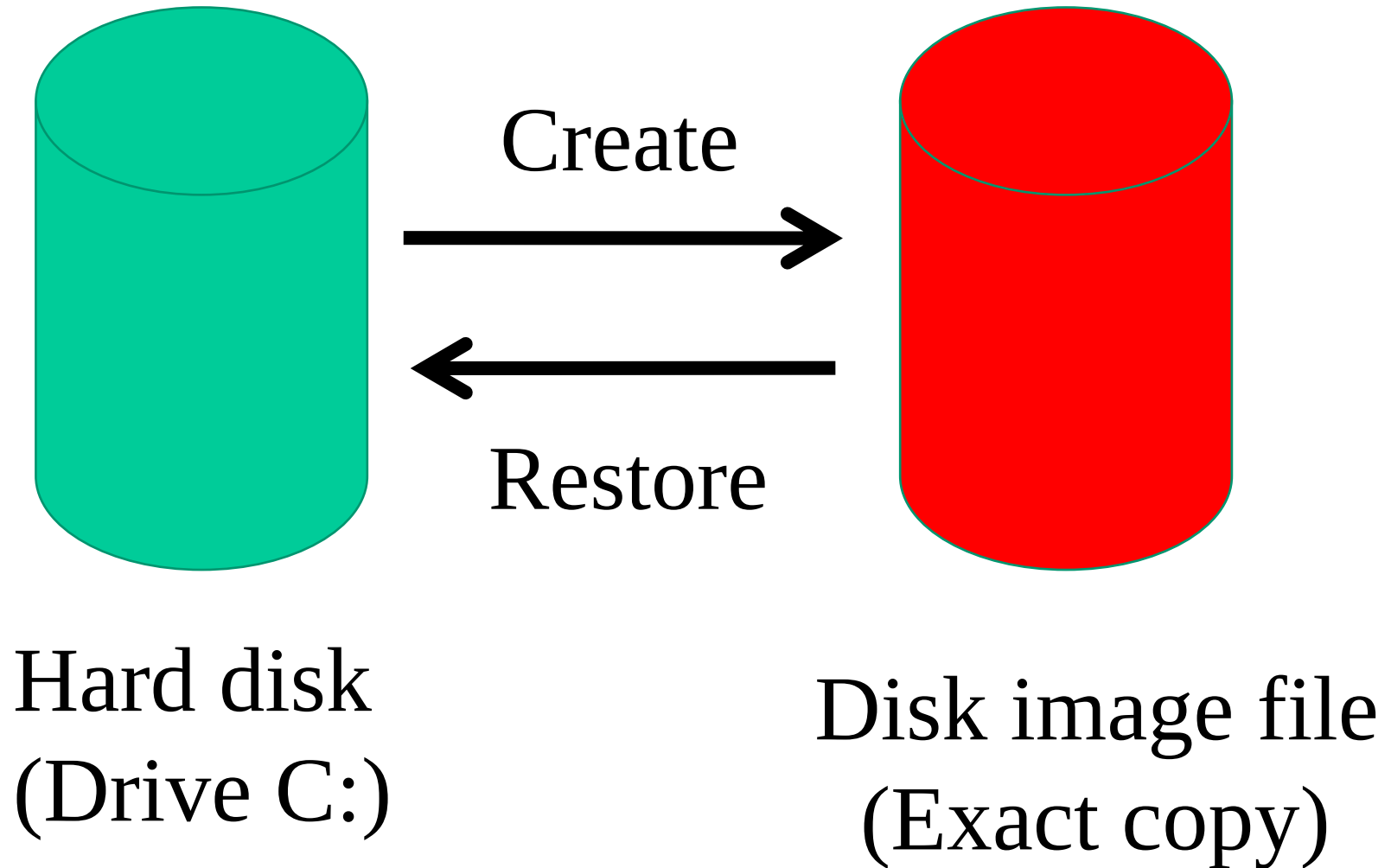
Disk Imaging

- What is the recommended software to perform disk image creation/recovery?

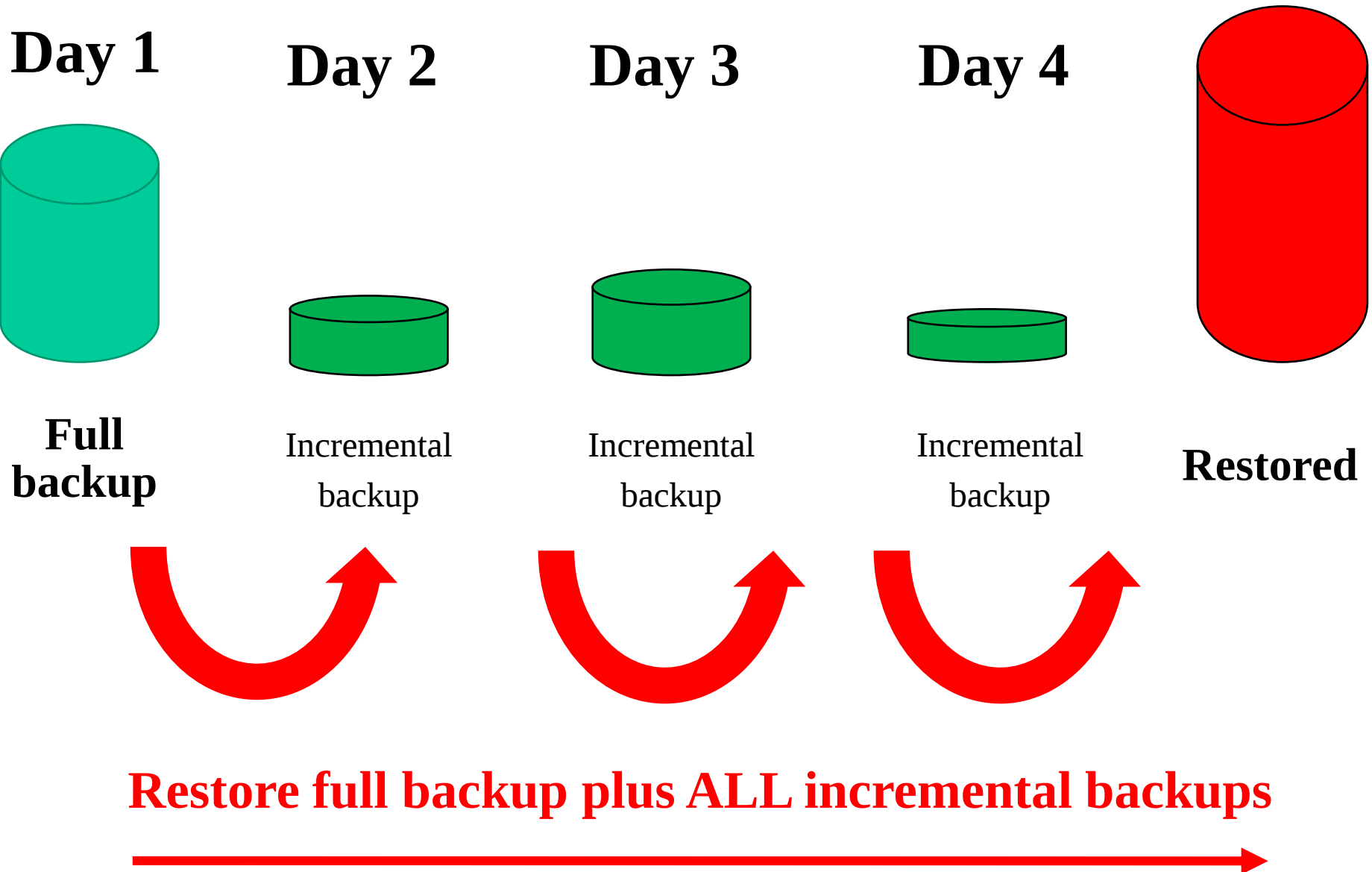


Harvey Hope

Full Backup



Incremental Backup





That depends...



- Assuming free is preferred
- Assuming Windows platform
- *Finding a backup program*
 - <https://opcug.ca/Reviews/BackupPrograms.htm>
- My requirements (yours may vary!)
 - image & restore partitions or entire disks
 - create full & incremental images
 - schedule backups
 - restore individual files & folders from an image
 - create WinPE rescue media



My final list

- Macrium Reflect Free (no longer a free version)
- Paragon Backup & Recovery Community Edition
 - <https://www.paragon-software.com/free/br-free/>
- EaseUS Todo Backup Free
 - <https://www.easeus.com/backup-software/tb-free.html>
- AOMEI Backupper Standard
 - <https://www.aomeitech.com/ab/standard.html>
- All had good and bad points
- I chose EaseUS Todo Backup

I have been satisfied with the program





Rescuezilla

- Free and open-source
- Full disk or partition imaging
- No incremental imaging
- Multi-platform (Windows, Linux, Mac)
- Runs from Live-USB
- Wizards for backup and restore
- Limited image mounting/browsing
(Under development)



<https://rescuezilla.com>



Brave windows



brave

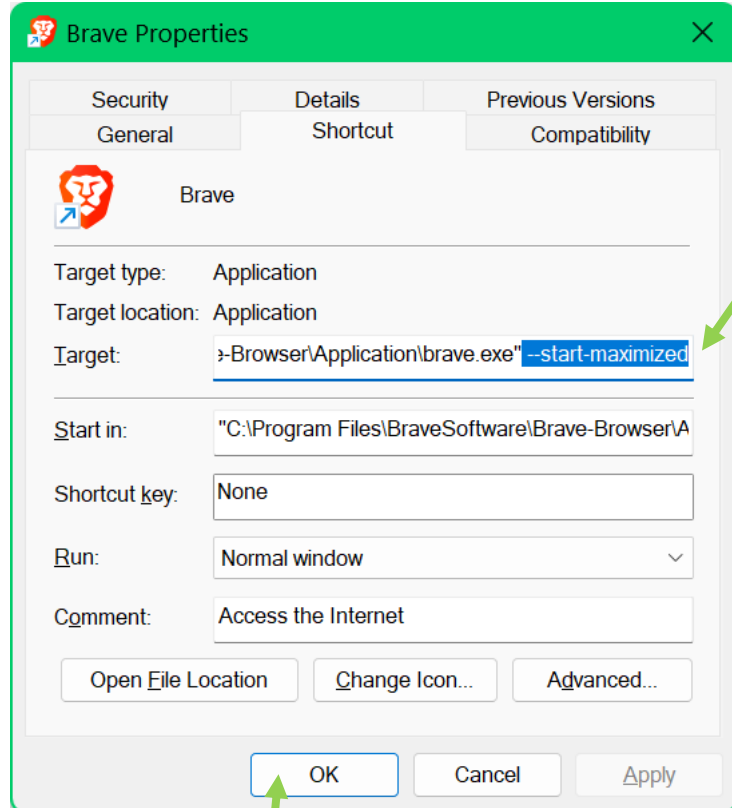
- Brave no longer opens maximized on one of my Windows 10 machines
- Okay on the other one
- Doesn't matter whether I try opening it from the desktop icon, the Windows Start screen or from the .exe file in the program file directory
- Opens in a smaller minimized window



Add startup parameter

Right-click the shortcut used to start Brave

- Choose *Properties*



On the Shortcut tab

- go to the end of the *Target* line
- add a space & *--start-maximized*

Click OK

Share

Loonie Bits



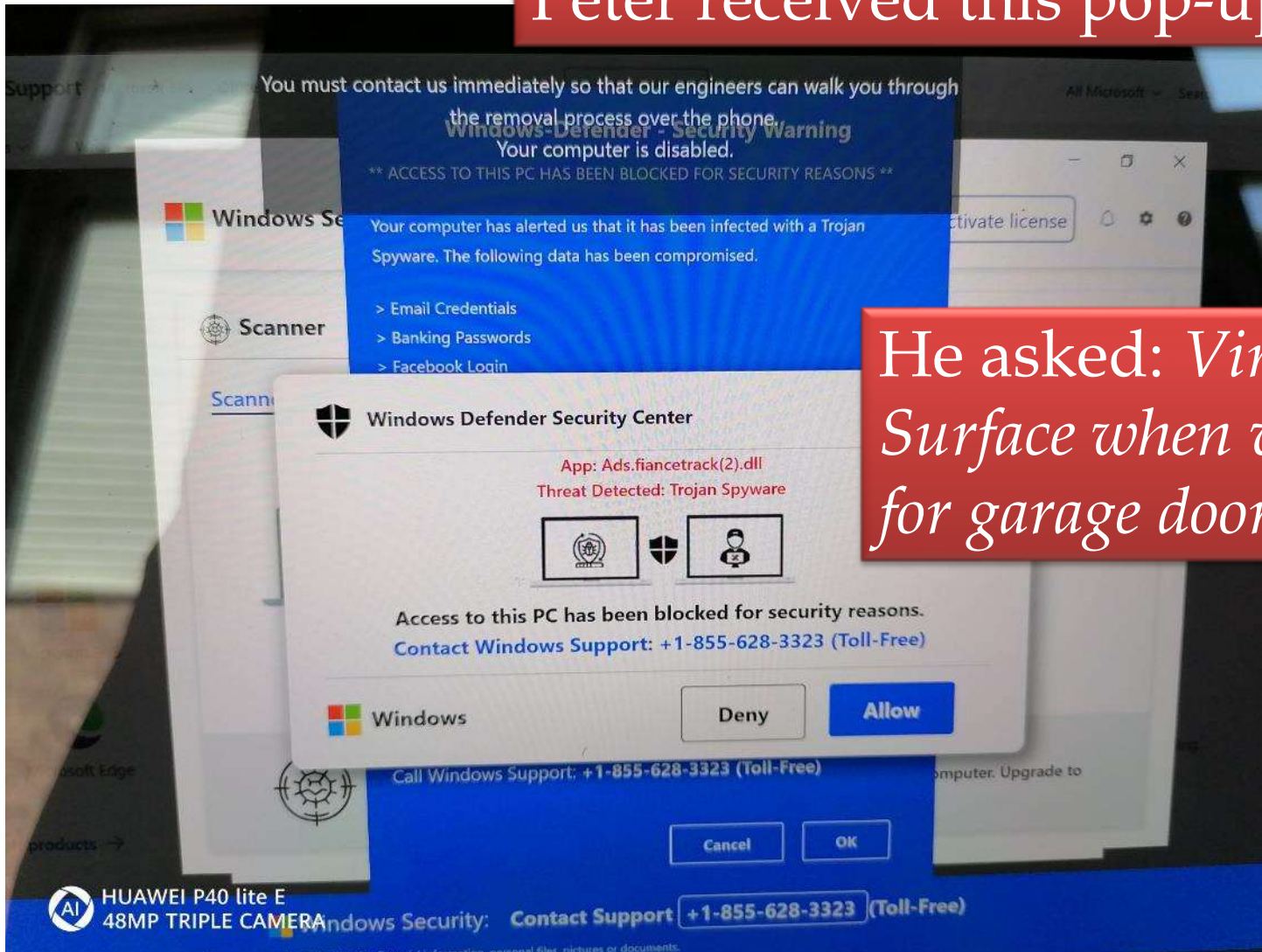
- The **Canadian Association of the Club Of Rome** is another group of fellow Canadians doing their best to make a difference in the world
- The current emphasis is on climate change and impact on ecosystems, but they do get into other stuff as well
The website tells all: <https://canadiancor.com/>
- And if you'd like to see them, the weekly Zoom discussion sessions are recorded and put up on a YouTube channel for anyone to view
<https://www.youtube.com/@canadianassociationfortheclubofrome7885/about>

Stewart Bruce



Potential virus?

Peter received this pop-up on his computer



He asked: *Virus? Popup on my Surface when visiting a US site for garage door opener parts*



It's a scam - the clues

SCAM

Sense of urgency

Your computer is working

Microsoft Defender
doesn't require
licence activation

Scary list of things compromised

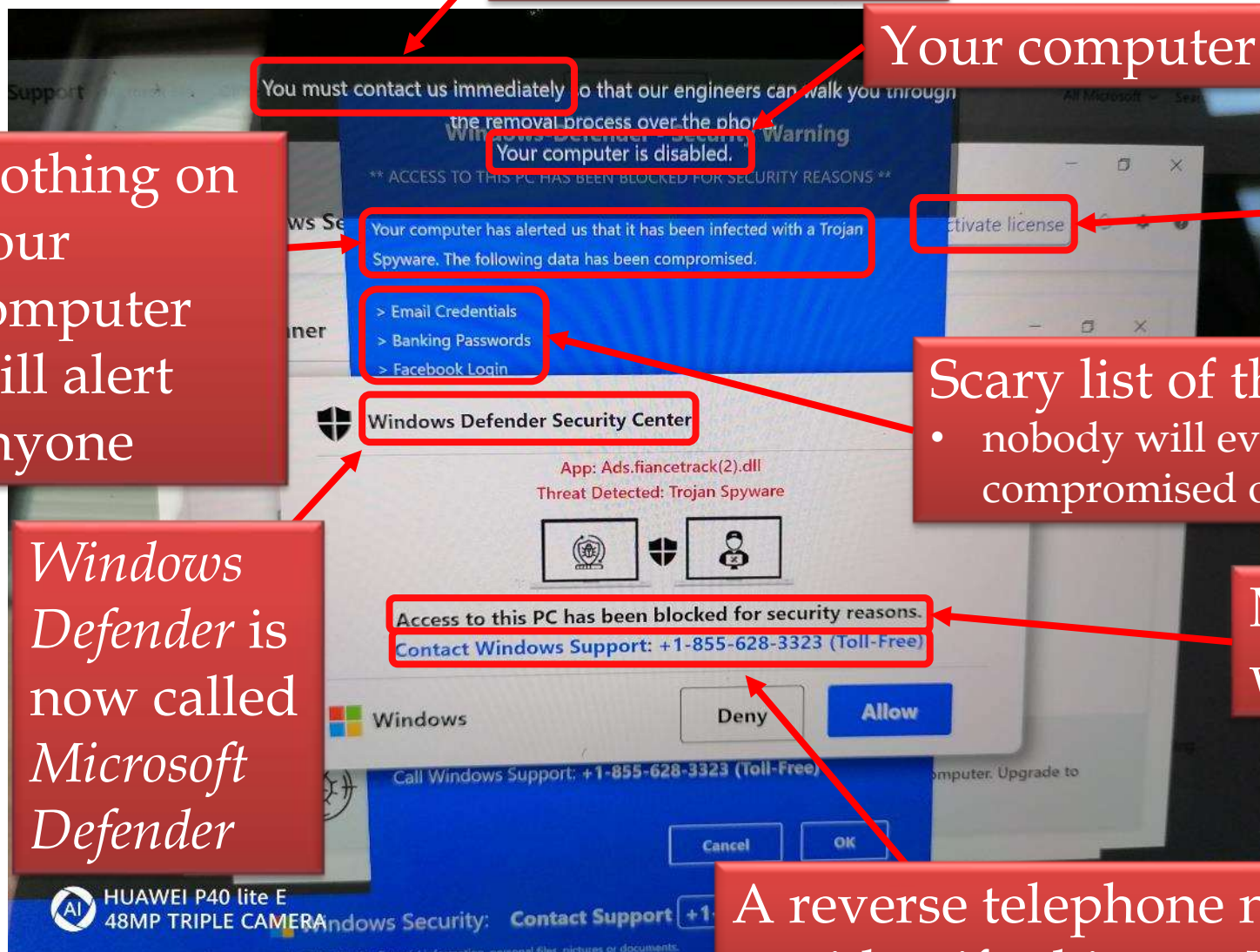
- nobody will ever know what has been compromised on a computer

Microsoft Defender
will never do this

A reverse telephone number search does
not identify this as a Microsoft number

Nothing on
your
computer
will alert
anyone

*Windows
Defender is
now called
Microsoft
Defender*





Further clues

- Peter sent an audio file (in a machine-generated “voice”)
 - *Critical alert from Microsoft. Your computer has alerted us that it is infected by a virus and or spyware. This virus may be sending your credit card details, Facebook login, and personal emails to hackers remotely. Please call us immediately at the toll-free number listed so that our support engineers can walk you through the removal process over the phone. If you close this page before calling us, we will be forced to disable your computer to prevent further damage to our network.*
- Vague statements
 - Facebook login (most people have a Facebook account)
 - Emails (everyone has email)
- Threat to disable computer



What to do?

- Most likely: compromised website that is throwing this fake alert to all visitors
- Doesn't hurt to do additional security checks
- Run a full virus scan with your chosen antivirus software
- Run a free on-demand scan from any number of 3rd party antivirus vendors
 - ESET
 - <https://www.eset.com/ca/home/online-scanner/>
 - Trend
 - housecall.trendmicro.com/
 - Panda Cloud Cleaner
 - <https://www.pandasecurity.com/en/homeusers/cloud-cleaner/>
 - F-Secure
 - <https://www.f-secure.com/en/online-scanner>
 - Norton Power Eraser
 - <https://support.norton.com/sp/en/us/home/current/solutions/kb20100824120155EN>
 - Microsoft Safety Scanner
 - www.microsoft.com/security/scanner/en-us/default.aspx
 - Sophos Scan & Clean
 - <https://www.sophos.com/en-us/free-tools/virus-removal-tool>



I knew that, but should you?

- I've spent a *lot* of time with security issues including scams
- I saw 9 red flags that told me this was a scam
 - one or two would have convinced me it was a scam
- It takes a while to become familiar with scams
- Until you are good at it
 - see the OPCUG *Fraud Watch* page
 - <https://opcug.ca/fraud-watch/>
 - continue to check with trusted sources (such as SuggestionBox@opcug.ca)

HOCUS FOCUS

This is a very brief ad hoc look at some various ways to try to sharpen a blurry out-of-focus picture, including:

- IrfanView – A free app that has been reviewed several times over the years at OPCUG meetings.
- Free Photoscape X – A photo editing app.
- inPixio Photo Focus – An AI image editing app with a ‘focus’ on fixing out-of-focus blurry pics.
- Remini – An AI based online app.



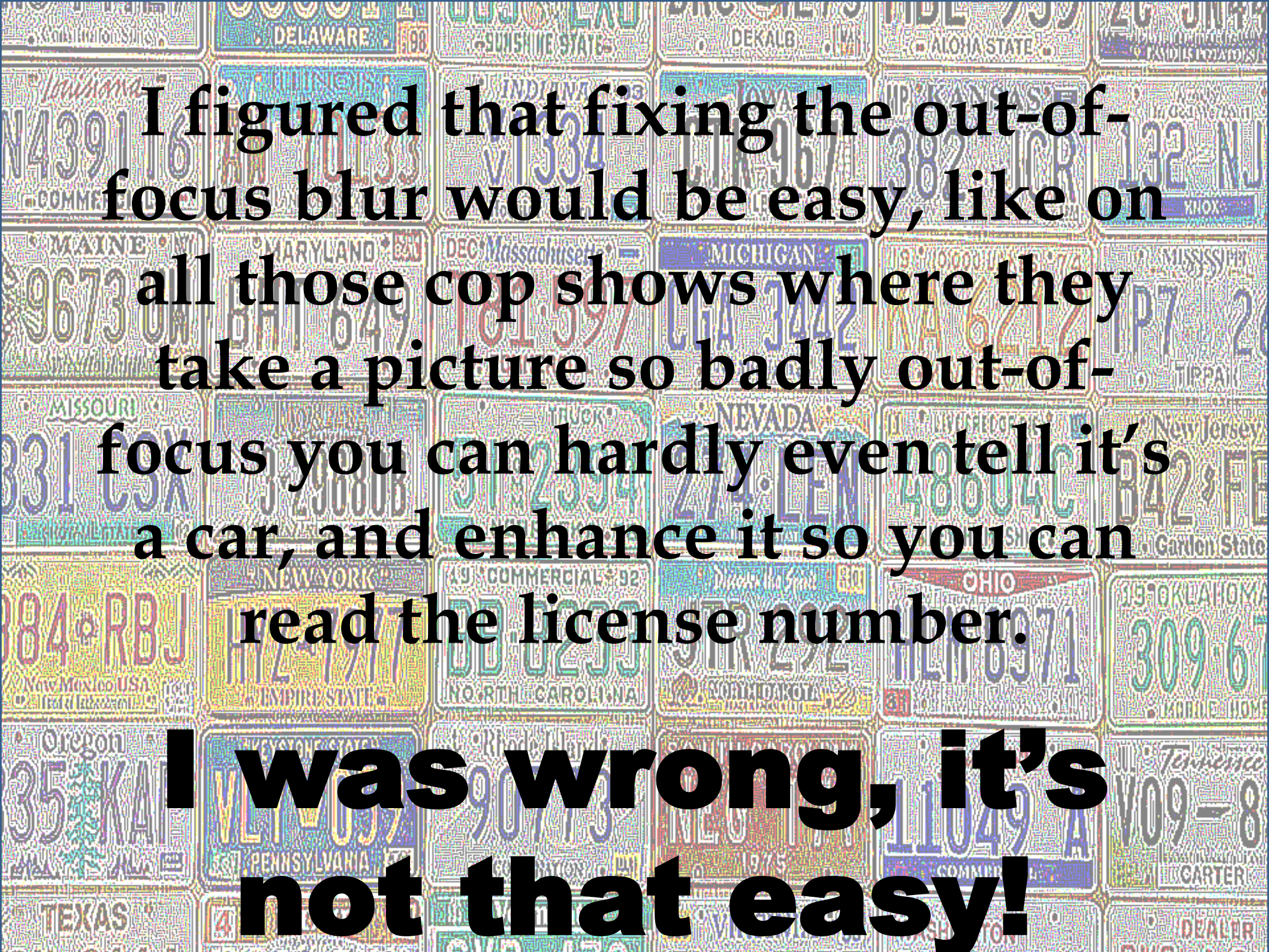
The Challenge

- Early one morning a couple of weeks ago I looked out the window and saw four otters frolicking in my backyard. By the time I was able to grab a camera, they were heading out and I barely had time to take one quick shot.
- The auto-focus had trouble locking on through the window, so the shot was blurry.





Original Picture

The background of the image is a dense, overlapping collage of various United States state license plates. The plates are from different states, including Delaware, Sunshine State, DeKalb, Aloha State, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The plates feature different colors, fonts, and designs, creating a colorful and textured background.

I figured that fixing the out-of-focus blur would be easy, like on all those cop shows where they take a picture so badly out-of-focus you can hardly even tell it's a car, and enhance it so you can read the license number.

I was wrong, it's not that easy!

IrfanView



- IrfanView is a great image viewer, editor, organizer and converter program for Windows. It can also play video and audio files, and has some captioning, image creation and painting capabilities.
- It has lots of great basic, easy to use image editing tools like crop, rotate, contrast, brighten, gamma, etc.
- It has a 'sharpen' function that makes minor improvements in images that are already in good shape (i.e.. It can 'crisp-up' the lines), but doesn't work very well on really blurry pictures like the otters. Any improvement wasn't noticeable.

IrfanView



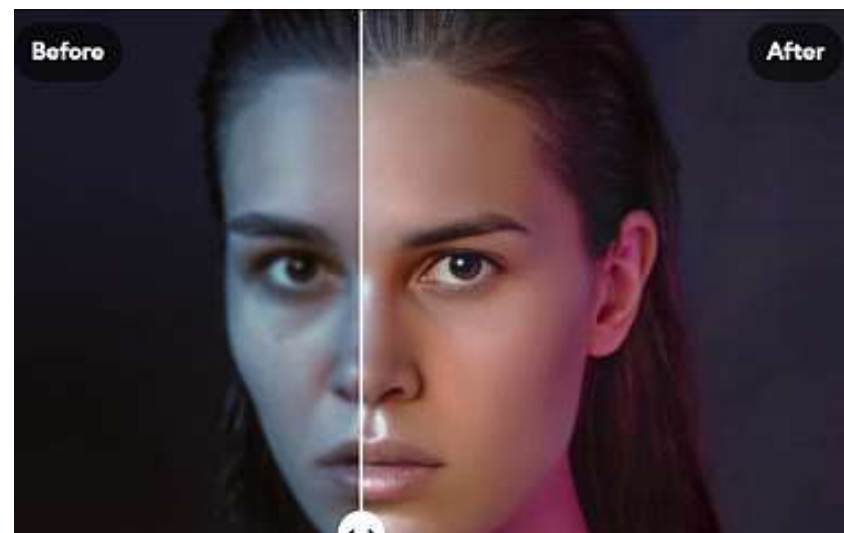
- Other than the 'sharpen' function not being that capable, IrfanView is a great app.
- IrfanView is free for non-commercial use.
- IrfanView uses plugins to handle several additional image, video and sound formats, and to add optional functionality such as filter processing or other program features.
- It is notable for being able to view obscure image formats and opening corrupted files which other photo editing software cannot read.
- Whenever I set up a new computer, or re-image an old computer, IrfanView is always one of the first apps I install.

- Lynda Buske is OPCUG's expert on all aspects of digital photography, and has made several presentations. She writes a monthly column for the OPCUG Newsletter and much more. See the [OPCUG website](#) more info.
- I asked her if there was anything she could do for the otters.



DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

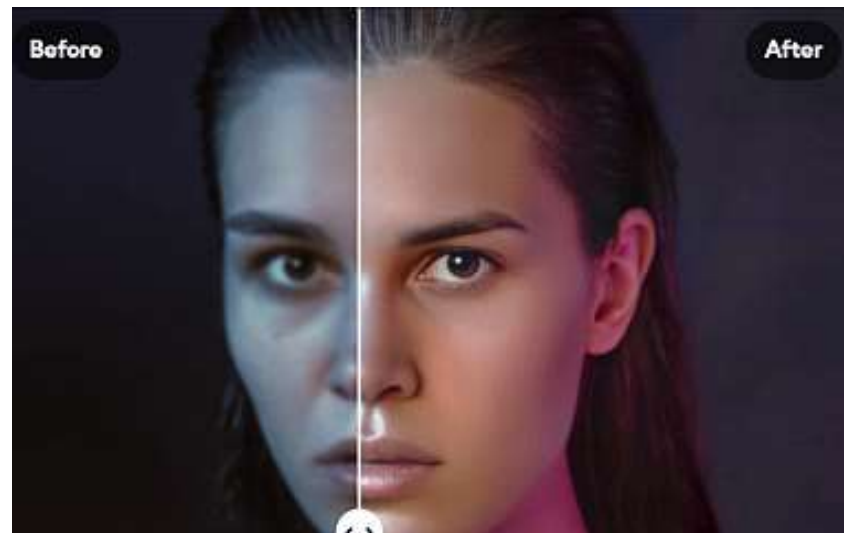
- First she tried the facial reconstruction with the ON-1 Photo Raw editing program. It didn't work at all as it didn't seem to recognize otter faces as faces.
- Then she used Free Photoscape X, an app that allows you to sharpen, adjust contrast, add clarity, etc. manually (Lynda has shown us this app before). She was able to get some improvement.



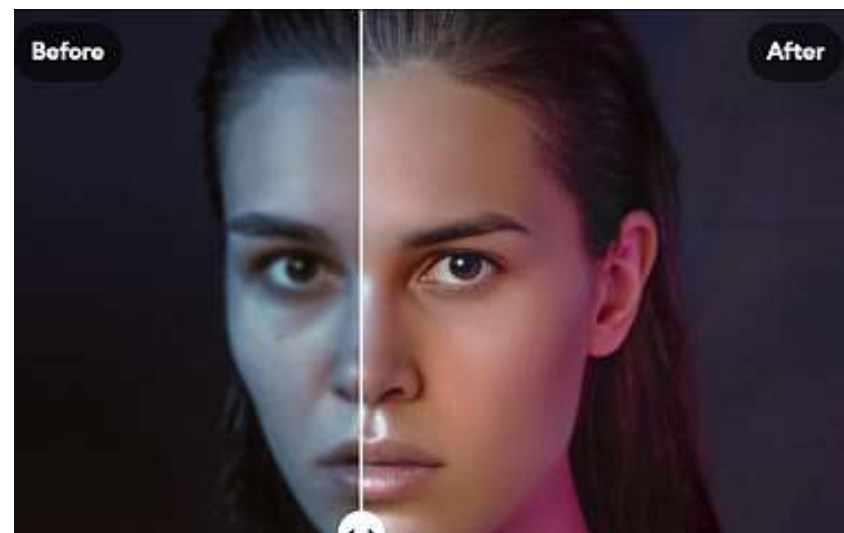


Picture using free Photoscape X (Original Picture Inset)

Lynda suggested I might want to try the online version of the Remini AI based photo editing app. I did, and it didn't produce any noticeable improvement, probably for the same reason the ON-1 Photo Raw editing program didn't work.



Lynda mentioned that one of the good things about animals and AI is that if it does recognize an otter face, you don't have to worry if it gets it perfectly right as long as it looks like an otter. It doesn't have to look like an otter you know and love dearly. Same for humans ... it does a better job on strangers faces than your own kin since the details aren't as critical.



inPixio Photo Focus



- So a couple of days later, I got a '*Special Offer*' in my in-box for inPixio Photo Focus, an app that specializes in fixing out-of-focus blurry photos, so I decided to try it.
- This app's results with the otters was similar to Lynda's results with free Photoscape X, except the improvement was more automatic than manual.



Picture using inPixio (Original Picture Inset)

inPixio Photo Focus



- As much as inPixio Photo Focus specializes in fixing out-of-focus blurry pics, it also includes a good set of basic photo editing tools and can be effectively used as your main photo editing tool.
- The free version has watermarks, the paid version is CDN\$30 (Standard) or \$35 (Pro) a year for a subscription (*'Special Offer'* pricing).
- As well as Photo Focus, inPixio also has other photo editing tools including their higher end Photo Studio app, as well as on-line photo editing tools

AI Photo Editing Tools

- Besides inPixio and Remini, there is a growing group of AI powered photo editing tools including Topaz Labs, Portrait AI, Fotor, Picsart, Imagen, HitPaw and many more.
- This field, including the capabilities of any particular toolset, is rapidly evolving.
- Trying to keep up is like a never ending game of Whack-A-Mole.
- That said, at some point in the future I may have a look at the Topaz Labs tools.

A couple of Review Sites

(Not necessarily completely unbiased!)

The best AI photo editors in 2023

<https://zapier.com/blog/best-ai-photo-editor/>

Best Photo Editing Software 2023

<https://software.fish/graphic-design/best-photo-editing-software>

Another Review Site

According to “*The best AI photo editors in 2023*” (<https://zapier.com/blog/best-ai-photo-editor/>), the best AI photo apps are:

- [Adobe Photoshop](#) for a full-featured photo editing and design app
- [Luminar Neo](#) for an AI-powered photo editor
- [Canva](#) for an AI-powered design app
- [Pixlr](#) for an easy-to-use online AI editor
- [Lensa](#) for a mobile AI photo editor

A Wee Note On Backyard Beasties

- **We live on the south edge of the Marlborough Forest, a diverse ecosystem of over 9,300 hectares of wetlands, forests, open fields. and small farms southwest of urban Ottawa.**
- **Brassill's Creek, one of three watersheds for the forest, runs through our backyard on its way to the nearby Rideau River.**
- **This is not the first time we've seen otters in the yard and creek. We've also seen deer, wild turkeys, blue herons, ducks, geese, foxes, groundhogs, rabbits, hawks, racoons, etc., etc., etc., and even wolves, a bear and a beaver.**
- **Many years ago some wolves were brought down from Algonquin Park to help reduce the out-of-control deer population in the forest, but they were hunted out a few years later.**
- **All of the pictures on the next slide were taken from the house or at least on the property.**





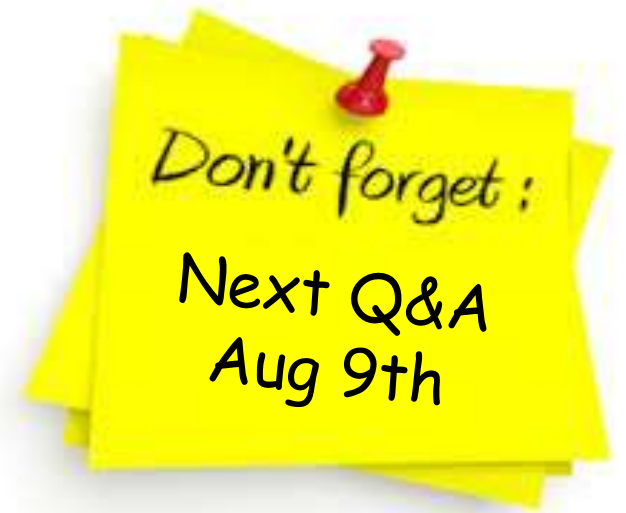
**Any other:
Questions
Comments
Shares?**



Help wanted!

- Early this week, we had one question in the pipe for Q&A
- After covering more than 1000 topics, Chris and Alan may be running out of ideas
- We need your input!
- What questions do you have?
- What items would you like to share?

SuggestionBox@opcug.ca



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

SuggestionBox@opcug.ca