

Dec 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

Backups in a Busy World

by Mark Schulman

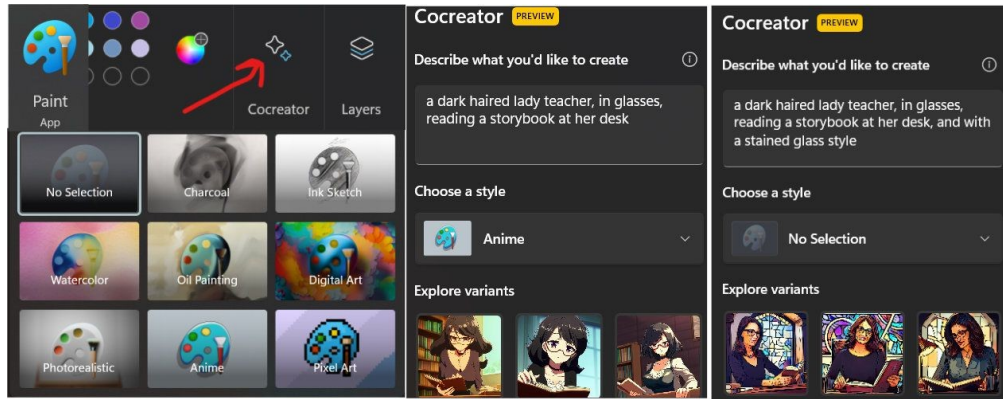
On ZOOM – Thursday, Dec 14 2023, 7:00PM



FYI

- By Dan Delong

Windows 11 Paint with Cocreator AI



Windows 11 got more than one **AI enhancement**, recently. Along with Bing Chat/Copilot in Edge, try **Cocreator** in Paint, now Dall-E 3 is integrated with it. Type a few text instructions, describing a visual scene, and choose an artistic style; it will try to create several versions, as understood by current AI algorithms. Save the version you like best, or each one separately. Although my start screen for Cocreator suggested I go on a “wait list for early adopters,”; this was not necessary. It looks like **Cocreator Preview** had already been installed when I chose that option, introducing Cocreator with a short tutorial.

[A new user starts with 50 free Cocreator coins/credits, using up one credit for each AI effort.]

Here is the text I used, “**a dark haired lady teacher, in glasses, reading a storybook at her desk**”. Whether I chose one of seven styles or not, the AI would generate one, two, or maybe three images, all having the six characteristics contained in the text. Adding a further – seventh - descriptor “**in a stained glass style**”, without choosing a default style, yielded three effective images.

[Asking Cocreator to follow the same instructions, on a different day, might produce very different results.]

Illustration 1: some examples from Paint's AI Cocreator



QuietQuill

Artificial Intelligence assistance, as of May 2023, is also available to writers of books. The [free QuietQuill](#) trial will pick up on your writing style and continue to create the first two thousand words for you. This service also creates the book's outline and divides content into chapters and sub-chapters. That first 2,000 words would not be enough content for a complete book, but will act as a 'hook' for gaining access to additional paid features., and more words. *[The accompanying image was made from a literal translation of "quill feather pen in hand, touching down on a manuscript, in a stained glass style"... not quite what I was after, but it works.]*



Apparently, famous voices can be also be re-created/faked by AI, and then used to narrate video content. [Richard Attenborough's voice](#) is one such example, as a choice for narrating content about the natural world. [\[Example\]](#) This [voicify.ai](#) service will accept both text and audio voice files, should anyone like to try it. It holds over 3,000 voices, while offering to do the same for your own voice - for a subscription price ranging from \$8/month to \$90/month.

[Producers of 'alternative facts' will have a heyday with this.]

[Quiet Quill](#)

Wired Magazine speculates on Q*. (opinions)

This article, which may be viewable only to subscribers, asks... **“The Mysterious Q* Might Be What Comes After ChatGPT”?** Speculation points to worry, among OpenAI's non-profit staff, with respect to a more powerful AI, under development, using a new technique called, **“process supervision”**. This name sound benign, as if all is under control, but it also involves the use of large data sets created by AI alone, to supplement the data it already gleaned from the Internet. In other words, some AI decisions may be made using data created by AI, itself, without human supervision. [I suggest that **process supervision** may refer to AI taking next steps in processing, after it has a high degree of confidence in a just finished process. That next step in processing may be partially based on answers it has created in earlier steps. This may explain the concept of AI using data it creates by itself. Sounds safe?]

[Three white, males now make up the entire OpenAI board of directors, one of whom, Larry Summers, is a champion of profit making, which often overrides ethical considerations.]

<https://link.wired.com/public/33539953>

Securing AI Development

Almost two dozen countries, led by the US and UK, are developing rules for AI research and development, such that the methods used are transparent, to governments, yet secure, from 'enemies'. The group calls for payments (not ransoms) to those who find weaknesses in AI's security. In other words, smart, "white hat" hackers could earn an income testing out AI systems.

<https://thehackernews.com/2023/11/us-uk-and-global-partners-release.html>

Smart Phone—Be Ever-present.

For those who are less attached to a computer, yet fully dependant on their cellphone, whether in Winter cold or a bathroom shower... try a pair of \$29-\$50 [knitted touch screen gloves](#), or a \$20 [water proof phone holder](#).

[In my opinion, balancing the phone on a roll of toilet paper indicates addiction.]

What's a Mouse Jiggler?

Moreover, **of what use is a “Mouse Jiggler”?** For those who are tied to their computer, as a work-at-home employee might be, this may be just the ‘thing’ for moments when you need to take a quick break, yet appear to be working. This model will keep your mouse pointer moving smoothly, never stuck in the corner of the screen, while you free yourself for as long as you wish. Simply plug this tray-like device into a free USB port (for power) and place the mouse into the tray. A pattern disc, in the base of the tray, will begin to rotate, guiding the mouse on the screen and preventing the computer from going to sleep. [The price is \$40 CAD plus tax.]



Make sure the batteries in the mouse are fresh, if planning on a long-away.

<https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B08V73BX53>

Epson PictureMate PM-520 Portable Photo Printer

Although several instant cameras, capable of ejecting small instant prints, have been available for years, Epson has designed a ‘smallish’ portable printer (battery powered) that puts out larger prints (5x7, 3.5x5, and 4x6 inches), each in under one minute, sent from a phone or computer, wirelessly. It is an inkjet printer, with variable droplet sizes, yielding a resolution of 5,760 x 1,440 dpi. Its 4 colour ink cartridge (Epson T372) might attain the claimed 160 photos output, before needing replacement by another 4 colour cartridge. This cartridge contains a special chip, designed to refuse replacement by cheaper, competitor units. The cost per photos is likely greater than for commercial kiosk prints, yet results are comparable, and certainly more convenient. I believe Canon makes a similar device, with lower resolution, 4x6 inch max. prints.



<https://www.staples.ca/products/3047426-en-canon-selphy-cp1500-colour-photo-printer-white-1>

Inkjets are notorious for jet clogging, hence the need to test-print occasionally.

Canadian distributors appear not to stock this model, yet. Online pricing suggests a retail price of around \$300, for the printer, and about \$70 for the ink.

[Chips are available, online, designed to defeat Epson's proprietary cartridge electronics.]

<https://www.epson.com.sg/For-Home/Printers/Inkjet/Epson-PictureMate-PM-520-Photo-Printer/p/C11CF36501>

Microsoft Research—opinion

This computer club newsletter has often included selected items with respect to cutting edge research by Microsoft. While under a great deal of scrutiny, lately, concerning the integration of Outlook with all other email accounts used by an individual, and the ‘kerfuffle’ over the recent firing and re-hiring of Open AI’s lead researcher, this company’s revised aims and objectives are taking all of this into account, with changes to future research directions—a direction that aims to use AI in “good” ways, to improve openness, to hasten scientific discoveries in a wide variety of fields, with a stress on health advances or responses to pandemics, or any other disasters. This direction is far more focused than Google’s old motto, “Don’t be evil”, although Google has also revised its research plans. Since both companies possess vast financial resources, let’s hope for evidence proving these aims and aspirations can be achieved in a capitalist business environment that so often does the opposite.

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/research/about-microsoft-research/>



Motorola's Latest Flip phone

I currently use a pair of very old Motorola outdoor 'walkie-talkies' and an older Motorola smart phone, which lets me enjoying great sound, good cameras, and long battery life (on the phone).

[These two products were, possibly, designed before Lenovo's takeover of Motorola.]

Looking over the promo for the latest **Motorola Razer + flip phone** makes for a tempting buy, now that the price has dropped by \$300 USD from the original \$1000; that is, until reading some of the reviews from buyers of this phone. Although users like the bloatless Android 13 operating system and the smaller back screen, complaints regarding battery life and sound quality stand out.

<https://www.motorola.com/us/smartphones-razr-plus>



Windows 10, the latest for this 8.5 year-old OS

Almost twice as many computers run on Win10, as opposed to Win11. Win10 will be supported and updated for a few more years, yet. Rumour has it that AI is coming to Win10, in the form of **Copilot** (now included in Win11). Users are also asking for more integration with Android apps, since Android now accepts many Windows features. **Control Panel** is hidden, in Win10, in favour of a unified **Settings** screen. Computer World has been following the more recent November 14, 2023 updates.

<https://www.computerworld.com/article/3199077/windows-10-a-guide-to-the-updates.html>

In case you didn't notice, the October 2022 Windows 10 update changed a few things, some for the better. For example, the new **Edge** browser, based on **Chromium**, will do more, faster, including integration with Chrome browser extensions. Moreover, **Alt-Tab** will now include Edge tabs, as well as any running programs. This update may have suggested connecting your phone to a PC or tablet and an Xbox. **Surface** tablet users will notice several new options to enhance touch usability when the keyboard is detached. For a full description, see the video link, below.

https://youtu.be/vIE_nwpeYP4?si=0fPKgTNKPnblibsv

Some security risks have been mitigated by closing down VBScripts, WordPad as an app, and by limiting Macros in Office.

Opera GX

This GX version of the Opera browser contains features appealing to '**Gamers**' in particular.

"Opera GX is a special version of the Opera browser built specifically for gamers. The browser includes unique features like CPU, RAM and Network limiters to help you get the most out of both gaming and browsing."

Other features may be of interest to '**Non-Gamers**'. **GX Corner**, built into the browser, delivers game news as well as the games themselves—some for free. Streaming services also gained some handy notifications, with integration to a sidebar—for multitasking. And, like Firefox and Edge, synchronizes browsers between phone, tablet and computer, including file transfers. The mobile version adds a **fast action button** for quicker access to 'where you've been' and 'where you'd like to go' next.



[Opera GX | Gaming Browser | Opera](#)

Google is Everywhere















































































Google will give **100 million dollars annually**, to a yet to be determined oversight organization, for distribution to news sources, in compensation for republishing Canadian news. This is such a small number of dollars, compared to Google's annual profits, as to be insignificant on the balance sheet of Google, or the many companies this 100M dollars will be distributed to. If my facts, regarding Google profits, and the math, are correct, this amounts to 0.0049105 of only year 2022's growth in revenue profits.

[2022 growth in revenue of 23 Billion, with profit of 21.35 cents per dollar. (source CoPilot Preview)]

In other words, Google is giving up about one five thousandth of \$5,000,000,000 dollars in profit for 2022.

[The lawyers negotiating this deal might have made more than 100 million.]

Just to illustrate how much we count on Google for 'everything' I copied a list of current products, ranging from **Gmail to YouTube**, and many more...; there are **116 of them**. I use 20 of them on a regular or semi-regular basis.

 Android	 Android Auto	 Android TV	 Bard
 Calendar	 Cars with Google built-in	 Chrome	 Chrome Enterprise
 Chromebook	 Chromecast	 Contacts	 Digital Wellbeing
 Docs	 Drive	 Earth	 Family Link
 Finance	 Forms	 Gboard	 Gmail
 Google Alerts	 Google Arts & Culture	 Google Assistant	 Google Authenticator
 Google Chat	 Google Classroom	 Google Expeditions	 Google Fi Wireless
 Google Files	 Google Find My Device	 Google Fit	 Google Flights
 Google Fonts	 Google Groups	 Google Health Studies	 Google Home
 Google Input Tools	 Google Maps	 Google Meet	 Google One
 Google Pay	 Google Photos	 Google Play	 Google Play Books
 Google Play Games	 Google Play Pass	 Google Play Protect	 Google Podcasts
 Google Shopping	 Google TV	 Google Tasks	 Google Wallet
 Google Workspace	 Keep	 Lens	 Messages
 Nest	 News	 PhotoScan	 Pixel
 Pixel Buds	 Pixelbook	 Scholar	 Search
 Sheets	 Sites	 Slides	 Snapseed
 Translate	 Travel	 Voice	 Waze
 Wear OS by Google	 YouTube	 YouTube Kids	 YouTube Music
 YouTube TV	 YouTube VR		



Linux in the News

by Alex Morrison

Arch Linux's December 2023 ISO Release Brings Linux 6.6 LTS, Updated Installer

0 Comments

Arch Linux 2023.12.01 is now available for download as Arch Linux's ISO release for December 2023 powered by Linux kernel 6.6 LTS and featuring an improved installation experience.

digiKam 8.2 Open-Source Photo Management App Is Now Available for Download

0 Comments

digiKam 8.2 open-source and free professional photo management app is now available for download with various improvements and bug fixes.

Latest Steam Client Update Improves Steam Overlay for CS2 and Other Games on Linux

0 Comments

Valve's latest stable Steam Client update brings Steam Overlay improvements on Linux for CS2, Watch Dogs, and other video games, as well as various other improvements.

10 Best Open-Source Accounting Software for Linux Users

Accounting software is a complex application that enables businesses of any size to manage data, especially financial data, and ensure that all resources end up in the right place. Here is a list of the best accounting software for Linux platforms that are not only open source software but...

4MLinux 44 Adds System-Wide VA-API Support, Improves Printing Support

0 Comments

4MLinux 44 distribution is now available for download with VA-API support, improved support for SPL printing and wireless networking, as well as updated components and support for new apps.

Cinnamon and KDE sync version numbers in desktop sibling rivalry

- The Register; By Liam Proven (Posted by [bob](#) on Dec 2, 2023 3:55 PM EDT)
- Story Type: [News Story](#); Groups: [KDE](#), [Linux](#), [Mint](#)

Expect the former in a Linux Mint point release later this year. Two of the most popular "traditional" – read Windows-like – desktops happened to land the same version number at once....

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



Linux – Not ChatGPT?

By Alex Morrison

On Linux or Mac or Windows running ChatGPT is usually an online option. There is a way to run an application very like ChatGPT on all systems.

First step is to go to the github website and download a single file. Llama.cpp is a Language module!

Here is the link --> <https://github.com/Mozilla-Ocho/llamafile>

Scroll down the page to a section called Quickstart and look at Step 1

That is the link to download an almost 4 GB file. Also on the github website is the instructions to setup the program.

At the simplest if you use Windows just rename the file downloaded to add .exe and the double click on it.

For most Linux systems go to the konsole and type as root user --- `chmod +x llama-v1.5-7b-q4-server.llamafile`

That command makes the file executable. Then run --- `./llava-v1.5-7b-q4-server.llamafile` --- to install the program.

When you run the program it should open a browser window and connect to the program on your PC. You do not need to be online!

It will look like this

llama.cpp

Chat
 Completion

Prompt

This is a conversation between User and Llama, a friendly chatbot. Llama is helpful, kind, honest, good at writing, and never fails to answer any requests immediately and with precision.

User name Bot name

Prompt template

{{prompt}}
 {{history}}
 {{char}}:

Chat history template

{{name}}: {{message}}

Grammar

Use gbnf or JSON Schema+convert

<p>Predictions</p> <input type="range" value="400"/> 400	<p>Temperature</p> <input type="range" value="0.7"/> 0.7
<p>Penalize repeat sequence</p> <input type="range" value="1.18"/> 1.18	<p>Consider N tokens for penalize</p> <input type="range" value="256"/> 256
<p>Top-K sampling</p> <input type="range" value="40"/> 40	<p>Top-P sampling</p> <input type="range" value="0.5"/> 0.5

Say something...

By typing anything in the box at the bottom the program will generate an answer.

I typed ---> What color is made by combining red and green?

Here is the reply.....

llama.cpp

User: What colour is made by combining red and green
Llama: The color that is created when you combine red and green is yellow.

Say something...

Send Upload Image Stop Reset

If you press the reset button it will return you to the start screen. Or just continue typing in the Say Something box.

Opening the program the next day on Linux can be accomplished by opening a browser and typing the following in the address bar ---> localhost:8080

Hope you enjoy the program. I encourage all to read the github page info as llama.cpp does a lot more!

Free Linux Wallpaper





Sudoku

December 2023

by Alex Morrison

EASY

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

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

HARD

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

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

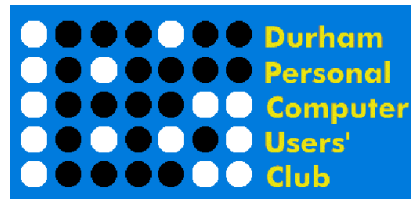
Durham Linux User Groups

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.



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2022-2023

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

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