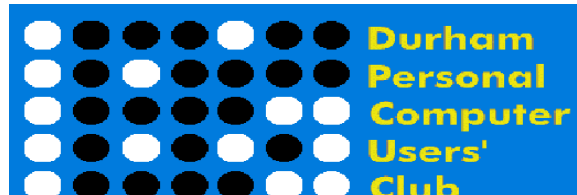July 2023

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/

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Next Meeting

Free Software for Editing Video

by Francis Chao

On ZOOM – **Thursday, July 13 2023, 7:00PM**

FYI   - By Dan Delong

Teksavvy is looking for a buyer

TekSavvy Blame the federal government, or blame the Big Telcos. Teksavvy, after decades in business—one of the last holdout broadband providers—can no longer compete with mystifying rule changes and slippery tactics.
https://www.thestar.com/business/2023/06/24/another-blow-to-canadas-internet-market-with-news-teksavvy-is-looking-for-a-buyer-advocate-says.html

[OPINION] Many decades ago, the Feds tried to combat profiteering in the oil industry by using public dollars to combat Big Oil's monopoly. Taxing these companies didn't work to lower fuel prices; and, these companies were too big to regulate. So, the government bought oil wells, a refinery, and a nation-wide gas station network, to create a new vertically integrated entity, **Petro-Canada.** (still around in name only)

[Perhaps today's over-concentration by Big Telcos can be overcome, not through a government buyout of one of these national companies, but by looking to a few medium sized communities with high growth potential (with housing, factories, and schools) and using them as test beds for government sponsored broadband... all the way from from the main Internet trunks to the last mile. Get in there before the ground has been disturbed by Rogers, Bell, and Telus. Like Petro-Can; let it be an arms length investment; and, unlike Petro-Can, let the communities themselves be 'in' on the management boards. One such growth area is now being served by Teksavvy, a company that has tried to service the Chatham area with Internet, Hosting, E-Mail, VoIP, and streaming TV. And yet , Teksavvy can't get past the high re-seller rates charged by Big Telcos.]

Toronto council once entertained the idea of creating a free wireless mesh system owned by the City. Nothing came of it. Peterborough has/had free Wi-Fi in the downtown area, supported by the BBB.

GE Smart Mixer

Home cooking and baking gained popularity during Covid. For this reason, sales of kitchen appliances also increased. Some say, quality baking is an art, not easily achieved without a lot of training and practice, nor with one more expensive gadget. GE, claims otherwise, having designed a smart counter top mixer, with viscosity feedback from the motor, such that it knows when to speed up, slow down, and turn off, according to the recipe at hand. The built in weight scale and voice operation over Wi-Fi (Alexa and Google Home) help to guide the mixing procedure. At a hefty weight of 44 lbs., the **Smart Mixe**r will stay put while running. At a retail price of $800 USD, this mixer is for serious bakers only.
[The warranty is for one year. Will such devices, loaded with circuit boards and connectivity, still work ten years hence? https://www.geappliances.com/smart-stand-mixers
*Note: A 5 quart **KitchenAid Artisan** mixer costs about half as much, at https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B00005UP2N]*

Intel Arc Series – new GPUs

Nvidia now has some competition in the GPU market, mainly for Gamers. A price matching war may follow. Ray tracing has come to **iIntel GPUs**, with the aid of something called, "**neural rendering**".
https://www.intel.ca/content/www/ca/en/products/details/discrete-gpus/arc.html

Bill C-18

In six months, "**the Online News Act**" comes into effect in Canada, in an effort to limit the power of Google and Meta to scrape news from existing online journalism, and re-publish it, along with their own paid advertising. Although some publishing companies have already made payment deals with these "giants", and have been told they will lose this arrangement, the future may bring opportunities for other print and online sources to share content with Canadians.

The Bill dictates that fair bargaining must occur for sharing content between digital platforms, or else an arbitration process will enforce reasonable payment.

Anova Culinary AN400-US00 Nano Sous Vide Precision Cooker

For the "cooking challenged" -Yes, that's you... Robert B---. – here's another kitchen aid. This particular model uses up to 750 watts of electricity, communicates by Bluetooth with a smart phone as cooking proceeds (again, according to the demands of the recipe chosen). **Use your own pot.** Cooking temperature is limited to that of water (**No burning!**) since food is sealed in plastic bags to keep in the flavour. Other, slightly costlier models consume 1000 watts and 12000 watts, for faster heating. Some grocery stores sell food, vacuum packaged, ready for heating in these immersion cookers. Amazon sells the Nano Sous Vide for $165 CAD.
https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B07C7PW3PC
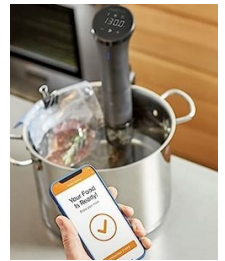
Lenovo Tablet P11 Pro Gen 2

At just under $500 CAD, and with an octa-core processor, 11.5 inch OLED touch screen, cameras front and rear, 6GB RAM, 128GB SSD, and an all-day battery, this tablet holds its own against Samsung. It can also be used as a wireless second screen for a laptop. A distinguishing feature is the great sound coming from 4 speakers, making it a really good 'smallish' screen for watching streaming movies (and for playing games). Android 12 was supposed to be automatically updated to 13, then to 14; users are still waiting. When considering a purchase, check the stated RAM, as some Canadian stores sell only the 4GB version.

Tab P11 Pro Gen 2

https://www.lenovo.com/ca/en/p/tablets/android-tablets/lenovo-tab-series/tab-p11-pro-gen-2/zab50101us

Lenovo ThinkReality VRX

Lenovo is one of many companies working on headsets and VR glasses. Perhaps **ThinkReality VRX**, although bulky, hits the sweet spot. Anyone wearing it will see two worlds—the **real world** (with pass through vision), and the artificially created **digital world**. Thus, ThinkReality VRX works for augmented reality as well as virtual reality. Developers decided on a wrap around design for better weight distribution, heat dissipation, and longer battery life. Rivals, like Sony, Apple and Meta are working on similar headsets. The **MetaQuest 3** headset, with two hand controllers, is now available. The Lenovo VRX may be out by October.
https://www.lenovo.com/ca/en/thinkrealityvrx

Intellectual Property Rights

Remember the days when **Apple** Computers were cloned with brand names like **Peach** and **Pear**? Due to legal action, such brands had a short life. These days, Apple has a lot more clout in the international legal world, with respect to even the idea of an apple. Apple has achieved favourable judgments in many jurisdictions regarding any use of an apple image in commercial settings, including video content. The Swiss apple growers organization awaits a court challenge ruling with respect to its long established logo – a red apple with a white cross – which could cost the organization millions in re-branding, should the decision favour Apple.
https://www.wired.com/story/apple-vs-apples-trademark-battle/

Flex Bolt

Photographers, have you ever tried to capture lightning during a storm? A remote shutter release might help, but it's always a lucky shot. The hot-shoe mounted **Flash Bolt light sensor** can capture lightning shots when mounted on a camera equipped with a remote, or an electronic, shutter release. Once the camera has been manually adjusted and mounted on a tripod, it can be left on its own to take shots. An accompanying phone app lets users sit in a nearby dry and comfortable location during a storm, while also monitoring the camera's behaviour.
https://newatlas.com/photography/flex-bolt-lightning-trigger-photography/

Mimono Portable 5-laser Digital Projector

MOONSTONE WHITE | CHERRY | APPLE GREEN | DEEP BLUE | MIDNIGHT BLACK

There is a good reason for the odd—almost alien—appearance of this small projector... wearing a thick silicone rubber skin, with four flex-arms, and a flex tail (in five colours). These 'limbs' are 'bendy', and able to hold a bent shape, supporting the projector in just about any position imaginable. When hanging up-side-down, the image automatically flips. (Keystone correction is automatic as well.) This projector may not have the strongest specs, but it is perfect for the outdoors (back yards, camping, and cottages) or any place without a wall plug (The battery lasts four hours.) Audio is over Bluetooth, to the speakers of your choice; or it can be extracted from the HDMI cable. (If sound input is from a laptop, the audio out on the computer would also work.) Connection is via an HDMI cable (USB-C for charging). Resolution is 1920x1080 max. For input and 720x1080 for output. The early bird cost is $900 USD. The next revision will offer a second battery and Bluetooth to up to 20 simultaneous receivers. (Will be like watching movies at a drive-in.) Almost forgot the main feature – **Silence!** Unlike all other wall plug models, the Mimono dissipates heat silently – N**o fans!**
https://www.mimono.com/

Fire Drone

As the name might suggest, this drone is useful in extremely hot situations, while still able to send camera images. A **Fire Drone** is able to withstand heat and flames, due to a coating of strengthened aerogel materials. It can also operate in cold environments. Uses include, training exercises, rescue in buildings, and up close forest fire monitoring. Some drones are strong enough to carry fire retardants, and shoot through a hose, but not this drone.
https://www.theregister.com/2023/06/28/fire_resistant_drones/

Governments Buying "YOU"

Transaction
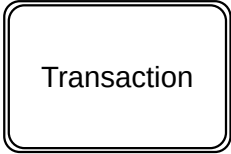
Individuals may not actually be 'for sale', in a literal 'slave trading' sense. But, our likes, dislikes, purchases, travels, finances, links, friends, party affiliation... stuff like that, is for sale from a variety of sources, all willing to make a few bucks on such sales... all made possible during a lull in legislation to make it illegal. The American government appears in no hurry to act, since they are not blabbing this knowledge all over the place. Instead, personal information is being gathered only by intelligence organizations.

https://www.wired.com/story/odni-commercially-available-information-report/

Taiwanese and Chinese Hardware are Suspect

Experts warn that intentionally hidden back doors in storage devices purchased by anyone (including the military and intelligence departments, and sourced from Asian companies) could have circuitry and programming that would be impossible to find, yet allow decryption of these devices by a foreign power.

https://www.wired.com/story/hualan-encryption-chips-entity-list-china/

Synology – something New – BeeDrive

BeeDrive is not a Synology NAS device, as would be expected. Although Synology NAS drives are often configured to perform differential backups within a local network, they can also do so remotely, across other, remote, Synology drives. The **Synology BeeDrive** makes backing up and transferring of files, very simple, among a variety of devices on the local network, and from one local network to another local network. Yes, it is an external **SSD hard drive (1TB or 2TB)** but with some attractive features for the home user and the hybrid worker: - *Plug-n-play backups for up to 5 devices (remembers each and resumes if interrupted), retains older versions (up to 5 layers), will handle duplicates and change image formats on the fly*. Synology equipment sells at a premium price because the software is so advanced, updated, and secure. This drive's transfer rate is 10GB/s over USB-C. Bee Drop software allows for drag-n-drop from a **phone to a computer**. *[Currently, backing up to the BeeDrive is not integrated with much larger Synology spinning hard drive enclosures. However, this feature may come later.]* Bee Drive software is easy to understand. Since a 1TB BeeDrive drive is, likely, smaller than the drives in the client computer, users can choose to backup: - *only files in certain client folders, only files in a certain size range, and only files of a certain file type.* Who is it for? BeeDrive is for homes with several devices, each using a different operating system, or for the business person who works in two locations.
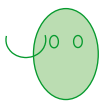
[Encryption during transfer is not offered because the device must be plugged into a recognized client before files can be seen.]

[For those already using the large Synology NAS drives, the company has introduced its own brand of durable **SATA drives**.*]*

https://bee.synology.com/en-ca

Framework Computers – an update

Framework laptops are pieced together, by buyers, with modules supplies by the company, resulting in computers that are as high end or as basic as the customer wishes. After several years of successful sales, some purchasers are wondering what to do with modules placed on the shelf, after upgrading. One solution—**recycling**—is offered by **Cooler Master,** a well known desktop computer case maker. Together, Framework and Cooler Master have designed a small desktop case for mounting Framework modules, including the essential mainboard module. Hence, an old Framework laptop can continue life as a desktop, equipped with the latest ports.

https://www.theverge.com/2023/3/23/23652939/framework-cooler-master-sff-pc-case

Google Reader – Oh, what it could have been!

Despite Google executives giving Reader a poor name, replacing the author's original name, "**Fusion**", **Google Reader** became a much loved aggregator, curator, and sharer, of web content, during its short life.
[Google Reader pre-dates, and overlaps, the rise of Facebook and Twitter.]
Google execs didn't feel 30 million daily users was enough to keep it going. Reader became just another killed Google venture. The inside story, along with the demise of many other projects, is covered in the link (below).
https://www.theverge.com/23778253/google-reader-death-2013-rss-social

Google merging DeepMind and AI Lab's Brain

The combination of these two departments will be known as **Google DeepMind**, now working on a superior Artificial Intelligence to current ChatGPT, called, "**Gemini**".
*[An item in a previous newsletter mentioned Google's version of GPT – **Bard**.]*
The DeepMind AI methodology is quite different from that of ChatGPT; DeepMind's AI mimics human learning – a recursive trial and error system, which strengthens successful pathway in its learning tree, similar to neural pathway reinforcement in the brain and nervous system, growing in size, knowledge and certainty. The head of such research, Demis Hasabis, claims **Gemini** will be way '**smarter**' than the latest **ChatGPT-4**. Such artificial 'brain power' scares a lot of people, both inside this 'dome' of research, and the academics who wish to know what's going on behind the curtain, but are left in the cold... outside of the loop. Moreover, a general consensus says this area cannot be controlled. We'll just have to cope somehow, much as we do with the threat of nuclear war and pandemics.

[**ANOTHER OPINION** (*ramblings, as deadline approaches*)

In looking at the two methodologies, I wonder which might lead to a disaster scenario first—the DeepMind method or the GPT method? *[**GPT** stands for Chat **G**enerative **P**re-Trained **T**ransformer.]*

Chat GPT is trained on a huge body of text – let's say, English, French, Italian, and German – from information frozen in time, on the date this data was made available (which is always sometime in the past). GPT can make grammatical/mathematical connections between words and phrases, so that it both, 'reads/understands' current human questions/conversations, and answers them based on higher frequency connectedness among/between words/phrases... to the point that answers are quite natural and logical in context... and in common parlance.
(It seems to me that this method provides no connectedness to the natural source of human thought and feeling, other than a smooth imitation of the spoken word between computer and client. The result appears to be from an automaton, without emotion or empathy, even when faking it.)

The **DeepMind** method, despite its similarity to human learning, is likewise devoid of language-dependent, emotion-laden, pre-processing of thought. *(Or, is it? Since language is the main vehicle for communicating our feelings to others, might **Gemini** get there via an accelerated process that is the reverse of human evolution?)*

Why did humans develop language in he first place? It has certainly led us to become a species with strong coping ability, mainly through co-operation made possible by a common language. Human and animal feelings and intensios must have existed well before language. Those pre-language human emotions and intentions eventually entered our many languages, and have governed our interactions as a species since.
[Cooperation among humans breaks down without a common language. Computers use a common lanuage.]

Let's see if computer algorithms can reverse the process, by learning emotions from our various language data banks. Converting the many human languages into a universal common language might enable super smart computers to be better able to make moral decisions for life forms on Earth. Would their final decision be to "re-set the clock"? Start over.]
Doubters, out there? Listen to this video review of **Google's Palm2** and **Meta's BliMP.**
https://youtu.be/M4QVAcYBA-Y

Links from Last Presentation   by Ann Delong

The links below contain information which I used in the presentation, as well as additional detail that may be of interest.

- [What Is a Modem and Why You Need One to Get Internet](#) (from HighSpeedInternet.com)
- [8 Essential Router Tips for Optimal Gaming Performance](#)
  (MakeUseOf article - these tips are useful well beyond gaming)
- [LTE fixed wireless and satellite Internet—what's the difference?](#)
  (Xplorenet explains how its system works)
- [How to optimize the MTU setting on your router for better performance](#)
  (TechRepublic article which has links to several other useful articles)
- [What is an SSID and how can you find yours?](#) (an article from the NordVPN blog)
- [What Is a 2.5G Multi-Gig Port and How Does It Work?](#) (from MakeUseOf)
- [Understanding Cellular Modem Specifications (Mobile Hotspots, Routers, Phones)](#)
  (from the Mobile Internet Resource Center)
- [What Internet Speed Do I Need for Zoom?](#) (from Reviews.org)
- [How Fast Is DSL Internet Service?](#) (from LifeWire magazine)
- [Windows 11 is finally great for gamers again thanks to this new feature](#)
  (TechRadar article about Dev Home, which monitors your system performance)

Here are a few of the many Wikipedia articles about internet connectivity and data transmission:

- [Broadband](#)
- [Maximum transmission unit](#)
- [Satellite Internet access](#)
- [Mesh networking](#)

Your router likely has software and/or a website specific to your make and model that lets you adjust its settings. As well there are general utilities which work with any system. These ones were mentioned in the presentation:

- [**Speedtest.net**](#) **- check your ping, upload and download speeds. There are many similar websites.**
- [**WiFiAnalyzer**](#) **– Android phone app from GitHub; shows strength and channels of WiFi signals in your neighborhood**
- [Bufferbloat and Internet Speed Test](#) – a web utility from Waveform which tests your internet connection for network congestion.

Linux in the News   by Alex Morrison

How Linux Kernel 6.4 Improves Wi-Fi 7 and IPv6 Networking

Linux kernel 6.4 is making some big networking strides that end users, enterprises, and service providers will benefit from.

How to Install Media Codecs in Ubuntu

Learn how to install media codecs in Ubuntu and other Ubuntu-based distributions that will increase your overall experience of the system.

Firefox 115 ESR Is Here with Hardware Video Decoding for Intel GPUs on Linux
4 Comments

Firefox 115 is available for download as the new ESR (Extended Support Release) series with hardware video decoding for Intel GPUs on Linux, as well as other changes.

Independent Distro KaOS 2023.06 Is Out with Linux 6.3, Latest KDE Software
0 Comments

KaOS 2023.06 independent Linux distribution is now available for download featuring the latest KDE Plasma 5.27.6 LTS desktop environment, KDE Gear 23.04.2 and KDE Frameworks 5.107 software suites.

New TUXEDO InfinityBook Pro 16 Linux Laptop Gets NVIDIA RTX 4000 Series GPUs
10 Comments

TUXEDO Computers unveils a new InfinityBook Pro 16 Linux-powered laptop with NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4000 Series GPUs, DDR5 RAM, and more.

Blender 3.6 LTS Adds Light Trees Support on AMD GPUs, HW Ray-Tracing on Intel Arc
0 Comments

Blender 3.6 LTS open-source and free computer graphics software is now available for download with new features and many improvements. Here's what's new!

# Linux –NitroShare   **By Alex Morrison**

I wrote about NitroShare a year or two back and showed it at the Linux SIG.

NitroShare has some improvements making it easier to use. As a result I am again mentioning NitroShare.

When you install NitroShare on PCLinux it appears in the Start menu under the Internet settings.

When you then ope the program a small icon appears on the task bar [at the right side].

If you right click the mouse on the small NitroShare icon [letter N] choose Settings and the image below will appear.
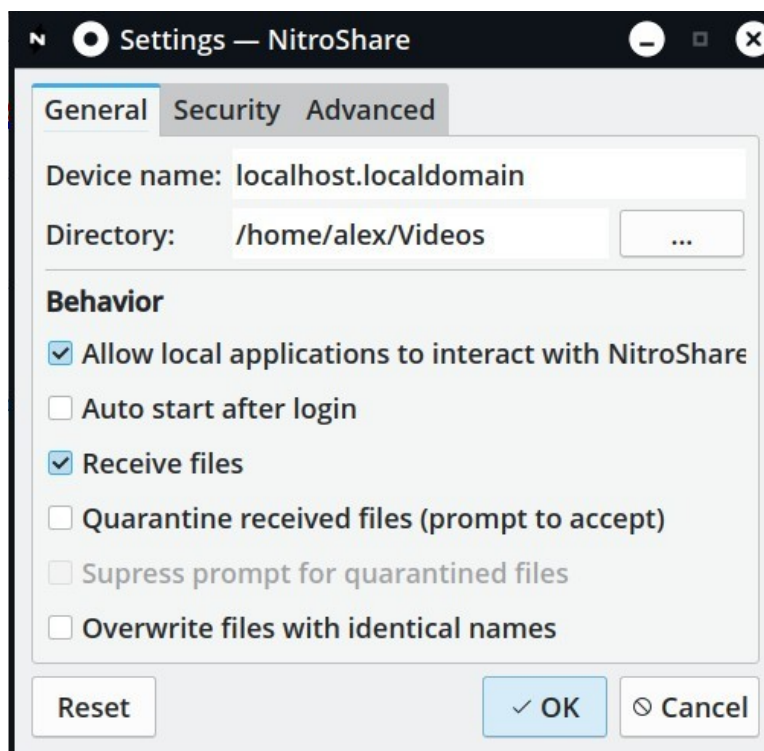
Just click the 3 dots to the far right side of the word Directory and select the path for shared/transferred files to be placed. I selected my Video folder as my first transfer was a small video file. NitoShare will auto select a folder for transfer called NitroShare and it will be located in your Downloads folder. I wanted to over ride that location so I chose Videos.

After doing that click OK to close the window.

Now again right mouse click on the letter N icon ans select Send Files

A Window will appear where you can browse for a file or files to send.

Files can be sent to anyone on your home network [logged in to your router/modem] NitroShare will find anyone in your home network who has NitroShare open.

The next image will show my home network search results.

After browsing to my pictures folder I selected an image and opened it to get the following screen.
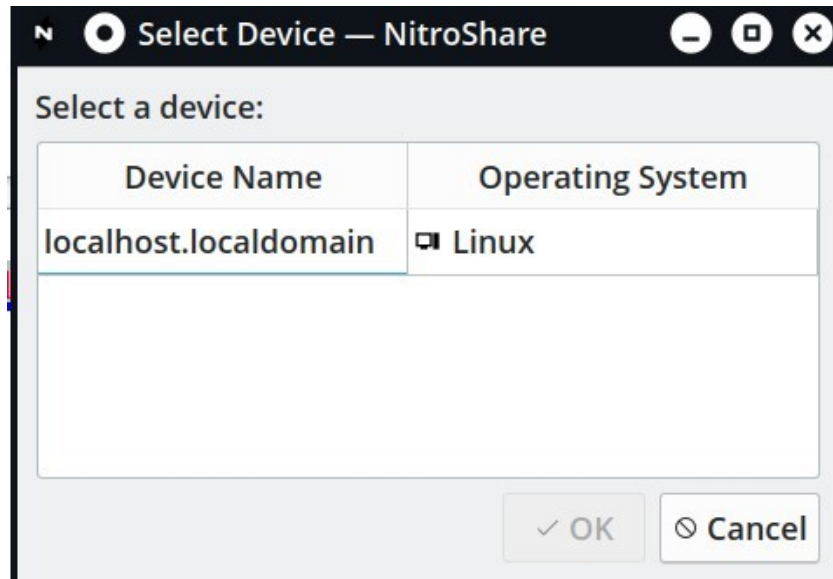
In this screen I see only one PC with a version of NitroShare open. My other Linux system.

I just highlight the Device Name and click OK [couldn't be much easier than that].

Here is the result.
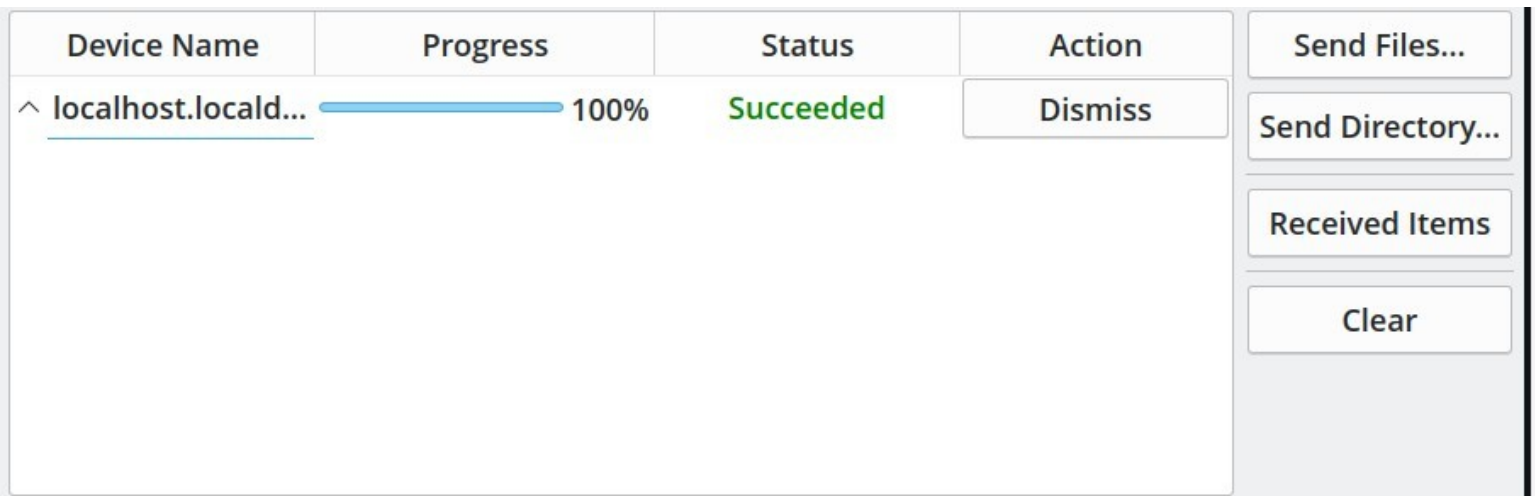
If you want to sent more that one file just highlight as many as needed before clicking OK.

To send an entire folder use Send Directory.

NitroShare works well on Windows, Linux or Mac OS X.

Much easier than copying to USB drives and walking to the other room and plugging it in to transfer files.

The only requirement is having NitroShare open on the other PC. The transfers are easy and as fast as your home network allows.

Sudoku   July 2023   by Alex Morrison

EASY

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

Sudoku

The game boards on this page were produced using **Sudokuki** on PCLinuxOS 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

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

HARD

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

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

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.
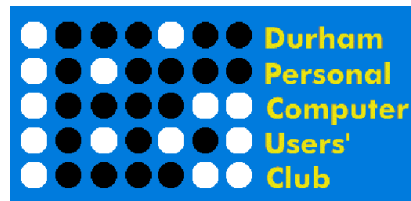
Special Interest Groups

Durham Linux User Group

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/

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