

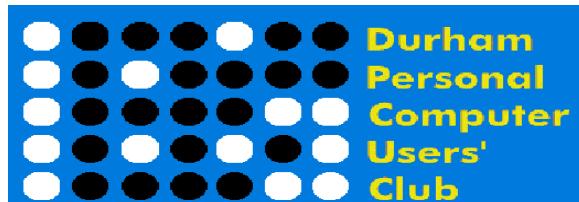
Feb 23

# **PC MONITOR**

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**Durham Personal Computer Users' Club Newsletter**

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## **Jan Prize List**

Our Prize list is of course missing this month due to our inability to have a general meeting at the church.

Hope all are doing well and staying safe in this COVID infection time!

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

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

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## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

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## **Next Meeting**

**Amplifon – Hearing Healthcare**

**by Amplifon Staff**

**On ZOOM – Thursday, Feb 9 2023, 7:00PM**

# FYI

- By Dan Delong

## Sorry! This Canadian university made a breakthrough.

As many disappointed users of battery powered equipment are aware, fully charged Lithium batteries don't always stay charged. **Dalhousie** researchers recently discovered the cause for this 'self-discharging' behaviour. It has to do with both, ambient temperature, and the type of thin plastic material used to separate electrodes within the electrolyte. PET (*polyethylene terephthalate* – like in pop bottles) is the insulating material, made into a very thin film, in Lithium batteries. However, over time, and especially at higher temperatures, it degrades such that a particular *redox* molecule enters the solution; and this is a molecule that shuttles electrons, thereby causing a degradation. This discovery has led to a significant (\$6 million) NSERC grant, to find better materials than PET for separating electrodes.

<https://www.dal.ca/news/2023/01/16/dalhousie-battery-discovery-self-discharge.html>



## Sorry, again! University of Toronto - Researchers have a way to make new anti-cancer drugs in under 30 days.

That's right! **U of T**, already a pioneer in AI, successfully staged a process —**Alpha Fold, by Google**—for identifying the 3-D molecular structure of a cellular protein that causes a liver cancer. The next step; use AI to create a molecule (or several molecules) able to 'gum up the works' of this enabling protein. They then tested these idealized molecules, to find which ones worked best in a 'petri dish'. It took under 30 days to go from finding the cancer's weak spot, to designing an effective drug. If it really works to fight cancer, it should work for other maladies as well.

As with the cure for diabetes, this home grown discovery will be open to others, to develop further in clinical settings.  
*[It should be noted that Google's Deep Mind has already predicted the 'look' of over 200 million human proteins, based on human DNA sequencing.]*

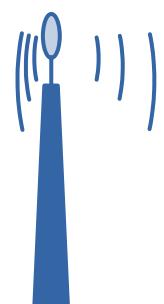
<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2023/01/19/u-of-t-researchers-used-ai-to-discover-a-potential-new-cancer-drug-in-less-than-a-month.html>



## Vicky Eatrideres – Learn this name. *[opinion]*

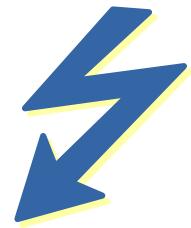
She is the new chair of the **CRTC**. One of her first challenges is taking hold of high prices for Internet and phone services in Canada. Only a handful of remaining independent ISPs still struggle to hold onto their existing customer base; while Rogers, Bell and Telus have, seemingly, cooperated to control the CRTC agenda, giving them supremacy over coverage, while keeping prices high for re-sellers. **Vicky Eatrideres** may announce a fairer price structure for re-sellers, who must piggy-back onto the existing infrastructure of the 'big three'. I have reason to believe communication companies are preparing for this decision. A door-to-door Bell representative offered a \$50/month high speed 'fibre' plan, for one year. This is a departure from earlier refusals to break up their far more expensive Internet/phone/streaming package service. *[My current ISP is offering a new customer referral rebate that would save each customer \$120 per year (both the old and the new customer). A few years ago, this same ISP reduced my bill by \$5 per month when ADSL fees charged by Bell, were reduced by regulation.]*

I hope the same will happen when/if new wholesale prices are lowered for cable, fibre optic, and wireless data.  
<https://www.thestar.com/business/2023/01/21/what-has-the-crtc-done-for-me-new-chair-of-telecom-regulator-takes-aim-at-canadas-high-internet-prices.html>



## The Master's Voice

This article's main focus concerns an effort to recover **Alexander Graham Bell's voice**, stored on very old waxed cardboard cylinders. The method for recovery from such old, mechanically grooved, audio archives – many of which are badly scratched—cannot involve contact with sharp objects; hence the development of a non-destructive optical digital recording process (which can be ‘cleaned up’ digitally during the conversion process, into to decent quality audio file). Over 300 of these old recordings are held in Baddeck, Nova Scotia, and the Volta Laboratory, in Washington, DC.



<https://interestingengineering.com/science/hear-alexander-graham-bells-voice>

## Colour e-Paper

OLED and LED monitors require constant power for displaying images, even those that are static. Not only that, but these images must be refreshed 60 to 120 times per second, whether there is a change in content or not.

*[Yes, there is an advantage to viewing on content on a monitor, for these images can be magnified and scrolled.]* Newspapers and magazines, which long ago, were printed in only black and white, are now quite colourful. Most of them now publish both, a paper, and a digital version, while encouraging patrons to switch entirely to the digital version. Readers might be more apt to switch entirely to digital if the experience was more ‘paper-like’. That is, if coloured e-paper became more vivid and flicker free, not to mention, being able to maintain these images while at the lowest power settings. Recently, as demonstrated at CES 2023, e-paper prototypes have created 50,000 levels of colour at 300 dpi. Commercial availability may be sooner, rather than later, such that we won't feel a difference between paper books and electronic flip books.

*[Apple may use an EPD (Electronic Paper Display) for the outside cover of a new folding phone.]*

<https://techcrunch.com/2023/01/12/e-ink-color-tech-epaper-magazines/>

## DELL Concept Luna

**Luna** is the name given to Dell's vision for new sustainable computers. For example; components snap in (for assembly and user upgrades); waste during manufacture is minimized; recycling potential is maximized. Achieving this goal required relocating a smaller main board, as well as other small boards, and using fewer screws (by a factor of ten). Other components were designed to need fewer connections, while snapping into place made it equally easy to remove them. A thinner screen, and other changes, improve heat dissipation and battery longevity.

<https://www.dell.com/en-us/blog/pushing-the-boundaries-of-sustainable-pc-design-concept-luna/>



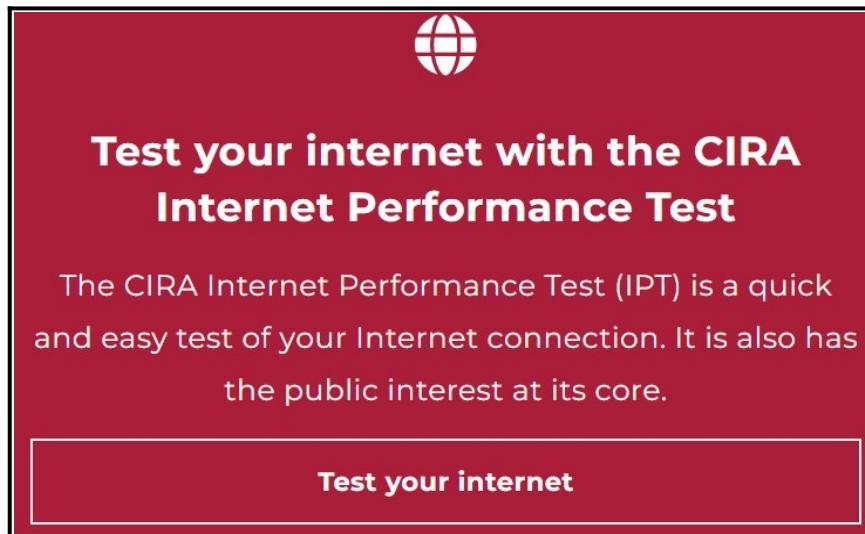
*[A similar computer design already exists, as mentioned last month – [Framework laptops](#).]*

## “Hendersonville High School – Artificial Hand”

If you type the above heading into your browser's search field, prepare to be impressed by this story. A Tennessee high school offers engineering courses, enabling its students to 3D print parts for an artificial hand. These parts are for a classmate who really needs an artificial hand, as his right hand did not fully develop. He can now catch a ball, grip any normal sized objects and lift them, thanks to his classmates. And, his hand is far cheaper than the mostly unaffordable, and somewhat unreliable, hands, made in Germany.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/students-built-robotic-prosthetic-hand-classmate-tennessee-2023-1>

## CIRA – security for Canadians



The banner features a white globe icon at the top center. Below it, the text "Test your internet with the CIRA Internet Performance Test" is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif font. A descriptive paragraph follows: "The CIRA Internet Performance Test (IPT) is a quick and easy test of your Internet connection. It is also has the public interest at its core." At the bottom, a white rectangular button contains the text "Test your internet" in black, bold, sans-serif font.

It is worth a visit to the [CIRA website](#), to learn about CIRA efforts to help us maintain our safety and security online. *[The CIRA sells and maintains the .CA domain names. It is not a Canadian government controlled organization.]* When I clicked on their home connection privacy test; it passed the test. Of further interest is the “**Test your internet**” option, which instantly identifies your ISP (by name), the IP address and location of their sever (*along with Postal Code, and a map of Canada showing the location of all speed tests they've run, including the results of those tests.*) The same page offers to put your personal tests on the map (*with your permission, showing both a download and upload speed test*) along with links providing advice on how to achieve the full advertised speeds.

*[A wired connection should give the best speed test result, but I was pleased with the higher than expected wireless upload speed; and this was before changing my DNS settings.]*

CIRA’s newest free service is their own DNS settings, called “[CIRA Canadian Shield](#)”. These settings will differ from the **Domain Name Servers** used by your ISP, which generally includes a primary DNS server name, and a secondary DNS).

**CIRA’s DNS servers are supposed to be safer; they have already blocked a huge number of bad actors.**

To use Canadian Shield DNS settings on your whole home internet requires access to the web interface of your router (explained clearly). But, this look-up service can alternately be applied separately to each device, or to each browser on any home device.

CIRA Labs is also working on “[Secure Home Gateway](#)”, for those who tend to hook up a lot of **Internet of Things** devices.

**Internet Exchange Points (IXPs)** in Canada, are being configured to improve speed, security and resilience. IXPs may reduce both latency and monthly costs, depending on mutual agreements between nodes.

For those who have dumped **Twitter**, in favour of **Mastodon**, CIRA is in official [partnership with Mastodon](#).

*[We may all be safer, if we circle our wagons, under the banner of the CIRA!]*

## World's Smallest Computer

Much smaller than a grain of rice, this 0.3 mm computer, the “[Michigan Micro Mote](#)”, can report temperatures with high accuracy, hence its suitability for medical research. As long as it can obtain visible light (its power source and method of communication) this little computer can do its job. Cancer tumours are the current target for cell cluster research in mice. Earlier, slightly larger, versions of this tiny computer have also sensed pressure. They do not communicate temperature or pressure constantly, but do so periodically (between sleep times/power gathering times). *[Several years ago, suspicions around the inclusion of “grain-of-rice-sized” circuitry in 5G communications devices made by Huawei, led to cancellation of contracts with China based manufacturers.]*

<https://tech.hindustantimes.com/tech/news/researchers-develop-the-world-s-smallest-computer-smaller-than-a-grain-of-rice-story-s8uFRIwqcxsmz68Vw2mZCN.html>

## I Fell Down!

7+ Congratulations! You qualify for a FREE ProtectWell ACTIVE emergency alert Smartwatch!

Only 300 Canadians qualify for this program - to reserve your free smartwatch, please click the continue button below and provide your details. We'll contact you by telephone within the next 48 hours with more information.

**Continue** press Enter ↵



**PulseAlert**

1-888-236-6756  
support@mypulsemedical.ca



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21 King Street West, 5th floor, Hamilton Ontario, L8P 4W7

\*Offer valid for Annual protection plans by new customers only.

\*\* Available for select Pulse Alert protection plans only. Ask your Life Safety Consultant for more information.

\*\*\*By submitting your information to request a free quote, you consent for Pulse Alert to use automated technology including pre-recorded messages to contact you at the number provided. This number is not required to make a purchase from us.



Yep. While walking in the neighbourhood to take photos of newly fallen snow, with no ID—only a camera (*forgot the cell phone too*), my feet went out from under me. Stunned, from hitting the back of my head on the sidewalk, I slowly gathered my faculties - still concerned about loosing consciousness. Now, safely home, nursing bruised ribs, I noticed a sponsored **Facebook ad for a FREE personal emergency alert watch**. [*Despite having hung up on several unsolicited phone calls, for a different, free, health and safety system, I decided to check this one out.*] **Pulse Alert** really is a Canadian company, located on Hamilton, ON, with a retired RCN officer as its CEO. The company website and the CEO's YouTube video answered some questions, but not all. For example: What does the service cost? (*The CEO says the cost is a bare minimum, affordable by someone on pension. Free devices are for new customers who sign up for a whole year.*) Is the connection directly to 911? (just like phones without a paid SIM card) or must it relay the call through an activated smart phone. Or, is the emergency call directly to a Pulse Alert call centre? How does the watch measure blood pressure, heart rate, and activity level? Is such data kept on a secure server somewhere? If so, where?

[*A decade ago, my mother wore a necklace style alert device that called through a landline. If she pushed the button, she would receive a call back from the company.*]

If Pulse Alert is better, and if the price is reasonable, perhaps it is the way to go.

[*The Canadian Legion appears to like it.*]

<https://get.pulsealert.ca/apply-sw-qfy-ob>

## Lithium metal/Ceramic Solid State Batteries

Solid state battery development is progressing on many fronts, using various compounds and manufacturing processes. Solid state batteries will, eventually, appear in all electric vehicles because they are safer (won't burn up), charge quickly, and they possess a higher energy density. However, some of these batteries have suffered from a perplexing problem—occasional, unexplained, battery failure—until now. Those that are designed with a metallic lithium anode, separated by a solid, thin, ceramic layer, can't seem to withstand any imperfections or bending, without causing short circuits. Electrical conducting channels can open up in the ceramic layer, should there be any flexing or denting of the material. Lithium then flows into those tiny channels causing a ‘short’. [*This discovery may be a breakthrough.*]

<https://techxplore.com/news/2023-01-scientists-illuminate-barrier-next-generation-battery.html>

## Facebook in control

A previous Facebook employee/insider claims that the Facebook app can, under the control of Facebook, drain the battery on your smartphone if you have, unfortunately, been selected. Why on earth would Facebook do this? It appears to offer a testing environment for new app developers, to test power usage when a phone battery is weak. As dangerous as a dead/low battery might be, for the person trying to use their phone in an emergency, he states that Facebook was only considering the ‘greater good’, for all users of the platform, from knowledge gained by doing such experiments.

<https://9to5mac.com/2023/01/31/facebook-apps-battery-drain/>

## Google – MusicLM

Using AI to create original music may be just one of Google's many forthcoming responses to the threat of ChatGPT. And, there may be many other artificial intelligence projects tucked away in the closet at Google; soon to make an appearance in the Play Store.

*[Media sources recently expounded upon ChatGPT, hosted by OpenAI with Microsoft Azure, a 10 B\$ investment in further development, a possible \$42/month upcoming fee, cheating by students, possible digital watermarking and detection by an Ontario student's/programmer's app.]*

Google Research surveyed tens of thousands music files, in dozens of musical genres, for samples that **MusicML** could use to create new music, based on genre and on text instructions. Some of the samples shown here (*link below*) are based solely on text prompts, while some of these pieces are based on descriptions of famous paintings. Output files are hi-fidelity. (*For a review of text-to-lots of text, text-to-images, and text-to-music – <https://youtu.be/2CUKU2iAzAs> )*  
<https://google-research.github.io/seanet/musiclm/examples/>

## Microsoft Designer – beta



For those who wish to test **Designer**, you may soon do so from any of your Microsoft Accounts. Designer can be used to create a stunning online presence, similar to WordPress templates, and is especially useful for those creating an online business, and for non-profits. Start by creating a title and an optional sub-title. Designer will select suitable images for the main heading and then offer to adjust thematic colours. All text is editable, in a variety of fonts.

*[I received an invitation to participate in the first release. However, the wait list should be short.]*

[Microsoft Designer 2023 - Stunning designs in a flash](#)

## Kasa Smart Dimmer Switch by TP-Link



At under \$30, this wired switch listens to Alexa, Cortana, and Google Assistant voice commands, or it responds to phone app commands, or it can be managed by manual touches; it can dim both incandescent and LED bulbs (those that are dimmable). ON/OFF can be set up on a schedule, or when you enter/leave the house. Automatic gradual dimming may help a child fall into sleep. Control is via 2.4 GHz wireless.

[https://www.amazon.ca/TP-Link-Dimmer-Switch-1-Pack-HS220/dp/B079775ZZQ/ref=sr\\_1\\_7](https://www.amazon.ca/TP-Link-Dimmer-Switch-1-Pack-HS220/dp/B079775ZZQ/ref=sr_1_7)

## Axis of Easy

... is a weekly report on security issues faced on the Web. Author and owner of Easy DNS, Marc Jefovic, writes it.

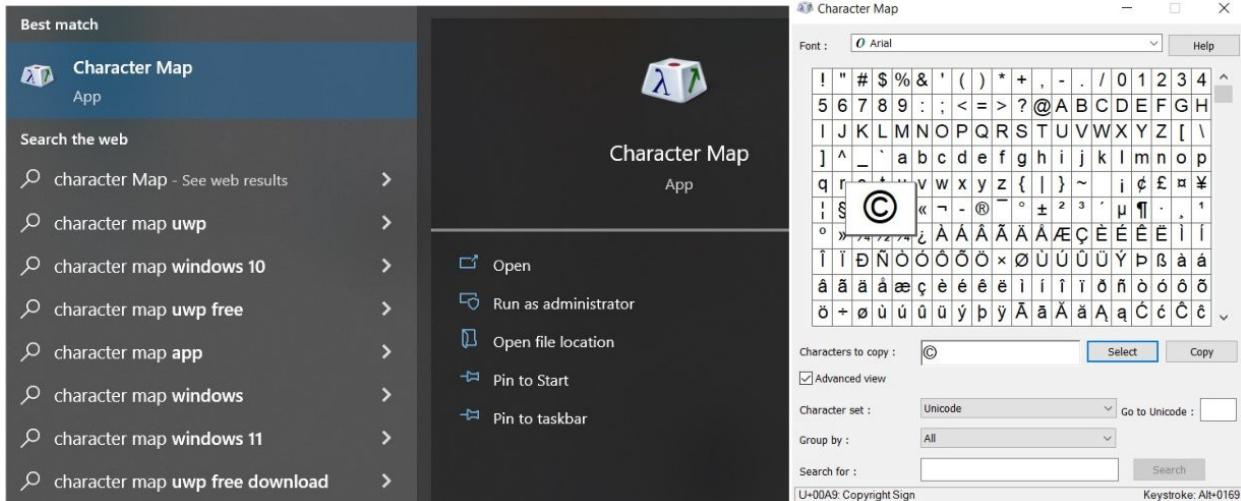
This issue features:

- GoTo's data breach is even worse than previously thought
- Social Networking Giant Meta Sues Surveillance Firm Voyager Labs for Unlawful Data Scraping
- North Korean Cyber Criminal Group Diversifies Tactics in Illicit Revenue Generation
- Mailchimp Strikes Again: 133 Accounts Affected in Latest Data Breach
- Doctors' group accuses drug maker of buying CBS's 60 Minutes story

<https://axisofeasy.com/aoe/axisofeasy-283-gotos-data-breach-is-even-worse-than-previously-thought/>



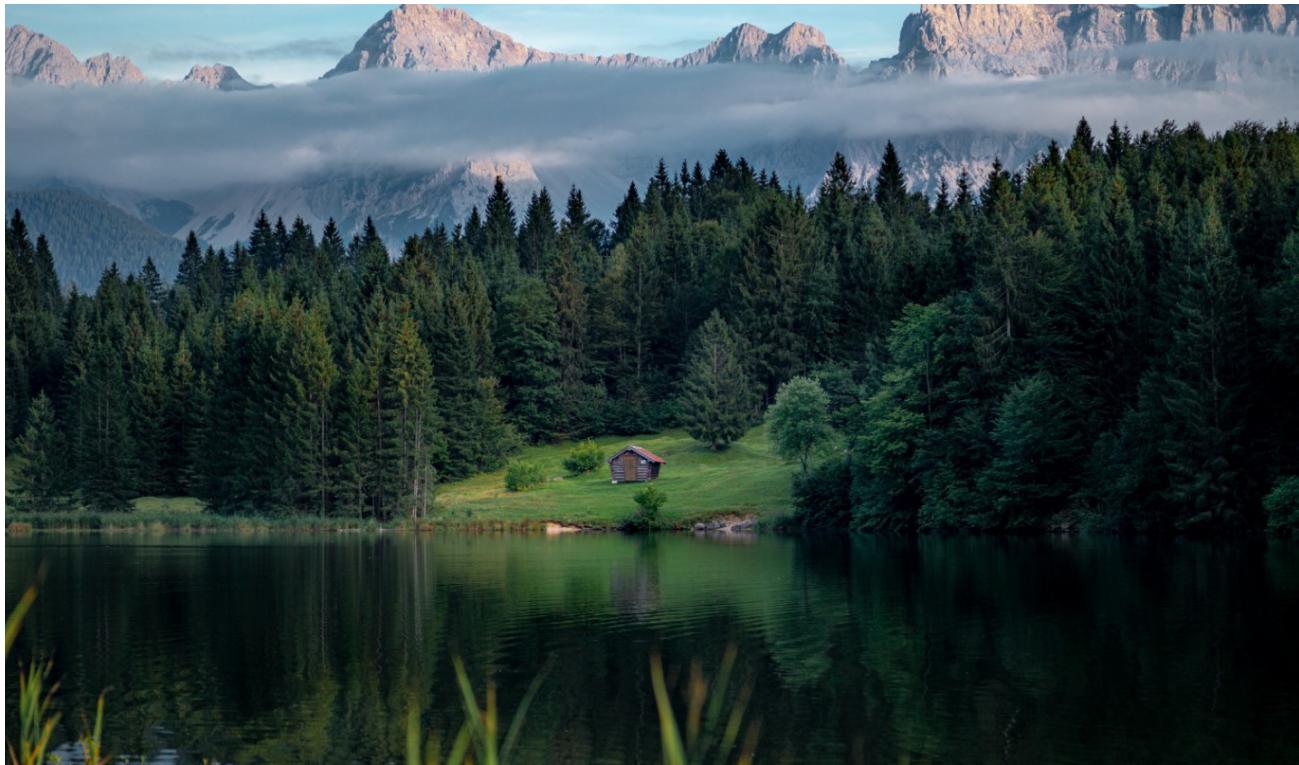
## The Windows Character Map is still there.



Since the days of Windows 3.1, many unique characters, not shown on the keys, have been available for composing. Some of the most used ‘special characters’ are offered by ‘shifting’ the top row of numeral keys. Others, unless you remember the numerical code for those missing from the keyboard (often needed for expressing currency, accent marks and foreign language characters) are harder to find. That is, unless you use an impeded character map. In the Windows “Search” (*lower left*), type “**Character Map**”. There may be slight variations in appearance on different Windows Operating Systems, but the character map you see should reflect the characters available when that particular OS was made. Generally, Copy/Paste will do the job. My Windows 10 Pro OS also provided the character code for the **Copyright character** (U+00A9) and the equivalent Keystroke (Alt+0169).

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### FREE Linux Wallpaper



## DPCUC President's Notes

They say that February is the coldest month of the year, but I must disagree. The same month that gives us low temperatures also gives us warm and loving thoughts on Valentine's day. Further, by now, most of the drudge of our New Year's resolutions are forgotten. Great! No more bland diets or boring exercise! However, it is also a time to step up and ask:

Am I going to start getting stuff done this year?

Last month I extended an invitation to all to attend the executive meetings. This is strictly a no-obligation offer and will let you see how the club really works and the fun we all have making it happen for all of you.

The offer still stands. Email me or any of the club executives and we will be happy to forward you the zoom credentials to attend the executive meeting held at 7:30 PM on the third Thursday of each month.

In last month's newsletter, I also mentioned the upcoming May elections. In order for the club to remain fresh and fun, it is vital to have your participation. Please give this some thought. There are always openings available.

Another matter I think should be cleared up is that of club membership dues. You may have noticed that there are none. The reason for this is that without room rentals and insurance premiums, there are very little in the way of expenses. So, informally, no dues. This unofficial policy is now official. Until the club resumes in-person meetings we will not be charging membership dues. Free! Invite friends!

Finally, everyone should know that we currently meet twice a month, at 7 PM on zoom (a Linux meeting on the first Thursday and a general meeting on the second Thursday). This costs nothing to attend. No gasoline; no taxi; no Uber or Lyft! If you have trouble with zoom, please reach out for help; We *are* a computer club after all!

Finally; As always; Please, Pray for Peace in Ukraine.

Peter Camilleri, President DPCUC.

# Linux in the News

by Alex Morrison



## [John the Ripper: Password Cracking Tutorial and Review](#)

John the Ripper is a popular open-source password cracking tool that can be used to perform brute-force attacks. Learn more here.

## [New Slax Releases Make Persistent Changes Up to 10 Times Faster with DynFileFS](#)

[0 Comments](#)

Slax 15.0.1 and 11.6.0 distributions are now available for download based on Slackware-current and Debian GNU/Linux 11.6 “Bullseye”, and featuring DynFileFS 3.0 for faster persistent storage change.

## [LibreOffice 7.5 Open-Source Office Suite Officially Released, This Is What's New](#)

[0 Comments](#)

LibreOffice 7.5 open-source office suite is now available for download. This release comes with major improvements to dark mode support, new application and MIME-type icons, as well as many other changes.

## [Xfce's Apps Update for January 2023: New Releases of Thunar, Xfce Panel, and Whisker Menu](#)

[1 Comment](#)

Xfce's apps update for January 2023 is here with news about new releases of Thunar, Ristretto, Screenshooter, Task Manager, Settings, and more. Here's the roundup!

## [Xfce 4.20 Desktop Environment Will Finally Bring Wayland Support](#)

[2 Comments](#)

The upcoming Xfce 4.20 desktop environment will finally offer support for the next-generation Wayland display server, as well as many other improvements and new features across all of its components.

## [Export a manpage to \(almost\) any format](#)

- RS1 Linux Tools; By Ricardo Sanz (Posted by [ricardo\\_rs1](#) on Feb 1, 2023 6:22 PM EDT)
- Story Type: [Tutorial](#)

At some point you may want to export a manpage to a file. Using ‘man’ options, you can convert a manual page to PDF, plain text or GROFF, among other formats.

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

# Linux – Lightweight Linux      By Alex Morrison



If you still have an old Desktop or Laptop lying around then there may be a way to restore it to life using a version of Linux. I will list a few and talk about them in this article.

The following are not all the possible lightweight Linux distributions but only a few I thought might be of interest. I also list them in no particular order.

## **Q4OS**

Download it here --> <https://q4os.org/downloads1.html> I suggest the fourth version in the list [[Q4OS Gemini, Trinity, install-cd - 32bit / i386](#)] as it fits on a PC or Laptop with as little as a 300MHz CPU / 256MB RAM / 3GB disk.

You will find Q4OS to be fast and well suited as a simple desktop system.

## **Slax**

Download it here --> <https://www.slax.org/?lang=es//en/download.php> The third one in the list is best for old machines. [[Slax – v11.4.0 slax-32bit-11.4.0.iso](#)] as it runs well on a USB or Desktop and has most basic software included – other software is easy to install as it is based on either Slackware or Debian. Slax will need 128 meg ram for offline use or 256 meg ram for a browser and also needs an i686 or newer cpu.

## **Zorin OS Lite**

Download it here --> <https://zorin.com/os/download/15/lite/32/> Zorin OS Lite will need 512 meg ram and 700 mhz single core in either 54 bit or 32 bit. Zorin is a well designed system and will run well on most PCs of the last 15 years.

## **Peppermint OS**

Download it here --> <https://peppermintos.com/guide/downloading/> Peppermint is a fine modern desktop still supporting 32 bit.

## **AntiX Linux**

Download it here --> <https://antixlinux.com/download/> Pick a source for the download in Canada it is usually faster.

Minimum requirements are 256 meg ram – but to run any but the smallest browser try 512 meg ram.

I started looking for a few lightweight Linux systems for a friend who wanted to remove his Windows XP from an old 32 bit Celeron laptop with 256 meg ram and a 40 Gig hard drive. I suggested he upgrade the ram to 512 or greater and use a larger hard drive and he might try any of the systems listed above or an old favorite of mine Mageia Linux

## **Mageia Linux**

Download it here --> <https://www.mageia.org/en/downloads/alternative/> The requirements for 32 bit are 512 meg ram and a 20 gig hard drive.

# Sudoku

Feb 2023

by Alex Morrison

**EASY**

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

**MED**

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

**HARD**

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

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

<https://www.boatloadpuzzles.com/playcrossword><http://www.freecodes.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****Details****BEGINNER**

**Co-ordinator:** Ed Goudge

**Location:** Call for Location

**Telephone:** 905-926-9003

**Date:** 3rd Thursday of month 7:00 PM

**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

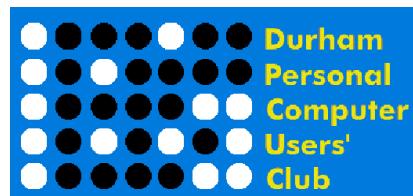
**Digital Camera Group**

**Co-ordinator:** Ed Goudge

**Location:** Call for Location

**Telephone:** 905-926-9003

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of month at 7:00PM

**DPCUC  
EXECUTIV  
E  
  
2021-2022**

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<b>Membership</b>	<b>David Odynski</b>	<a href="mailto:odynskid@sympatico.ca">odynskid@sympatico.ca</a>	905-576-6325
<b>Librarian</b>	<b>Dan Delong</b>	<a href="mailto:dandelong@timetraces.com">dandelong@timetraces.com</a>	905-623-6975
<b>Program Director</b>	<b>TBA</b>		
<b>Advertising Director</b>	<b>TBA</b>		
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**Newsletter  
Information**

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