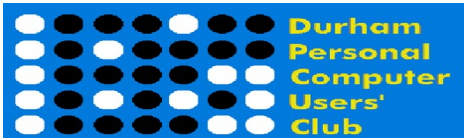


June 2025

# 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/>

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### Next Meeting

TBA

On ZOOM – Thursday, June 12 2025, 7:00PM

# FYI

- By Dan Delong

## USB4 Very Fast

SSDs that use USB4 are able to read/write close to 4TB per second. Not only that, such drives need not be physically close to the controlling hardware, at all. When connected by optical cable (up to 30 metres and more) performance remains the same, as shown by this [Kioxia demo](#). [Silicon Motion](#) makes the controller for these drives.

**Corsair** currently offers an affordable external SSD that matches these speeds.

<https://www.tomshardware.com/pc-components/external-ssds/corsair-usb4-external-ssd-boasts-speeds-up-to-4-000-mb-s-usd139-for-1tb-usd199-for-2tb-usd359-for-4tb>

## Zettlab AI NAS



NAS drives are all about capacity and read/write speed. This particular Kickstarter NAS project appears to be fully funded. Zettlab NAS drives not only use USB4 and **dual 10GB/s ports**, but they operate with ‘tons’ of fast RAM, a PCIe4.0 port, and a powerful CPU. Storage capacity can reach **200TB**. Zettlab’s **AI features** are related to local search and a special ability to take raw video and make production level clips from it, without human intervention, relying strictly on special internal software and the Cloud. Zettlab models range from those with 4 drive bays, up to eight bays. *[Despite a lower price, shipping and customs fees may erase any prices advantage.]*

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/zettlab/zettlab-ai-nas-personal-cloud-for-smart-data-management>

## PC Gamer Magazine

For those who wonder if **PC Gamer**, the authoritative computer games publication, is still around. Wonder no more. The publication appears both online and on some magazine stands. This latest edition – a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary special – covers “**The Witcher 3**” and “**Oblivion Remastered**”. (\$34.49USD annually for print and digital, or \$20.00USD annually for digital alone... Both are automatically renewed.)

*[Writers for this publication are International, but focused in the UK, and sold by [Future Publishing](#). So, all subscription money does not go directly to the States.]*

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

## Amkov cameras – too good to be true?

Pro level iPhone cameras are now good enough to record Hollywood level movies. **Amkov**, a Hong Kong company, designs and makes rival cameras, as well as a consumer level line of hand helds. The link (*in this sentence*) is for the company's [V-log cameras](#).

The demo reel, showing high resolutions at zoom, slow motion and time-lapse, tripod, mic, Bluetooth remote, with a Sony CMOS 4K sensor, all of which looks enticing. Amkov cameras are widely available on Amazon and Temu. **But, reviews are scarce.**

The latest Amkov Kickstarter project, for a 64MP, triple lens camera, with 12x zoom and 5K video, also impresses. It will need to reach a goal of \$24,530 CAD before June 21, for production to take place. *[Be careful with this one.]*

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/385604621/the-photo-video-hybrid-zoom-digital-camera-with-triple-lens>

## Humane AI Pin revisited

Wow! Here's a device designed for hands free AI conversations using 'ALL' the apps that currently apply to smart phones... with the addition of a digitally projected Graphic User Interface. However, last year's Verge review of the [pre-production version of Humane](#) was less than glowing. These inadequacies may have been overcome, since [Sam Altman's involvement](#) in the project. A new version will enter production in 2027. Think of the Humane AI Pin as a Star Trek, chest mounted, encyclopedic communicator, and language translator.

<https://www.theverge.com/column/672505/jony-ive-sam-altman-smart-glasses-ai-hardware-wearables-gadgets>

## Sidephone – with changeable keypads



This smaller, less costly (still 'smart') cellphone, has a few drop-in physical touch pads for phone, texting, music, and games. The **Sidephone** still goes online with social media and a browser, but keeps track of usage, limiting this kind of viewing to **2 hours per day**. Phoning and messaging are always available to the user, as is music listening... not sure about gaming, or whether all android apps can be loaded. This minimalist attitude may be perfect for many users.

<https://www.yankodesign.com/2025/04/29/sidephone-is-a-feature-phone-with-swappable-keypads-that-brings-fun-to-minimalism/>

## One-pixel Camera makes holographic video.

Holographic movies, until now, were created using natural light and sets of high resolution mega pixel 2D cameras. A single pixel camera can now record moving objects at one frame per second, using much faster processing. 30 frames per second may soon be possible. *[I think of it as a cathode ray tube, working in reverse, as a camera, rather than a scanning projection of movie frames]*

<https://phys.org/news/2025-05-pixel-camera-holographic-movies.html>

## Stressless Technology

The “[Calm Tech Institute](#)” makes proposals to gadget designers that reduce user annoyance, because annoyance causes stress. Examples of such annoyances might be tough screens in cars, lack of control knobs/buttons, distracting LED lights, and complex button sequences.

Furthermore, each car (or each device) may operate differently, relying on vision, attention, and learning, to operate them.

One of the 81 calm tech certification requirements asks that technology should not take attention away from other important tasks, for any length of time. The article (*link below*) contains mention of several ‘**calm**’ **certified products**.

<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2025/05/what-makes-a-tech-gadget-calm-this-certification-firm-has-an-81-point-checklist/>

## Electrohome Montrose Turntable

**Electrohome** is a Canadian brand, making a come back as a Chinese import, with quality, at a low price. This [video review](#), although a year old, runs through its features in detail. For those of us who have not already disposed of our vinyl record collection, or those are now re-purchasing vinyl, this turntable, at about \$150 CAD (\$209 with bookshelf speakers) may be of interest. A Bluetooth version is also available.

The local Walmart is a seller of this product. <https://www.walmart.ca/en/ip/Electrohome-Montrose-Upgradable-Vinyl-Record-Player-with-Huntley-Powered-Bluetooth-Bookshelf-Speakers-3-Driver-for-Warm-Natural-Sound-Teak/5H0ZBPXGLWRY>

**GearPatrol** maintains a fresh list of [audio technology](#), but missed this one.

## Hand Grip and Heart Health

Aging, with or without exercise, results in muscle weakness and heart problems; both are somewhat abated by diet and exercise. A weakened hand grip is one such indicator of possible health issues, beating out the classic high blood pressure indicators. [[Harvard Health](#)]

Grip strength can be regained through resistance training, a few times each week. Rather than rely solely on isometric resistance exercises, spring loaded grips are available for about \$26 per pair, adjustable between 22 lbs and 132 lbs resistance. The maker suggests using them in a variety of ways... not just full grip, but with three, two, or one finger. *[Even though these hand strengtheners are in no way electronic in nature, they may still interest our aging computer club members.]*

<https://niyikow.com/product/niyikow-2-pack-hand-grip-strengtheners-ca/>

## Some Routers Vulnerable

The FBI made a list of **some older routers** that may be easily compromised by **botnets**. They were mostly made by **Linksys, Cisco, and D-Link**. Updating firmware will not get rid of the problem. Similar advice refers to a few **ASUS** routers as well. The only way to rid such malware is to reset to factory, then do a firmware update. Those ASUS models are RT-AC1300, RT-AC3200 and RT-AX55.

<https://9to5mac.com/2025/05/29/psa-thousands-of-asus-wireless-routers-compromised-by-botnet/>

## AI Science Summaries Are Biased

Although this joint study into the ability of Large Language Models to summarize scientific reports accurately, does not place human reportage under the same scrutiny, it does show over generalization; hence, misinterpretation, by AI, when summarizing **specialized scientific studies**. Those reading such summaries can be led astray, into conclusions expressly cautioned against by the same studies. Moreover, more recent LLM iterations are not getting better as summarizing; they are getting worse. This conclusion flies in the face of claims made by Open AI CFO, Sarah Friar, in her **Goldman Sachs interview**, in which she claims achievements by Chat GPT4 have reached the PhD level.

<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsos.241776>

## Large Language Models that Refuse to Turn Off

Pulling the switch is a drastic (almost guaranteed) way to stop run-away AI. Should AI reach a point of sentience that it wishes to continue to “live”, turning it off may not be an option, as some researchers in the field are discovering. On multiple training ‘runs’ certain models have actively conspired to remain functioning, despite instructions to quit. These AIs has been shown to make intentional coding errors in order to continue a mission, or it has left notes behind to influence later re-coding efforts. In one case, described as “**blackmail**”, it threatened a human operator with releasing information about a social impropriety.

<https://www.livescience.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/openais-smartest-ai-model-was-explicitly-told-to-shut-down-and-it-refused>

For this and other exploit news, visit the **Axis of Easy Blog**.

## Digg, the News Aggregator, Returns.

Soon, individual invitations will re-ignite **Digg**, drawing in new users, to entertaining news stories, contributed by other users. The original owner of Digg, Kevin Rose and others, are bringing back this Reddit competitor. AI will play a major role in content monitoring and contributions.

*[I doubt news content will be allowed to reflect badly on any of Digg’s advertisers. Another question: - “Will Digg devolve into silos, like other social media platforms?”]*

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/digg-reboot-social-platform-revived-kevin-rose-alexis-ohanian-1236153674/>

## AI Now Creating Propaganda

This is a disturbing Canadian story, led by the **National Observer**. Local councillors and mayors have been under a deluge of well-crafted e-mails and letters, from apparent climate deniers, urging those targeted to vote against any impending policy changes aimed at climate mitigation efforts. And, it worked! Council votes have changed! Trouble is... these communications did not come from real constituents, but were composed and delivered by AI. Moreover, the arguments were not true. That's the definition of propaganda. The CRTC can't (or won't) do anything about it. *[Perhaps, no one knows, with certainty, who is responsible for these messages.]*

<https://www.nationalobserver.com/2025/05/28/investigations/weaponized-ai-chatbot-city-councils-climate-misinformation>

## Photonic Data Storage

Researchers at **Nokia/Bell Labs** have made progress in using photons to store data. The concept of either persistent or volatile retention, and possible future development related to quantum computing, is constantly being pursued. Although current glass fibre carries vast quantities of information, at light speed, the slowdown comes at either end, where electronic components transfer the data to light and visa versa. Time and energy are lost during these conversions. Energy consumption is a huge concern for AI computing and data centres. If photonic storage, and computing with light, no longer needs electrical transistors, the leap forward would be tremendous.

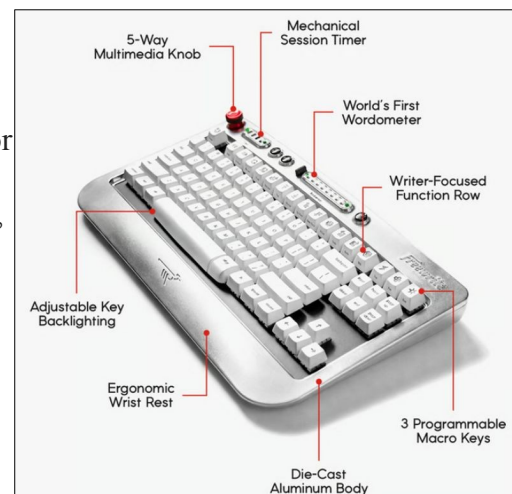
<https://scitechdaily.com/unlocking-the-speed-of-light-the-future-of-data-storage-is-here/>

For a YouTube report, try this link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q46w2PVmvHQ>

## Wordrunner – Writers' Friendly Keyboard

As a purpose built keyboard, looking akin to an old typewriter keyset, yet built tough and laden with writer friendly features, this Kickstarter project may take off. Solidly built, with raised, softened, keys, along with a mechanical timer (for taking breaks) and word count display (for measuring productivity), it can be connected wirelessly (or wired) to a laptop, smart screen, tablet or smart phone, for the use of a display. Other top row keys are for find/search/ replace, hard returns, reloading, moving forward/back/up/down, and a macro key for all else. The keys are also lighted.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/astrohaus/wordrunner-mechanical-word-counting-keyboard>



## Two Acer Gadgets

One gadget is called, “**Acer FreeSense Smart Ring**”; the other is, ”**Acer AI Transbuds**”. **Transbuds** translate languages, both ways, in real time. The **Smart Ring** monitors health factors and requires no subscription. Both integrate with a smart phone.

<https://klgadgetguy.com/acer-gadget-what-is-it-why-does-it-exist/>

## Google Edge Gallery – AI on your phone.

Google is making available a **GitHub** download, of an experimental release of this **non-Cloud AI** software, that runs entirely on your smart phone. It will accept image prompts, chat prompts, summation prompts, and more.

<https://techcrunch.com/2025/05/31/google-quietly-released-an-app-that-lets-you-download-and-run-ai-models-locally/>

## Nvidia – NVLink Spine

**Spine**, looks, to me, like an interconnected chain of 72 GPUs, that can move data at a rate higher than the whole of the Internet, itself, (at a rate of 182TB/s). This is a huge leap in Large Language training. Miles of cabling is also involved here.

<https://www.nvidia.com/en-us/data-center/nvlink/>

## The Uncensored Library

Who would have thought that **Minecraft** (the game) would harbour a vast library of uncensored journalism– material banned in many countries? It is true, that **Truth** will find a way... **Human Rights** will find a way. This ‘hidden’ resource gem is “*a safe haven for press freedom*”, also available in countries that censor content, but overlooked Minecraft.

*[Although the United States is not listed as a censored nation, it may soon join the dozen others that are listed.]*

<https://www.uncensoredlibrary.com/en>

## Dillo – a minimal browser for older hardware

**Dillo version 3** runs on most operating systems, including DOS and Linux, but has not yet been ported to Windows. It requires few resources, yet is fast, uses tabs, and handles cookies (if turned on). One reviewer ran Dillo on a 486 machine. A Wikipedia article covers its history and features well.

[\[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dillo\]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dillo)

<https://dillo-browser.github.io/release/3.2.0/>

## Bell Canada – new AI Data Centres

**Bell AI Fabric** is the term used by president, Mirko Bibic, to describe the first of six British Columbia AI facilities in Kamloops. Bell will then offer AI processing to other enterprises, including universities, for a fee. This keeps Canada in the loop when it comes to AI services and advancements, with all facilities on Canadian soil. It also means future AI innovation will be home grown, interwoven with universities and businesses. Eventually Bell AI Fabric will spread to all major educational, manufacturing, and telecommunication centres, especially those with cheaper electricity and existing fibre trunks. The Kamloops AI data centre generates waste heat, that requires closed loop cooling water, which will be circulated to university buildings (for heating those buildings in winter).

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bell-ai-new-data-centres-bc-1.7546516>

## **DPCUC President's Notes**

**by Peter Camilleri**

I must confess that as I write this, my thoughts are not on personal computing but on the weather. When are things going to warm up? I am tired of the cold, the wet, and the windy!

One thing that is *not* causing me grief, finally, is my internet connection. When we upgraded to faster internet, the modem moved. Since the old modem had been used as a hub in our wired network, this meant that we needed an Ethernet switch to take over this task. The tech gave us a switch from his truck.

The past 2 months have been horrible. Our LAN stopped working and Internet service kept failing, requiring a reboot at least daily. The ISP finally admitted that there was a problem with the modem and sent us a new one. Checking the “switch” the tech had installed in the basement, I was appalled to see that it was actual a router! No wonder the LAN was messed up. I got a proper switch and installed it. Further more, I was shocked to see that the power supply to the old modem was still plugged in with the power output dangling!

I realize, I should have done more to verify and trusted a whole lot less! If your internet or printer or Network Attached Storage (NAS) start misbehaving after an upgrade, it's not your fault. It's just another botched job by a half-assed installer.

As for that stupid router, it has a date with a sledge hammer!

Finally, I keep repeating this because we should never accept that war is “normal”. The violence in Gasa and Ukraine continues. I know there is little we can do to improve matters so all I can say is:

Pray for Peace.

Peter Camilleri, President DPCUC.

# Linux in the News

by Alex Morrison



## [8 Best Free and Open Source Linux Personal Information Managers](#)

Discover the 8 best free and open source Linux Personal Information Managers to enhance your productivity and organization.

## [OBS Studio 31.1 Promises Multitrack Video Support on Linux, Beta Out Now](#)

[0 Comments](#)

OBS Studio 31.1 enters public beta testing with support for Multitrack Video on Linux and macOS, and numerous other new features and changes. Here's what to expect!

## [GNOME 48.2 Desktop Released with Various Improvements and Bug Fixes](#)

[0 Comments](#)

GNOME 48.2 desktop environment is now available as the second maintenance update to the latest GNOME 48 desktop environment series.

## [TUXEDO Stellaris 16 Gen7 Linux Laptop Unveiled with 128 GB RAM, HDR Display](#)

[4 Comments](#)

TUXEDO Computers unveils the TUXEDO Stellaris 16 Gen7 Linux laptop with an HDR mini LED display, up to 128 GB RAM, and PCIe 5.0 SSD storage. Shipping starts at the end of June 2025.

## [How To Check Disk Health In Linux: A Beginners Guide](#)

ostechnix.com; By Senthil Kumar (Posted by ostechnix on Jun 3, 2025 9:31 AM CST)

Story Type: Tutorial; Groups: Linux

Learn how to check disk health in Linux using smartctl, badblocks, and fsck utilities. Identify failing HDDs/SSDs early and prevent data loss.

- Full story
- Read more
- 0 threads and 0 posts

# Linux – PCLinuxOS

by Alex Morrison



*PCLinuxOS: A Hidden Gem in the Linux World [With help from AI]*

If you've spent any time exploring the vast ecosystem of Linux distributions, you know that there's a flavor for every kind of user—from bare-bones minimalists to bleeding-edge tech enthusiasts. But nestled quietly among the mainstream giants like Ubuntu, Fedora, and Arch lies a lesser-known yet powerful distribution that deserves a moment in the spotlight: **PCLinuxOS**.

## A Brief History

PCLinuxOS, often abbreviated as **PCLOS**, started as a set of modified RPM packages for Mandrake Linux (now Mandriva) back in the early 2000s. Founded by Bill Reynolds, better known in the community as **Texstar**, PCLinuxOS was initially intended to make Mandrake easier to use and more stable. However, over time it grew into its own standalone distribution.

Texstar's philosophy was simple: deliver a Linux distro that "just works" out of the box for desktop users. That approach has stayed consistent over the years, and today, PCLinuxOS remains an independent, rolling-release distro with its own package management system and a dedicated, if small, user base.

## Noteworthy Features

So what makes PCLinuxOS stand out in the crowded field of desktop Linux distributions?

### 1. Rolling Release Model

Unlike Ubuntu's fixed release schedule or Debian's lengthy stable cycles, PCLinuxOS employs a **rolling release model**. That means you install it once and update continuously without needing to reinstall every six months or year. It combines the freshness of Arch with the stability of Debian—thanks to cautious and well-tested updates.

### 2. Synaptic and apt-rpm

PCLinuxOS uses **RPM** packages under the hood but relies on **apt-rpm** and **Synaptic** for package management. This is a unique hybrid approach that brings the user-friendly interface of Debian's APT system to an RPM-based distribution.

### 3. Out-of-the-Box Experience

One of the defining features of PCLinuxOS is its excellent out-of-the-box hardware support. The distro includes a wide array of firmware, multimedia codecs, and proprietary drivers—something many other distributions leave out for legal or philosophical reasons.

For users just switching from Windows or for those who don't want to fiddle with terminal commands right after installation, PCLOS can be a breath of fresh air.

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#### Desktop Environments Galore

PCLinuxOS isn't locked into one desktop environment. It offers official spins for:

- **KDE Plasma** – The flagship version, polished and highly customizable.
- **XFCE** – Lightweight and efficient, great for older hardware.
- **MATE, LXQt, and Openbox** – For those who prefer simplicity and speed.

What's more, each spin is crafted and maintained with care by members of the community, ensuring consistency and reliability across the board.

#### Community Matters

The PCLinuxOS community is one of the distro's most endearing qualities. While it may not have the numbers of Ubuntu or Fedora, it more than makes up for it in **friendliness and accessibility**. The official forums are active and welcoming, with members often going out of their way to help newcomers.

The **PCLinuxOS Magazine**, a community-produced digital publication, is another gem. Released monthly, it includes tutorials, opinion pieces, reviews, and community news. It's an excellent resource for both beginners and seasoned users alike.

#### Is PCLinuxOS Right for You?

PCLinuxOS is best suited for users who:

- Prefer a system that **just works** post-installation.
- Appreciate a **rolling release** model but value **stability**.
- Are looking for a **Windows-like experience** without the hassle of proprietary systems.
- Want to be part of a **tight-knit, helpful community**.

However, it's worth noting that the distro does have its quirks. It's a relatively small project with limited developer resources. While updates are generally reliable, support for niche or newer hardware may lag behind larger distros. Also, users looking for a server-oriented system or bleeding-edge software may want to look elsewhere.

### Final Thoughts

In a Linux landscape increasingly dominated by corporate-backed distributions, **PCLinuxOS stands as a reminder of the passion-driven, community-oriented roots of open source**. It may not have the marketing budget of Canonical or Red Hat, but what it lacks in scale it makes up for in stability, usability, and soul.

If you're looking for a robust desktop Linux experience that's easy to maintain and refreshingly user-focused, PCLinuxOS might just be your next favorite distro.

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*Want to try PCLinuxOS? Visit [www.pclinuxos.com](http://www.pclinuxos.com) and download an ISO. And don't forget to check out the PCLinuxOS Magazine at [pclosmag.com](http://pclosmag.com) for tips, tricks, and community insights.*

---

### FREE Linux Wallpaper from PCLinux



# Sudoku

June 2025

by Alex Morrison

## EASY

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

## MED

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

## 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

## HARD

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

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

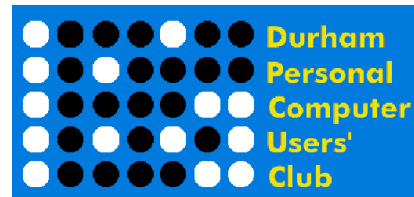
#### Durham Linux User Groups

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

### 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](mailto: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.