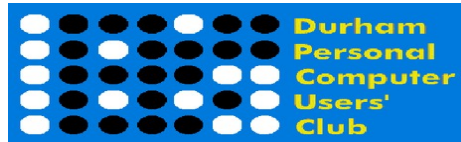


Oct 2024

PC MONITOR

Durham Personal Computer Users' Club Newsletter



DPCUC General Meeting

**Our Club meets monthly on the second Thursday of each month.
All meetings are currently held using Zoom.**

We hope some day in the future to be able to meet in person again.

Please visit the Club Web Page for all the latest links and information

<http://www.durhampc-usersclub.on.ca/>

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Next Meeting

Artificial Intelligence

by Rob Truman

On ZOOM – Thursday, Oct 10 2024, 7:00PM

FYI

- By Dan Delong

Executive Meetings

At our last club executive Zoom meeting – *and we need more members on it* – we speculated about the arrival of Quantum computers, the current state of AI, concern over the upcoming e-waste caused by insistence on new hardware for Windows 11, lack of local places to drop-off old hardware for possible re-furb./re-cycling, and plans for a Christmas get together for the December executive meeting. Also, our website suffers from a temporary glitch caused by the changeover in hosting provider at the end of August, still piggy-backed on APCUG. It's working now! Thanks, Hugh.

Quantum Computing – Are We Closer to the Fabled “Positronic Brain”?

We've heard about the potential for quantum computers to break the strongest encryption, without itself being compromised, and the blazing speed at which it can compute. Experts on the subject are increasing in number, but can't agree on a date for practical implementation. One difficulty... Current experimental quantum computers must be kept at near absolute zero, and are limited as to the number of cubits available, along with accurate error checking. It remains doubtful that such computers will shrink in size, to become portable like a PC. However, Australia and the United States appear most interested in pursuing a practical quantum computer, competing with each other... and with China. In fact, Australia is wondering why one of their financially supported endeavours – to the tune of almost one Billion dollars—has become American.

<https://www.anao.gov.au/work/request/investigation-the-investment-psiquantum-announced-the-australian-and-queensland-governments>

The company, **PsiQuantum**, [700 Hansen Way, Palo Alto, California 94304] combines photonic chips with optical data transfer to more conventional motherboards, all at a slightly less cold temperature than current experimental units.

<https://www.psiquantum.com/>

Sabine Hossenfelder, a popular German physicist, uses simplified language to explain **PsiQuantum's** methods, to produce a practical Quantum Computer - in contrast Google's efforts (with only 70 cubits available).

<https://youtu.be/Yz4wfKkw2fg>

Open Media

This Canadian advocacy group—Open Media—encourages the right to own and fix your own devices [[petition here](#)], along with cheaper and more widely available broadband, consumer online privacy, and net neutrality.

<https://openmedia.org/>

Tesla Superchargers are now available to GM EVs

The YouTube video (*linked below*) describes some newly expanded high speed charging options for Chevy Bolt EVs, and newer GM EVs. About seventeen thousand V3 Supercharger locations have just opened up to American GM drivers, easing their range anxiety. Purchase of an adapter is required, at a cost of 3 to 4 hundred dollars.

<https://youtu.be/QCHWaK6bLu4>

Jim's Toolbox

Thanks to one of our executive members, who subscribes to the [Ask Woody](#) – “**Tame Your Tech!**” Newsletter, came this link to **Jim's Toolbox** (from [OlderGeeks.com](#)). This software suite includes so many tools for fixing a PC, securing it, diagnosing it, and basically putting the computer back in your control.

In addition to detailed system information the tool shows the Windows security key and other installed software keys. It will clean up the Start Menu, along with powerful diagnosis and repair tools. Granted, some tools are also available within Windows, if you know how to find them. ‘Jim’ (*actually Cemil Tasdemir*) includes **GOD mode** in one of the tabs, along with links to download the latest **.iso** for Windows. The network flush and restore tools are impressive. The author has integrated the most used **SysInternal** Tools – Autoruns, Procexp64, and Procmon64. Run **ESET** virus scan directly and upload to **Virus Tools**. **Google Remote Desktop** is included, should you need to share a screen by connecting remotely. As a bonus, **Simutrans**, the model trains simulation for Win, Mac, Linux, and Android, is included. The most recent Ask Woody Newsletter explains Jim's Toolbox more completely...

<https://www.askwoody.com/newsletter/free-edition-jims-toolbox-so-many-nifty-tools-in-one-collection/>

[This is the newest, 5.6 version, meant for Windows 10/11 64 bit systems. Since the compressed file is of the 7-Zip variety, 7-Zip may be required to uncompress it, along with dot Net 4.8 and running as an admin.]

<https://www.oldergeeks.com/downloads/file.php?id=4564>

Humane AI Pin

This is a small, square, “intelligent” cell phone, without a glide pad, touch screen or a pin with which to fasten it to clothing. The **Humane AI Pin** is held in place – usually the same place for a Legion poppy – by **magnetism**. This magnetic backing plate is also the battery, transmitting power wirelessly to the phone. Touching the phone wakes it up for a voice command, or a query. You may ask it to summarize or send an email, to read an email aloud, to translate your sentences into another languages, recommend nearby businesses, give directions. If the environment is too noisy to hear the response accurately, the AI Pin can project content onto the palm of your hand, and scroll through with hand gestures. A built in camera takes photos and video. The cost is \$699 USD for the device, and \$24 per month for the required subscription, which provides AI through Chat GPT by OpenAI, along with unlimited Cloud storage.

<https://humane.com/>



ChargeFind Pro

This \$50 item looks familiar... But why is it so costly? **ChargeFind Pro** not only charges two devices simultaneously; it also sends out a signal to locate your car - no matter where – in a parking lot, or in another country. The charge rate is 20 watts, for each USB port. Apple phone owners will see the car's location on the “**Find My**” network. If turning off the car also turns off the 12 volt power supply, the last known location appears. If, in settings, the car is declared “**lost**”, any nearby Apple device will be notified. Those device users can then take appropriate action to aid in recovery.



<https://yournextgear.com/chargefind-pro/>

Parallel Processing Units (PPUs)

Finland researchers claim to boost CPU performance 100 times (2x for legacy programs) through parallel processing. This involves minor modifications to the integrated processor's silicon. The greater the number of cores, the faster the CPU functions. Here's a quote:-

"The scalability in performance is directly linked to the number of PPU cores. A PPU with 4 cores is ideal for small devices like smart watches, a 16-core PPU is perfect for smartphones and a 64-core PPU offers excellent performance for PCs. For servers, a PPU with 256 cores is recommended, allowing them to handle the most demanding computing tasks with ease."

<https://flow-computing.com/technology/>

Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI)

Sam Altman – a name many will recognize – predicts computers will surpass humans in intelligence within a few thousand days. That translates into sometime in the next five to ten years. Much depends on the future cost of computing, referring to both hardware and energy costs, while ignoring the costs to humanity.

<https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2024/09/ai-superintelligence-looms-in-sam-altmans-new-essay-on-the-intelligence-age>

X Complies with Brazilian Orders

A judge in Brazil ordered a total blockage of X (formerly Twitter), cutting off 22 million users, because certain accounts—likely in support of past president Bolsonaro—were still online. X's owner, Elon Musk, has long held the view that any censorship is bad, be it the spread of false information or not. This judge hit him in the pocket book, just hard enough for Musk to change his mind.

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2024/09/elon-musks-x-gives-up-fight-in-brazil-starts-complying-with-judges-demands/>

OLED Displays

Organic Light Emitting Diode (OLED) displays are now common. Despite and ability to heighten contrast with deeper blacks, they lack brightness and they can retain burn-in. For this reason, automobile screens, and many other screens needing extra brightness, have switched to **Tandem OLED** technology. For a full explanation of these latest screen technologies, including **QDEL**(Quantum Dot ElectroLuminescence), **phosphorescent LEDs**, and **MicroLEDs**, use link (*below*) which also names manufacturers employing each type of screen technology.

<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2024/09/what-tandem-oled-can-and-probably-wont-do-for-consumer-gadgets/>

Kaspersky Anti-virus users in America

On September 19th, Kaspersky uninstalled itself and installed Pango Group's **UltraAV** in its place. This because of the American government's desire to rid computers of software originating in Russia. The American government also proposes to ban vehicle software developed in China, or Russia. Canada may follow the same path.

<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/kaspersky-deletes-itself-installs-ultraav-antivirus-without-warning/>

Chrome and other browsers may get real time translation.

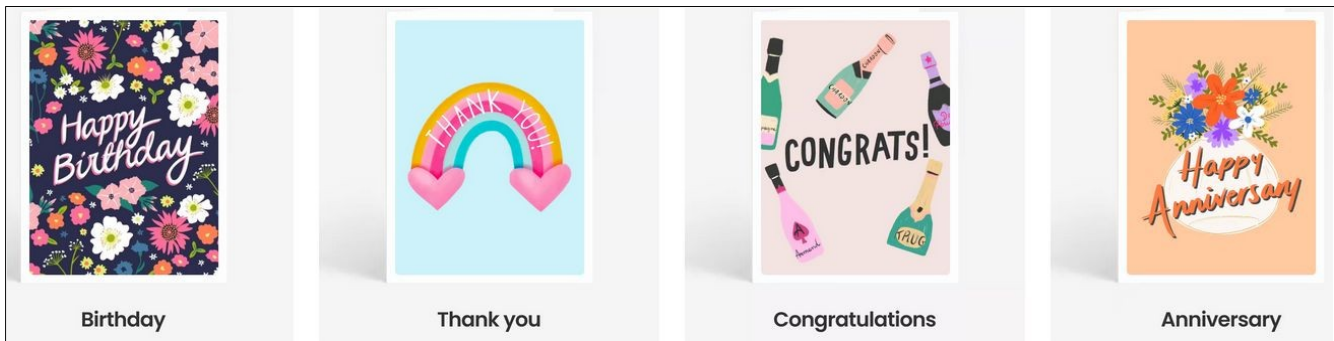
Here's a clue:-

```
const translator = await ai.translator.create({
  sourceLanguage: "en",
  targetLanguage: "ja"
});
```

For example, a foreign website would be recognized as to its base language, and immediately translated into the readers home language, even while new content was being added. With the help of AI, this could be achieved, either on the device, or in the Cloud.

<https://github.com/WICG/translation-api/blob/main/README.md>

Touch Note



Although it can be entertaining to peruse the assortment of greeting cards in a store, it takes time. And, you still may have to settle for a less than perfect card. Touch Note is the online version of a greeting card store. You can use Touch Note's art and text, or supply your own. The final greeting card (or a less expensive post card) will be printed on quality stock and dropped in the mail the same day (if printed by 2 p.m.) The cost ranges from about \$5 to \$10 CDN.

<https://touchnote.com/ca/>

Ryoko Wi-Fi Hotspot

I wondered why my browser insisted on not letting a link to **get Ryoko** go through, although the Facebook page for Ryoko worked just fine. I noticed that **Ynot Media, UAB**, is the admin for the Facebook page. Checking out the meaning of "UAB" led to the revelation that UAB is a private company in Lithuania that registers business names with very limited liability to shareholders or to customers. Hence, I still don't know if this "New 2024 Portable High-Speed Wi-Fi Router" (hot spot) works in 112 countries (as claimed), with 150mbps speed, nor do I know how much it costs, or if it will actually ship after payment.

[I hesitate to supply the link here, because your browser may let you through to the purchase page, with potential malware.]

However, those on Facebook can still view this sham account – in my opinion – containing very little validating content. Facebook still states that the account does not break terms of service.

[Ryoko sounds believable, possibly, because International roaming SIM cards work in the same manner as is claimed here.]

<https://www.facebook.com/muamaryoko>

Archiving Photos

An empty shoe box is all that is needed for keeping old photos safe for the next generation. Photo prints were valued even more if information had been written on the backs, in pencil, or if passed along to a family member who wanted them. Too often, these photos were chucked by heirs, who did not recognize the content. Or, they could end up in an antique shop. What should we do with digital images, to ensure durability? I generally download smartphone and digital camera files to a **USB** key or hard drive, along with **pCloud** storage and **NAS** storage. Most of the images on old CDs have been copied to hard drives. In other words, they are stored in many places, using the latest technology. [**Flickr** – another older online storage site – has somehow managed to charge my credit card for another year of pro storage, even though this credit card requires new credentials.]

Cloud storage is “iffy”, since such services may eventually die. **pCloud** claims my “lifetime” storage – 2TB—will last as long as I do. **DropBox** may have similar conditions. Google, Apple, and Microsoft will store photos and videos for a monthly **subscription fee**. Even Facebook allows free, large, photo albums and video uploads. The link (*below*) goes into specifics.

<https://theconversation.com/how-to-archive-your-photos-in-the-digital-age-239175>

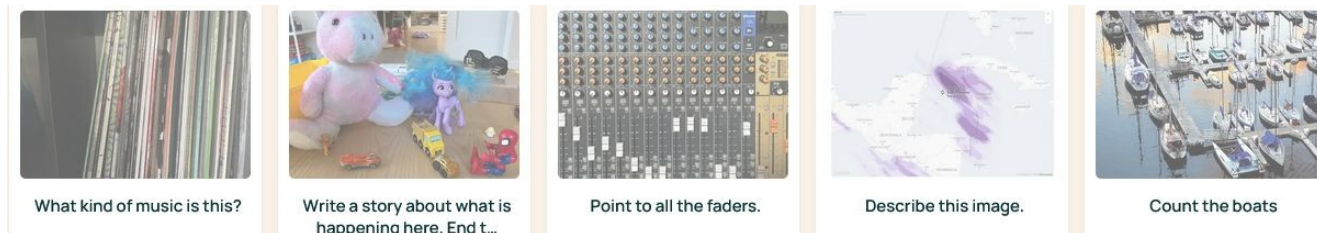
Adobe Acrobat AI Assistant

Oldsters may recall buying **Cole's Notes** to avoid the tedium of trudging through tomes, like “Moby Dick”, or Shakespeare. Cole's writers not only condensed such academic material, they annotated passages, to enhance real understanding. **Acrobat AI Assistant** can assist today's students and researchers by doing the same, in real time – almost. When ‘feeding’ a document to AI, you must tell it how to treat the information. Do you want a summary? Do you want it to make a presentation? Do you want just the salient facts? Should the text output be formal, or more colloquial?

The cost to students is \$2 per month – others \$5.

<https://www.xda-developers.com/i-tried-adobes-2-ai-study-buddy-and-it-could-be-a-game-changer-for-students/>

Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence

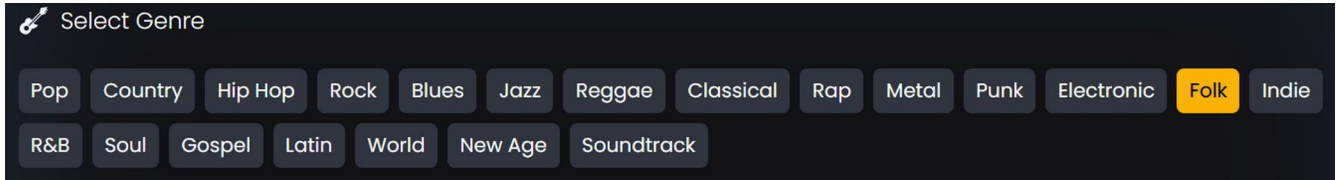


This Washington group has developed technologies for AI, based on open and trusted data, under acronyms like:- OLMo or Open Language Model, and MOLMo or Multimodal Open Language Model, the latter able to use computer vision to interpret computer screens and ‘guess’ at subsequent actions to help users in their next steps, be it moving through the web, finding a file, or composing text.

The link (*below*) leads to demos and a trial usage opportunity.

<https://allenai.org/>

SongerAI and Soundraw



Both of these AI music/song generators offer free trials, yet require registration, or an account, to download results you'd like to keep. However, the music you ask it to create is yours to exploit, as long as you've paid for the download. I could not determine the cost without becoming a member.

I tried **Songer**, asking for a folk song in English, with the prompt, "*Aedan likes to play with diggers and dump trucks, in 'Dirt Don't Hurt'*".

The 60 second previews came up with some lyrics and a great singer, along with two variations. I could have asked for more free variations and genres... very impressive. Try it with another kid's name.

*Aedan in the sandbox
Digger in his hand
Building up mountains out of the sand
Toys of steel and rubber
Morning till night
In the land of dirt
Everything's just right
Dump trucks and dozers
Rolling through the grime*

I was impressed enough to sign up and pay for 15 songs, at \$40, then took advantage of an instant offer for 50 more songs at \$38. That will work out to just over 1\$ per song – for each that I wish to download. One of these 65 songs might be a hit!!

[One guy became wealthy hosting a complete repertoire of 'original' AI music on a pay site. Making music with AI has become so popular that some services have changed licensing terms and fee structures.]

<https://songer.co/> and <https://soundraw.io/>

AIRGO 3

Solos AIRGO 3 smart glasses, are prescription orders with a bonus. That bonus being the ability to pair with your phone to handle calls and chats. The price does not appear outrageous.

<https://solosglasses.com/collections/shop-all>

Meta's Orion AR Glasses

Although these AR glasses are unlikely to be sold to the public, this article evaluates the features, capabilities and limits of this expensive research. Yes, the glasses are a lot like wearing a computer, with a large field of view – a transparent view – and a wrist strap controller with micro-muscle movement sensors enabling control through finger and hand motions. A Wi-Fi 'puck' completes the hardware. It reaches out to the internet for AI input. In another video, Zuckerberg was able to show how a pair of non-AR glasses could perform almost simultaneous translation between two people wearing them, who otherwise had no way to talk to each other.

<https://www.theverge.com/24253908/meta-orion-ar-glasses-demo-mark-zuckerberg-interview>

Microsoft and Security

Microsoft has a reputation for weak and slow reactions to security issues. To fix this, changes have been made on a number of fronts. For example over five million inactive accounts have been eliminated. Inside the company, access to sensitive information has been tightened. Things are improving, although users may soon have to jump through more hoops to gain access to accounts.

https://www.theverge.com/2024/9/23/24251945/microsoft-security-report-secure-future-initiative?utm_source=pocket_discover_technology

Free Linux Wallpaper

This image came from PCLinux.



DPCUC President's Notes

by Peter Camilleri

My thoughts turn to Facebook and security. Or rather its complete lack of security. Let me paint a scenario for you. While on Facebook, you receive a friend request from someone you know. You approve. After all, you know this person. Then later they message you and before you know it, the conversation takes a weird turn. I've seen them hawking government programs for a country they should know I don't live in, or asking if I have entered the publishers clearinghouse contest. Has your friend been hacked? Did someone steal their password? Nope. No hard stuff is needed. All the faker needs to do is steal the friend's name and profile pic (really easy to do) and to create a new account from which to commit identity theft.

When you get a friend request. scrutinize their account carefully. Is it full of stuff you know about them or is it nearly empty, with only strangers as friends. Delete the request. If already a friend, block the faker.

Facebook is a cesspool of these sorts of criminals and they *don't care*!

Now this next item comes from the department of "So you think your computer is slow!". The first microprocessor, the Intel 4004 came out in 1971. Linux came out in 1991. Somebody thought that it would be a good idea to bring these two things together. This is a really insane idea. As for performance, the system boots a special, cut down version of Linux, and it does it in just a little under five days! A directory listing (the ls command) starts outputting data in *only* 16 hours! This is by far the craziest example of retro computing *ever*!

Here's a (shortened) link to the (exciting?) video: <http://tiny.cc/j1lnzz>

Also, last month I made reference to a 16 terabyte hard drive. I should have dug just a little deeper as local retailers now sell 24 terabyte hard drives. Sorry, I must have blinked and missed it.

Finally, I know world politics is truly depressing, but it looks like the conflict in Gasa is getting set to spread further afield as an invasion of Lebanon appears to be in the works. And again, pray for peace in Ukraine.

Peter Camilleri, President DPCUC.

Linux in the News

by Alex Morrison



[Krita 5.2.5 Launches with Over 50 Bugfixes](#)

Krita 5.2.5 digital painting app brings over 50 bug fixes, optimizing audio playback and transform masks. Here's more on that!

[VirtualBox 7.1.2 Released with 3D Acceleration Support for VMs Running on ARM](#)

VirtualBox 7.1.2 is now available for download with a new option to change the remote display security method and other improvements. Here's what's new!

[LibreOffice 24.8.2 Office Suite Is Now Available for Download with 85 Bug Fixes](#)

LibreOffice 24.8.2 is now available for download as the second maintenance update in the LibreOffice 24.8 series with 85 bug fixes. All LibreOffice 24.8 office suite users must update to this version as soon as possible.

[LXQt 2.1 Promises Experimental Wayland Session, Styling Improvements](#)

LXQt 2.1 desktop environment promises experimental Wayland session, styling improvements, and various other enhancements. Here's what to expect from the upcoming release in mid-November 2024.

[Zorin OS 17.2: Hands-On with the Latest Update](#)

- How-To Geek; By Rich Dezso (Posted by [Scott Ruecker](#) on Sep 28, 2024 12:02 PM EDT)
- Story Type: [News Story](#); Groups: [Linux](#)

Zorin OS has long been a great option for Linux users who want an easy-to-use, customizable desktop alternative to Windows. The latest version, Zorin OS 17.2, adds even more features that make it worth a look. Here's my hands-on experience with the latest update.

- [Full story](#)
- [Read more](#)
- [0 threads and 0 posts](#)

[Tor and Tails Merge to Fight Global Surveillance and Censorship](#)

Tor Project & privacy-focused Tails Linux distro join forces to boost global internet freedom and enhance online privacy. Here's more on that!

Linux – Why use Linux?



Linux is free to use and all the software on a Linux system comes from a repository offered by the Linux distribution you chose to use.

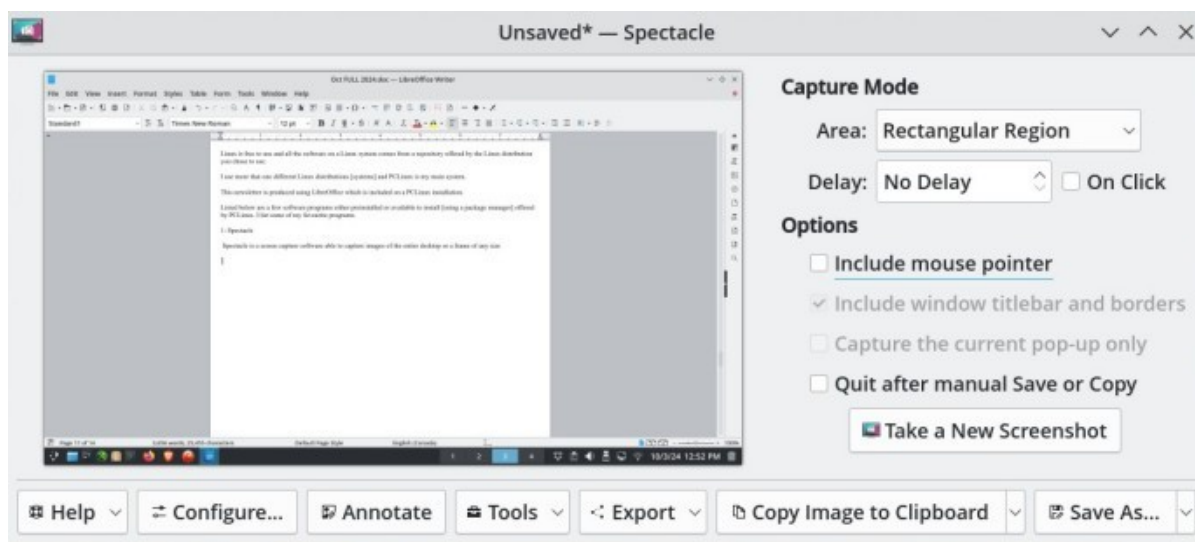
I use more than one different Linux distributions [systems] and PCLinux is my main system.

This newsletter is produced using LibreOffice which is included on a PCLinux installation.

Listed below are a few software programs either preinstalled or available to install [using a package manager] offered by PCLinux. I list some of my favourite programs.

1: Spectacle

Spectacle is a screen capture software. [Remember Snagit on Windows]



You are able to capture a full screen, a rectangular region, or the active Window. You can include the mouse pointer if wanted and set a time delay before the capture in order to move things around.

2: VLC

VLC is a media player on steroids. VLC plays videos, plays music and can even display a webcam image of you if the webcam is pointed at you. VLC does a lot more but that would be an article on its own.

3: Mediainfo

Mediainfo is a graphical program that looks into a media file and provides the details about the file including video container [eg mp4,] Sound settings [eg bitrate]. I use this program to determine the codec inside the video container. This allows me to use the next program to convert a file if needed so I can watch it on my TV.

4: Handbrake

Handbrake is an excellent tool for converting video files from one format [mp4 or mkv or webm] or size to another format or size as per your needs. Handbrake is also able to copy DVD or Bluray files that you wish to back up to your system – useful if you wish to travel and bring movies or TV shows with you and store them on a USB Drive. Not everyone has a portable DVD player.

5: Gimp

Gimp is a graphics program as complete as Photoshop on Windows. Gimp is not Photoshop so it has a significant learning curve to master it.

6: Wine

Wine and a few addons [wine-tricks, wine-mono, wine-gecko and winetricks] all available on PCLinux enable many Windows software programs to run on a Linux system.

I only use one Windows program called Tablo Ripper which wirelessly transfers TV shows from my Tablo TV tuner to my PC when a show I want to keep was recorded.

Wine includes Wine File Manager, Wine Minesweeper, Wine Registry Editor, and several other Windows programs that are part of the Wine virtual Window system.

7: Games

There are a large variety of simple games available including tpat [Patience solitaire games], Mahjongg [several varieties], Chess [several versions and engines] and Palapeli [Turn any photo or other image into a jigsaw puzzle and try to solve it.

8: Angry IP Scanner

Scan your network for all devices connected to the same router or modem as you. Useful Info.

9: LinSSID

Scan all networks within range of your WiFi card and identify Mac Addresses, WiFi Security, and some other info. I find 39 network devices in range of my home network. Nice to know if someone is trying to hack into your system.

10: Ksudoku and Sudokuki

Sudoku puzzle games. See next article as examples of sudokuki.

Many of the programs I have on PCLinux are unique to PCLinux [and other Linux systems] and many are available also in one form or another on a Windows system.

Try using Linux yourself and you might like it!!!

Sudoku

Oct 2024

by Alex Morrison



EASY

	5						2	1
7		3	6	2				
						5		
					4			6
3						2		
		1			9		8	
	6	9		4		7		
						1		5
		7		1	6	8		

Sudoku

The game boards on this page were produced using **Sudokuki** on PCLinux 64 Bit running KDE Plasma.

The objective is to fill in the missing numbers ensuring that every 3 X 3 grid has the numbers 1 through 9 with no repeats and every full column or row has the numbers 1 through 9 again with no repeats.

If you have troubles solving the puzzles send an email to me and I will send you the solution.

Have fun! Alex

MED

7			1					
	6	2				3	9	
	3		7				8	
		1			4	8		
3					7			
8	4		3			6		
	2			6				
			9			2	1	
		7				5		

HARD

				1				
				4		5	7	
4			9		3	6		
				2		1		
	8	2				7	3	
1		7						9
	7							
8				5			1	6
		1	8	3		9		

If you don't Like Sudoku puzzles – try these pages

<https://www.boatloadpuzzles.com/playcrossword>

<http://www.freegames.net/puzzle-games.html>

<https://www.cryptograms.org/play.php>

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS SIG's

Special Interest Groups are for members only.

SIG's are really free monthly seminars with question and answer sessions following the presentation(s)

Members of SIG's enjoy a feeling of community and share common goals and interests.

Most SIG's are informal and members who attend them set the agenda for the meeting based on their own needs.

Special Interest Groups

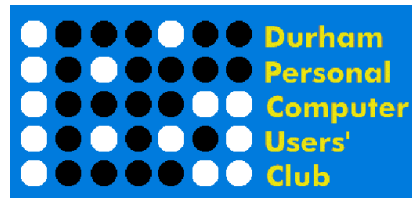
Durham Linux User Groups

Coordinator: Ed Goudge

Our Linux group meet on the first Thursday of every month.

All meetings are currently held using Zoom.

We hope some day to meet again in person.



DPCUC EXECUTIVE

2022-2023

President	Peter Camilleri	peter.c.camilleri@gmail.com	289-928-1579
Vice-President	Anne Delong	annedelong@timetraces.com	905-623-6975
Secretary/Treasurer	Mark Hunter	mark.s.hunter6605@gmail.com	905-924-2196
Membership/Publicity	David Odynski	odynskid@sympatico.ca	905-576-6325
Librarian	Dan Delong	dandelong@timetraces.com	905-623-6975
Program Director	TBA		
Newsletter Editor	Alex Morrison	dpcuc@rogers.com	905-579-1560
Director at Large	David Swain	david@swainracing.com	



HOME PAGE --- <http://www.durhampc-usersclub.on.ca/>

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