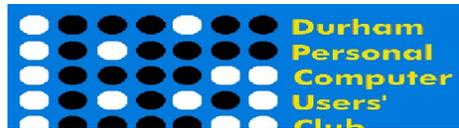


Jan 2026

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 Topic

**Managing Updates
Windows & Linux & Others**

By Anne Delong

Thursday, Jan 8 2026, 7:00 PM

FYI

- By Dan Delong

Fast Humanoid Robot AI Training

The title refers to physical movement training, not the “thinking” aspect of large language training. Such training is comparable to learning human navigation in the real world, which requires almost autonomic, years long learning, from babyhood to childhood - but can now be “taught” to a human-like robot in a matter of hours (through navigation in a simulated world, with simulated physics for gravity, friction, contact with objects and limits to joint movements). Such knowledge can then be “downloaded” to identical humanoid robots, so they all can then move effortlessly in the real world - safely. Before this development, training was a slow, trial and error process, which involved errors (like falling down) that often damaged the machine.

[This information, with respect to Nvidia, comes from a Facebook account by Anik Singal, CEO of venture capitalist Ugentic AI at <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1HHakhAiji/>]

LG UltraGear evo Monitor Series

Pricing won't be revealed until CES, later in the month. But a features list is now out. Expect sizes of these Mini-OLED screens to range from 27-inches to 52-inches, with very high resolutions, high brightness, 0.1 ms or better response times, AI Upscaling, AI Scene Optimization and AI Sound.

<https://www.tomshardware.com/monitors/gaming-monitors/lg-ultragear-evo-gaming-monitor-lineup-announced-ahead-of-ces-2026-27-inch-5k-mini-led-39-inch-curved-tandem-oled-and-a-52-inch-5k2k-large-format-display>

[LG recently got a lot of flak for including Copilot, by default, in it's recent television sets. I believe that feature is now removable.]

Twelve Microsoft Boasts for 2025

Those who recently updated Edge may have paged through some self congratulatory screens/features. Specifically they are:-

1. Jan. – Copilot with AI Assist
2. Feb. – Translation of web page text
3. Mar. – Video Summary as text
4. Apr. - 50th Anniv. For MS; 10th for Edge
5. May – Game Assist with guides and chats
6. June – Streaming with Media Control Centre – Pic-in-pic and translation
7. July – Tab Manager for groups
8. Aug. – Scareware Blocker
9. Sept. – Memory saving with sleeping tabs
- 10 Oct.– MAI – image generation upgraded
11. Nov. – Shopping – cash-backs from Walgreens and Best Buy
12. Dec. – Pinning of sites, which saves time typing

One final screen provides many text example queries to try out Copilot

Super Computers at Queen's University

Faculty members of the **Electrical and Computer Engineering, Ingenuity Labs Research Institute**, at Queen's (Kingston, Ontario) design supercomputers. Another supercomputer is in development - computers that simulate weather patterns and process AI. One of the Queen's faculty members leading the team is Dr. Ryan Grant, trained both at Queens and in the States. He wants to make a Canadian supercomputer that is at least competitive in the speed of its peta flops, to the rest of the World

<https://www.queensu.ca/alumnireview/articles/2025-03-13/super-man>

No Monitor? No Problem!

A set of AR glasses, by **Sightful**, can throw up a virtual 100 inch screen, with multiple windows... for simultaneous viewing of entertainment, learning, and productivity. This method is not for everyone, as the glasses cost over \$1000 CAD and require an expensive monthly subscription. Sightful lenses still permit enough "see-through" transparency that real world objects are still visible. Also, those who wear prescription glasses can obtain corrective lenses. Hardware recommendations are for Core i7, 16GB RAM, fast USB-C, and Win11.

[Just imagine, you could be sitting in a small cubicle, or on a train, while viewing a huge virtual screen!]

[Spacetop for Windows | AR Software For Business](#)

Meta Quest VR Headset as Alternative

Meta Quest VR glasses are getting AI, hence the ability to compete with **Sightful**, in many ways, and for less money. For instance, these glasses can now view **LibreOffice** applications, and control them to some extent. This does not mean that content creation is automatic, just that viewing is both private and controlled. A nice feature Meta's glasses are still known for is the ability to "see" real objects and scour the Net for information about each.

[Look for Google to introduce a competing product in 2026.]

[LibreOffice Viewer on Meta Quest | Quest VR games | Meta Store](#)

An Old Gmail Address Can Be Changed

Mine still can't be changed because Google is rolling this feature out, area-by-area. Actually, I see no need to change mine, even though I've had it for almost a couple of decades. However, those who took out an email name that they find silly, or old hat, after all those years, may wish to make a change to the part that comes before **.gmail.com**. Google will allow only one change per year, and up to three in a lifetime. Another reason; Some users have taken out their account in a different first language, and may wish to change it to a more current language. Google still advises saving all photo and documents before making this kind of change, although Google will do its best to redirect all mail, still addressed to the old account, to the newly named account. Also, some WiFi controlled home appliances might need reprogramming after this change. *[Some long abandoned accounts may be revived by this offer to change the user's name.]*

<https://www.howtogeek.com/google-is-finally-letting-users-change-their-gmail-address/>

KickStarter Aquatouch Small Gaming Computer

Despite the name, suggesting a powerful computer needing water cooling, that is not the case here. Aquatouch refers to the clear, multi-touch screen that is included on the side panel of this ITX sized computer, making it somewhat larger than a mini-computer, but smaller than most gaming computers. The specs for this computer are superior to many commercial gaming computers. Despite the “clearness” of the screen, which can display both system stats and almost 3D video effects, the included screen is rather small for gaming. Therefore, most users will attach a larger monitor.

[AquaTouch: Built-in Transparent Touch Screen ITX Mini PC by Augatouch — Kickstarter](#)

Windows PC Saviours

At the command prompt, usually in an admin account, five commands can save the day, when Windows seems to be unrecoverable. They are: - “*sfc /scannow*”; “*DISM /Online /Cleanup-Image / RestoreHealth*” (Try each of the three preceding ‘flags’ one after the other.); “*chdsk /f /r*” (for disk errors and recovery); “*ipconfig /flushdns*” (for flushing DNS); “*netsh winsock reset*” (resets the catalogue if flush didn’t work)

[Before using these powerful commands, it might be a good idea to put each into a search for a more complete description. The above information is from a Facebook posting by emdotech@gmail.com.]

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1ALEPVgp9b/>

Windows 12? Not Anytime Soon!

Even if you find offers to obtain Win12 for free, the download will not be from Microsoft, nor will it be sanctioned by Microsoft – because MS plans to support and upgrade Win11 for the long term. Should Win12 be announced, it may not be until 2027, and it might include further hardware demands. Even so, online ads for a new version of Win12 claim more AI, and improved security, in the next version.

[This information is derived from a Copilot query.]

Digital Cash is Coming to Europe.

Cash is ‘good’. It is anonymous, unless you are signing a legal agreement (like a sales slip). Unlike credit and bank cards, cash transfers do not encounter a fee (then passed on to consumers). And finally, you can’t overspend cash, unless the seller extends credit or a lay-away plan. The **European Central Bank (ECB)** is planning on a 2029 introduction of digital cash, along side the existing coin/paper system. The pool of digital cash would be linked to a personal *cache of cash*, with transfers based on credentials - like plastic, embedded chip, smart phone, or passworded permissions. Not only would privacy be maintained, along with everyone having access, but it would keep wealth out of the hands of private companies, involved in bit-coining... often used for criminal money transfers. The exchange would need to work offline, such that both the spender’s and the receiver’s devices would perform the accounting tasks, without calling into a “Mothership” bank.

[There are still some known unknowns, which makes working out the details so time consuming.]

[It should end up to be a free service (unlike pre-loaded credit cards that can be purchased by poor people) – still better than money ‘hidden’ under a mattress or left in a piggy-bank or on a gift card.]

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/digital-assets/2025/03/07/a-2025-overview-of-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-digital-euro/>

Rogers Satellite Add-on

Low earth satellites can now be added to some Rogers smart phone plans. The service takes over when the regular connections fails (as in remote areas) as long as the sky is clear and the service has been paid for. Only texting is currently allowed, with expectations to include voice and data later. For some (Ultimate and Popular) plans, this service costs nothing (for 24 or 12 months respectively). After this free period the cost varies between \$10 and \$15 per month. Older phones may be incompatible with satellite signals.

<https://www.rogers.com/mobility/satellite>

GPS is Pervasive and Needed

But, GPS can be messed with, even though military operations depend on it. Despite encryption, powerful signals, special antennas and proprietary satellites, jamming signals can still redirect and confuse ordinances. Civilians count on reliable guidance for cars, delivery trucks and taxis. Criminals have been known to spoof the GPS location of a truck, while its contents are being stolen. Government spying on the movements of protesters, has been aided by GPS trackers and phones. GPS has allowed both Ukraine and Russia to guide deadly drones. Even if GPS works accurately, a power failure, taking out traffic lights and WiFi, can bring traffic to a halt, as seen recently when **Waymo** self-driving cars froze, blocking intersections.

<https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2025/12/gps-is-vulnerable-to-jamming-heres-how-we-might-fix-it/>

Stax, for Comparing AIs.

Google released this trial AI comparison tool; there may be some bias here. Those still curious may try it anyway (with Chrome preferred, or other browsers).

Gemini provides this explanatory text: -

“Google's **Stax** is an experimental developer tool. It assesses and benchmarks generative AI models and applications. It helps developers test new prompts or models. The tool provides a structured, repeatable, and data-driven evaluation process.

- **Key Functionality:** Users can compare prompts and models. They can run large-scale evaluations on datasets, create custom "LLM as a judge" evaluators, and visualize performance metrics.
- **Comparison to Other Tools:** Stax focuses on a user's *specific* use cases instead of general benchmarks. Its competitors include other AI evaluation or MLOps platforms. These platforms offer similar model testing and observability features.
- **Unique Aspects:** It is currently in beta and free.”

[To enter this site, a valid email is required, along with an API key (user key) for each of the LLMs you will be using for comparisons. Once the comparison windows are up (visible), type in a query.]

<https://stax.withgoogle.com/>

Clicks Power Keyboard

Isn't it strange that many smart phone owners seldom make phone calls. Everything, for them, can be achieved through texting. **Clicks** now makes an 'almost smartphone' device, with a Blackberry-like keyboard, front and back cameras, and expandable memory, specifically designed for texting only individuals. Ironically, it is called, "the Communicator." Another Clicks device combines charging with a slide out keyboard, for Apple phones only. At CES the same physical Bluetooth keyboard will be available as a stand-alone, or with a **Magsafe charger** that attaches to the back of the phone, for both iOS and Android

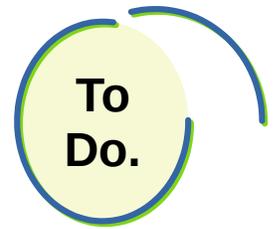


<https://www.engadget.com/mobile/smartphones/clicks-is-bringing-its-first-smartphone-and-a-new-keyboard-to-ces-2026-182239003.html>

Best Practices. We Say It a Lot.

But do we do it? Whether malware or hardware failure, both are disastrous – unless we take a few proactive measures.

1. Microsoft's Tuesday updates are more than a suggestion; they often plug a lot of holes.
2. Keep Windows Defender and the Firewall active.
3. The link seemed so tempting, when offered in social media. Don't click on it! Hover over it to see where it goes first – the real URL. *[I've made this mistake a few times, freezing my screen with fake emergency warnings. The offending tab would not close... so had to use the Task Manager to end the process (and close the offending tab before it could open, redirecting right back to the same fake screen.)]*
4. Weak passwords are now quite easy to crack. Either change them often or make them so complex that they are almost impossible to crack.
5. Backups can be in the Cloud, on a NAS, or on a removable hard drive or key. If you have regular backups in two extra places, one of which is offsite, you should be safe(r) and secure(r).



Hiren's Boot Disk

There's a name from the distant past, but now you don't need to sneak around to get [Hiren's BootCD PE](#). This new **Win11 compatible version is free** of pirated software. And, since most computers no longer have a CD tray to boot from, this version runs from a USB drive containing about 3GB of data (on a USB boot key).



The download is an .iso file that can be uncompressed by Rufus, or by [Ventoy](#) *[Ventoy is preferred if you want to include other .isos on the same drive].*

Users of Hiren's are mainly interested in recovering a misbehaving computer, using the many tools supplied. The tools are for data recovery, partitioning, password recovery, network fixes, security scanning, hardware information, along with memory and CPU testers, space analyzers, and with numerous other utilities. The link (*below*) is an excellent reference.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/hirens-bootcd-pe-swiss-army-knife-broken-windows-pcs/>

Anker's 521 PowerHouse

With solid state memory prices rising, battery backups – the smaller units – are stabilizing, or dropping, in price. Canadian Tire now sells a number of brands of power station, in many sizes. Most include at least one 110 volt AC source, a few USB power ports and a 12 volt DC out. Some can be charged with solar panels, or a car alternator, or a wall plug. This \$130USD (\$200CAD), 256 watt-hour model can power a mini-fridge, and many other low wattage electronic devices, including modems and routers. It also has a variable brightness LED light – very useful during power blackouts – and a digital screen that reports state of charge, plus charge and discharge rates. Heavy draws can drain the batteries within a few hours. Full sized power stations, capable of running high draw appliances, cost up to \$3000 CAD.



[The Canadian Shopify site does not appear to stock this cheaper 521 model, but does offer a more powerful 768 Watt-hour Solix model for about \$900 CAD.]

https://www.anker.com/ca/search?search_category=all&q=power%20station&ref=

Plaud Note Pro

Fifty hours of voice recording, in a device so thin it fits in a wallet, has arrived. That's the \$260 CAD Plaud Note Pro.

[The Plaud is usually magnetically attached to a phone's back.]

When connected to a smart phone it transcribes too!

It's an AI thing, as self-described here: -

“Plaud Intelligence: AI transcription in 112 languages with speaker labels and custom vocabulary. Generate summaries with 10,000+ templates, mind maps, and workflow integration.

- **Data security:** ISO 27001, ISO 27701, GDPR, SOC II, HIPAA, and EN 18031 compliant.
- **Multimodal input:** Capture audio, notes, images, and highlights for contextual understanding.
- **Multidimensional summaries:** Transform one conversation into multiple role-specific summaries.
- **Ultra slim & powerful performance:** At 2.99mm thin and 30g, capture voices up to 5 metres (4 MEMS + 1 VPU) with 30 hours of recording, 60 days of standby, 64 GB of storage, and an InstantView Display.
- **Smart dual-mode recording:** Automatically switches between phone call and in-person modes.
- **Free Starter Plan:** 300 mins/month transcription included. Upgrade anytime for more minutes and advanced AI features.”

<https://ca.plaud.ai/products/plaud-note-pro?>

A detailed description by TechCrunch is at: - <https://techcrunch.com/2025/12/29/plaud-note-pro-is-an-excellent-ai-powered-recorder-that-i-carry-everywhere/>



Free Wallpaper from BigLinux



DPCUC President's Notes

by Peter Camilleri

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

My research projects for evaluating software options for an old slow laptop, fitting it with an SSD so it's not quite so slow, and a new project of turning a Fire Tablet into a more useful device are not forgotten. They did suffer a setback as December was a very busy time for me and old health issues resurfaced to make it even harder to get things done. Hopefully, things will calm down soon and progress can resume.

Add to all this the non-club projects of setting up a computer lab and finally finishing the book I've been working on for years, and you've got a pretty crowded to-do list.

Hopefully we will start to see some progress again.

I also wrote a lot about how the world is doing. Then I thought, if you know how the world is, you don't need to hear it again, and if you've avoided the insanity, your good luck should be preserved. So I deleted all of it.

Peter Camilleri, President DPCUC.

Sudoku Puzzles

January 2026 by Alex Morrison



EASY

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

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

HARD

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

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

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

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

Linux – Linux Commands

Alex Morrison



The command line in Linux is very useful. You do not need it if you are intimidated by the thought of typing commands in a terminal/konsole.

If you want to use the terminal/konsole here are a few commands you should be familiar with.

Top 50 Linux Commands You Should Know as a Regular User

1. [ls](#) - The most frequently used command in Linux to list directories
2. [pwd](#) - Print working directory command in Linux
3. [cd](#) - Linux command to navigate through directories
4. [mkdir](#) - Command used to create directories in Linux
5. [mv](#) - Move or rename files in Linux
6. [cp](#) - Similar usage as mv but for copying files in Linux
7. [rm](#) - Delete files or directories
8. [touch](#) - Create blank/empty files
9. [ln](#) - Create symbolic links (shortcuts) to other files
10. [clear](#) - Clear the terminal display
11. [cat](#) - Display file contents on the terminal
12. [echo](#) - Print any text that follows the command
13. [less](#) - Linux command to display paged outputs in the terminal
14. [man](#) - Access manual pages for all Linux commands
15. [uname](#) - Linux command to get basic information about the OS
16. [whoami](#) - Get the active username
17. [tar](#) - Command to extract and compress files in linux
18. [grep](#) - Search for a string within an output
19. [head](#) - Return the specified number of lines from the top
20. [tail](#) - Return the specified number of lines from the bottom
21. [diff](#) - Find the difference between two files
22. [cmp](#) - Allows you to check if two files are identical
23. [comm](#) - Combines the functionality of diff and cmp
24. [sort](#) - Linux command to sort the content of a file while outputting
25. [export](#) - Export environment variables in Linux
26. [zip](#) - Zip files in Linux
27. [unzip](#) - Unzip files in Linux
28. [ssh](#) - Secure Shell command in Linux
29. [service](#) - Linux command to start and stop services
30. [ps](#) - Display active processes
31. [kill and killall](#) - Kill active processes by process ID or name
32. [df](#) - Display disk filesystem information

33. [mount](#) - Mount file systems in Linux
34. [chmod](#) - Command to change file permissions
35. [chown](#) - Command for granting ownership of files or folders
36. [ifconfig](#) - Display network interfaces and IP addresses
37. [traceroute](#) - Trace all the network hops to reach the destination
38. [wget](#) - Direct download files from the internet
39. [ufw](#) - Firewall command
40. [iptables](#) - Base firewall for all other firewall utilities to interface with
41. [apt, pacman, yum, rpm](#) - Package managers depending on the distribution
42. [sudo](#) - Command to escalate privileges in Linux
43. [cal](#) - View a command-line calendar
44. [alias](#) - Create custom shortcuts for your regularly used commands
45. [dd](#) - Majorly used for creating bootable USB sticks
46. [whereis](#) - Locate the binary, source, and manual pages for a command
47. [whatis](#) - Find what a command is used for
48. [top](#) - View active processes live with their system usage
49. [useradd and usermod](#) - Add a new user or change existing user data
50. [passwd](#) - Create or update passwords for existing users

Many of the above listed commands need a secondary command or operand after the command to be useful.

You may be able to use a different command to get information on the above commands.

EG: type `man wget` and press enter.

This will produce a description of the wget command.

A very good guide to commands can be found here ---

<https://www.digitalocean.com/community/tutorials/linux-commands>

Your Linux system may not include all of the listed commands but your systems package manager will often have the commands available if you want to install them.

Don't be afraid of the command line – some of the commands are a lot of fun to use.

neofetch and fastfetch are two of my favourite commands

Two images on the next page illustrate these commands.

Linux in the News

by Alex Morrison



[Papermoon: A Space-Grade Linux for the NewSpace Era](#)

Discover Papermoon, the cutting-edge space-grade Linux designed for the NewSpace era. Explore its features and capabilities for modern space missions.

[Link to Germany Puts Microsoft on Five Years Probation for Antitrust Bullying](#)

Germany Puts Microsoft on Five Years Probation for Antitrust Bullying

For the next five years, Microsoft will be under the watchful eye of Germany's Federal Cartel Office, which will be seeking to thwart any monopolistic activity coming from Redmond proactively.

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

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!

[IceWM 4.0 Lightweight Window Manager Released with an Improved Alt+Tab Switch](#)

[0 Comments](#)

IceWM 4.0 lightweight window manager is now available with improvements to the Alt+Tab quick switch, support for high-resolution icons, and many other changes.

[Arch Linux Installer Archinstall 3.0.15 Adds Support for the rEFInd Boot Manager](#)

- 9to5linux.com; By Marcus Nestor (Posted by [hanuca](#) on Jan 1, 2026 4:12 AM EDT)
- Story Type: [News Story](#); Groups: [Arch](#), [Linux](#)

Archinstall 3.0.15 has been released today as the latest stable version of Arch Linux's menu-based installer, adding a couple of new features and fixing various bugs and other issues.

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

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

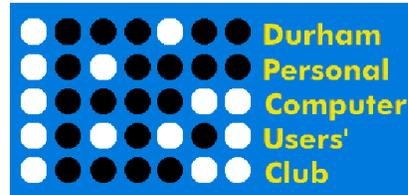
Durham Linux User Groups

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/>

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.