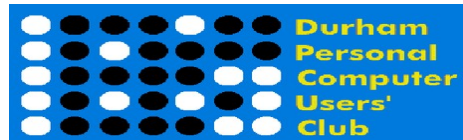**April 2025**

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/

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Next Meeting

**Unleash Your Inner Techie
How to Build Your Own PC**

by David Swain & Kal Somogyvary

On ZOOM – Thursday, April 13 2025, 7:00PM

FYI

- By Dan Delong

Synology AI for Image Recognition

Synology is known primarily for NAS drives, with lots of custom extensions. Synology has now branched out, to embrace NPUs (in-a-camera) along with their Surveillance Station (one of the NAS software extensions) to improve the analysis of objects "seen" by almost any camera.

False alerts will no longer be tripped by wind blown leaves or tree branches. Recognition of people and vehicles extends to specific individuals and vehicles types, when incorporated into Synology's NAS Surveillance Station app.

[$150CAD is the price for a just released, Synology, indoor/outdoor USB powered, Wi-Fi camera – the **CC400W***]*

https://blog.synology.com/ai-driven-image-recognition-accuracy-synology-enhances-enterprise-security-monitoring-with-smarter-solutions

Is AI the Solution to Quantum Computing?

Sabine Hossenfelder summarizes recent developments in the field of Quantum Physics, explaining necessary terms, like "**Atoms in Tweezers**" or "**Neutral-atom Arrays"** and how they relate to the future of computing.

https://youtu.be/1aBfNMisTbE?si=PbPSbN8C9R-bkC_y

Can AI Be Unbiased?

The **Trent University Alumni Association Magazine**'s October 2024 issue carries a report on this topic from visiting scholars, **Dr. Lai-Tze Fan and Dr. Makhan Virdi**. Their answers are important for decision making in many areas, like education, climate, ethics, productivity, and jobs, not to mention war and investment cheating.

https://issuu.com/trentmagazine/docs/trent_magazine_55.1_winter_2025_web/s/65306009

$8.5 Million dollars later...

Glass may have been found to be a superior substrate for reliable quantum computing chips (as opposed to silicone) as shown by an Italian developer in the Quantum Photonics field. **Ephos** is a three-year old company, led by Andrew Rocchetto. This new glass-based chip may make smaller, faster, super-computers possible, especially in NATO's Europe, where military advantage is sought.

https://www.maginative.com/article/ephos-raises-8-5m-seed-funding-for-glass-based-quantum-photonic-chip-facility/

NVIDIA—helping to understand the World's Faunal DNA

> *"The **Arc Institute and NVIDIA** unveiled **Evo 2**, the **largest AI model for biology ever,** trained on 9.3 trillion DNA base pairs from over 128,000 species, to advance synthetic biology, medicine, and genome design."*

Many genes do nothing (or are thought to do nothing) until acting in relation to other genes that also appear to do nothing. AI makes better predictions about the significance of such unknown gene combinations, thereby hastening cancer research and individually designed drug treatments; also known as gene manipulation therapy. It may even result in the resurrection of some extinct species.

https://www.maginative.com/article/nvidia-and-arc-institute-introduce-evo-2-2/

ASUS Zenbook DUO

Laptop Mode   Dual Screen Mode   Dual Screen Mode   Desktop Mode   Sharing Mode

DUO, in the name, means this laptop has **two 14-inch,** 3K, OLED, touch screens, that can act as an extended desktop in both horizontal and vertical configurations. The resultant screen size is equivalent to 19 inches. The base version, priced at about $1300USD, includes Win11 Home, Intel Core Ultra (i5 to i9 CPUs), an NPU, Intel Graphics, with a 1TB SSD, and 16GB of RAM.
[As for ports; "*1x audio jack and 1x HDMI® 2.1, 1x USB3.2 Gen1 Type-A, 2x Thunderbolt™ 4 USB-C® and one USB type C on the detachable soft keyboard.*" Canada Computers stocks a basic version for $1500CAD.]
[*For a fully fleshed out machine, look at a 2TB SSD, 32GB RAM and an Intel Ultra 9 CPU, for $2700USD. A touch screen stylus is available.*]
Verified students, over 18, can obtain a lower price on ASUS computers.
https://www.asus.com/ca-en/laptops/for-home/zenbook/asus-zenbook-duo-2024-ux8406/

Starbook – Linux laptops

Don't want Microsoft? **Starlabs** makes a series of Linux laptops for every user, with a sweet spot starting at about $1300CAD. The **Starbook** model (one step above the base model) has an HD screen (14-inch, with a matte finish, at 3840x2160px) and simultaneously supports full native resolution on the built-in display, and on up to two more displays with 4096x2304 resolution at 60Hz. The CPU is a 4-core Intel N200 with 8GB of RAM and a 512 SSD It comes with six lighted keyboard choices, lots of ports (including legacy USB ports). Memory upgrade options are to 16GB or 32GB, with SSDs going up to 4TB.
These laptops include a preinstalled **Linux** distro (**Ubuntu LTS 24.04.1**, or a number of other distros).
Three other models are available:- **StarLite** (a convertible, cheaper model, with a smaller screen); **StarBook Ultra** (with 16 cores and more RAM); and **StarFighter** (with a 14 core i9 and AMD Ryzen 7 7840 graphics @ about $2800CAD). User installed hardware upgrades do not cancel the warranty.
The **Byte Mini PC model,** for about $600, appears to be sold out. **Starlabs** is located in the UK.
https://ca.starlabs.systems/pages/starbook-specification#menu

Opatch – [Zero Patch]

Another way to extend the service life of older hardware – those running **Windows10** – is with **0Patch,** at a cost of $25 Euros per year. However, Microsoft also offers another year of extended support – after October 14, 2025, for $30USD. Or, with a lot more effort, install **Win10 LTSC** (a stripped down Enterprise version of Win10) with support to 2017.

> "*0patch delivers miniature patches of code ("micropatches") to computers and other devices worldwide in order to fix software vulnerabilities in various, even closed source products. With 0patch, there are no reboots or downtime when patching and no fear that a huge official update will break production.*"

https://www.0patch.com/

Windows 11 install without a Microsoft account

Well!... As of now the latest Win11 installer build won't complete unless you associate a Microsoft account with Win11. The old *"unplug the Ethernet cable"* method no longer works. Nor, does the ***bypassnro.cmd.*** However, all is not lost. A **Tom's Hardware** link *(below)* describes a registry change that does work. It also suggest that making a USB install drive, with **Rufus**, probably takes care of this as well.
https://www.tomshardware.com/software/windows/microsoft-eliminates-workaround-that-circumvents-microsoft-account-requirement-during-windows-11-installation

Organic Maps

Why choose **Organic Maps** **(a.k.a. MapswithMe)**? And why is Organic Maps is moving from GitHub?
First, the maps are from the **OpenStreetMap** community.
Second, they do not use any of the data allotment from a cellphone. In fact, the phone might no longer have a SIM card at all. The maps reside on the phone, and are accessed by the Organic Maps app. This is great for those who travel, especially when off the beaten track, while hiking, cottaging, or biking. This also saves battery and prevents tracking. Driving directions are still available too. It's all open source – no registration – and does not require any Microsoft involvement. Maybe that's why it will soon be unavailable on GitHub. In future, Organic Maps updates will be available on instances of **Forgejo**, for self-hosting of projects. *[Sounds like a peer-to-peer environment to me.]*

Kickstarter Powerbank – Starship -$80USD

Designed in California, this power bank outputs up to 210watts on two USB-C ports (140W on one, and 70W on the other). The **Starship** claims to outperform all competitors, for its size.
[Inside each unit are four, automobile grade lithium cells.]
The product bears no connection to Starbook computers.
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/aohi/starship-worlds-most-powerful-10000mah-power-bank

Kickstarter 1&2 TB SSD for phones – Planck about $182 CAD for 1 TB

A shape redesign of a USB-C SSD storage device allows it to plug-into a wide variety of smart phones, without dangerously sticking out, or requiring a wire extender (to prevent port damage).
Transfer rates can reach 1050 MB/s.
https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/planck/planck-the-worlds-smallest-phone-first-ssd-with-up-to-2tb

The Twopan Nano SSD is a smaller (smaller than a 25-cent coin) 512 GB competitor to the Planck. An order for it might arrive directly from China – (not sure of cost here). The 90 degree position of the USB plug is similar to the Planck, but the speed is slower.
As an advantage over the Planck, this USB-C SSD offers fingerprint security.
https://prelaunch.com/projects/twopan-nano-ssd-light-as-paper-secure-like-vault-twopan-nano-ssd-light-as-a4-paper-secure-like-a-vault

Taara Competes with Starlink

Musk's Satellite Internet – Starlink – has served some remote areas well, yet it is under the control of an untrustworthy person. That is why some governments have cancelled upcoming contracts with Starlink. In a similar vein, Google's **Taara Lightbridge** may, or may not, be a better arrangement, should it prove successful in these same remote areas. **Taara** employs laser light, point-to-point, for jumps of up to 20 kilometres, at 20 gigabits per second. It uses **Free Space Optical Communication**, which carries more data per cycle than typical radio waves; and, it is currently employed in about a dozen African countries.

As a non-fibre, land-based solution, rain, fog, cloud, and smog still hinder Taara transmission. Where light beams cannot go, more expensive fibre fills the gap.

[A Canadian company, so I hear, may soon enter the low orbit satellite Internet business.]

https://techcabal.com/2025/03/21/googles-taara-takes-on-starlink/

Sync.com – Canadian Cloud Storage

As a long time **pCloud** user, I can't vouch for this alternate to Dropbox (or other offline storage); whether, as to service quality, features, price, or graphic interface. At last check of the website, some significant savings *(likely for a limited time)* are to be had.

[200GB for $45 CAD annually, then $60; 2TB for $72 CAD annually, then $96]

For those who back up files locally, on a NAS system or hard drives, a tertiary cloud backup might be advisable, unless backup media can be stored offsite.

https://www.sync.com/canadiancloud/

Chrome update patches zero day exploit

This Windows patch came out on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 – in the latest update to version 134.0.6998.178. The exploit attacked mainly Russian users, in government or education, who received phishing emails inviting them to click on the **Primakov Readings.** A quick redirect to a valid website conceals the infection. It just goes to show how lax security can be inside a browser or operating system. If the Russians can do it, so can many other governments. Firefox also got a fix, with the 136.0.4 update.

https://www.pcmag.com/news/chrome-zero-day-flaw-also-affects-firefox-browser

Wired Magazine's Advice on US based services

Google, Meta, and X are some of the major online services, based in the States, that may deliver biased content during the Trump presidency. They may also comply with MAGA enforcement demands for access to user data. This is a risk to every US citizen – and perhaps, close allies as well.

> *"Collaboration between Big Tech and the Trump administration began before Donald Trump's swearing-in on January 20. Amazon, Meta, Google, Microsoft, and Uber each gave $1 million to Trump's inauguration. Separately, in personal donations, so did Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Apple's Tim Cook."*

The Trump cult administration has been deleting government digital records not in alignment with... – who knows what? Fortunately, the Internet Archive and Wikipedia are held in backup copies, at some off-site locations beyond reach of the US; for they too are at risk.

[NOTE: Meta/Facebook is notoriously complicit in its prevention of news from or about Canada. Here's an example of a significant omission from our news... https://disinfowatch.org/ *However,* **Snopes** *does get through, as does The Poynter Institute's* Politifacts.

https://www.wired.com/story/trump-era-digital-expat

Thermacell E65 – 20 ft. Mosquito Repellent

Sit, recline, or stand, within the 10 foot radius of this mosquito repellent, to enjoy the outdoors, trouble free. The **Thermacell E65** is not suitable for indoors, should mosquitoes enter, due to off-gassing. Each liquid refill lasts for about 36 hours. Battery powered heat elements evaporate the repellent liquid over time. Refills cost about $15, while the whole kit, with one refill, costs about $90. USB-C battery charging takes about 2 hours.
[Most of the reviews are positive. Come May and June, I may write my own review.]
https://www.canadiantire.ca/en/pdp/thermacell-e65-rechargeable-mosquito-repeller-with-docking-station-charcoal-1592573p.html

Laptops Can Serve as Desktops

Popular Science describes some the advantages for adding the following:- 1) a multi-port USB hub, 2)a larger screen, 3) and a separate keyboard. The laptop then becomes a work station.
https://www.popsci.com/diy/laptop-desktop-computer-conversion-tips

United Nations Moves to Open Source

In an effort to escape USA billionaire controlled software, the United Nations supports open source development and usage, complying with certain principles. One recent move is from Google forms, to **CryptPad forms**, which is used to create online questionnaires and polls.
https://unite.un.org/news/sixteen-organizations-endorse-un-open-source-principles

Amazon Alexa+

Millions of **Alexa** devices, currently in use as voice assistants... i.e.; for reminders and queries, will get faster and smarter in the next generation of Alexa devices. But, they'll be accompanied by a user fee, because their enhanced AI features require expensive processing (both in-device and remotely).
https://www.seattletimes.com/business/amazon/inside-amazons-plan-to-reshape-its-alexa-devices-business/

Minecraft Education, "Peter is Here."

Not unlike Lego blox, **Minecraft** makes intricate virtual reconstructions of world edifices possible. One particular learning adventure, *"Peter is Here"*, challenges students to restore a **virtual St. Peters Basilica** (which is the burial place for Saint Peter, the first Pope).
https://unlocked.microsoft.com/minecraft-vatican/

Breathing for Better Memory and Mental Health

The autonomous nature of breathing is essential to mammalian life. When genetically 'messed with' (in mice) retention of learned patterns dropped. Human memory also tends to be poor when breathing is irregular. There may be more to meditation than first thought.
https://www.aol.com/scientists-powerful-connection-between-breathing-170700989.html

Popular Science – hydrogenated water for health

Although not fully validated as a health drink, the **Aquaala** water bottle can infuse its contents with hydrogen in three minutes, using electricity from a USB rechargeable battery.

https://www.popsci.com/sponsored-content/half-off-aquaala-hydrogen-infused-water-bottle-sponsored-deal/

Vinyl Record Flattener

Depending on how vinyl records have been stored, some may have become warped, long after their production and sale. Playing such records can damage both the cartridge and grooves in the record. So, this Australian business sells a device that flattens them again. It uses evenly distributed heat and pressure to do the job. *[about $1000USD] [Perhaps the same result might be obtained by placing a record between two pizza stones, placed in an oven at low to moderate temperature.]*

https://www.gearpatrol.com/audio/pro-ject-flatten-it-vinyl-flattener/

Cats Smitten by TV are More Adoptable.

An Australian pet hospital tried this out on 50 adoptable kittens. Those that paid attention to television shows and iPad videos were better socialized; hence, ready for adoption. This kind of visual stimulation is akin to house cats, glued to a window, watching the movements of birds, animals and people, outside. A sterile, windowless, environment is not good, for cats or people.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-03-29/ipad-trial-to-socialise-cats-and-kittens-for-adoption/105107818

An Off-grid Sports Stadium

Opening in late Summer of this year, a stadium in Germany will install 11,000 solar panels to charge an array of batteries, yielding 4.2 megawatts of power for its lighting systems.

https://interestingengineering.com/energy/germany-to-house-worlds-largest-stadium-solar-roof

Proton advice regarding AI Privacy

The article *(linked below)* is more than a year old, but the description of data mining methods, used by AI in relation to your personal texts and photos, is chilling.

https://proton.me/blog/privacy-and-chatgpt

DPCUC President's Notes   by Peter Camilleri

Another year and the calendar again says that Spring is here. A tradition at this time is the ritual of Spring Cleaning. For me this takes the form of deciding what to do with old Windows 10 machine. Since I purchased my Windows 11 machine, it has sat idle. The question arises, what is to be done with it? It does, after all, have a perfectly capable processor, a decent 16GB of RAM and a 512GB SSD. What to do?

Well after a thorough cleaning, my plans are to make it my Linux test machine. To that end, I already use applications, like Libre Office and GIMP that are Windows ports of Linux applications.

Next comes education. I am currently being tutored by the Explaining Computers YuoTube channel that has a series: Moving to Linux for Beginners. So far I have learned a great deal, but there is much more I need to understand, especially in the areas of networking and printers.

The real problem step for me will probably be cleaning out the basement so I have a place to put the machine! I have no timeline for that step yet.

We do you think? What computer projects do you fancy? As always the executive are open to any ideas, suggestions, or questions you might have. We would be so happy to hear from you.

Finally, wars never seem to cease while cease fires never seem to last. Please Pray for Peace.

Peter Camilleri, President DPCUC.

Linux in the News   **by Alex Morrison**

How To Install Kernel 6.14 On Ubuntu, Debian And Derivative Systems

Learn how to install Kernel 6.14 on Ubuntu, Debian, and derivative systems with our comprehensive guide. Boost your system's capabilities today!

Install Jitsi on Ubuntu 24.04

Discover how to install Jitsi on Ubuntu 24.04 with our comprehensive guide. Get step-by-step instructions for seamless video conferencing setup.

Mozilla Thunderbird 137 Open-Source Email Client Released, Here's What's Changed
0 Comments

Mozilla Thunderbird 137 open-source email client is now available for download with various improvements and numerous bug fixes. Here's what's changed!

Slackware-Based PorteuX 2.0 Distro Released with GNOME 48 and Linux Kernel 6.14
1 Comment

PorteuX 2.0 Linux distribution is now available for download with Linux kernel 6.14, GNOME 48 desktop, and other changes. Here's what's new!

WattWise: Monitor Your Computer's Power Usage in Real-Time

- ostechnix.com; By Senthil Kumar (Posted by ostechnix on Apr 3, 2025 3:28 PM CST)
- Story Type: Tutorial; Groups: Linux

WattWise is a lightweight, opensource, command-line tool to monitor the power usage of your system in real-time.

Full story
Read more
0 threads and 0 posts

GIMP 3.0.2 Fixes Key Bugs, Enhances macOS and Windows Support

GIMP 3.0.2 is here with essential bug fixes and improved support for macOS and Windows. Enhance your creative projects with this powerful update.

Linux – Wine

If you still rely on Windows 10 or older versions of Windows then this application [Wine] might be useful.

I found the message below on the site ---> https://www.aztechit.co.uk/ ----> referring to Windows 10.

As of 14 October 2025, the following changes will be implemented:

- You will no longer receive free monthly security updates or bug-fix patches
- You will no longer receive technical support from Microsoft
- You will no longer receive feature updates

While your Windows 10 PC will keep working, it will become more at risk for security issues such as viruses, malware, and cyber threats after Windows 10 reaches the end of support.

Without monthly security update releases, any new security vulnerabilities that are discovered will not be patched, making your PC less safe.

For businesses and individuals, this could result in the loss of sensitive data, cyberattacks, or poor system performance over time. Therefore, understanding the implications of Windows 10 EOL is crucial to protect your devices and data.

Those not wanting to upgrade to Windows 11. or if your PC is still good but doesn't support Windows 11, or if you do not want to spend the money to upgrade the PC to run Windows 11 -----> try Linux!!!!

When you install a Linux distribution after doing any updates it will be time to install Wine.

This site will give you a description of the Wine software and apps that run well using Wine.
https://www.winehq.org/

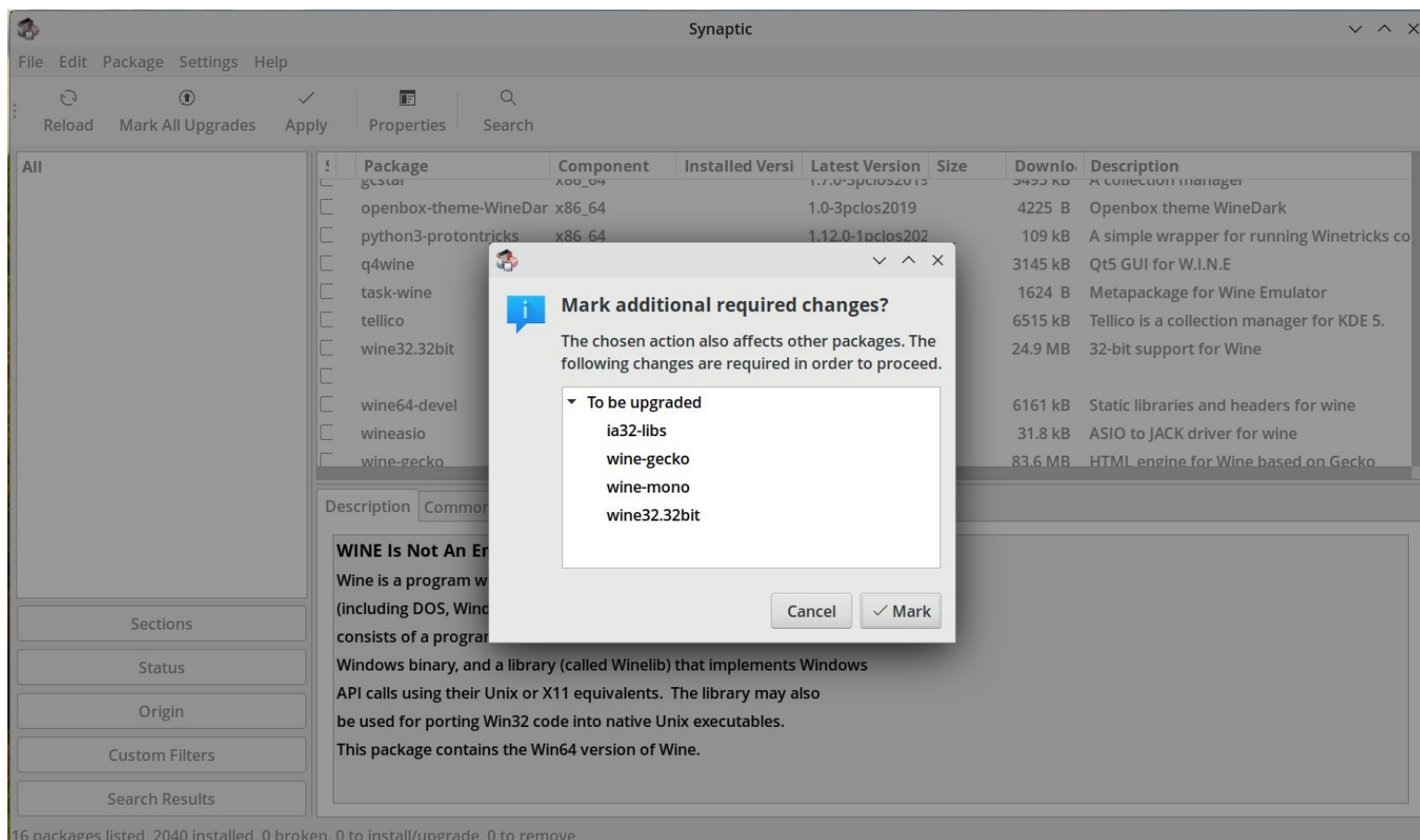My primary Linux distribution [I use three] is PCLinux.
I installed Wine on PCLinux using the package manager [Synaptic].

On PCLinux when I selected Wine in synaptic it shows a few additional packages that would be installed.

The extra useful programs automatically installed are Wine-gecko wine-mono and 32 bit support files.

See the image below.

Not all Linux systems install these extra programs for you.

I use a Windows program called TabloRipper.msi.

It is for TabloRipper that I installed Wine.

Wine supports .msi files as well as .exe files. You just right mouse click the Windows executable and select open with 'Wine Windows Program Loader'and the Windows software will open and install for you.

The WineHQ website shows many Windows games that work on Linux and it offers a search to see if it lists a piece of software you rely on in Windows.

Even if the software is not listed just try installing it with Wine. It might work. TabloRipper worked for me!!!

Sudoku   April 2025   by Alex Morrison

EASY

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

Sudoku

The game boards on this page were produced using **Sudokuki** on PC Linux 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

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

HARD

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

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

https://www.boatloadpuzzles.com/playcrossword

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.

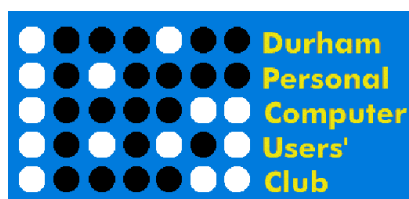### Special Interest Groups

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

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Newsletter Information

PC Monitor is the official publication of the Durham Personal Computer Users' Club and is published monthly at Oshawa, Ontario.

The DPCUC mailing address is dpcuc@live.com

The PC Monitor cannot be responsible for errors or inaccuracies in the content, although efforts will be made to publish information accurately.