

Nov 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/>

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Next Meeting

**A 20 Years Overview of Preservation,
Research and Outreach**

by Zbigniew Stachniak

On ZOOM – Thursday, Nov 9 2023, 7:00PM

FYI

- By Dan Delong

Gabb – Watch 3, and Kid Safe Phones

Gabb Watch 3

The safe phone kids wear.™
AGES: 5-12 years old



Gabb Phone

The perfect first phone.™
AGES: 9-15 years old



Gabb Phone Plus

The premium kid-safe phone.™
AGES: 10-15 years old



Parents worry, rightly, about their kids access to nasty stuff one the Web. That's their job. Communication devices, carried by a child or teen, should not expose them to such risks. **Gabb** sells phones and watches able make voice calls, to selected people only. Gabb uses GPS to track a child's movements. Beyond the \$150 USD purchase price, Gabb devices require a cell phone plan. In the States, Verizon is their service provider. **Gabb devices do not go on the Internet... ever.** The operating system – **Gabb OS** – is a modified Android OS. At this time, Gabb devices work only in the States. Should readers in Canada wish to buy a slightly more expensive, yet safe, phone for kids, [Troomi](#) sells two Samsung models.

<https://gabb.com/>

OnePlus Open

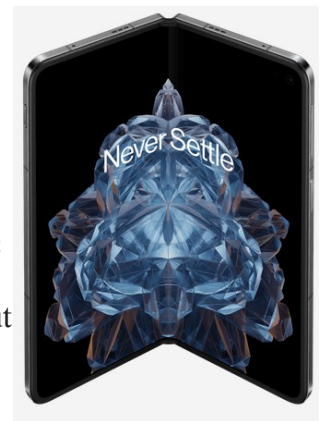
One Plus Open is a new smart phone that folds open, and flat, to reveal a large 2440*2268px AMOLED (8-inch) screen, along with a second 2484*1116px cover screen. Camera hardware is from **Hasselblad/Sony**. Further specs are in the link (*below*). This phone should have been available on October 26th, for about \$2000.00 CAD.

[The link offers 20%, off-the-top, at the app store and some generous trade-in rebates (from \$330 to \$1000, depending on model and condition.)]

As always, opting into purchasing bleeding edge smart technology is not only expensive, but some devices may be at an 'immature' stage of development.

[Personally, I could do without the large cover screen, since it is unprotected from drop damage, in contrast to one of the key advantages of flip phones.]

https://www.oneplus.com/ca_en



Semiconductors in Canada

I was not aware that Canada had any presence at all, as a chip maker, until reading an article in two of our major newspapers by The Canadian Press contributor, Tara Deschamps. She urges for more government stimulus money, to go well beyond the auto industry, into home grown manufacturing of semiconductors right here, in Canada... in support of said auto industry, and others that count on a reliable supply of a variety of semiconductor 'chips'. Canada's highly educated people, who know how to design semiconductors, will leave if we do not have facilities to make them. We lack facilities mainly because the start-up cost for doing so ranges into the billions of dollars. She points out that total production of semiconductors will soon be worth trillions, hence, we should not shut ourselves out of the jobs and profits involved. To read her full text, search for, "*Tara Deschamps The Canadian Press*".

Digital worker exploitation

Digital workers have, historically, earned enough money to live well, as long as they live in one of the World's larger, safer, cities. Compensation is much, much, lower for digital workers in less democratized parts of the World. Many digital workers, in economically depressed areas, struggle to make enough money to survive. And, these are better educated people, with technology "chops". They are hired to use their highly developed human brains to improve training data for various artificial intelligence (AI) platforms. Typically, these college educated, data "labellers" spend long shift hours "attached" to their laptop, awaiting a paid assignment. Sometimes these micro-jobs arrive in their "To-Do" box frequently enough for them to make a little money... from a few cents to a few dollars per job, depending on the difficulty of the task. We consumers/users of AI will never know how search queries are improved, as these workers are invisible.

[In fact, we, ourselves, are among those workers. We do it for free, when we click on Captcha image squares to identify all parts of the image with, say, "traffic lights", or "bicycles". Those words are then applied automatically as labels for identifying similar images in other settings.]

Companies hiring AI, crowd sourced, workers, have names, such as;- Appen (Australia), Clickworker (USA), ScaleAI (USA, PQ Canada), and Sama (Kenya).

Who buys these services?... just about every large company or university, including Microsoft, Google, Amazon and Facebook. No labour laws apply to such platforms. They fly under the radar of human rights advocates. Unionization is unlikely as workers in depressed environments are unable to link up, and cannot afford, (money-wise or time-wise) to endorse job action.

<https://www.wired.com/story/millions-of-workers-are-training-ai-models-for-pennies/>

The Sanctity of Online Obituaries, in Question

Obituaries, once posted on church doors, in post offices, and printed in newspapers, have long since gone digital. Each funeral home now publishes their own obits online, which can spread widely, if posted by a group of corporate funeral homes. Here, in Canada, one re-publisher of obituaries (not *Legacy.com*) was fined 20 million dollars for lifting text and photos from on-line obits, and republishing them. The name, **Afterlife**, was used for this money making scheme, now known as **Everhere**, and run by the same individual. More bizarre, are the thousands of YouTube obituaries, appearing as video re-reads of obits recently published online. However, these YouTube videos (recorded by a stranger on a personal phone) seem to be among the latest money schemes. What is distressing to surprised, bereaved, families is the ghoulish, impassioned, tone of these recordings, and the sheer number of them, none of which were sanctioned by the family or the funeral home.

RIP

[This is not to say that funeral homes fail to monetize their own listings. Furthermore, this is all a bit confusing to genealogists, since publication of obituaries is a main source for family history research. After all, aren't all obituaries published for both current, and future, consumption by the public at large, whether in newspapers (now dying out) or online?]

Firefox 119.0

This latest version of the Firefox browser adds in-browser PDF editing to the list new features.

<https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/119.0/releasenotes/>

I also notice a list of Firefox recommended extensions, mostly related to privacy.

[Mult-account containers, PopUpOFF, ClearURLs, Bitwarden, CanvasBlocker, NoScript, Relay, Don't track me, Cookie AutoDelete, Facebook Container, History Clearer, Privacy Badger]

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/collections/4757633/privacy-matters/>

Fantasy.co – Today's Mad Men (Ad Men... 'er Ad People)

While exploring the Web... In other words, while haphazardly tripping through sites, wasting time, one can, occasionally, experience serendipity. I hit upon a website, that, for a time, left me quite confused. Their front page was just on splashy, active, graphic. But it gave not clue as to its purpose, or the type of business involved. I thought, "What the heck does this New York company do?" Intrigued, I ventured deeper into the solitary "What we do" link, which led to "All Categories". And, they are: -

Ecosystems

Operating Systems

Mobility

Products

Vision & Strategy

A.I. & Voice

Healthcare

B2B Platforms

TV & Streaming Media

Retail & Ecommerce

Fashion & Luxury

Websites

Travel & Hospitality

Only after actually viewing each of these dynamic categories (which took some time) did a revelation for this eclectic business model begin to gel. The company name is "Fantasy".

If you've wondered who makes those impressive websites for deep pocketed customers, like car manufacturers, sports teams, travel bookings, and the like... this is 'them/they'. Their aim is to enhance profit for customers by creating the best online presence possible, to the point that this company – Fantasy - now uses 'synthetic humans' for market research. In other words, they create online personas, by loading them up with some typical human traits (labels indicative of potential customers, or a group of customers). This 'synth' then enters the world of AI, on ChatGTP-4 (or another AI platform) continuing to interact/chat with other 'synths' to discuss a potential product or service, just as real humans might do. This rapid discourse, between and among 'synths' yields intriguing insights into, what would have been, a more time consuming and costly research process than if human test subjects were used. Some of these marketing revelations could not have been achieved without synthetic AI personas. Fantasy's experience with the use of 'synthetic humans' exposed just how far AI has come, in 'acting human'.

<https://fantasy.co/what-we-do/ecosystems>

Windows 11 Update October 26

Since OS Build 22621.2506 (aka 22H2) has likely already installed itself on your machine, perhaps you'd like to know what has changed?

[October 26, 2023—KB5031455 \(OS Build 22621.2506\) Preview - Microsoft Support](#)

On my laptop, all of my saved dash cam content now appears on One Drive, taking up over half of the allowed free 5GB storage space. I do not recall giving permission for this, nor for storage of all of my snipping tool screen grabs. But, there they are, on One Drive. Offers to increase storage space should soon be arriving... for a monthly fee.

Those who wish to jump ahead, can install 23H2... [How to Download and Install the Windows 11 23H2 Update \(techrepublic.com\)](#)

DALL·E 3

In conjunction with **Chat GPT-4**, **DALL·E 3** creates convincing, high resolution, unique ,images, as requested by natural language text phrases—queries.

For example, a Bing AI enhanced request for a description of DALL E 3, itself, returned: -

“DALL·E 3 is a text-to-image generation model developed by OpenAI. It is capable of generating realistic and diverse images from natural language prompts. DDALL·E 3 is now built natively on ChatGPT, which lets you use ChatGPT as a brainstorming partner and refiner of your prompts. “

I thought it would be fun to try it. However, following the instructions within **Bing**, **Chat GPT-4** did not pan out; as the expected icon did not appear at the top of the screen, as instructed by Bing Chat.

[The Bing instructions (below) did not work, at least, not here in Canada.]

In today’s fast moving world of popular web utilities, ChatGPT-4 is no long free. Once subscribed to ChatGPT-4, for \$20 per month, things should work as described.

- “You can easily translate your ideas into exceptionally accurate images with DALL·E 3.
- It is now available to all Bing Chat users for free. *[no longer the case]*
- You can access DALL·E 3 by hovering over GPT-4 at the top of the screen and selecting DALL·E 3 Beta from the drop-down menu. *[might be there for some subscribers]*
- Please note that DALL·E 3 has mitigations to decline requests that ask for a public figure by name. It also has improved safety performance in risk areas like generation of public figures and harmful biases related to visual over/under-representation, in partnership with red teamers—domain experts who stress-test the model—to help inform our risk assessment and mitigation efforts in areas like propaganda and misinformation “

Previous users of DALL E 3 have synthesized some strange, mind blowing, images. See them at <https://openai.com/dall-e-3>

(Media Pipe) Face Stylizer from Google Research



Building

upon the latest computer vision object recognition advancements, the [Media Pipe division of Google](#), has created a phone app that synthesizes realistic human faces in a style dictated by both the original, “real” face, and a similar “ideal” face, or even a cartoonist’s, drawn, face. This process also works for creating a new “stylized” faces that are both male and female, from ‘seed’ faces that could be either male or female. When released to the public, it will likely be either a free app, included with a smart phone, or a paid app in the Store. Face Stylizer is attractive to smart phone makers because the code impact is minimal.

<https://blog.research.google/2023/09/mediapipe-facestylizer-on-device-real.html>

Posting your ideas as a syndication

Syndication of cartoons— published in many newspapers—reaches way more viewers. *What if your posts could syndicate; that is, publish to many existing platforms, automatically?* Then your best posts/ideas/opinions could be seen by a wider audience. In future, this may be possible, because ‘influencers,’ who publish on a lot of platforms (eg:- Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Mastadon, TikTok, Tumblr, Threads and personal blogs) find it burdensome to publish in so many places. They must log-into each platform with an ID and password, then copy/paste material suitable for each of those platforms.

The solution is “**POSSE**”-- the current acronym for describing such efforts.

[**P** for Post or Publish, **O** for your Own, **S** for Site, another **S** for Syndicate, and **E** for Everywhere or Elsewhere.]

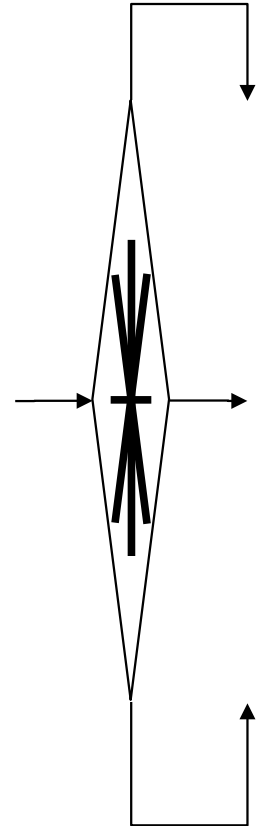
The concept, here, is for you to first, own a website on which you post/publish your stuff, and which, pushes that content out to other selected platforms immediately (often automatically).

[Just imagine, you would no longer embarrass yourself when going to the Pub on a Friday night, only to express yourself, in a drunken rage, to those on either side of the bar stool. With POSSE, your rants could reach the whole World!]

How to handle responses from readers is still a problem. However, a [Micro.blog](#) (free or \$5 per month) may carry out the publishing/feedback cycle adequately for some users.

Buying a personal domain, and paying for hosting, along with building a website, is likely to be rather onerous for posters who find the convenience of free sites adequate (despite the need to stay within the rules of each). What worries those who make it their business to write content is the ability of these platforms to censor ideas, and the possibility that some platforms may simply cease to exist in the near future, erasing everything they’ve posted in the past.

<https://www.theverge.com/2023/10/23/23928550/posse-posting-activitypub-standard-twitter-tumblr-mastodon>



Permission Slip, by Consumer Reports

A notice for this free app recently arrived in my in-box, likely because I am a CR member. However, it looks like this fully developed app is free to all (*in the United States, for now*). It will help to limit data mining of your personal information. We are all familiar with cookie permission requests, that pop up on splash pages for many business web sites. Cookies deemed “essential” cannot be stopped. **Permission Slip** lets you revisit sites that have, or may have, collected personal data (either through visits or when paying for products), and ask for personal data to be erased, along with confirmation that this has occurred.

[The Permission Slip “Donate Now” button, viewed in a web browser, did not work for me, nor was “Permission Slip by CR” available in Google’s Play Store in my country (for Android or iOS). Perhaps this roll-out is for the States only, with support by donation.]

<https://permissionslipcr.com/>



Election Fraud Detector

Until this device has been independently examined for its ability to show that simply detecting the presence of wireless signals is somehow proof of voting malfeasance, how can (Pillow Guy) Mike Lindell's statements be affirmed? His insistence that voting machines were tampered with, during the 2020 US election, has never been verified in the courts. All he got from the courts was a 1.3 billion dollar judgment against him for libelling the company that designed the software for these voting machines, along with a 5 million dollar suit for breach of contract with another software developer.

Here's a quote from the article,

"Lindell has been promoting and selling these devices since August 2023, after hosting an event called the Election Crime Bureau Summit. However, Lindell's device has been met with skepticism and criticism from election officials, cybersecurity experts, and legal scholars, who say that it is based on false assumptions, unreliable technology, and illegal surveillance."

<https://www.businessinsider.com/mike-lindell-wi-fi-blockers-protect-evil-chinese-communist-party-2023-8>

Free Linux Wallpaper



DPCUC President's Notes

by Peter Camilleri

Hi again. The club continues its efforts to resume normal, in-person meetings and I am very pleased to announce some small bit of progress. The executive meeting was able to be held in person for the first time since I joined the club executive. Meeting in person was, in my mind, so much better than via zoom. While some may not agree with me, I feel we got more work done in less time. Very special thanks to Dave Odynski for hosting the meeting at his home.

As for the other meetings the club runs, we still have a lot of work to do. Issues include finding a location, paying for that location, reinstating club dues to raise the required money, and figuring out how to support the significant numbers of people who attend our meetings from far away places. For now, these meetings will remain virtual.

There may be exceptions however. One special meeting being considered is a swap-meet to allow members and others to exchange used but useful computer equipment. Another idea for next summer would be a picnic in a local park.

One of the interesting parts of the in-person meetings was always the bug sessions, where your tech issues could receive attention. This seems to be absent from our zoom meetings. So, if you have questions nagging you, please send an email to me or any of the executive members and we will try to dig up some answers.

Further, if you are interested in learning more about the operation of the club, feel free to contact one of the executives for an invitation to the executive meeting where the decisions are made. Of course, you may also contact us with your ideas, suggestions, and questions.

Finally, a sad note. I have been writing for a long time about the madness of war. It would seem that madness is popular because I must now lament the insanity of two wars. It seems a waste of time, but all we can do is please, pray for Peace.

Peter Camilleri, President DPCUC.

Linux in the News

by Alex Morrison



Ubuntu 24.04 LTS “Noble Numbat” Is Slated for Release on April 25th, 2024

2 Comments

Ubuntu 24.04 LTS “Noble Numbat” operating system has been slated for release on April 25th, 2024, and it’s expected to come with the GNOME 46 desktop environment.

Linux Mint 21.3 to Ship with Cinnamon 6.0 and Experimental Wayland Support

12 Comments

Linux Mint 21.3 will be the first release of Linux Mint to ship with an experimental Wayland session for its Cinnamon flavor.

TUXEDO Linux Gaming Laptops Powered by AMD Ryzen 7000 Series CPUs Are Back

0 Comments

TUXEDO Computers announces the Gen5 TUXEDO Polaris 15 and TUXEDO Stellaris 16 Linux gaming laptops with AMD Ryzen 7000 Series CPUs, high-end NVIDIA graphics, and up to 96 GB DDR5 RAM.

10 Best Flowchart & Diagramming Software for Linux

Are you looking for free and open-source flowchart and diagramming software to create different kinds of diagrams, flowcharts, illustrations, maps, web graphics, and more on a Linux desktop? This article reviews the 10 best flowcharts and diagramming software for Linux.

Linux Mint 21.3 to Ship With Cinnamon 6.0, Experimental Wayland Support

The Linux Mint project announced today in their monthly newsletter that they’ve started working on implementing a Wayland session for a future release of the Linux Mint distribution, to be initially available in Linux Mint 21.3.

Phoronix: Linux Hardware Reviews & Performance ...

Phoronix is the leading technology website for *Linux* hardware reviews, open-source *news*, *Linux* benchmarks, open-source benchmarks, and computer hardware ...

Linux –PCLinux

By Alex Morrison



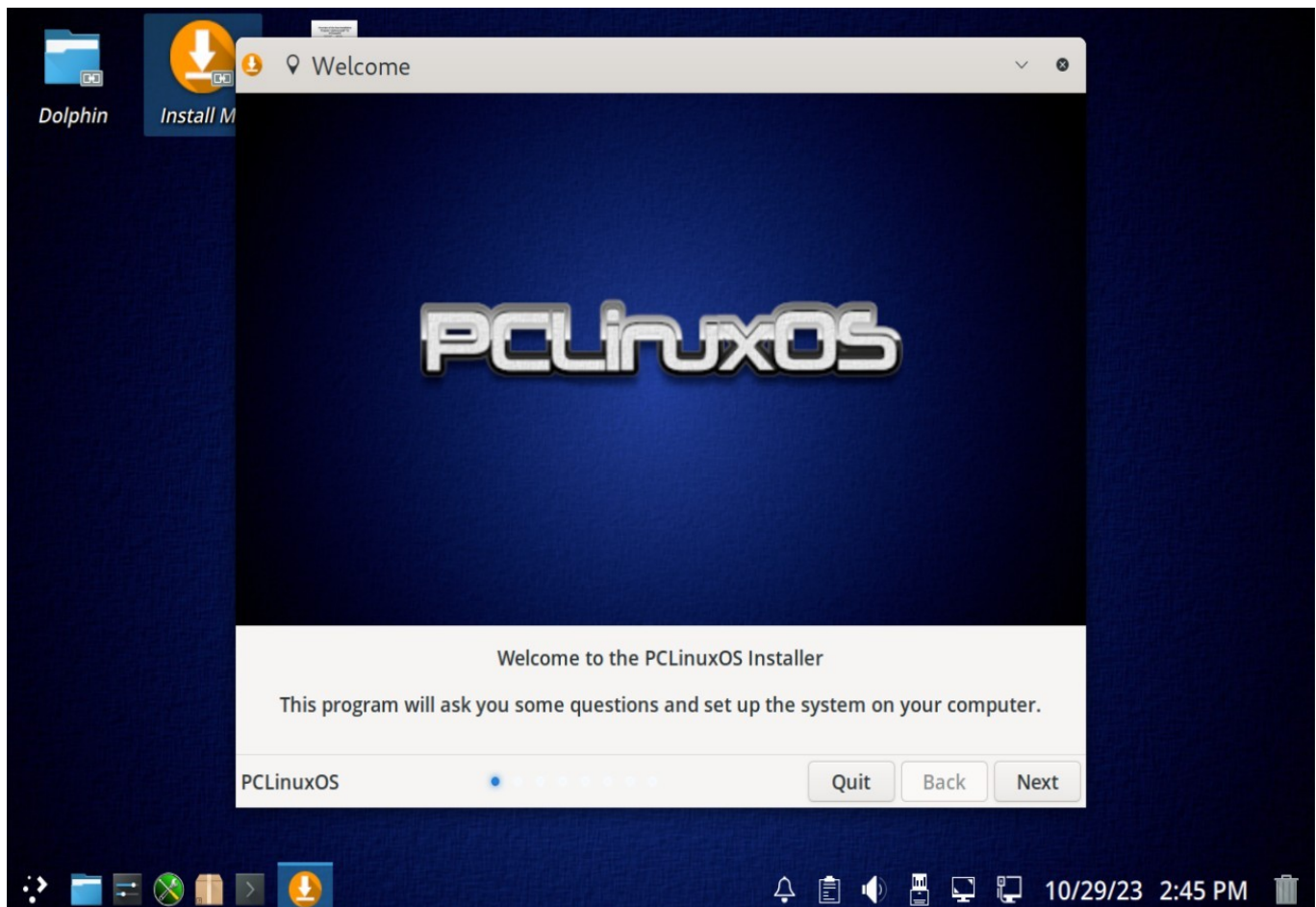
I moved my main desktop OS from one PC to another and installed the latest version of PCLinux. In doing so I got a couple of surprises.

You can download PCLinux from this address --> https://www.pclinuxos.com/?page_id=10

Pick one of the main version – be it KDE, MATE or XFCE.

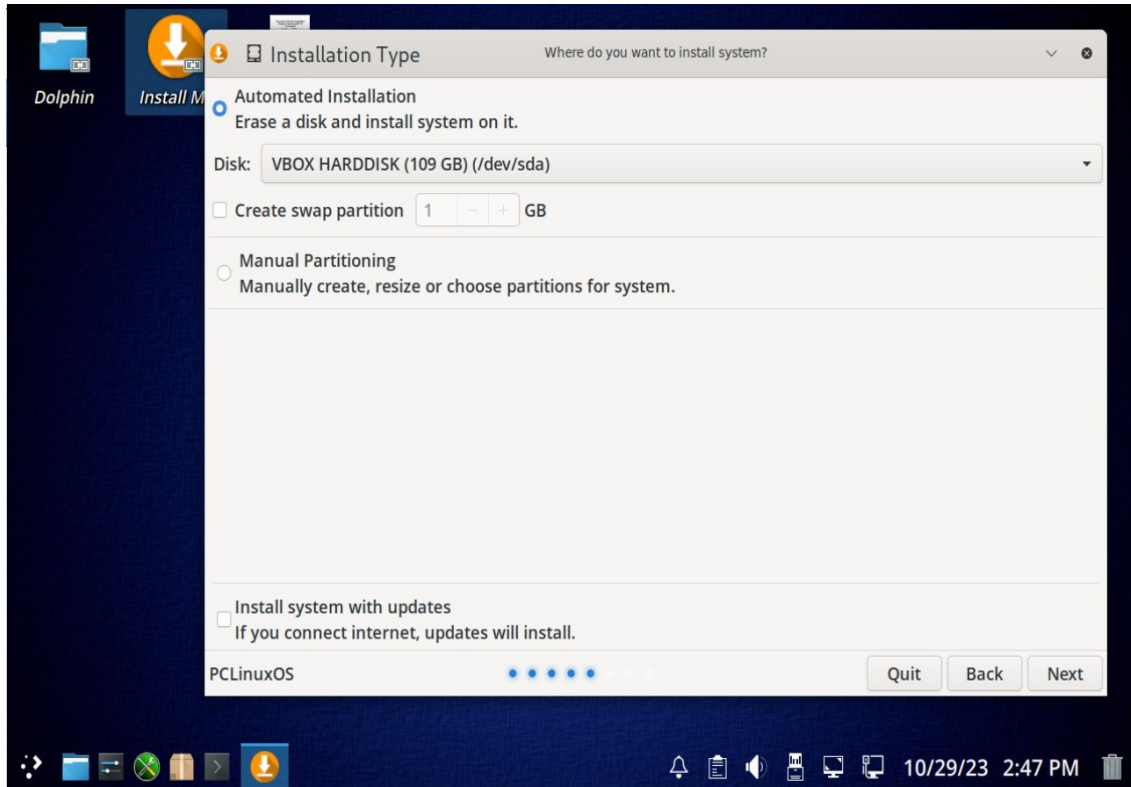
Make a bootable DVD or USB from the new ISO.

My first surprise was during the new installation process. The next image is normal.

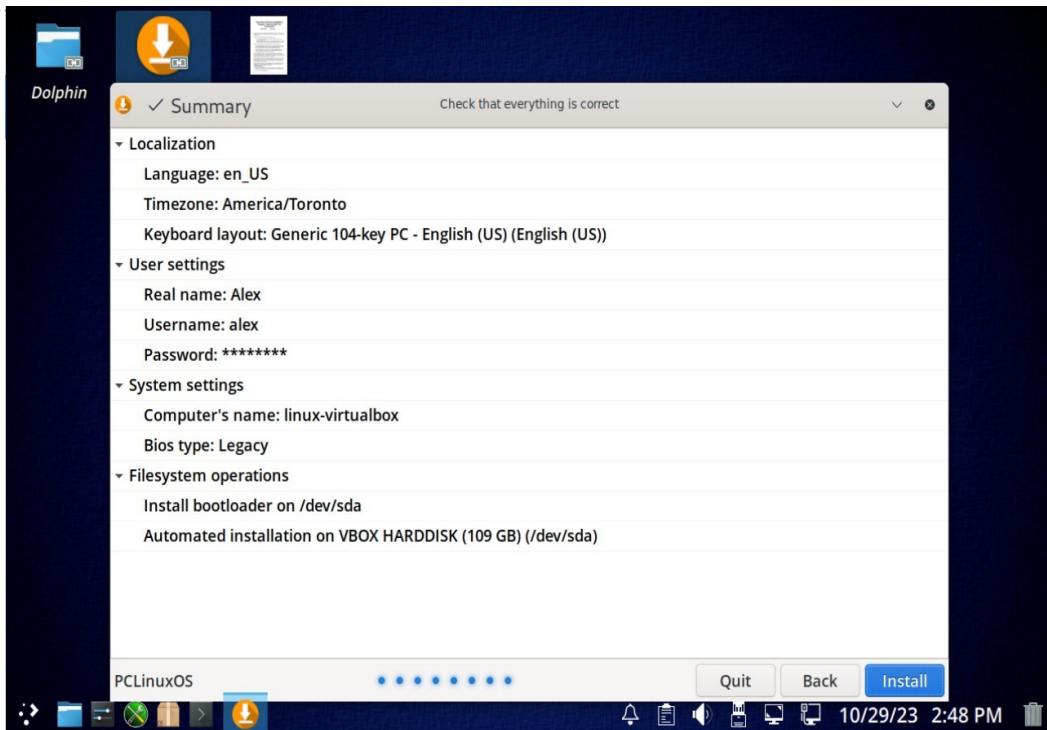


The following image is a new procedure. Where it asks you to select a drive it offers an automatic install and you are able to chose a swap partition at this time.

Of course you can select manual partitioning if you wish.

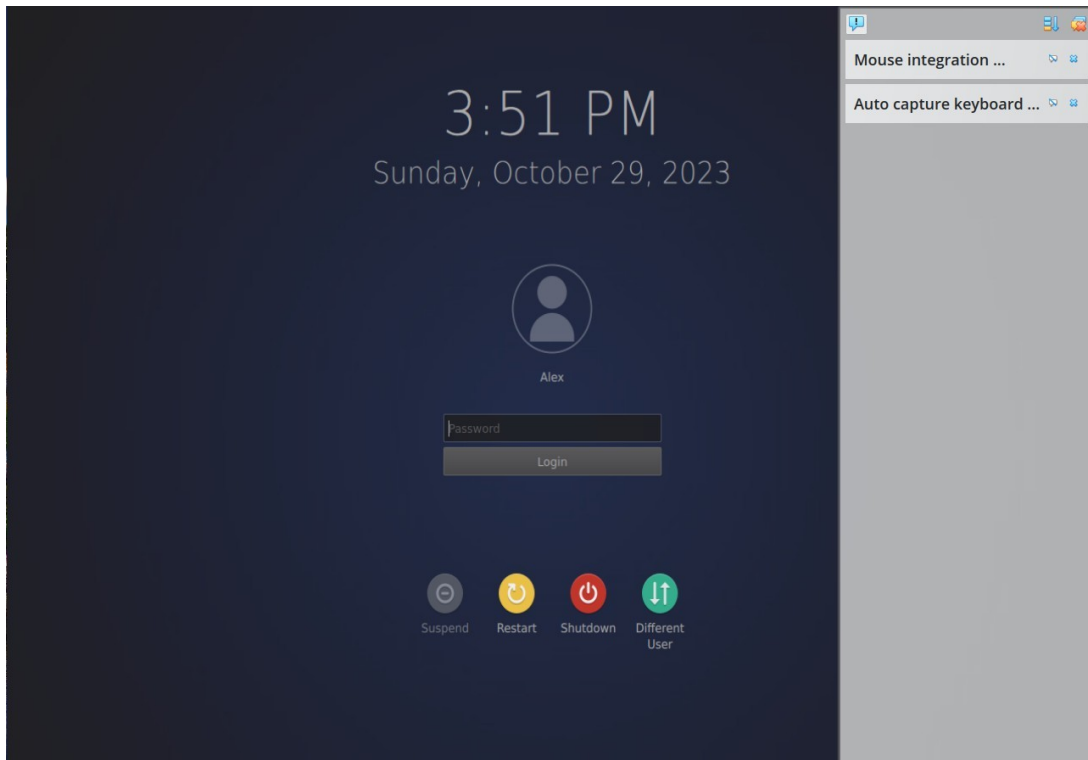


This screen is also familiar but part of the automatic installation.



This is the first boot screen. The older installs required clicking your image or typing your user name. Now the user name is found by default and you just type your password.

Note: the right hand gray rectangle section is only appearing when using virtualbox.



The following image shows a few new options under Configuration that did not appear on previous installations.



Total install time in Virtualbox was about 5 minutes.

Total install time on my desktop [dual boot with Window 11] was about 8 minutes as I selected manual installation.

Sudoku

November 2023

by Alex Morrison



EASY

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

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

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

HARD

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

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

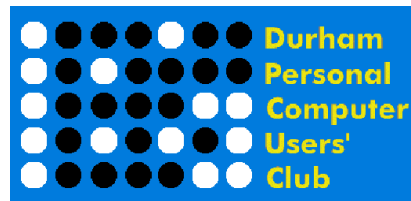
Durham Linux User Group

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
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2022-2023

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

**Newsletter
Information**

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The PC Monitor cannot be responsible for errors or inaccuracies in the content, although efforts will be made to publish information accurately.