May 2019
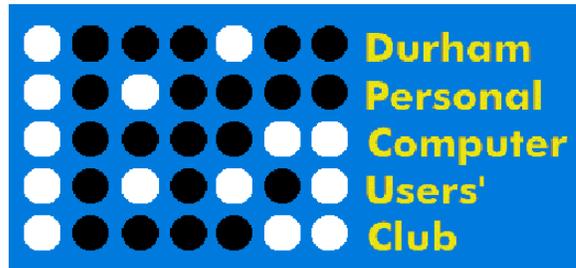
PC MONITOR

Durham Personal Computer Users' Club Newsletter

April Prize List

Bob Bell	$11.00	Dave McComb	Mobile 1 Oil
Allan Francis	$7.00	Mike Roche	Mobile 1 Glass Cleaner
		Ed Goudge	Mini Discs
		Alex Morrison	Pressure Guage
		Glen Goslin	CD/DVD Cases

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

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Next Meeting

TD Wealth Investment Advice

By Robert Gawne

Faith United Church at 1778 Nash Road, Courtice

Thursday, May 9, 2019   7:00PM

FYI
- By Dan Delong

January 2020 – only 7 months away

On January 14 2020. Microsoft will/may cease support for Windows 7. Choices are:
- Pay for a full version of Windows 10 (most modern hardware will accommodate it), or buy a new computer with Win10 OEM installed
- Run Win10 without registration, or create a Win10 CD/USB and try registering with a valid Win 7 number.
- Continue to run Win 7 without support, but mitigate with antivirus and sandbox software.
- Move to Linux, as some 'flavours' now approach the look and feel of classic Windows.

As a new Linux user, I've been searching for the best alternatives to Windows. [I hope our Linux special interest group will soon present thoughts on this matter.] So far, I've settled on two candidates. **Chalet OS** is a smaller install, yet brings along many familiar alternative programs to those commonly found on Windows. Also, the latest Beta of **Zorin (version 15)** looks very promising (although a total install and update of this beta software needed about 4.5 hours of baby sitting, on an old Compaq laptop). Once Zorin finished, it looked and functioned a lot like Windows. All I did was download the .iso, burn it to a DVD (about 2.5GB), and then I left the DVD in the drawer while booting from that location. Sometimes the DVD's read head did a lot of thrashing, but it finally installed successfully. Perhaps these beta versions contain a lot of extra functions, which report how well the installation was progressing. *(I left the machine plugged into the Internet via a cable).*This is by no means an exhaustive search for a Windows alternative. The final Zorin 15 version will likely install much faster.

The following should speak for itself.

Open hybrid solutions with Red Hat and Microsoft

https://www.redhat.com/en/partners/microsoft

Acronis follow-up

Gene and Linda Barlow are restoring the **User Group Relations** website, which had 'crumbled' shortly after our last meeting's presentation. For computer club members, the prices for all four programs (3 for backups and 1 for disk drive tweaking) are reduced by half. Ask for the link at the next meeting. When I tried to buy the Standard version of True Image, our group was not yet findable; so, our president may need to re-register the club in order for such savings to be available. The programs are: **True Image** (Standard, Advanced, and Premium) and **Disk Director** 12.5 (updated). The Barlows provide extra help via e-mail, FAQs, Webinars, and videos.

Fine Grained Visual Recognition

Computers are now conversant in many languages… able to convert text to speech and speech to text, along with simultaneous translation. But, they are not so good at visual recognition. So far, computer vision can do a lot with facial recognition and can distinguish between things like cat and dog,

or leaf and bird. But, being able to identify a species of bird or plant, or the material and time period for a piece of art, has been challenging. Google is sponsoring competitions in this area. The intent here is to improve visual labelling of 'things' by looking at all attributes of the object, down to the finest detail. Computers will then be able to diagnose some diseases in plants and other life forms, as well as defects in production. Robots need this ability in order to fulfil dreams of the future. https://ai.googleblog.com/

UK and IoT Security

The government may soon set rules for the sale of 'things' that hook up to the Internet, according to the BBC. Retailers will then be able to sell only items that meet stringent government standards of privacy. Included in the rules would be a requirement for unique passwords that cannot be reset to a common default word. Also, a snitch line will alert the manufacturer to breeches, and the manufacturer must guarantee a minimum term for security updates. https://www.theinternetofallthings.com/uk-iot-regulatory-proposals/

SureCall N-Range Booster

Cell coverage in weak areas, like cottage country, pushes the limits for texting and talking, as well as for web browsing. The **N-Range Booster** consists of a magnetic roof mount, a 12 volt (cigarette lighter) power supply, and a magnetic dash mounted phone holder. It works with all North American carriers, and it handles the latest 4G/LTE signals. If you change vehicles, this device can be moved quite easily. [$250 CDN] https://www.surecall.com/CA/signal-booster/vehicle/N-RANGE/
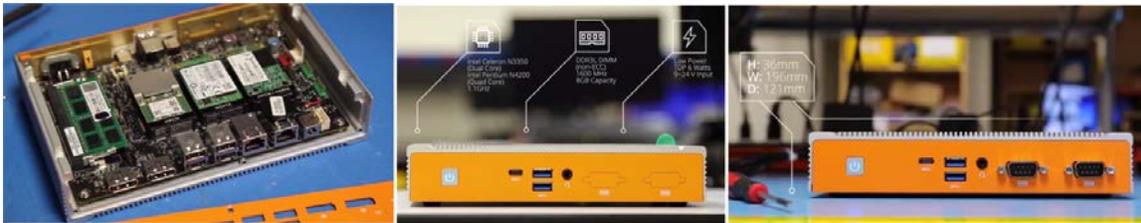
Industrial PCS

This area of technology - the purpose-built, industrial computer - is new to me. Club members may enjoy learning about it, because the specs are impressive. Not only are the options for such a build wide open, but longevity is assured. As for an operating system, that's up to the user. In the business world, this type of computer is meant to control large ad screens (two of them at 4k), or control production line and warehouse operations, with or without various wireless controls. The finned aluminum case emits enough heat to eliminate the need for fans. As a result, the unit is sealed against dust. Multiple peripheral ports are included, and more slots are available for further expansion, along with three, internal, mini-PCIe connectors. All this, comes in a device the size of a hard cover book. A starter PC costs $424 USD, and it comes with Dual or Quad Core Intel CPU, 2 GB RAM, 32GB SSD, and either a $10 Linux image or a much more expensive version of Windows. Lots of add-on upgrades are available. https://www.logicsupply.com/ml350/

Louis Farrakhan, Alex Jones banned from Facebook, Instagram for hate speech

Although these guys are Americans, and this action was taken by an American company, Canada also has Facebook in its sights, for allowing political discourse to decline into hate speech, innuendo, and lying. With an election in the near future, it may be too late to temper this 'over-the-top' spread of mis-information, which has nothing to do with important issues. As always, people will vote with their emotions. That is why mud slinging and fear mongering seems to work. https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/facebook-bans-louis-farrakhan-alex-jones-hate-speech-1.5120557

Here's a borrowed quote: *"Every decent man is ashamed of the government he lives under."* By H. L. Mencken

TAP Strap Keyboard

Do you think a physical keyboard is better than a virtual keyboard, such as those popping up on cell phones? **The TAP Strap Bluetooth Keyboard and Mouse Controller** fits somewhere in between. The finger motions, on one hand, operate the 'keys'. At $200 USD (nearly the cost of some okay phones) the TAP, which takes some getting used to, is still an expensive solution. The battery lasts for a day's worth of typing, on any surface. https://www.tapwithus.com/

Web Server Technology
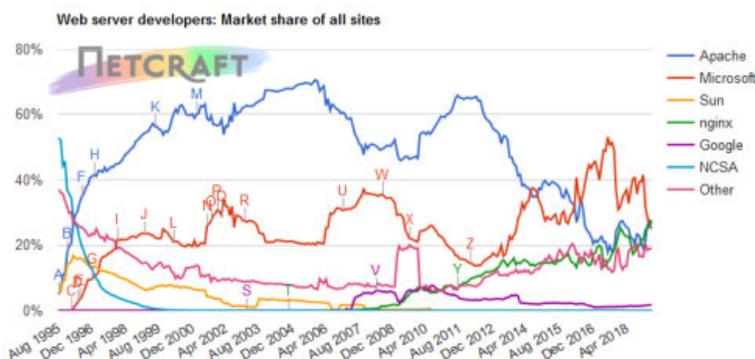
My web server training is almost two decades old, and went only so far as to learn how to install two local web servers: - namely, Apache and IIS. I had never heard about other contemporary web servers, like Sun, NGINX, Google, NCSA, and others. With new releases last month NGINX is on the rise. It is offering stiff competition to Microsoft's IIS and Apache HTTP server, and now appears to be in the lead position. https://www.nginx.com/

Netcraft - Open Redirects Explained

The graph, in the above paragraph, is sourced from Netcraft, a service dedicated to security. Here is a link describing how Open Redirects on websites for banks and other money exchanges, have been used to scam users of these sites. https://www.netcraft.com/security-testing/open-redirect-detection/

German Police take down Dark Web

Actually, International police have taken down several dark web operations, but this one, in Germany, had 1.5 million users. So, now, **Wall Street Market**, in Germany, and **Silkkitie**, in Finland, are gone. The illegal activity included drug sales, malware, Monero and BitCoin money laundering, blackmail, and fencing. https://www.theverge.com/2019/5/3/18528211/wall-street-market-silkkitie-valhalla-dark-web-takedown-police-germany

Robo Calls Increasing

Robo calls are not just increasing, they are increasingly annoying. I received one this month at 6 a.m. – *"Your credit card... blah, blah, click!"* When a phone rings at six in the morning, the first thing that goes through my mind is*, "What terrible thing just happened to a family member?"* Policies and plans are in the works to use certificates and other methods to authenticate the source of calls, and o let the recipient know if the call is verified as coming from a real number/person. Just blocking suspected spam calls is not possible, as real and important calls should never be stopped from getting through. That is the whole purpose of the telephone system – to be reliable communication, especially in an emergency. Money is at stake here as well – not just that which is lost to scammers. But, the phone companies base invoices on the length of time you spend on a call, making it less urgent for them to "kill the goose". https://www.theverge.com/2019/5/3/18525784/robocalls-spam-calls-solutions-comcast-at-t-t-mobile-stir-shaken-scam-john-legere-telecom
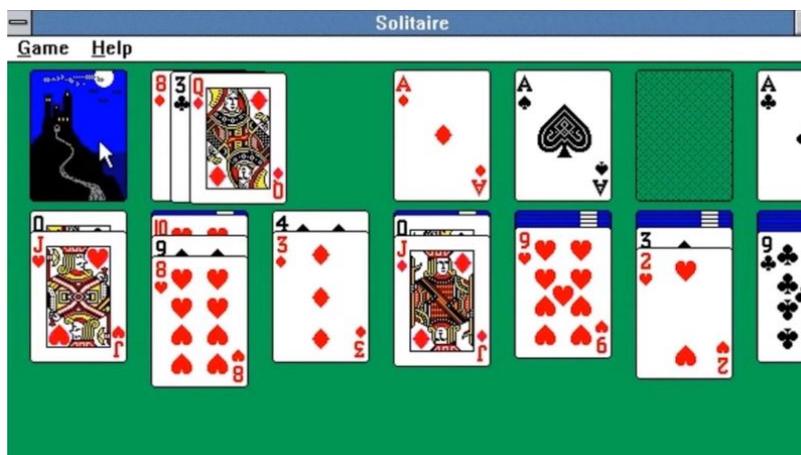
Microsoft Research – TORC

TOuch Rigid Controller (TORC) aptly describes the use of this device. Augmented Reality, during a Virtual Reality session, loses its sense of reality when you try to pick up a virtual object. There is no sense of touch, as your real hand grasps "nothing". When wearing this TORC controller, the sense of touch is restored (at least, for the thumb and two fingers, which is basically all is needed for realism). The two fingers receive haptic feedback from voice coils, while the thumb uses that same technique, but with the added ability to slide, rather than just grip. This hardware is much less costly than other devices developed in the laboratory for the same purpose. Transference to game controllers and drawing pens may follow. Should you grab a virtual rubber ball, the representation of the ball will deform as pressure is added. By sliding the thumb, the ball will rotate. https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/research/blog/introducing-torc-a-rigid-haptic-controller-that-renders-elastic-objects/

Windows Solitaire

Solitaire, first introduced in Windows 3, was intended to let new mouse users become familiar with mouse movements and clicks. However, it became so popular; Solitaire was included in many subsequent releases of Windows. The game has now been elevated to a position in the World Video Game Hall of Fame, along with World of Warcraft, Doom, and Tetris. https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2019/05/windows-solitaire-inducted-into-the-world-video-game-hall-of-fame/

Sudoku

May 2019   **by Alex Morrison**

A Trio of Puzzles again this month – Enjoy

EASY

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

Sudoku

The game boards on this page were 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 puzzles send an email to me and I will send you the solution.

                Have fun! Alex

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

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

https://www.boatloadpuzzles.com/playcrossword

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

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

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 https://fossbytes.com/

How to geotag photos on Linux with Otto
(May 03, 2019, 14:00) (0 talkbacks)

If you want to transfer, rename, geotag, and organize photos and RAW files in one fell swoop, Otto is your friend.

VidCutter - Linux Video Cutting Or Trimming App
(May 03, 2019, 09:00) (0 talkbacks)

VidCutter is available for all major operating systems including Linux.

Set Background Wallpapers In Linux With Fondo

- LinuxAndUbuntu.com; By Mohd Sohail (Posted by MohdSohail on May 5, 2019 9:52 AM EDT)
- Story Type: Reviews; Groups: Linux

Fondo is a desktop wallpaper app for Linux where you can search for the most beautiful wallpapers on the Internet from within the app itself and set your preferred image as your desktop wallpaper by just clicking on the image directly. The app is simple and easy to use.

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

Ubuntu 19.04 is out
by Martin Brinkmann on April 18, 2019 in Linux - 55 comments

The final version of the Linux distribution Ubuntu 19.04 is now available. The new version is

already available for download in all supported flavors. Existing Ubuntu systems running Ubuntu

18.10 can be […]

Presentation Photos   by   Robert Bell

David Swain and Bob Bell last month illustrated how to safeguard your PC data and mobile data [cell phone].

Backing up to an external device [hard drive] or to the cloud is possible with Acronis.

Do you want an extra month added to your Membership – FREE!

All you need to do is to write an article for the newsletter. It can be as small as a single page!

If you write an article every month for 12 months you will end up getting a full year free membership.

Topics can be anything you think might be of interest to the general membership.

Linux - Mycroft   **by Alex Morrison**

We have already heard about the Amazon Echo and the Google Home devices. These devices offer excellent voice assistant technology. We have had demos in our club meetings in the past.

An open source initiative was created to offer similar capability with the following promise on the web site.

Our Promise

We believe the future of AI should be open, not a cryptic black box only few understand and have control over.

Building this new technology together, sharing ideas and building on top of each other, that's how we see it.

We promise to never sell your data or give you advertisements on our technology.

Mycroft in addition to building a device like the Amazon Echo and Google Home have made available free to home users the software to run Mycroft.

Mycroft is available currently for the Raspberry PI, Android, and Linux. Windows and Mac will be supported soon.

The easiest way to build your own Mycroft Device would be to install Picroft on a Raspberry Pi device or install it on a Linux device if you have Linux installed. Currently it is easiest to install Mycroft on Ubuntu/Debian or Fedora or Arch. My favourite distro PCLinux is not yet supported.

The following web page is available for downloading and reading about Mycroft.

https://mycroft.ai/get-mycroft/

We were able to start the installation on an Ubuntu laptop at the last Linux meeting but time constraints limited our completion of the installation.

The following Video shows the Mycroft MarkII kickstarter device and mentions the earlier MarkI device.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ud3XLEGIu8U

I don't own a Raspberry Pi but may try installing Mycroft on an old laptop as soon as I install one of the supported Linux systems on the laptop.

After that if I get it working I will look for where to purchase a MarkII device.

https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/mycroft-mark-ii-the-open-voice-assistant#/

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: OSCC 43 John St W
Telephone: 905-926-9003
Date: 1st Thursday of month 7:00 PM

Digital Camera Group
Co-ordinator: Ed Goudge
Location: Call for Location
Telephone: 905-926-9003
Date: 4th Thursday of each month at 7:00PM
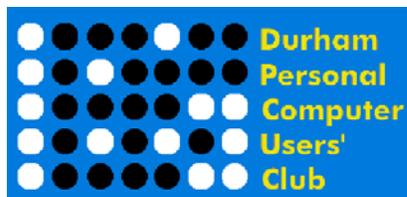
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HOME PAGE   --- http://www.durhampc-usersclub.on.ca/

Newsletter Information

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PMB # 110, 27-1300 King St East,
Oshawa, ON L1H8J4.
The PC Monitor cannot be responsible for errors or inaccuracies in the content, although efforts will be made to publish information accurately.

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.