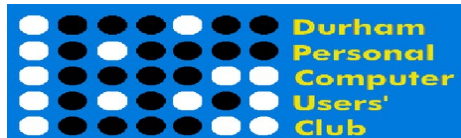**July 2025**

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/

Next Meeting

Libre Office vs Only Office

Hosted by Peter Camilleri

On ZOOM – **Thursday, July 10 2025, 7:00PM**

FYI   **- By Dan Delong**

Zoox Robotaxi

Soon to appear on the streets of **Las Vegas** *(later, San Francisco, Austin, and Miami)* will be Amazon's foray into public transportation. I assume payment will depend on a smart phone app/wallet. These self driving vehicles will transport patrons within a limited city core area, at speeds up to 45mph.
Zoox has more to say about the present and future of this business in a '**journal'.**
https://zoox.com/

Windowa 10 Extended Security Updates (ESU)

Coming in July\August, to all Windows 10 users (who have not installed Windows 11) Microsoft offers a $30USD solution, along with sync. backups to the cloud and 1000 points. This fee will keep Windows 10 safe from malware for another year.
https://overclock3d.net/news/software/microsoft-offers-extended-windows-10-security-updates-but-theres-a-catch/

Kodak Ultra Mini Portable Projector

Digital projectors, with enough power to throw a 50 or 60 inch display from 14 feet away, are getting quite small. This one also has a battery and speaker *(or, you can plug in external powered speakers)*. Get all this for the current price of $233.09CAD. The source for its video content can be via USB or HDMI, from a game console, a smart phone, a computer, or a micro SD.
https://www.bestbuy.ca/en-ca/product/kodak-ultra-mini-portable-projector-75-lumens-hd-led-dlp-rechargeable-projector-100-display-built-in-speaker-hdmi-usb-and-micro-sd-white/12485962

Gemini by Google Reads Out Texts, and more

This **Gizmodo** article follows a trail of evidence showing that Google's Gemini will continue to gather user data, including personal messages, in order to enhance AI driven personal assistants (**agentic AI**). **It can't be turned off!** If Google did not poke into personal messages, voice recordings, location followings, it would be unable to train your smart personal assistant (or **agentic AI,** as they call it). For some early users , who also own a large library of photos, Google uses AI to classify images as to content. This enables a new service called, "**Ask Photos**". The, requesting Gemini for a type of photo, like "all with pets" or "best photos for my phone background", will bring up all images suitable to that query *(from your personal photos only)*.
https://gizmodo.com/google-to-gemini-users-were-going-to-look-at-your-texts-whether-you-like-it-or-not-2000620141

AI Will Turn Us (and the U.S.) Into Morons

Results from search engines (the OLD WAY) may still be better than results from AI (the NEW WAY) as shown by this article.
https://gizmodo.com/multiple-studies-now-suggest-that-ai-will-make-us-morons-2000620811

Super Cook

Click or type, to add the ingredients in your fridge or pantry, and get recipes that use just those items; this saves on waste. The app assumes you have salt, pepper and water. Since I had a lot of items in my list, it returned almost four thousand recipes.
[Lots of pop-ups can get in the way while using this site.]
https://www.supercook.com/

OnePlus – smaller watches

Smart watches are typically rather large, allowing for clearer displays and longer battery life. Traditionally, ladies watches have always been smaller than men's watches. Among the latest **OnePlus** products will be a smaller smart watch for both sexes.
https://gizmodo.com/oneplus-watch-3-gets-smaller-size-because-not-everybody-has-hulk-wrists-2000620671

Go Wireless, for Listening

Cut the cord, while improving the sound, with a small device that plugs into any standard audio out port. The **AirFly** transmitter sends out blue-tooth audio to Apple air pods, or most any ear pods or headsets that accept blue-tooth. **AirFly** also claims to improve the listening experience on flights. [$60CAD, or the cheaper $40 version]

https://www.bestbuy.ca/en-ca/product/twelve-south-airfly-pro-bluetooth-transmitter-black/17301304

ClearClick VHS2DVD

ClearClick sells many digital converters. Most are more expensive than **NHS2DVD** for digitizing video tapes. (As far as I know, the accompanying software does not copy commercial tapes with digital rights content.)
[I have found that software downloads for one brand of digitizer may also work for off brand hardware... some hardware as low as $30CAD.]

In any case, the *mpeg* files created do not have to be placed on a DVD; they can be copied to thumb drives. Old family videos can then be passed along to descendants. [$70USD] **ClearClick** upscalers will cost more.

Video Game Treats ADHD

EndeavorRx is the name of a game that seems to help children with **ADHD** *(Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)* especially those on the hyperactivity side. **Akili** promotes this game.

Game difficulty adjusts automatically. The content and style of the game was designed by neuroscientists. This has prompted mental health researchers to employ games diagnostically, possibly for treating patients who subscribe to **thymia AI**. Thymia diagnoses not only ADHD, but many other disorders, suffered by billions of people... depression being the major disorder scored by the app.
https://thymia.ai/

CabinPulse Remote Monitoring

This Canadian remote monitoring device can work on just about any cell provider's signal, as low as one bar, to deliver messages about temperature, air quality, humidity, and poqwe outages, when set up in a remote location. Should main power fail, the battery back up lasts three days. Should cottage temperature fall below freezing, a **CabinPulse** warning text message allows the owner to take action. Should the **CabinPulse** 'hear' the sound of a smoke detector, it will send an alert, within five minutes. Bluetooth is included for future upgrades to more nearby sensors, yet to be developed. [$199 CAD with a $14/mo CAD service fee – coverage is most of Canada, US, Mexico]
https://cabinpulse.com/

Sideclick remote

The **Sideclick** fits snugly onto a Firestick TV remote, or an Apple TV remote, taking the place of all other remotes for sound bar and TV control.
https://www.sideclickremotes.com/products/sideclick-universal-remote-control-attachment-for-amazon-fire-tv-streaming-device

TikTok's Cleaners are upset.

Offshore contract employees for **Byte Dance** (somehow also associated with **Telus**), and mostly located in Turkey, are experiencing mental health issues, and want help from their employers. Turkey has given approval to unionize, but these big employers have found ways to block them.
https://restofworld.org/2025/tiktok-moderators-turkey/

Oukitel RT3

Sometimes I run across a 'new' brand name. This one, **Outkitel,** makes phones – some of them ruggedized. But, the **Oukitel RT3 model** is both a phone and an 8-inch, tablet – similar to an iPad, in that it has touch, cameras front and back, expansion ports, and it can take up to two phone SIMs. Sure, Android 12 is not the latest version of the Android OS, nor is the CPU as strong as in expensive smart phones, nor do the cameras match specs of the newest smart pones. Still, the **RT3** gives 'bang for the buck'. With a $190USD price, this may explain why it is out of stock on the company's web site. Amazon may still have a few.   Oukitel RT3 – OUKITEL

Devices that Listen to You

As expected almost any voice activated device (including smart phones) can listen to our voices full time. Other examples are smart TVs and appliances. This article exposed a few more...
https://www.aol.com/13-common-gadgets-home-might-163926577.html

Collection of Online Tools Website

Here's another website that follows the same pattern as above. Although it looks like an AI creation (to me) users may still find it useful. I tried the OCR tool, for extracting text from a newspaper article image, and it worked extremely well. Many other tools are obviously AI focused.
[Other, similar sites often allow for a few no fee requests, then ask for money.]
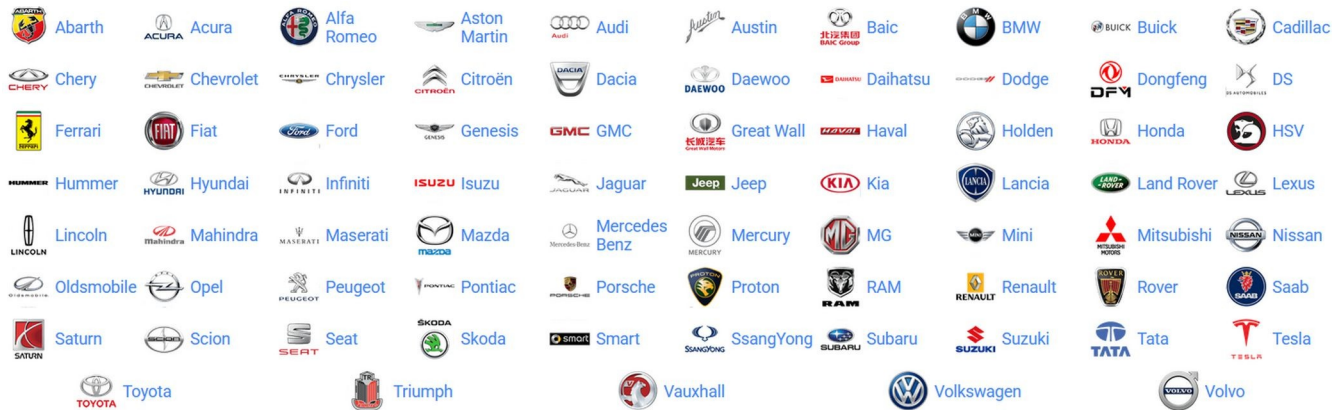https://www.prepostseo.com/

WiFi7 is Proving Faster

The above is a qualified statement, depending on a lot of "**ifs**". Among those ifs; Do you have a WiFi7 router? Do you have fast Internet? Do you have a computer that can be updated to WiFi7? Is it worth the cost? Routers, with WiFi7, are becoming more prevalent (starting at about $170CAD) So is high speed Internet. WiFi7 PCI boards start at about $60CAD for desktops. Laptops present a bigger challenge, as only some newer laptops contain a WiFi7 card. Those that came with a **WiFi6e M.2** card can be upgraded to a **WiFi7 M.2** card quite easily (for about $125CAD), as shown in the following link. A 50% throughput increase is claimed (which is appealing mostly to Gamers).
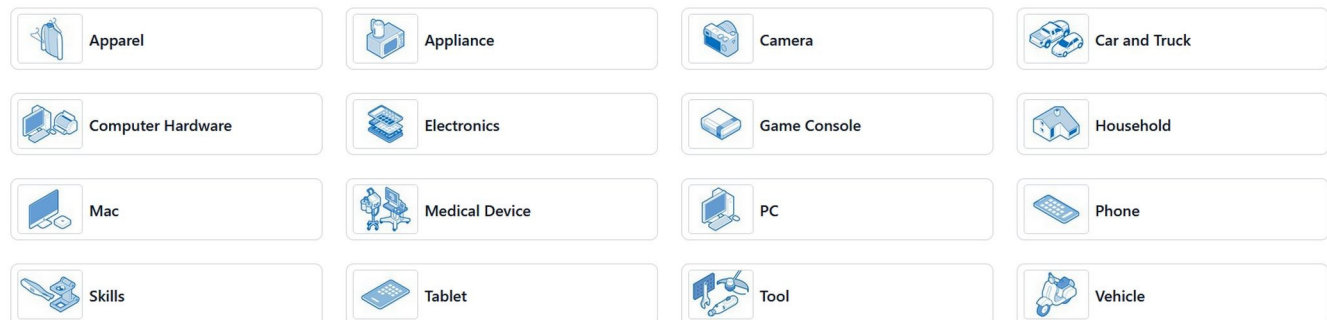https://www.tomshardware.com/networking/wifi7-upgrade-laptop

Vehicle Problem?

By describing a car's problem, or browsing through hints, you may find a diagnosis and a DIY fix for the problem.
[But, watch out for the free download pop-ups. They are many, and they are quite annoying.]
https://www.startmycar.com/ca

Fix It in General

I'm starting to wonder if these cooking and fix it websites have been built completely with AI. If so, I'd prefer to use a smart search feature that does not introduce pop-ups.
[Sites like this would be far more useful with less click bait.]
https://www.ifixit.com/

Computational Chemistry

Microsoft Research has made gains in predicting theoretical effects of more complex chemical compounds (yet to be made in the lab) through computational 'thinking'. Moving up, from predicting simpler, less complex, reactions, to the level of complex chemistry *(as in organic chemistry for medicine)* has been the bane of older super computers, until machine learning came along.

Breaking bonds, breaking ground: Advancing the accuracy of computational chemistry with deep learning - Microsoft Research

Wild Fire Detection in 20 Minutes

Google Research is aiding in the development of lower earth orbit satellites devoted to early forest fire detection. Google supplies the infrared sensors and the 'smarts' (AI), along with all the data crunching needed for future predictions – based on historical fire behaviours.

https://blog.google/outreach-initiatives/sustainability/google-ai-wildfire-detection/

"Honey, I shrunk the Pill!"

Caltech developers have made a small sensory capsule that you swallow. As it passes through the alimentary canal, measurements are recorded relative to gut health, as well as to overall health: items like acidity, glucose levels, temperature, and serotonin. This removes the need for biopsies, in some cases. A single **PillTrek** is 25 millimetres long, and powered by a couple of small button batteries. *[Camera pills have already been in use, to perform endoscopies.]*

https://www.caltech.edu/about/news/new-smart-capsule-to-study-the-health-of-the-gi-tract

Getting OFF US Tech

Free email accounts, searches, web hosts, and free office apps are mostly supplied by American businesses. Paris Mark describes his journey to find alternatives to US Tech. However, those who drive newer vehicles, with screens attached to Android or Apple services, will have a harder time getting off American technology. The post *(linked below)* provides alternatives.

https://www.disconnect.blog/p/getting-off-us-tech-is-no-easy-task

One of our club members passed along a warning about using the **Google password manager,** especially when accessing the Web via a chromium based browser, like **Chrome** or **Brave**. He recounts the steps by which he was seriously hacked, although he had always practised 'safe' computing.

https://youtu.be/BB0c-7fk4G4?si=HZXKnhbTfGa36de9

DPCUC President's Notes   by Peter Camilleri

For this month, I have two things I want to discuss on the topic of taking back control of the computers we paid for.

The first has to do with Ad Blockers and YouTube. I was noticing an increasing number of times that YouTube would pop up an annoying message about sluggish performance and a link to a web page that blamed ad blockers. It seems that the slow down is being caused by the pop-up message and is a deliberate action taken by Google. I am not sure if this is just a Chrome thing or if other browsers are affected. In any case, I have a partial fix to this attack.

In Chrome:
- Click on the three dots menu and select Settings.
- In Settings select Privacy and security.
- Select Site settings
- Select View permissions and data stored across sites
- Find YouTube and click
- Find www.YouTube.com and click
- Find the setting for Notifications and select Block
- Exit settings and close Chrome (to allow the settings to "take")

This fix "mostly" works. It seems that the message will sometimes appear, but it's mostly associated with actual rather than fake slow-downs.

Secondly: The other thing I find exciting is a tool called "Flyby11" that allows most computers to run Windows 11. I need to study this more, but the software can be found at:

https://www.majorgeeks.com/files/details/flyby11.html

More on this as I learn more.

Finally, as wars rage on unabated, Pray for Peace.
Peter Camilleri, President DPCUC.

Linux in the News   by Alex Morrison

NeuroShellOS: A New Concept for an AI-Native Linux Distribution Emerges

NeuroShellOS is a visionary concept for an AI-native Linux distribution that integrates a fine-tuned local Large Language Model (LLM) directly into its core system architecture.

Debian 13 Installer Now Supports Rescuing of Btrfs Systems Installed via Calamares
0 Comments

Debian 13 "Trixie" installer gets a second Release Candidate with support for rescuing Btrfs systems installed via the Calamares installer, as well as other enhancements.

Libreboot 25.06 Open-Source BIOS/UEFI Firmware Adds More Hardware Support
0 Comments

Libreboot 25.06 open-source BIOS/UEFI firmware is now available for download with support for new hardware, as well as other improvements. Here's what's new!

Thunderbird 140 Adds 'Mark as Spam' and 'Mark as Starred' Actions to Notifications
0 Comments

Mozilla Thunderbird 140 open-source email client is now available for download with various new features and many bug fixes. Here's what's new!

digiKam 8.7 Released With AI Auto-Rotation Tool, OpenCV OpenCL + CUDA Support

- Phoronix (Posted by bob on Jul 3, 2025 10:55 AM CST)
- Groups: KDE; Story Type: News Story

- The digiKam 8.7 professional photo management software has been released for this KDE/Qt-aligned open-source solution for digital photography...

- Full story
- Read more
- 0 threads and 0 posts

Linux – Try A Different Distro   by Alex Morrison

If you have a spare old PC you are not using why not experiment with a Linux distro.

I have two old computers that at one time ran versions of Windows.

Windows 10 was on an old desktop PC [Pentium class] that was not being used.

Windows 11 was preinstalled on a small Beelink mini pc [Celeron N100] that I purchased from Amazon for about $200.

Now I use both machines to test different Linux distro.

Windows 10 was replaced with Manjaro Gnome so I could see what Gnome offered as a desktop.

Gnome is not a system that was of interest to me so it will be replaced soon with another Linux system [To Be Determined]

Windows 11 on the Mini PC was replaced by CachyOS using KDE. Cachy OS is still being tested by me.
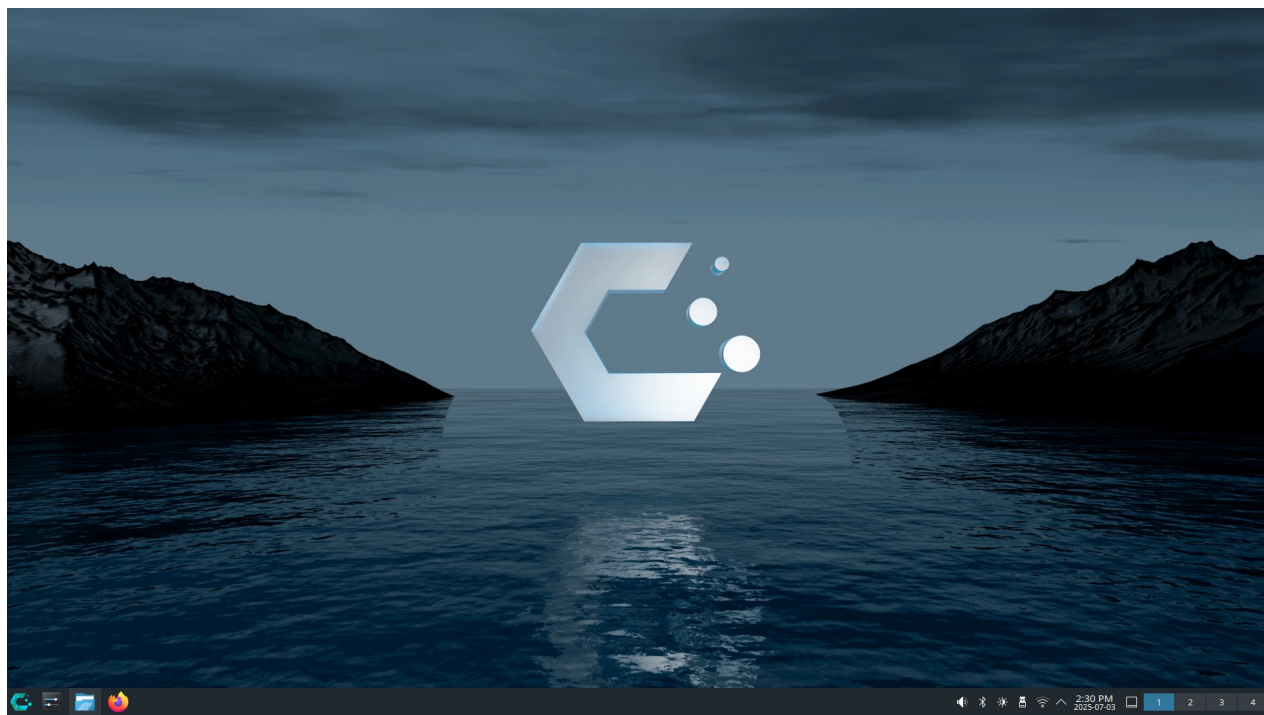
Below I will show a screen shot of each system as it appears when first booted.

Manjaro Gnome

Clicking the Small square of dots to the left of the Firefox icon launches a program screen full of icons.

CachyOS KDE

Like any other Kde system [or most Windows desktops] clicking the small icon on the far left of the bottom taskbar launches a program list.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this short article just make use of an old or unused PC and install a Linux system and give it a try. You might like it!

Sudoku   **July 2025**   by Alex Morrison

EASY

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

Sudoku

The game boards on this page were produced using **Sudokuki** on PC Linux 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

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

HARD

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

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

https://www.boatloadpuzzles.com/playcrossword

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.
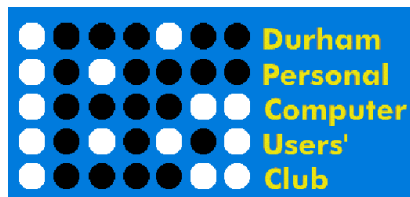
Special Interest Groups

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.

**DPCUC
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2022-2023

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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.