December 2017
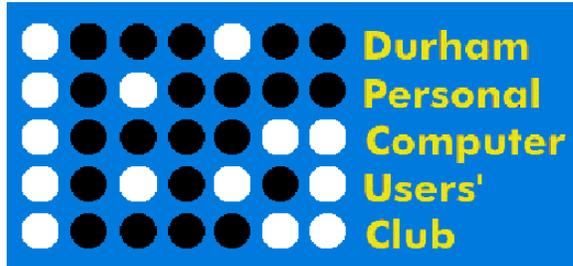
PC MONITOR

Durham Personal Computer Users' Club Newsletter

November Prize List

Ed Goudge	$17.00	Lloyd Lindsay	Mobile Flashlight
David Swain	$10.00	David Swain	Surge Protector
		Duane Harrison	Transfer Cable
		Fred Fernbach	Selfie Stick
		Allan Oliver	Seat Protector

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

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Next Meeting

Fraud/Scam & Safety for Seniors

by Sergeant Sheri Tate

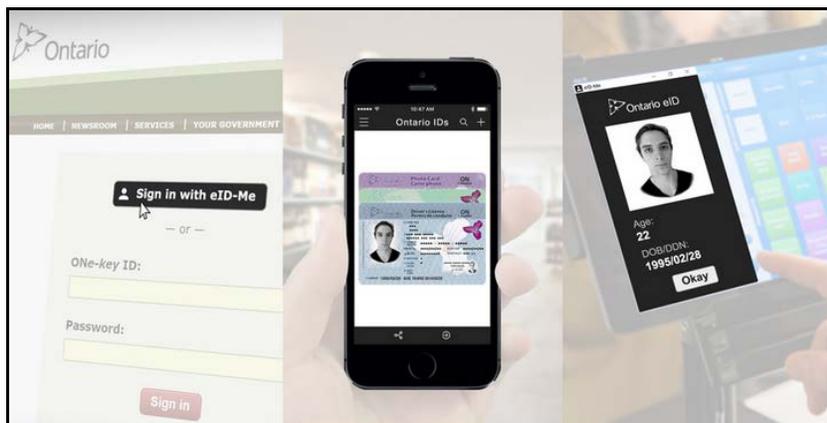Faith United Church at 1778 Nash Road, Courtice

Thursday, December 14 2017   7:00PM

FYI   - By Dan Delong
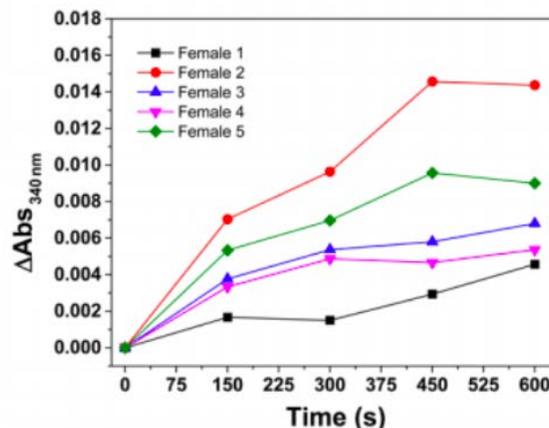
eID-Me – on your phone

Alternatives to your Ontario identity cards, (i.e.; Driver's Licence and Health Card), may soon be offered for smart phones. Should you need to pass your identification to a payee, only a subset of the data on your card would need to be shown, not the complete record. Instead of revealing all data on our current **eID** account, say when at the liquor store, only your photo and age would come up on the phone's screen. Displaying the eID screen would require the user to, either scan some biometric data, or enter a password. Since the Ontario Government already stores all of this information in database format, transferring to a phone would be trivial.
https://bluink.ca/blog/posts/press-release-bluinks-eid-me-brings-ontario-digital-identity-to-your-smartphone

Biometric IDs

Biometric validation uses palm/finger print, voice, photo recognition, iris scan, and now comes – Sweat! That's right – perspiration. Developers discovered that the chemical profiles in sweat -from skin glands on the palm - are unique enough to be used for validation, even though hormonal composition varies with emotional states and time of day. The article describes the process as "*full-proof*" (sic), which gives me pause to trust the article. It could be '*fake news*'. The origin is, after all, the University of Albany, NY. However, a researcher, at Rutgers University, is working on recognition of micro-vibrations from an individual's finger movements on a hard surface.

https://thenextweb.com/tech/2017/11/13/sweat-analysis-might-soon-be-the-safest-way-to-unlock-your-phone/

Microsoft's EMET or Windows Defender Exploit Guard

Operating systems can offer a form of exploitation known as "***code re-use attacks***", whereby commonly used addresses, both in the OS and those used by individual programs, are known by malware coders, so that they can access those addresses and make use of such predictable locations for their attacks. Microsoft first employed ASLR (Address Space Layout Randomization) to mitigate the problem, followed by an enhanced version (EMET), which puts code into temporarily allocated locations. In this case, entropy is our friend, protecting us from exploits.

http://www.thewindowsclub.com/implementation-address-space-layout-randomization

Katasi groove

Wouldn't it be "**groovy**", if no more accidents were caused by distracted driving due to texting. That's the aim of **groove,** by **Katasi**. As soon as a vehicle reaches 8 km/h, the driver's phone will no longer accept texts or phone calls. Instead, an automatic response informs the caller that the message will be read as soon as the driver is able, (i.e.; when the car stops). A passenger's phones would not be restricted, nor would GPS information, or music playing. The success of this project is most easily (and most universally) possible with cooperation from all cell phone providers. Auto companies are developing alternate ideas, allowing drivers to look ahead but still hear messages. In 2009, MP Erin O'Toole's father, MPP John O'Toole, advocated for the current Ontario laws against cell phone use by drivers. Still, many drivers seem willing to take a chance on getting caught. Remember the 'good-old-days', before cell phones, when no matter the level of urgency, drivers could not be contacted at all.
https://katasi.com/

WiraLite – video panning device

Mount any camera (under 1.5 Kg) on this remotely operated, travelling/carriage system, to achieve panned, steady-shot, video. Wherever drones can't go, or are not permitted by law, such cable/rope operations are okay. Even though the direction of travel is limited to a straight line, the sample videos have achieved amazing results. I see one weakness here; the sound (recorded along with the video), unless recorded with a shot-gun microphone, will likely contain noise from the carriage motor. The accompanying remote control device can set the speed of movement slow enough for time-lapse video (very slow), or very fast (up to 45 km/h) to keep up with bicyclers. [Cost: about $200 USD]
http://futurated.com/wiral-lite-the-easy-cable-cam-for-impossible-film-shots/

PLEX – recordings without commercials

Up to now, those who have stored large numbers of PLEX digital recordings on a local server needed to manually edit out commercials, after the fact. PLEX is releasing a process to automate the stripping-out commercial content from existing recordings. Since the process requires a lot of processing (power), the computer on which this action occurs should be a more modern machine. Of further note:

> *["Plex's DVR service costs around $4.99 a month, with $39.99 yearly subscriptions and a $149.99 lifetime subscription. While recording over-the-air broadcasts does require owning a limited range of hardware, Plex has begun to support a wider range of DVR tuners and antennas."]*

https://gizmodo.com/plex-has-now-added-commercial-cutting-to-its-cordcuttin-1820787265
Of course, OTA video will still be branded (watermarked) with the broadcasters' logos.

MikeME

At a retail price of $500 USD for just this microphone, you'd expect a lot in terms of quality and performance. According to this review, you get a lot… partly because the audio is automatically synched (when sent via Bluetooth to an iPhone), while recording HD video. The resultant audio quality is much better than can be achieved with the phone's internal microphone. **MikeMe** might also solve some of the motor noise problems noted for the above **WiraLite** system. Gain controls are located on the microphone itself, while an app sets the recording volume using the phone's touch screen. Thirty-four hours of WAV audio (24-Bits at 96 kHz) can be stored on the internal 16GB. After recording is finished, the app also prompts the user to take a photo of the subject matter of this audio file, which then becomes a visual reminder of the file's contents. I watched an impressive sample video of MikeMe at the same link.
https://www.tomsguide.com/us/mikme-video-recording-app-update,news-26115.html

Net Neutrality Corrupted

Those who favour ending Net Neutrality claim that the free market will take care of itself; believing that any ISPs throttling, blocking sites, and charging extra fees will lose business. But, those big **telcos** have such a hold on infrastructure (originally sanctioned by government), customers have few choices when looking to buy/rent access to the Internet. So, to avoid such excesses of power, Obama passed a law designed to open up the Internet (i.e.; establish net neutrality as a policy). Trump's new appointment to head the FCC is now repealing that law, and he will not release data that should prove whether or not fake accounts were used to flood opinion polls, run by the FCC to garner public support for same. In other words, government watchdogs can't obtain relevant data from the FCC, (which is under suspicion of having generated a huge number of anti-neutrality comments on their site, using real names and addresses without the knowledge of those real people). Talk about fake data! And, that is not the only bad news coming from the FCC; television transmission is in for a big change in the next few years.
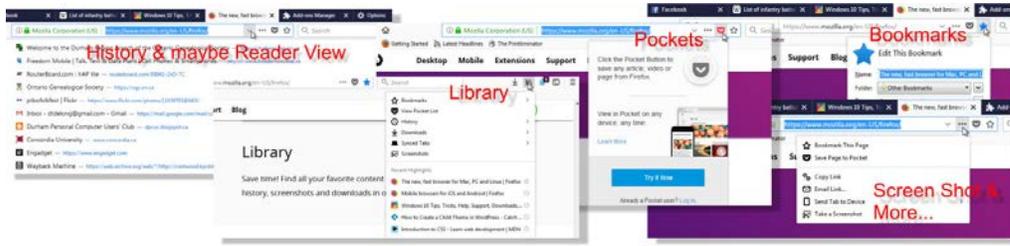https://gizmodo.com/search?q=fcc

Reminder

December is also our Christmas Pot Luck! Food treats and drinks are welcome

Firefox 57 Quantum

The Firefox browser has been totally rewritten for version 57, released on November 14, (with an all new UI and CSS engine). But not every platform will get Quantum at the same time. My Android phone installed the previous version 56 on November 16th, and updated to 57 soon thereafter. **Firefox Quantum** is much faster (than Chrome) and is more feature-packed than the older versions (That goes for all platforms – Windows, Linux, Mac... plus Android and iOS). **Firefox Quantum** uses less memory (no more leaks, I hope), handles lots more tabs (only the open tab gets priority), and offers more than 60 search engine possibilities. With the advent of Google's new **Armageddon** search algorithm, which favours mobile sites over older sites, the need for some other search engines is paramount. A new feature – **Pockets** - is a way to save content for later access, or to receive suggestions matching your interests at some later date *(Mmmm… sounds a lot like a Facebook feature).* Depending on the sites you visit, a new toolbar icon may appear – **Reader Mode** – which changes the text to a plain font, with inline images (much like a blog posting), and with an estimate of how long it will take to read the passage. Reader Mode articles also store neatly in Pockets that will read the article aloud, using Microsoft's Annie voice. Pockets will work better (that is, will synchronize across devices) if a user creates a personal account with Firefox. Extensive toolbar customization allows for either a clean or messy toolbar, whichever you prefer. Like most installs (not upgrades), a new install of Quantum will offer to import bookmarks, auto-fills, passwords, and history. Mine was an upgrade, and it retained my personalized setting. However, to see "**Restore the Previous Session**" now requires clicking on the 'hamburger' icon, in the top right corner. *(I recommend that you do the update while leaving your usual tabs running at the top. That'll guarantee restoration of previous tabs after the update.)* Quantum is also ready for VR and Gaming, and it saves any items you might later need to find in a newly designed **Library**. **Screen shots** automatically focus on 'code boxes', or regions. And Firefox offers a choice, to immediate upload to social media, or to save screen shots locally. *[While opening several tabs, my Windows Task Manager listed seven instances of Firefox, one instance for each open tab, with at least three of those instances slowly growing in size. Therefore memory leakage may be from an installed plug-in and not from Firefox itself.]* Mozilla also makes a **Firefox OS** version for smartphones), called, "**Firefox Focus",** with private browsing and an ad blocker, the **Thunderbird** email program, **Firefox Rocket** (a browser for Indonesia), and **Webmaker** (design tools), as well as other iterations of the browser in **Beta, Nightly, and Developer** releases. https://www.mozilla.org/

Quad9 – Better DNS by IBM and Partners

Your current DNS (Domain Name Server/s) is/are likely those that your ISP has already selected for you when you signed up for their service. You may find this arrangement perfectly adequate, until you realize that ISPs can log and mine your online behaviour through DNS servers that they use, and then sell that information. **IBM's Quad9** project simply uses different DNS servers, and they do not track your online actions. The service claims to be faster as well. Furthermore, Quad9 protects against cybercrime by refusing to connect to dangerous sites – those known to be risky, according to both IBM's databases and those of its partners. Instructions for changing the DNS settings on your modem or router are included on the site. It is very easy, and worth a try. Just write down the existing DNS server numbers before making the change in case you wish to go back to the old settings. https://www.quad9.net

HP Touchpoint Analytics Client Service

The name of this recently installed driver on my HP laptop sounded so innocuous, until reading the description; **"Harvests telemetry information that is used by HP Touchpoint analytical services"**. Yes, I have a touchpad, but this "**Touchpoint**" thing is touching my nerves! Reports claim that HP installed it without consent, and that it sends information to their Cloud servers when it starts up *[set now for Automatic (Delayed Start) the computer drive thrashes away collecting data and sending it off to HP]*. It looks like my computer received this new driver on November 11; and has been sending out a log file each day since. Apparently, this only occurs on computers with HP Support Assistant, even though I have set Assistant to ask me about new installations first.

Here (below) is one line of the log. It tells me that today's run occurred at 10:47 p.m. on November 28, and was scheduled to next run the following day at 2:02 p.m. *(Note: It did run at that precise moment, and scheduled another run for 12:42 pm the next day.)*

> *"28/11 10:47:03.042 INFO [4] HP.TouchpointAnalyticsClient.Service.ClientScheduler - Scheduling a client execution on 2017-11-29 14:02:50"*

When I viewed the kind of data sent to the Cloud on November 28 (still in the form of a text document), it suggests an involuntary installation has occurred.

> *"Starting HP Touchpoint Analytics - HPSA (RELEASE) version 4.0.2.1439 (running on CLR 4.0.30319.42000)*
> *Internet connection is available*
> *HP.TouchpointAnalyticsClient.Commons.Configuration.LocalConfiguration.TaLocalConfiguration - Custom Client properties file was not found*
> ***Downloading [PRODUCTION] configuration file for version: 4.0***
> ***Parent process is: TouchpointAnalyticsClientService***
> *Quitting and running updater.*
> *Shutting down logging system.*
> *Starting HP Touchpoint Analytics - HPSA (RELEASE) version 4.0.2.1439 (running on CLR 4.0.30319.42000)"*

The other (older and archived) log files cannot be read by any program I have. A link in the article provides instructions for eliminating this driver. Maybe Touchpoint is simply checking and reporting on the health of systems, like: Battery, Events, Services, Processes, Security, Thermal, BIOS, System State/Slots, Clock, Processor, Network, Windows Updates, Hard Drive Statues, PnP Devices, and Memory. But, what's to say other data is not being transmitted?
https://www.engadget.com/2017/11/28/hp-quietly-installs-system-slowing-spyware-on-its-pcs/

Linux in the News   by Alex Morrison

From: http://lxer.com/ & http://www.linuxtoday.com/ & http://www.linuxinsider.com/
         http://www.topix.com/tech/linux

Torrents - Everything You Need to Know

- LinuxAndUbuntu.com; By Mohd Sohail (Posted by MohdSohail on Dec 5, 2017 5:09 AM EDT)
- Story Type: Reviews, Security

Torrents - Every time we hear this word, the only thing that comes to our minds is free movies, games and cracked software. But little do we know about how they work, the various concepts involved in torrenting etc. So here in this article let's have a look at torrenting from a technical perspective.?

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

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30 Best Linux Games On Steam You Should Play in 2017

- It's FOSS; By Ankush (Posted by abhishekpc on Dec 5, 2017 2:06 AM EDT)
- Groups: Linux

When it comes to Gaming, a system running on Windows platform is what anyone would recommend. It still is a superior choice for gamers with better graphics driver support and perfect hardware compatibility. But, what about the thought of gaming on a Linux system? Well, yes, of course – it is possible – maybe you thought of it at some point in time but the collection of Linux games on Steam for Linux platform wasn't appealing at all few years back.

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

Ubuntu 18.04 - New Features, Release Date & More
(Dec 05, 2017, 14:00) (0 talkbacks)

We've all been waiting for it - the new LTS release of Ubuntu - 18.04.

MX 17 Linux: The Best of 2 Linux Worlds

MX Linux-17 Beta 1 is a desktop-oriented Linux distribution based on Debian's "stable" branch. It is a cooperative venture between the antiX and former MEPIS Linux communities. Normally, taking a first look at an early phase beta release means taking a few hours to get familiar with the features and performance. If too many glitches appear, it can doom the early release to a negative review. [More...]

Sudoku   for December 2017   **by Alex Morrison**

A Medium Puzzle this month!

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

Sudoku

The game board on the left was produced using **Sudokuki** on PCLinuxOS 64 Bit running KDE 5 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 puzzle send an email to me and I will send you the solution.

Have fun! Alex

Linux   PCLinux XFCE   **by Alex Morrison**

PCLinux is the operating system I use and the desktop version I have is KDE Plasma.

To get the best use of KDE Plasma it helps to have a modern reasonably powered PC. Plasma is not suited to everyone's taste.

PClinux does offer other desktop alternatives and this month I will write about the XFCE desktop.

XFCE looks like a simpler version of KDE as the start menu is located on the lower left of the taskbar. XFCE also offers multiple copies of each desktop with a different wallpaper picture on each as KDE has offered for years.

The software offered with the stock XFCE desktop is very similar to other Linux desktops. XFCE however provides some lighter weight software options for everyday use.

Dolphin the heavyweight file manager of KDE is replaced by Thunar. K3B is replaced by xfburn.

The text editor and image viewer in use on XFCE are much lighter on resource usage than KDE counterparts.

It sounds like XFCE should be my choice for everyday use but it isn't. KDE offers heavy on resource software but each software package is very complete and feature rich.

The choice of your desktop should depend on the power of your PC. KDE Plasma requires more powerful hardware
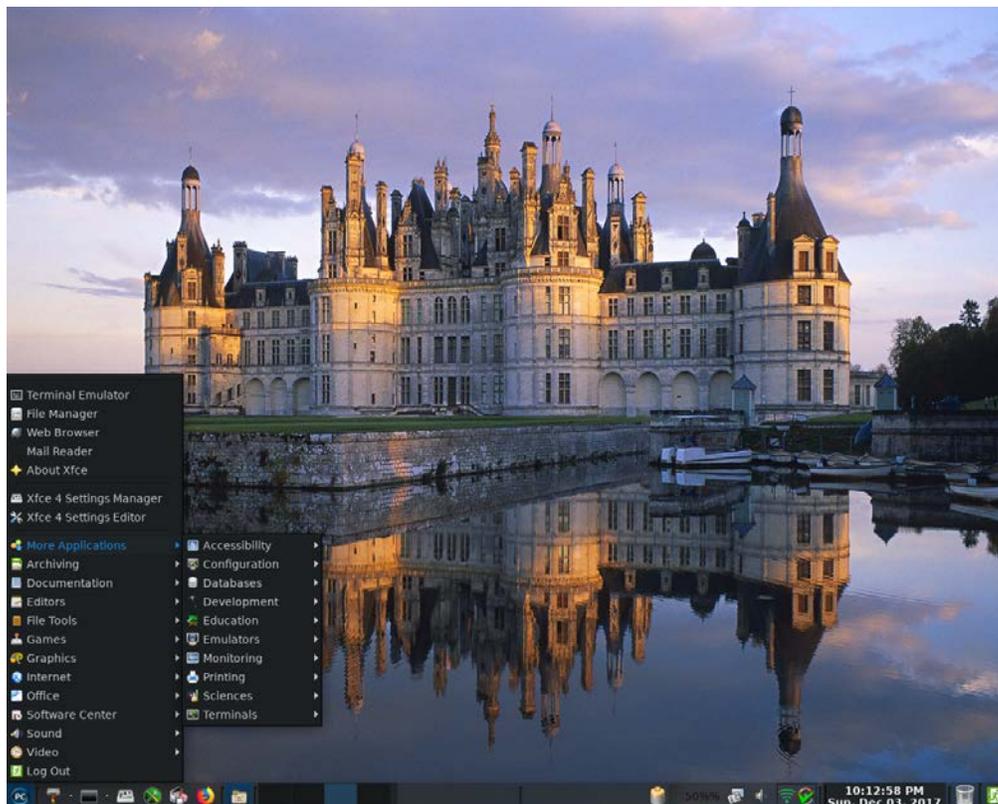
While XFCE can run on slower older PC's and performs well on lighter hardware.

The two images on the next page show XFCE and a brief glimpse of part of the start menu.

This is the basic XFCE system with start menu bottom left on desktop 1 of 4.

This is XFCE showing part of the start menu on Desktop 3 of 4.

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.

New ideas for SIG groups are welcome.

Special Interest Groups

Details

BEGINNER	**Co-ordinator: Ed Goudge** **Location: Call for Location** **Telephone: 905-926-9003** **Date: 3rd Thursday of month 7:00 PM**
LINUX **Durham Linux User Group**	**Co-ordinator: Ed Goudge** **Location: Call for Location** **Telephone: 905-926-9003** **Date: 1st Thursday of month 7:30 PM**
Digital Camera Group	**Location: Call forLocation** **Telephone: 905-926-9003** **Date: 4th Thursday of each month at 7:30PM**
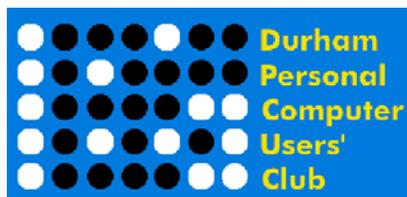
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2015-2016

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

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The deadline for articles and information is 10 days following the monthly meeting. Late submissions may not be published due to tight schedules. Submit articles by email to the editor at alexmor@teksavvy.com
Articles should be submitted in Word Format using Times New Roman as the preferred Font.