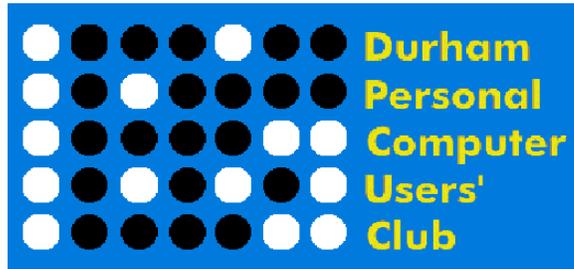


Dec 2019

PC MONITOR

Durham Personal Computer Users' Club Newsletter



Nov Prize List

Robert Daub	\$14.00	Kal Somogyvary	Air Bulb
Glen Goslin	\$ 8.25	John Huber	Armoured USB Cable
		Hugh Crawford	Small Parts Box

Happy Holidays!!!

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

Block Chain & Cryptocurrency

By Fred Fernbach

Faith United Church at 1778 Nash Road, Courtice

Thursday, December 19, 2019 7:00PM

FYI

- By Dan Delong

Aurora Alienware Gaming Desktop

Model	FPS	Resolution	VR Ready	Price Range
NEW ALIENWARE AURORA GAMING DESKTOP	200+	1080p	No	\$1,299.99 - \$1,199.99
NEW ALIENWARE AURORA GAMING DESKTOP	240+	1080p	Yes	\$2,249.99 - \$1,799.99
NEW ALIENWARE AURORA GAMING DESKTOP	240+	1080p	Yes	\$2,999.99 - \$2,199.99
NEW ALIENWARE AURORA GAMING DESKTOP	270+	1080p	Yes	\$3,549.99 - \$2,799.99

This latest Dell gets some very good reviews, with only a few concerns about adequate power supply being offered in the basic box, and limits to upgrading to higher speed RAM. All systems are liquid cooled, as is expected for such high performance machines... ones that will be over clocked. Players of virtual reality games benefit most from so much power and performance, but will need to configure a system above the basic \$1200 CDN 200+ fps unit, for VR to succeed fully.

<https://www.dell.com/en-ca/shop/cty/pdp/spd/alienware-aurora-r9-desktop>

Affiliate Links Are Ruining Reviews

If, when you read a review and click on one of the links, you are sent directly to a seller of products, especially products the reviewer is reviewing, you are supposed to be informed about the nature of that relationship... fully. But, that is not happening. According to the article (*link below*), even legit review sites suffer from accusations of 'bribery', in the sense that readers may feel, whether their testing was done with purchased or donated devices, that the reviewer has been tainted by loyalty to the products being tested. By the way, Consumer Reports, a well-established and rigorous tester of all kinds of consumer products and services in the United States, has always bought retail, never giving a heads-up to sellers.

<https://onezero.medium.com/affiliate-links-are-ruining-gadget-reviews-5762d5d461b2>



TikTok

Hurry! Do it NOW! Just as the name -"TikTok"- suggests, join now, or you'll miss out on this latest social media craze. *[Well, I'm not biting, since I learned that users need to be creative, able to handle smart phone video recordings, and they 'must' be YOUNG! Still, it's good to know what's going on in the "youth market".]* **TikTok** is a Chinese platform, created in 2016, and now used extensively in the home country, as well as India, South Africa, and many other countries, including North America. While under Chinese control, the United States government, in particular, worries about exploitation of TikTok personal information. What do users create on TikTok? Again, as the link (*below*) explains, TikTok provides tools for creating and editing flashy videos, of duration between 3 seconds and one minute. Clever users have gained a significant number of followers, reminding me of the early days of Twitter. Who believed that a texting platform - Twitter - restricted to 128 characters, would become a much more expansive system, now used for almost live dissemination of news (fake and real), opinion (mild and rabid), and short videos of the same?

<https://gadget.co.za/tiktok-takes-sa-by-storm/>



USB Rechargeable Batteries



Thirty-five dollars Canadian may not sound like a great deal for four, AA/AAA batteries, especially since the storage technology is of the older nickel metal hydride chemistry, rather than the denser and lighter, in weight, lithium based chemistry. Furthermore, the moderate 1000 mAh capacity of these batteries is probably due to exclusion of some battery volume by the micro-USB port in each unit. These battery sizes, the most common of all for electronic devices, can be charged 500 times. Charging time is an extensive 8.5 hrs. and is subject to damage from overcharging. Fully charged voltage is only 1.2V. However, environmentally conscious customers seem to like them.

<https://chargedpower.com/products/micro-usb-rechargeable-aa-battery-4-pack>

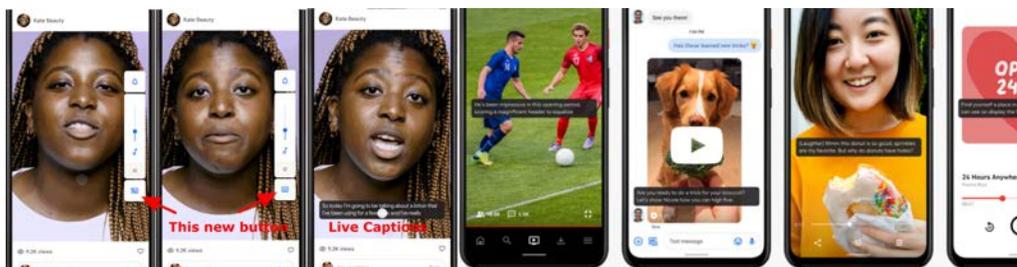
Kosher and Frugal

I'm not sure how I came to this site, but travellers to, and residents of, Israel would find some of the site's gadgets and buying tips useful. When I looked at their 220 volt appliances, accompanied by a "Not for USA" coda, it reminded me of my in-laws trip to Europe, after which, a new 220 volt electric kettle appeared, for heating water for tea. It was very quick to bring water to a boil! My father-in-law had experienced the luxuries of 220 volt power during his war years in the service. Being well versed in proper wiring methods, he brought back the appropriate wall socket for this 220 volt kettle (much smaller than the huge connector in use for North American stoves and dryers.) **Kosher and Frugal** has some great food ideas as well. Using the site will result in some Google tracked advertizing. But, what commercial site doesn't?

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



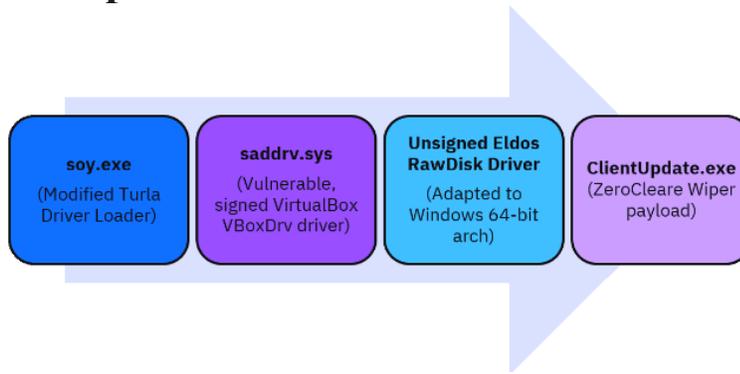
Google Live Caption



Although my old Android phone can handle the Live Transcribe App, only newer phones, including Pixel smart phones seem to have the capacity to load up the **Live Caption App**. While Live Transcribe requires talking into the microphone, Live Caption adds text captioning to videos you watch, or videos you make yourself. (The **Recorder App**, I believe, can transcribe phone calls, when given access to your calls.)

<https://www.blog.google/products/android/live-caption/>

ZeroCleare Malware Wipes Disks



IBM's X-Force finds threats and reports on them. The latest and most dangerous – **ZeroCleare** – does not even attempt to ransom victims; but attacks almost militarily, to destroy computer systems needed to run infrastructure. IBM, without explaining fully, directs blame to Iran, partly due to the effect this malware had on Saudi oil production. Successful attacks have not yet worked on 32-bit systems, but the complex, multi-stage, invasive, procedures involved have worked on 64-bit systems. Since the Saudi attack succeeded in wiping 30,000 computers, I wonder if our financial institutions could take such a hit. As with the loss of each block chain key, our accounts might simply disappear. Should some financials return to paper records, or at least be capable of reverting to paper, as some government operations are doing in Russia?

On a possibly related note, Microsoft recently blocked an old hotmail account, and sent me a note to that effect, using the verification email address. When I followed all steps to restore this account and reset the password, the reason for such blockage became apparent. Every few days, over many previous months, and from IP addresses scattered all over the World, attempts had been made to enter the account using blunt force (by repeatedly guessing the password). Finally, one guess got through. The invader, by gaining entry into this seldom used account, might have been able to install malware needed for the first step in attacking Microsoft's servers. That wasn't the end of it. A few weeks later, a message came to that account asking for my Amazon credentials, including credit card. I guess this account is now being shopped around to phishing sites.

<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-iranian-zeroclare-data-wiper-malware-used-in-targeted-attacks/>

AMD 32-core Ryzen Threadripper 3970X



AMD's 32-core Ryzen Threadripper follows the company's 16-core Ryzen 9 3950X. But even gamers don't need that kind of power. This processor will be used for heavy data crunching, as is needed for computer vision and AI. This chip still fits in the older socket. AMD will not be stopping at 32-cores; 64-cores are in the works.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/3453946/amd-threadripper-3970x-review-32-cores-of-unbeatable-power.html>

Santa Tracker



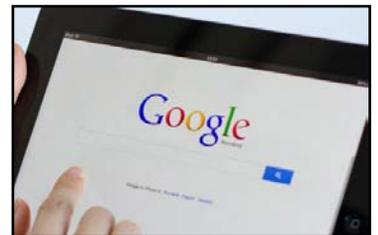
Google has built a plethora of Christmas activities for those who live in Googleland, via Google Assistant, and other means. Let Chief Elf Correspondent, **Dimplesticks**, be your guide. Cookies must be allowed! Enjoy a Santa Selfie, Snowbox Game, Elf Maker, Code Maker, Santa Search, Gumball Tilt, Present Bounce, Elf Jetpack, Holiday Traditions, Present Drop, Translations, Santa's Canvas, Quick Draw, Elf Ski, Snowball Storm, Penguin Dash, and some videos, Gift Slingshot, all while hearing music and watching the count down timer to Christmas Day.

<https://santatracker.google.com/>

Google Doesn't Forget

Some pop-up advertizing (*Some is still allowed by my browser.*) is way out of date, promoting products and services I am not interested in at all. This may be due to the fact that Google never forgets where I've browsed in the past. In May, a new privacy tool lets you erase tracked data – it is your choice I terms of how far back to go. YouTube already has such a tool.

<https://www.thestar.com/business/technology/2019/10/02/how-to-set-your-google-data-to-self-destruct.html>



Reminder – Our Meeting is Dec 19 [special date for this month only]
Bring treats if you want [it is not a requirement.]
Also – This month, especially for Christmas, we will have better prizes!!!

Linux in the News

by Alex Morrison



From: <http://laxer.com/> & <http://www.linuxtoday.com/> <http://www.linuxinsider.com/>
<http://www.topix.com/tech/linux> <https://fossbytes.com/> <https://www.techradar.com/>

HandBrake, An Open Source Video Transcoder Review

(Dec 10, 2019, 15:00) ([0 talkbacks](#))

HandBrake is a free and open source application that lets you convert videos from one format to another.

Toplip - A Very Strong File Encryption And Decryption CLI Utility

(Dec 11, 2019, 10:00) ([0 talkbacks](#))

Toplip is a free and open source encryption utility

China to ditch all Windows PCs by 2022 – could this be Linux's time to shine?

In a major blow to Microsoft, the Chinese government will be replacing all PCs that run Windows by 2022, and could instead use a Chinese-created Linux distro, such as Kylin Linux.

The order comes from the Chinese Communist Party Central Office, and is part of a drive to replace any computer that runs non-Chinese software, partly in response to the [US government's blacklisting of Chinese hardware](#).

Zorin OS 15.1 Released with Better Microsoft Office Compatibility, GameMode

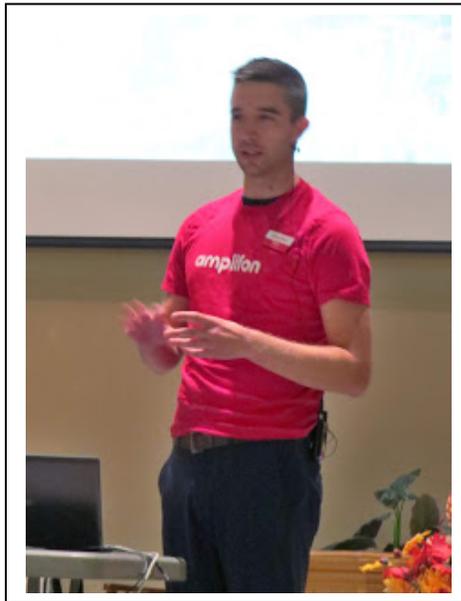
- Softpedia; By Marius Nestor (Posted by [hanuca](#) on Dec 12, 2019 7:01 PM EDT)
- Story Type: [News Story](#); Groups: [Distributions](#)

The Zorin OS community has announced today the general availability of the Zorin OS 15.1, the first point release of their latest Zorin OS 15 operating system series based on Ubuntu 18.04 LTS.

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

Presentation Photos

Credit Dan Delong



[Nov 2019 Amplifone - hearing loss diagnosis](#)

Amplifone is an international company, with several local agents, four of whom came to present an extremely informative and detailed account of hearing loss, and the many technological options for overcoming hearing loss.

<https://www.amplifon.com/ca/branch-locator/hearing-clinics-oshawa-on>

Articles wanted for the newsletter!

Write an article for the Newsletter and get an extra month free on your membership renewal.

Sudoku

Dec 2019

by Alex Morrison



A Trio of Puzzles again this month – Enjoy

EASY

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

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

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

HARD

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

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 – PCLinux XFCE

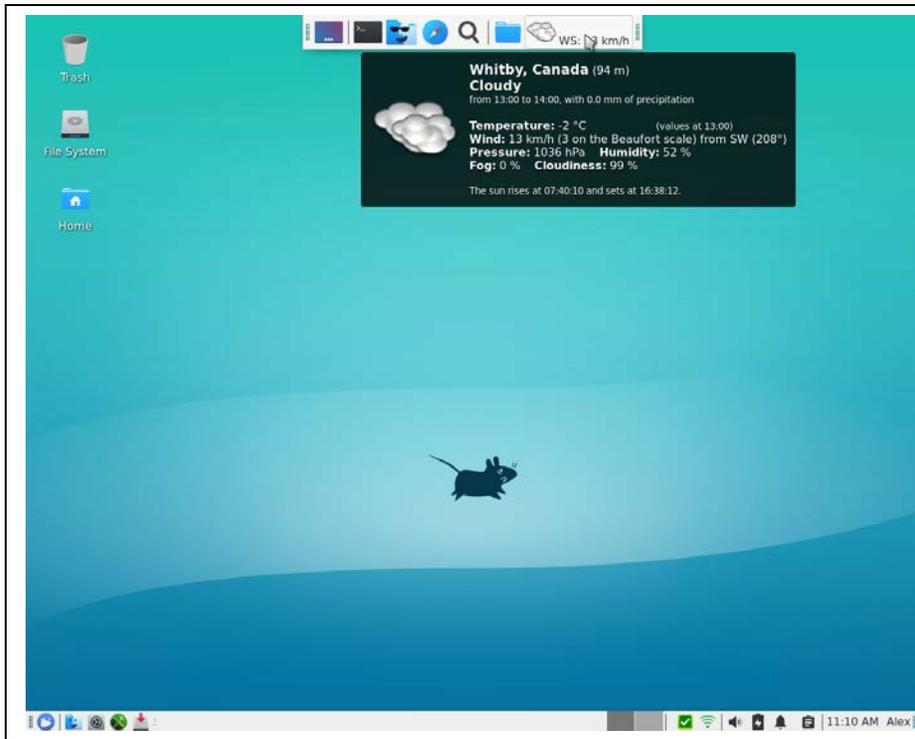
by Alex Morrison



PCLinux XFCE is a lighter desktop suitable for running on lower system requirements than larger systems running KDE or Gnome. That said it is not as light as something like Puppy Linux or Lubuntu.

PCLinux XFCE will need a P4 with 1 Gig of ram and at least 5 Gig of hard drive space. [I would recommend a larger hard drive if you want to use the system and install software.

This is the main screen. I added a Weather app to the top panel and selected one of the simplest images as wallpaper.



XFCE is running on one of my spare hard drives as my main system [a laptop] runs PCLinux KDE.

What I wanted to show you is a program unique to XFCE called “XFCE Undercover Mode”.

When you run the program it turns XFCE into a Windows 10 look-a-like. Run it again to change back!



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.

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

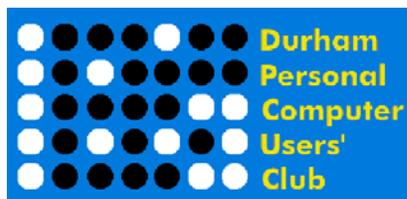
LINUX

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



DPCUC EXECUTIVE

2019-2020

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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.