



OTTAWA PC NEWS

Vol. 15 No. 8

The newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group

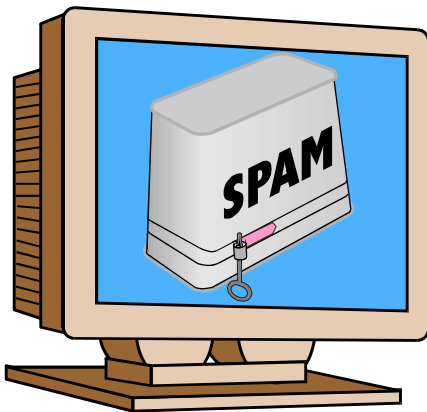
October 1998

PUB II News

The evils of spam *By Chris Taylor*

Spam—unsolicited e-mail that generally tries to sell you something or gets you involved in get-rich-quick schemes—is rarely welcomed by anyone. Users have their mailbox clogged with junk mail and pay for the time to download it from their POP3 server. ISPs (Internet Service Providers) get complaints from their users, lose valuable server space and lose bandwidth. I have yet to meet anyone who is happy about the current state of spam on the Internet.

But efforts to curtail it may be as bad or worse than the spam. Some PUB II users have experienced this inconvenience. For a month, clients of the local ISP, Storm, were unable to receive e-mail from PUB II due to Storm's efforts to reduce the level of spam reaching their mail servers.



PUB II uses an ADSL (Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line) connection that provides a low-cost, high-bandwidth, constant connection to the Internet. Unfortunately, spammers have discovered that they can get an ADSL connection and use a computer to act as a relay host for SMTP (Internet) e-mail. By acting as a relay host, it can mask the true

origin of spam. Users have difficulty tracking the source to complain about the unrequested and unwanted junk e-mail. Running a port scanner on the subnet used by PUB II revealed 10% of the addresses hosted SMTP services. This seems like a rather large percentage; however, Storm's assertion may indeed be correct.

When Storm reached this conclusion, they decided to fight the problem by configuring their SMTP host to refuse any connections from machines in the adsl.bellglobal.com domain. Since all ADSL lines from Sympatico are within that domain, it effectively blocked any spam being relayed by these SMTP hosts. Unfortunately, it also

blocked legitimate e-mail coming from hosts such as PUB II.

I reconfigured the Listserve portion of PUB II to route all the traffic through Sympatico's SMTP host. Then, Storm could not block it without affecting a lot of legitimate e-mail. However, due to the nature of the Wildcat Interactive Net Server (WINS) software used to run PUB II I could not redirect normal e-mail in the same way.

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Next meeting: **WEDNESDAY, October 7th, 1998**

Listserve part two

by Chris Taylor

I remember someone once told me about the Humor Listserve. It sounded magical; all I had to do was send an e-mail and I would receive 10-20 jokes a day. It cost nothing; if I wanted to contribute, I could e-mail my joke to a single address and have it distributed world-wide—heady stuff.

The OPCUG has entered the world of heady stuff. Now, we have a Listserve as part of PUB II. Using it, you can bring most PUB II messaging to you, rather than retrieving it from PUB II. The Listserve is also used to distribute the electronic editions (plain text and Acrobat formats) of the OPCUG newsletter. Finally, we have started an announcements list to help the Board of Directors keep you informed. Wouldn't it have been nice if you had received an e-mail during ice storm 97 to inform you that the general meeting was still going to happen?

Like all new ways of doing things, this form of messaging has its rules and quirks. While not particularly difficult, it is sometimes easier to grasp the concepts if you have a walk-through—the focus of the October 7th general meeting. I will bring my computer and we will provide a live demonstration of the OPCUG Listserve. Come on out and see what the Listserve can do for you!

Any spare time after the Listserve presentation will be used to demonstrate

other features of PUB II. If you have “requests for topics” please let me know in advance and I will try to make sure I am prepared. You can contact me by e-mail at Chris.Taylor@opcug.ottawa.com, CTaylor@NRCan.gc.ca, or at the group's answering machine 723-1329.



Calendar

Meetings	Date	Time and venue
OPCUG General Meeting	October 7 th : Listserve (Part Two) See <i>October Feature Presentation</i> , above. November 4 th : Computer Peripherals	7:30 p.m. - National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa Paradox Users Group	Third Thursday of each month	6:15 pm - Inly Systems, 1221a Cyrville Rd.
FOX Pro/Developers SIG	To be announced	7:15 pm - Sir Jean Talon Building Conference room, Tunney's Pasture, Holland Ave. (north of Scott St.)
PIG SIG (or is it WING SIG?)	October 7 th After all the other SIGS - All questions, be they serious or not	“Good Times” cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe

Microsoft Publisher 98 By James Fridrich

Congratulations! You've done it! Like a growing number of Canadians, you finally made the leap from the corporate world and started your own business. It's a big step and it's exciting, although the startup costs seem overwhelming. You decide to do most of the marketing yourself since a one-person business can't afford a marketing department. Besides, the wonderful world of computerization has enabled the novice entrepreneur, like yourself, to enter the professional desktop publishing industry. The pricing on page layout software makes you sweat a little. Microsoft Publisher 98 is a fraction of the price of Quark Xpress, Adobe Pagemill and Corel Ventura. You decide that financially it is the best alternative, but is this the right software for your specific needs?

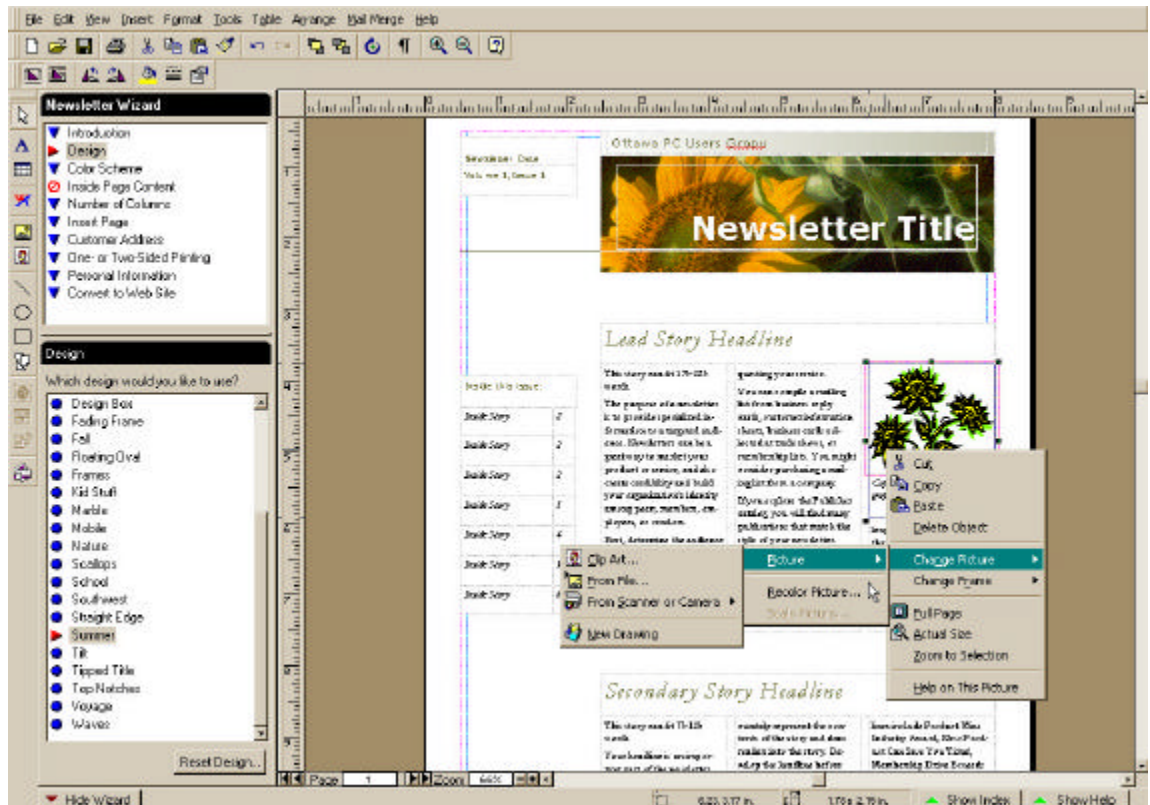
What comes in the box?

For \$99 plus tax you get: one CD-ROM containing Publisher 98 program files, 179 fonts, 210 backgrounds, 13,080 clipart images, 15 borders, 150 GIF images, 1600 ready made design templates, a trial version of Microsoft's "Picture It" image editing program, and of course Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.0.

There is also a 100-page softcover book entitled "Microsoft Publisher 98 Companion." I expected it to be a user's manual; instead, the Companion is an introduction to basic graphic and web design concepts as well as an Internet primer. For example, it contains general information on designing with colour and the value of establishing a colour scheme. One third of the 100 pages of the Publisher 98 Companion are hardcopy previews of fonts, clipart, and styles for easy browsing. There are no installation instructions; the focus is to introduce and educate novice users about desktop publishing and web design.

Using Publisher 98

When the program is first run you choose one of the 1600 themes for: templates, brochures, catalogues, newsletters or business cards. These design sets help to ensure that projects have a consistent design. I found several which



looked interesting but if you're concerned about originality you can modify the elements to create your own templates. If you do like the ready-made designs, using them can save a lot of time since the wizard would set up the entire template and colour scheme based on a few keystrokes. The template wizard can make global template design changes. If you suddenly change your mind about some earlier editing, the Undo feature works for up to 20 actions.

The user interface

Users can create text styles and apply them to the entire document. Modification tools for each picture or text frame are accessible with a right-click menu option. There are few toolbars to clutter up the desktop. This simplicity

Continued on next page

is nice; it is less complex and easier to learn than some of the high-end desktop publishing programs. Two things bothered me: page-up and page-down keys scroll the current page instead of changing to the next page and the distracting animated paperclip, called the Microsoft Office Assistant, remained on the desktop after help files were summoned.

Web publishing

One excellent feature is the web conversion wizard: a time-saver for converting your publication into web pages. I found the web pages looked very crisp; however, while examining the construction of the first page in a WYSIWYG HTML editor I found that the wizard converted the page elements into a series of embedded tables. Avoid editing the tables; instead, make changes directly in Publisher 98 and then convert them again to HTML. The site preview mode loads your native browser and displays your newly designed webpage. The wizard works only with HTML (not java or javascript); a search for "java" in the Help index was not successful.

Automated checking tools

Automatic spell checking is appreciated. The Web Site Wizard checks download time, guides the inexperienced user through errors in web design and explains how to fix them. It even lets you fix the problems on-the-fly. If it encounters a problem, it gives a brief explanation; a detailed explanation is optional. The design checker helps to teach the user the basics of good design by correcting errors: for example, misaligned objects and overlapping frames. I found the learn-as-you-use features

excellent. Of course, Microsoft provides extensive help files to educate novice users who take the time to read them.

Ask the expert

Should you require the services of a professional printer you will need to make an imagesetter print file. I tested the Microsoft Publisher 98 Imagesetter Printer driver included with the application. I generated a print file (PRN), then checked its integrity by distilling it into a portable document file (PDF) and opening it in Adobe Acrobat. Although the PDF was successful it is ultimately the PRN file which guarantees imagesetter success. Previous versions of this driver caused problems at government in-house printing departments. A local pre-press expert stated that Publisher PRN files work but the colour separations are too simplistic for complex jobs. I believe that Publisher 98 was intended for use with standard inkjet or laser printers.

In a nutshell

Experienced desktop publishers—particularly those dealing with a commercial printer—may want to dig deeper into their pockets to invest in a high-end application with advanced features. Desktop publishing and web design neophytes, on the other hand, should find this package is an excellent primer and user-friendly tool for internal publishing needs. It is probably the best choice for many one-person businesses.



Club News

Electronic newsletter *by Jocelyn Doire*

Gradually, I'm receiving messages to remove members from my old newsletter mailing list and I'd like to thank those who took the time to transfer to Listserve, the new automatic mailing list, available on PUB II. All members may subscribe to the newsletter electronic mailing list: send the message "subscribe newslettertxt" or "subscribe newsletterPDF" (without the quotes) to listserv@opcug.ottawa.com.

I still have 50 names on my old list, and time is running out to transfer to Listserve. This is the last newsletter I will send by email using my old mailing list. I have already sent reminders to all members who were still on my list; if you did not receive the newsletter in September, then you are no longer on my list. A couple of people had to ask me for a second time to remove their name: sorry about that.

At the peak I had 74 members who subscribed to my newsletter mailing list: a significant proportion of our membership. The last time I checked with Chris, Listserve had not reached that level but the transfer is fairly recent and the season is just beginning. By next spring I hope that we will have exceeded that number.

Some people have asked me if it would be possible to receive only the electronic newsletter and not the paper version. The Board of Directors accepted the idea at its September meeting; members who agree can help to save a few trees and maintain the current membership fee. Anyone who wants only an electronic version should either give me their name at the next OPCUG meeting or send an email to: mark.cayer@opcug.ottawa.com.



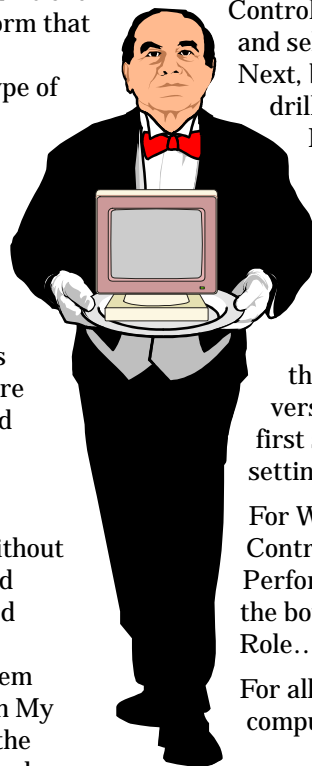


Why you need a server

Home users, with a non-networked machine, who want the latest optimization tweak for maximum speed need to join their big-business brethren and acquire a "server." No, I am not forcing you to buy another machine.

If you are running Windows 95 or 98 and you have sufficient RAM, then you should convince your Windows platform that it is a server. By using this description, the Windows operating system assigns more memory buffers (a type of cache) and performs other subtle tweaks; generally, these efficiencies promote greater throughput. Most current configurations—32 MB of RAM or more—are adequate; however, any improvement will diminish proportionately with lesser amountsof RAM and would probably disappear with a 16 MB machine.

This trick was distributed quite early in the Windows 95 cycle; however, since many systems of that era were configured with 16 MB of RAM it was widely believed that insufficient memory precluded successful implementation. That was only part of the story; full disclosure is more complicated. The original versions—full retail and upgrade variants, with or without the Plus! Pack and identified as version 4.00.950—and Windows 95 with the Service Pack 1 upgrade installed (version 4.00.950a) all have a bug that prohibits implementation of this feature regardless of the system settings. To identify your version of Windows 95 open My Computer, 2x-click on Control Panel and 2x-click on the System icon. Look on the System Properties... General page for the information.

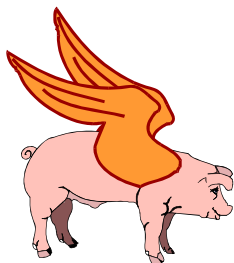


To implement the server setting effectively on any of these Windows 95 variants you must not only identify the system as a server but also change some Registry settings. Exercise caution: backup your Registry settings before making any changes! For the first portion: click on Control Panel/System/ Performance/File System and select Network Server from the pull-down box. Next, backup your Registry. Then, using RegEdit, drill down within the Registry to the key: `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\FSTemplates\` and reverse the settings for the `ServerNameCache` and `PathCache` values. Your want `ServerNameCache = a9 0a 00 00` and `PathCache = 40 00 00 00`.

For Windows 95 OSR2 users, identified on the System Properties... General sheet as version 4.00.950 B, you need only implement the first stage above. Do not change any Registry settings; the bug was already corrected.

For Windows 98 users: open My Computer, then Control Panel, System and click on the Performance tab. In the Advanced Settings box at the bottom click on File System. In the Typical Role... box select Network Server.

For all these variations you must restart the computer for the new settings to take effect.



Fly West for Questions and Answers!

The "Good Times" cafe at Shoppers City West, Baseline and Woodroffe, for chicken wings and a drink after the General meeting. Maybe the best and most informative SIG meeting of the evening.

Disable programs running at bootup in Windows 95 or 98

Windows 9x has several programs already running when you are able to take control of your Desktop. Even the clock in the System Tray is a program. Aside from the standards—like the clock—many software applications decide to add their presence. For example, Corel's WordPerfect Suite, Microsoft's Office Suite, anti-virus programs, mouse and display utilities or personal information managers commonly place their icons in the System Tray. Others, while running, are more discreet and hide their presence from the casual user. Most of these programs can be defeated for an individual session by right-clicking the icon and selecting variously Close, Disable or Exit; however, that program is usually re-enabled the next time you boot Windows. A few exceptionally well-mannered programs do offer an evident method for the casual user to disable them permanently. For the remainder, how can you convince them to disappear? Obviously, de-installing the program is an option but there are less drastic approaches that allow you to disable the autorun feature while retaining the ability to use the program as necessary from the Start... Programs area. Depending upon the program and the method used to install it there are several possibilities—from the easiest to the most obscure.

! If it appears in `\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\start up` merely delete the icon (a shortcut).

! If it appears in the `\windows\win.ini` file, place a Rem followed by a [space] in front of the entry.

! The more obscure applications are embedded in the Registry; you will have to edit that file using RegEdit. Before you begin your pursuit of the elusive entry, backup your Registry! There are no absolutes that dictate exactly where you will find the reference(s). Basically, the procedure requires drilling down in the correct Registry key to the proper level. Then, to disable any start-up process that appears in the right pane delete the corresponding entry value. Check the following keys:
`H_KEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run`

or... `RunOnce` or ... `RunServices` or ... `RunServicesOnce`.



Reduce system freezes

While Windows 9x system freezes can be caused by any number of processes, here is a simple solution to try. First, make certain that you are using the most stable set of video drivers that are available for your card. Often, this is not the most recent version. Card manufacturers strive to deliver what "the customer ordered"—in this case blindingly fast speed. Given the permutations of the systems that are in use, it is inevitable that a handful will be upset and stability may lose. Many sites will offer a



choice: the absolute latest driver or an earlier version that enjoys Microsoft certification. If you are experiencing stability problems the latter is preferred. If your sessions involve mainstream application software, not the latest in monster destruction (aka games), you probably will not notice the fractionally slower screen redraws. While applicable to any situation, I suspect that this comment is most relevant for the latest 3D games. Games software, video cards and their drivers are trying valiantly to coexist peacefully but there are a lot of pitfalls on the cutting edge of technology.

Reduce System Freezes (Continued)

Another situation that often prefaces problems of this nature is indicated by the system freezing when you use your mouse to manipulate a window (changing its size or dragging it to a new location). Often, the system is really locked up tight: nothing works—even the “three finger salute” (Ctrl + Alt + Del). Rebooting is the only solution but it is temporary; sooner or later the same problem recurs.

When all else fails, try “plan B.”

! Go to My Computer... Control Panel... Display... Settings... Advanced Properties... Performance.

! In the Graphics section move the Hardware Acceleration slider bar to the left to decrease the settings by one notch.

! Click “ok.”

For Windows 98, this problem is a less likely occurrence due to internal system tweaking; however, in the “world of Windows” everything is possible. The location has changed. Open My Computer... Control Panel... System and click on the Performance tab. In the Advanced Settings box at the bottom click on the Graphics button. Reset the slider as above.

Give it a try. The slight speed loss may be repaid by increased system stability.



Spam (continued from page 1)

It must be handled by the SMTP host software built into WINS; therefore, it was still being blocked by Storm.

At first, Storm said they were unwilling to open their SMTP host to the adsl.bellglobal.com domain. I pressed them, stating that it was unfair to refuse connections from our host simply because we were in a domain they had determined contained other hosts used by spammers. I pointed out that our SMTP host was set up to prohibit relays. Furthermore, if any spam originated from an OPCUG user, complaints would be dealt with swiftly and decisively. Storm relented and has opened their SMTP host to allow connections from PUB II.

At Natural Resources Canada, I chair the Electronic Messaging Working Group. We get our fair share of spam and nobody likes it. I will fully support any automated tools that will reduce spam without bouncing a single legitimate e-mail message. So far, nobody has requested that support.

Before choosing an ISP determine its policies for dealing with spam. If they have installed any automated procedures to block spam it will probably translate into less spam in your mailbox and reduce your frustration level when downloading and reading e-mail. But your frustration level may rise if you discover that legitimate e-mail does not arrive—assuming you ever find out that some mail was blocked.

My thanks to OPCUG member Micheline Johnson for helping to track down the problem and André Gosselin from Storm for re-opening their SMTP host to connections from PUB II.



Club News

Computer fair

from Board of Directors

Canadian Computer Fairs will be present at the Nepean Sportsplex, 1701 Woodroffe Ave, on October 3 and 4. OPCUG will have a table, so support the club, drop in and say “hello!” Use the discount coupon below for a dollar off admission.



OPCUG

OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members. Deadline for submissions is four Saturdays before the general meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG normally meets on the first Wednesday in the month, except in July and August, at the National Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meeting times are 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Fees

Membership: \$25 per year.

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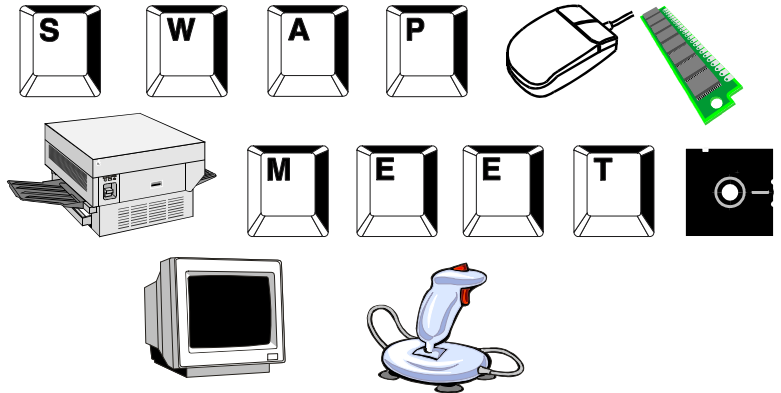
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Club News

Swap meet alert

from the OPCUG Board of Directors

Attention all members! Start collecting your treasures. The annual OPCUG swap meet is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 18** at the National Museum of Science & Technology.



Club news

Prize winners

by Mark Cayer

At the September General Meeting, Gloria Wong and Paul Louiseize each won a St. Bernard Software T-Shirt.

Hans Hageraats won a copy of Microsoft Publisher 98.

Many thanks to St. Bernard Software and Microsoft for the donation of these prizes.



Club life

Reuse, recycle



Bring your old computer magazines, books, or any other computer paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the general meetings, and leave them in the area specified. If you don't bring something, you may want to TAKE AWAY something of interest, so look in on this area. Any item left over at the end of the meeting will be sent to the... recycle bin.

