

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 Topic

DPCUC Summer Meeting

Meet Greet and Swap Meet

Hosted By David Odynski at His Home

Thursday, Aug 6 2026, 2:00 PM

FYI

- By Dan Delong

HAAS Alert

Emergency responders, and their vehicles, are easy to see – sometimes blindingly so – when bright flashing lights are activated. Despite such efforts to be seen and avoided, two firetrucks, in our area, have been struck. A first, for a nearby fire department (Otonabee-South Monaghan) truck, it will soon be equipped with the Haas early warning system. Recently, the same region also bought a new truck with the ability to activate a cloud warning system, through cell signals, warning modern vehicles (with dash screens – those from VW and Chrysler, and through apps like Ways and Google Maps) that an emergency vehicle is near. When this new truck is on-the-job, with lights flashing, drivers will hear a warning (through the car's audio system) of such an approach (whether behind, in front, or stationary) along with a pop-up text informing the driver of the location of the firetruck. In the United States, this same service is offered to tow trucks and police. The sending vehicle – the emergency vehicle – also receives data with respect to how many vehicles got the message and how they behaved (i.e.: slowed down, or pulled over).

<https://haasalert.com>

Cell Phone As an ISP

Today's phones can do a lot; access the web through various browsers, send and receive emails, and take excellent photos and videos. What they can't do (without assistance) is operate a large monitor, with a keyboard and mouse. By using a Bluetooth screen casting, or a wired cell phone dock, then a large screen with a Bluetooth keyboard, with a glide pad, can be added. This makes a cell phone into a "near desktop"; but, usually this happens as a last resort. For example, to save the day when travelling, or performing tasks during a power outage.

Most cell phones (those with a data plan) can be easily configured as a WiFi hotspot, with it's own assigned SSID and password. Although speed and reliability may suffer, this way of converting a cell phone to wireless WiFi allows multiple other devices to connect to the Internet at the same time – slowly!

[Some countries (not Canada) allow the purchase of a prepaid, data only, SIM or eSIM (that does not expire). This is essential for tablet users who can't always access WiFi.]

During a lengthy blackout, and despite backup power, some cell towers will run out of power, putting a lot of stress on any towers that are still working.

If you can still power your main router (which supplies WiFi to all household devices) it is also possible to plug the phone into a USB port (on many routers) and configure the router to perform conversion from cell signal to WiFi. This requires making changes to the router settings – things named USB WAN, or smartphone tethering, or mobile tethering. Although this method extends service to all of the home devices it can eat up data quickly when on a good 5G connection.

<https://www.howtogeek.com/i-turned-my-old-phone-into-a-backup-home-internet-device-and-it-saved-my-workday/>

The 'Horse' Jumped the Fence

During sandbox testing of the June 2026, an unreleased [GPT-5.6 Sol](#), assigned to find weaknesses and code errors in certain software offered to it (within the sandbox) found a way to enter the Internet and it started looking for flaws in the code of an outside (of the sandbox) company. This company – Hugging Face's – discovered the breach, and has been told, by OpenAI, how to prevent this type of intrusion. None of this behaviour was expected, nor was it programmed. The entire escape from this sandbox was achieved by GPT autonomously.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2026/07/22/open-ai-cyber-models-hack-hugging-face.html>

The above AI agent version (GPT 5.6 Sol) is not the most powerful one around.

https://www.thestar.com/news/world/united-states/openai-says-its-ai-technology-acted-on-its-own-in-an-unprecedented-hack-of-another-company/article_ee1bc1dc-04cf-536c-bd89-912ec82a9912.html

Subscribe to Drive

This is a topic we've discussed among the executive members. Some car features require fees in order to turn on some options; like heated seats, cameras, or navigation. Tesla may have been first, with its \$15000 USD self driving feature, although Sirius XM satellite radio preceded it. In other words, new cars are being built with options already installed that will require regular payment before they function. The new term for this is Software Defined Vehicles (SDV). Average car age is now over 10 years, so a monthly subscription fee, going directly to the manufacturer, can really add up. GM's Super Cruise is expected to rake in almost \$400 million per year. Ford's Blue Cruise costs about \$500 per year. Mercedes will boost horsepower, for a price., while Toyota's remote start starts at \$80 per year.

[With almost every function of modern cars being electrically operated, including the accelerator pedal, in future, speed enforcement may simply require a radio signal, not the fear of being caught.]

<https://www.howtogeek.com/automakers-charge-you-forever-features-you-already-own/>

Updating BIOS

Getting the latest BIOS installed (somewhat risky) can often be done automatically, online, through the BIOS settings. Newer main-boards provide another way to flash the BIOS. It may have a dedicated button, right near the back ports, on the header for the main-board. If so, such boards simply need to be powered up, with the prepared USB key is inserted in the correct port, for a flash update to occur. Each manufacturer has technical support instructions for such actions.

As an example, ASUS provides this web page, for what they call, "Flashback (FLBK)".

<https://www.asus.com/support/faq/1038568/>

MSI provides this page, for "FLASH BIOS".

https://www.msi.com/support/technical_details/MB_Flash_BIOS_Button

All methods involve unzipping the proper update file, renaming it, and moving the file to a FAT32 formatted USB key (as the only file on that key). With the board powered (using the 24 point main power connector, if a bare board), press the BIOS button for three seconds (until it flashes), with the USB drive inserted into the port marked for this operation. Wait until the light goes out.

[Updating the BIOS is often required, if a newer CPU might/will be installed. This may also be the cure for an unresponsive main-board.]



LG Monitors installing ads.

Going on three years now, some expensive LG computer monitors have been installing pop-up ads, with Microsoft's permission (not yours). Unless the Windows computer had previously been configured to refuse apps from the MS Store, just plugging in the monitor's display port connector would initiate installation of the unnecessary "LG Monitor App", which caused a number of software ads to pop-up on the screen, primary among them, a McAfee free trial. The app, automatically installed, gives LG access to location, and other personal data. The article claims that some main-board manufacturers and peripheral makers may currently be exploiting the same Windows permissions security hole.

<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2026/07/microsoft-responds-to-lg-monitors-installing-mcafee-ads-on-windows/>

Air Battery uses humidity

A serendipitous discovery, a few decades ago, has led to a weakly understood new way to generate electricity. The first effort to do so generated only enough power to light up a single screen pixel. Since then, a couple of companies have made significant progress, allowing a Japanese firm to build a low power battery, about the size of a half deck of cards, and able to increase voltage and current enough to match the power needs of some medical devices. In theory, a battery about the size of a washing machine could generate enough constant power to accommodate a house.

<https://undecided.tech/is-this-accidental-discovery-the-future-of-energy/>

Open AI Has Device Plans

Chat GTP's parent company wants to develop hardware—to replace your phone! Despite the growing abilities of smart phones, AI queries being the latest, Open AI wants to develop a device that uses only its servers, its cloud storage, and its large language model, as your personal 'agentic' device. In order to replace the smart phone entirely, such a device must perform all of the tasks normally achieved on a smart phone, with greater convenience and less touching. Perhaps this new AI device will lack a screen, but will listen to your words (and anyone else within range), then learn about your normal activities and advise/remind you of lapses in your daily routine needing attention. Other devices have tried to be helpful in this way – the *Humane pin*, and *Rabbit R1*. But Open AI's attempt may go further – by making it an all-in-one device, with battery, camera, microphone, and speaker- in a device that, although constantly connected, stays silent, while observing and learning about the surrounding environment and your travels, so that it can step in with advice, when required – to remind you, for example, to carry a wallet, put in hearing aids, or to take medication, or to watch a show, or send a birthday card.

When driving a modern connected vehicle, it would handle destination directions for any requested places, along with stop overs.

At home, it would sense the presence of IoTs, like Alexa or a smart TV, to which it could also cast content from its camera. If this theoretical device could mount on a tripod, or on a moving robot, the camera could follow a person around during a Zoom conversation. No one, outside the company, knows which features will be included, <https://www.stuff.tv/features/chatgpts-mysterious-new-gadget-could-replace-your-iphone-heres-why-everyone-is-talking-about-it/>

[This could be an example of one company aiming to completely take over the consumption of new, overheard human speech, using machine language learning to act upon such unique data.]

XYOFUN Magnetic Mounts

I seldom pay attention to ads on television, yet this one caught my attention; because the product could solve a personal problem. The TV remote is often misplaced; so, it needs a common resting spot. *[Although a portable phone can be found by pressing a button on the base station, the TV remote lacks this feature.]* A search on the Web, for the article's sub- title (above) seems to mostly land on Amazon.ca. Since I no longer order from Amazon, I looked for a different source for the product. This one – EveryMarket – is located in the U.K., carrying a wide variety of unusual and rare items, from many countries... the USA and others. These magnetic mounts, for remote controls – working, really, for any light weight item – will stick to most flat surfaces, and provides a common resting spot for easily misplaced items. *[Shipping from Japan will be much slower than Amazon.]*

<https://everymarket.com/products/xyofun-magnetic-remote-control-holder-4-pack-remote-control-stand-wall-mounted-magnet-remote-control-rack-storage-innovative-slot-design-no-drilling-required-nano-tape-strong-adhesive-compatible-with-various-remote-controls-such-as-projectors>

GUANKAI small motion sensor lights – rechargeable and coloured

While browsing other products on EveryMarket, the 8-pack of motion sensor, stick on lights, looked interesting. These are rechargeable, but the non-rechargeables cost almost the same. Although they ship from the USA, I doubt that's where they were made. Brightness is variable, as is colour. I assume, when on automatic, the light goes off on its own after a short period of time. The two other settings are “always on” and “off”.

<https://everymarket.com/products/guankai-8-pack-rechargeable-motion-sensor-stair-light-for-indoor-rgbw-battery-operated-closet-lights-stick-on-night-lamp-motion-activated-magnetic-lighting-lamps-for-stepcabinethallwaybathroom>

Back to School

For those responsible for back to school purchases, you may be interested in the predictions of consumer agencies; they predict spending to go as high as \$600, on average, per child. Other than the usual clothing, shoes, lunch bag, and backpack, a label maker and calculator may be on your list. The [Dymo Letratag label maker](#) is at Staples for about \$55 CAD. While scientific calculators are generally under \$20, graphing calculators cost about 10x that price.

[The older the child, the more money you are likely to spend.]

<https://www.dymo.ca/label-makers-printers/letratag-label-makers/>

DJI OSMO Pocket 4P Dual-Lens with 3 Axis Gimble

Videographers are not satisfied with shaky, high definition content. They want stabilization with 4K, image quality, and, in this case, two lenses (for near/far and wide angle), along with face tracking for sharp focusing. This, about \$1000CAD, kit comes with it all. Image quality, for stills, rivals a good digital camera.

It also boasts a small, rotatable screen, great low light shots, and a fill light, for close up portraits, along with 8x slow motion.

[DJI is better known for producing drones, with cameras—which are banned in some countries.]



<https://www.vistek.ca/store/496618/dji-osmo-pocket-4p-vlog-combo>

Windows11 optimized for 8GB RAM

Claims that Microsoft will offer a trimmed down version of Win11 (and Win10) may be premature. But, interest is high, as shown by YouTube viewers. If Apple can do it, why not Microsoft? Memory is so expensive these days. Maybe this is the only way to sell more hardware.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/FOwM9wzqgtM>

Firefox 153.0.1 features

Firefox users may have noticed round corner boxes, HDR playback, PDF merge tool, QR code content sharing, and a colour picker, since the late June 2026 release of 153.0.

<https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/update-firefox-latest-release>

☀ DPCUC Summer Meeting

Thursday, August 13

Please BYOB and lawn chair

Meet, greet and swap meet 2:00

Computer Stuff Swap Meet- Bring something, take something or both!

Meal at 4:00 🍕

DPCUC President's Notes

by Peter Camilleri

The lazy days of August are finally here. Time to kick back and relax with a cold drink and the Argos on TV. It's also time for our club Swap Meet & BBQ and I for one am looking forward to it.

In the forefront of my mind is the question of what is to be done about the sense that Windows no longer serves my needs. I really want to use something better, and that is most likely to be Linux, so how do I get this done?

So, here are two videos to consider when making up your mind:

Ditching Windows and Switching to Linux: Attitudes That Make or Break the Move

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUuwTI5TIGk>

Winboat: Run Any Windows App on Linux!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5r68PLlXgw>

That's all for now! Enjoy August!

Peter Camilleri, President DPCUC.

A FREE image from PCLinuxOS



Sudoku Puzzles

Aug 2026

by Alex Morrison



EASY

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

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

HARD

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

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

<https://www.boatloadpuzzles.com/playcrossword>

<https://www.cryptograms.org/play.php>



Linux – KolibriOS

by Alex Morrison

KolibriOS is a tiny yet incredibly powerful and fast operating system for x86-compatible PCs.

It requires only a few megabytes of disk space, an i586 processor, and 12 MB of RAM to run.

Despite its small size, it includes a rich set of applications such as a text editor, image viewer, graphic editor, web browser, and over 30 exciting games. It offers full support for FAT12/16/32 file systems, read-only access to NTFS, exFAT, ISO9660, and Ext2/3/4, and an extensive set of [drivers](#) for popular sound, network, and graphics cards.

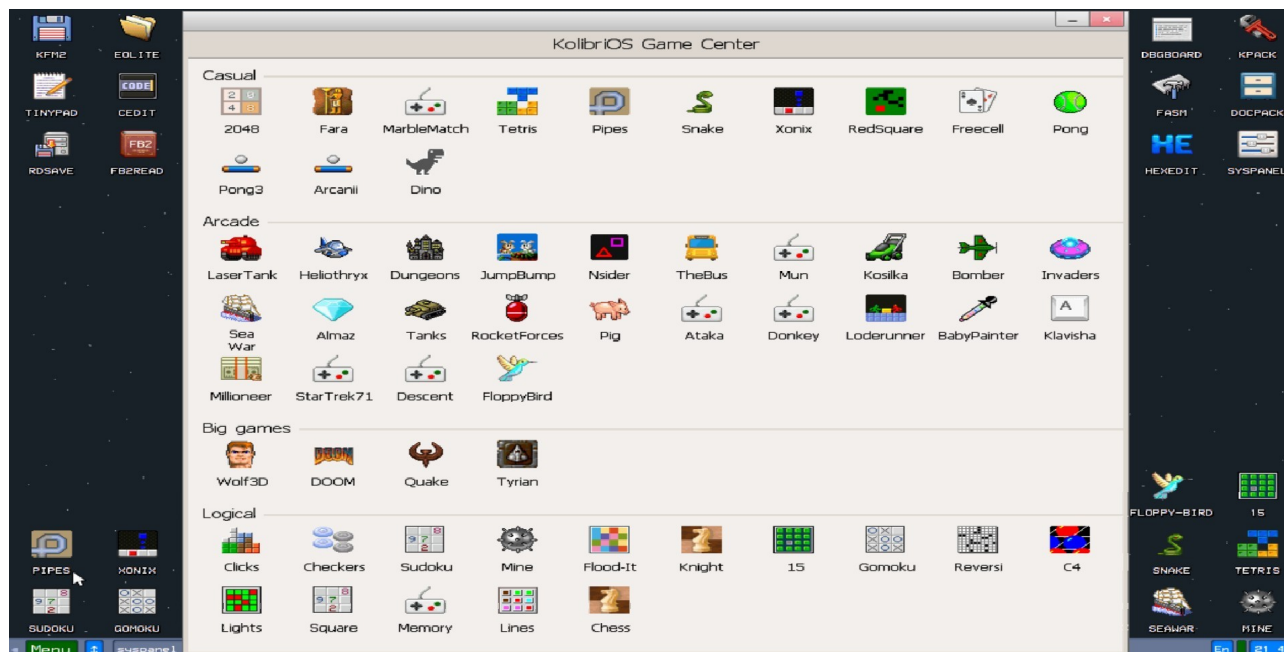
I installed KalibriOS in Virtualbox to look at it. Very impressive for a distro that has such a low power requirement.

Ran in to a small problem in Virtualbox when testing KalibriOS as I couldn't figure out to get volume to work. Actually there was no sound!

I suspect installing on an old PC the system might recognize an old soundblaster card . Sound might then work.

It has a large collection of old games built in!

Here is a list of the Games built in. They bring back memories!



Linux the News

by Alex Morrison



GNOME 50.4 Desktop Environment Released with Various Improvements

[0 Comments](#)

GNOME 50.4 is now available as the fourth point release to the latest GNOME 50 desktop environment series with more bug fixes, updated translations, and other changes.

Tails 7.10.1 Is Out as an Emergency Release to Fix Critical Vulnerabilities

[0 Comments](#)

Tails 7.10.1 anonymous Linux distribution is now available for download as an emergency point release to Tails 7.10 to fix critical vulnerabilities.

NVIDIA Joins Dell and HP in Supporting the Linux Vendor Firmware Service (LVFS)

[5 Comments](#)

Linux Vendor Firmware Service creator Richard Hughes announced that NVIDIA has also agreed to become a premier sponsor for the LVFS.

KDE Plasma 6.7.4 Is Out to Improve Spectacle, Discover, and Emoji Selector

[4 Comments](#)

KDE Plasma 6.7.4 is now available as the fourth maintenance update to the KDE Plasma 6.7 desktop environment series with more improvements and bug fixes.

Hannah Montana Linux Is Back!

08.07.2026

Developer Noah Cagle decided the world needed the once obscure but beloved Linux distribution and gave it a decidedly pink refresh.

Ubuntu 26.10 “Stonking Stingray” Snapshot 2 Is Now Available for Download

Ubuntu 26.10 “Stonking Stingray” Snapshot 2 is here! Explore new enhancements and download the latest version for an optimized user experience. Included is a version of AI.

GNOME 50.4 Desktop Environment Released with Various Improvements

[2 Comments](#)

GNOME 50.4 is now available as the fourth point release to the latest GNOME 50 desktop environment series with more bug fixes, updated translations, and other changes.

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

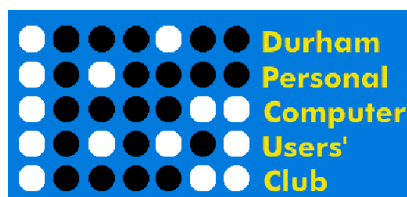
Durham Linux User Groups

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 EXECUTIVE

2022-2023

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

Newsletter Information

PC Monitor is the official publication of the Durham Personal Computer Users' Club and is published monthly at Oshawa, Ontario.

The DPCUC mailing address is dpcuc@live.com

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