

# BUG Data



Barrie Users Group

December 2009

Visit Our Web Site At = [www.BarrieUsersGroup.org](http://www.BarrieUsersGroup.org)



## [Message from the President](#)



### **The Metamorphosis**

As computers have evolved from massive stand-alone machines into tiny components of our everyday life, the need for the traditional "computer user group" has diminished. There was a time when we had to solder in our own components onto motherboards and write our own programs. Now, most of the time, we don't even know that we are using a computer. Computers, operating systems and software are hidden into everyday items such as TVs, phones, cars, and even our coffee maker.

Since the celebration of our 25th year in 2008, the Barrie Users Group has been undergoing a dramatic transformation. At 26 years old, however, we are emerging with new energies and wider horizons as **BUG**.

Our members consist of a mix of people at every age, gender and skill level, from new users to experts in nearly every field. We are people who want to learn more about technology. We want to be able to go into technology stores and know what we are buying, what questions to ask, and what a fair price is. We want to know how to do our own basic maintenance and to use the equipment we purchase to its fullest capabilities. We are no longer just a computer user group; we now embrace all technologies and the use of them.

Our meeting of the first Tuesday of the month focuses in on the technical, but

not to the extent that it only appeals to the members with a technical background. On the contrary, we hope that appeals to all our members who are interested in such things as keeping their equipment in working order, learning how to buy new equipment, and seeing what is new. In the last few months we have brought in professionals and asked our experienced members to help us learn how to keep our data safe, see how the new versions of Blackberries work, protect ourselves from viruses and what to do when infected, choose the right "flavour" of internet, protect ourselves and identities, how to create a slideshow, how to access podcasts, and introductions to open office, and Linux. The topics have been diverse and both the beginner and the more experienced enjoyed the speakers.

In order to appeal to people beyond the purely technical topics, BUG has embraced the artistic side of technology and added another meeting every month. In this way, we can not only maintain monthly content on the more traditional computing side of the group but also give sufficient time to the creativity of our members. Our meeting of the second Tuesday of the month focuses in on the artistic use of technologies, but not to the extent that it only appeals to the expert artists in the group. Almost everyone now has a digital camera, video camera or an mp3 player. This meeting is providing a forum for all our members to learn how to expand and improve their creativity using digital technology, how to make better use of and maintain the equipment they have and how to purchase new equipment. We have brought in professional photographers and experienced speakers to demonstrate not only how to create interesting images but also how to light their subject, use their cameras, the impact of colours and how to edit images using Photoshop Elements, Picasa and Gimp. Most of our sessions this year

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## Membership Report

*George Ray*

Help your Club grow, bring some friends to the meetings.

For each friend who joins the Club, we will extend your membership by two months!

Annual membership fees are as follows:

Regular	\$50.00
Student	\$50.00
Family	\$00.00

We welcome once again, the old friends who have decided to CONTINUE their membership for another year, and the following NEW members. If there are omissions or something to be corrected, please let me know.

C=Continuing,

N=New, R=Regular

E=Extended, sponsored a friend,

<u>Name</u>	<u>Expiry Date</u>
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(CR) Serge Moiseev	01-Oct-10
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Do Your Part to Help BUG Grow, Bring a Friend!!

Just a reminder to the following, your membership has either expired or is about to expire. Please contact George Ray at 728-0821 as soon as possible to pay your membership dues.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Expiry Date</u>
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Alva LaPlante	01-Nov-09
Brian Everett	01-Nov-09
Barbara McCahery	01-Dec-09
Ray Williams	01-Dec-09

## BARRIE USERS GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**President:**  
*Paul Mather* 728-9047

**Vice-President:**  
*Dave Jackson* 728-1565

**Treasurer:**  
*Mike Clarke* 728-3298

**Secretary:**

**Web Master:**  
*Paul Mather* 728-9047

**Membership:**  
*George Ray* 728-0821

**Newsletter Editor:**  
*Don Edwards* 726-8490

### [Message from the President Cont.](#)

have been related to photography because that is the current interest of most of our members. We are not a photography club so we do not pretend to provide a forum for those seriously interested in photography. We do not provide photo contests, critiques of members' images or linkages into professional photography. We do provide our members with a forum to learn the basics of photography the use of colour, design and manipulation of images. Pour members have told us, however, that there is also interest in video and music so we are searching for knowledgeable speakers on these topics. All of our senses come into play when we interact with our surroundings so creativity is not only limited to the visual.

As you can see, our new mandate is huge and it will be difficult to have every meeting appeal to every member, but our intent is also to broaden our understanding of all our technologies and our creative use of them. We encourage members to attend all sessions as it might open up a new perspective and perhaps even a new interest. Over the years, I have found that by exposing myself to new things it has widened my field of view. The members of BUG are no longer just "computer geeks". We are computer technicians, software developers and users, internet savvy, photographers and musicians. Even the experts in our club realize that we do not know everything and look forward to BUG. We are there to share our collective experiences and to learn from each other, as well as our expert speakers.

We have transformed!



# NEXT BUG MEETING

## January 5, 2010



## Google is re-inventing email.

Shawn P. Conroy

On September 30th Google sent out 100,000 invites to some very lucky people. With this invite you may sign up for Google Wave. To quote Google, Wave is what email would have been if it had been invented in the 21st century rather than the 1970's. Email, you see, is like snail mail (traditional mail), each email message is it's own unit. Emails are not linked together as a conversation. Some modern email programs and some email websites like Gmail try to link all the message together so you can see an entire conversation, but in actuality each email message is completely separate and that is just a work around to the problem.

With traditional email, a conversation with multiple people can have everyone sending different information at different times in response to different messages and can get messy. Sometimes you can reply to a part of an email message that has already been settled because you haven't read the emails sent after the one you are currently replying to. Because an email is only part of the message this can confuse large conversations.

Wave changes that. Since all correspondence exists within a single Wave, this can't happen. Everyone's responses are tied together. So you can read through the entire part of the conversation before replying, not missing anything and then being embarrassed when you realize your reply is too late. In this sense, a Wave is like a discussion forum that lists all posts together. In a Wave there is no need to quote the old email message. Quoting is a work around for a broken system. Wave fixes this system.

In a Wave you can reply to any part of another wave, and not just send another message under it, or in a separate email. It's a true conversation within the message itself. This is a radical departure from traditional email.

Or, imagine this: I send an email to you saying "hey, why don't we meet at the waterfront at 3 tomorrow morning?" I would have to send another email after saying, "oops, I meant 8!" But this is not the case with a Wave. You can edit your Waves after you send them. But be warned: the edit history is saved, so if you sent all your co-workers a Wave one night calling your boss a moron, you can go back and edit it, but people can look at the history of the message.

Or, you can actually un-send the Wave. If you realize you "misspoke" you can remove all the recipients from the message. If you do this before they've checked their Waves, no one will know that you called your boss a moron, which really isn't conducive to steady employment.

Wave is a bold re-imagining of what email could be. Wave could change the way we communicate or it could become just another failed product. Google hopes that Wave will completely remove email from internet life, replacing it utterly. Time will tell, but it will be an interesting time.

## Linux is for Users Traveling to Linux by Whirlwind

By Shawn P. Conroy

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Linux. I may not be the Wizard of Linux, but I hope to bring those interested down the Yellow Brick Road safely. Linux is an operating system that is open source. You can download it for free. Most of the work that goes in to Linux is donated by individuals or companies around the world.

If you missed the recent BUG presentation of the history of Linux, you can listen to the hour-long presentation on the link provided on the BUG website. Email your questions to me at shawn@[semanticcomputing.ca](mailto:shawn@semanticcomputing.ca) and I will try to get answers.

### Choosing a Linux Distribution

A distribution is a collection of programs included with Linux. For example, some Linux distributions come with Firefox browser, others with Konqueror.

The easiest to use most feature complete Linux distribution, the one I recommend to new visitors who enter the land of Linux, is Mint Linux. Trust me, it is minty fresh. Mint Linux comes in several flavours. The 'main' flavour, or edition, is the GNOME edition (pronounced GUH-nome). There are others, like the KDE distribution. It's a matter of preference, really.

For those that have old hardware and want a stripped down version of Linux, you can download the Linux Mint XFCE Edition. Although it's user friendly, the interface does not feel like a modern interface: it's not as feature complete, but that's the whole point. It does the bare minimum, to keep the operating system (Linux) out of the way to give more room for the programs.

No matter what distribution or edition you choose, you can run the same programs on it. But for a new user who doesn't care about the choice just yet, I recommend the plain old regular Linux Mint.

### Available Software

You can use open source software on Windows. Some software is the same in Linux as Windows, and if you use it now in Windows you can lessen the shock when you switch to Linux. Here are some examples of Linux-compatible software that you can use in Windows:

Internet Explorer can be replaced with Firefox,

Microsoft Office can be replaced by [openoffice.org](http://openoffice.org),

Adobe Photoshop can be replaced by

The GIMP (and Illustrator by Inkscape),

Microsoft Outlook can be replaced

by Thunderbird to read your email.





## Installing

Linux is an entire operating system. In general, computers don't usually have more than one operating system on them. For this reason, many operating systems don't play well with each other. Linux, of course, is different. You can install Linux on 'part' of your computer and Windows on the other part. Windows will make it so you can no longer access the Linux part but Linux plays nicely with Windows.

You must decide if you want your computer to be able to boot *both* Linux and Windows or only Linux. If you want to run only Linux then this job is very easy. Just select 'use entire hard disk' guided option. It will set up everything just for you.

To install Linux along side with Windows you need to resize (partition) your Windows C-drive. A hard disk can be divided into several 'virtual drives' or 'partitions'. Each partition can be used for something different. The Linux install program can do this for you, automatically. As long as you have the required free space on the drive, it can partition your C drive and make an empty partition for Linux.

However, the good folks at Linux Mint and Ubuntu have added something new, the WUBI install method. If you pop the CD in your disc drive it can start the install program in Windows! It can install inside your Windows C partition. This recently developed technology is included in new Linux distributions. With this you can install Linux without having to repartition your hard disk or make any substantial changes to your computer. There is, however, a drawback. Your Linux system will run slower using the Windows file system.

Once you have made up your mind as to which you want, you can go ahead and install Linux. Download the ISO file from the Linux Mint website and burn it to a DVD as a disc image, not as a plain old file. The installation of Linux is really simple. Linux takes care of all the configurations and drivers for you.

## Hints

Do you ever wonder how big a file is, the type of file or when it was created?

There's three ways to find out.

First Right click on the file and choose properties.

Second Highlight the file and while holding down Alt, press Enter

Third Hold down the Alt key and double click on the file

Give it a try...it gives you new ways to do the same thing.

Kathleen



## My Computer's Bio, Part 1

by Mike Clarke

Next to my tooth brush, my computer is probably the most useful tool in my house. First of all, it is not my computer (yet) but belongs to the Ontario Professional Foresters Association (OPFA), and was acquired in 2007 to assist that organization with various administration duties at that time. They were going through internal difficulties, as well as a major move from Stroud the Georgetown and needed all the help they could get. This was their primary computer at that time.

Since that time I have continued helping the OPFA with various duties for which I am paid in kind – I have been buying this machine from them, through the work I do, over the last year. I track membership changes, post job offers, list up-coming forestry events, track continuing education credits, transmit the newsletter, and update member information that comes my way, especially e-mail additions/changes.

In the last case, I have to phone members across Ontario, most of whom have forgotten to inform us of their e-mail changes. Skype is the way I contact them, using the Skype-Out level which permits me unlimited calls to any phone or cell phone, in North America, for about \$30.00 a year. You can be sure it gets a lot of personal use as well with frequent calls to Michigan, my brother in BC and my son in London.

Outlook and Excel also get a lot of use, working now with seven IMAP accounts. These include the OPFA inbox as well as six other professional and personal IMAP sites which link to my AOL accounts. An interesting feature which has recently been added is a program called Skylook which links my Outlook contacts with Skype. This allows me to Skype directly from Outlook – a very useful feature.

Since I also help to edit the OPFA website, I have been provided with their editing program called Contribute. It allows several editors to work somewhat simultaneously on the same site (not on the same page) and to send edited pages to other editors for their advice. Unfortunately, contribute doesn't allow me to FTP so files have to be uploaded separately using WS-FTP.

When I send out the newsletter to all OPFA members, I download the most recent member database from their website, load it into excel, then transfer 15 to 20 email addresses at a time to paste directly onto the outlook message that includes a link to the newsletter (which first has to be posted to the website). If I send any more than 15-20 at a time, some servers blacklist us as potential spammers – lots of fun ☺

You can imagine, therefore, that this computer gets used a lot and is in almost constant use for OPFA business – then there is our (Diane's and my) personal use, but I'll save that for another BUG newsletter. If anyone has questions about programs listed above, or would like an article written on a specific subject, please don't hesitate to ask me, or other potential authors, to write one. Better yet – write something yourself ☺ mc