



Penticton Seniors' Computer Club How to Create and Send Ecards

Introduction

An ecard is a web page designed to send greetings to a friend or relative, congratulations or just send some information and/or pictures to keep in touch with the person. This facility allows you to create your own ecard and send an email to someone so that he or she can access it. The ecard can contain your personal pictures.

Anyone who is a member of the Penticton Seniors' Computer Club can create and send ecards. Each card can be from one to ten pages long with each page having either a background colour, background pattern or background picture and then having other pictures, text and decorations added. Once such an ecard has been created music and transitions between the pages can be added and it can be sent. The facility automatically sends an appropriate email message, although, you can alter it if desired.

The Login Screen

When you start by clicking on the *Ecard Tile* in the *Penticton Seniors' Computer Club* homepage, the *Login* screen appears (the picture at the right). At the top of the login screen is an introduction to the ecard facility while the bottom has a form to enter the registration information needed to use the ecard facility. It is your *given name* followed by your *surname initial*, and your *ecard registration number*. For example, if your name is *Mary Smith*, then your name will be specified as *marys*. Your registration number is a four-digit number assigned to you. You will not be able to use the ecard facility if you do not enter this information correctly. Once the registration information has been entered, the *Edit Ecard* button is clicked to go to the *Selection Screen*.



The Selection Screen

The *Selection screen* has a blank ecard page at the top with a selection window below it. This selection window lets one select whether to go to edit a new ecard; go to see any existing ecards to view, re-use, send or delete any of them; or to go to view ones personal pictures or upload new ones.

This instruction sheet explains how to use the editor to create a new ecard. Other instruction sheets explain how to manage existing ecards and your personal pictures.

Click on the *Edit Ecard* button to go to create and edit a new ecard.



The Ecard Editor

There are five windows in the ecard editor -- *General*, *Add Pictures*, *Add Text*, *WebPage* and *Send*. Above each of these is shown the current page of the ecard you are editing. In each of the editing windows is a select list and *Previous* and *Next* buttons to let you switch from page to page of the ecard as it is edited. To add text, pictures, backgrounds, music to ecard pages, you switch from one editing window to another as necessary.

When you first enter the ecard editor, the *General Window* appears.

General Window

The *General* window is used to let you give your ecard a name (eg, *mary birthday*) so that the card can be saved and then later

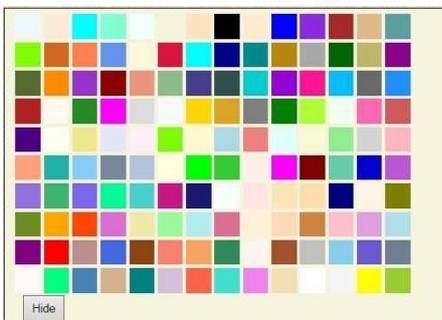
retrieved. This lets you start creating a card and then stop to continue at some later time. It also lets you create a card for one person and then, after retrieving it, make alterations and use it for someone else. Ecards are saved as *cookies* in your computer so you must have cookies enabled for the web browser that you are using. (Once an ecard has been created and sent to the web server, it remains on the server until you delete it. While on the server it can be downloaded and re-edited to be used to send to someone else.)

There is also a dropdown list in this window, called *Cards*. It lists all the ecards that you have currently saved on your computer. Selecting a card from this list and then clicking on the *Retrieve* button will cause that card to be displayed in the ecard area so that it can be edited and used if desired.

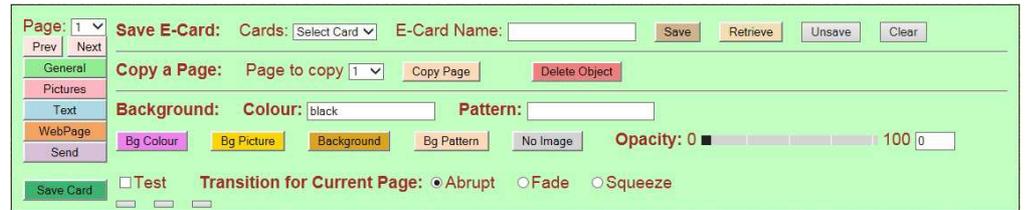
The *General* window can also be used to copy one page to be another. This lets you have two or more pages with the same general design but with, say, different texts or pictures. Simply copy an existing page to be another page and then make suitable changes.

To copy a page, use the page dropdown list to select the page you wish to copy to or use the *Next* or *Previous* buttons to go to the page you wish to copy to. Then in the *General* window, select that page that you wish to copy from the dropdown list labelled *Page to copy* and then click on the *Copy Page* button.

To start a new ecard you will normally start with page 1 and give it a background colour, pattern, background or background picture. To give it a colour, click on the *Bg Colour* button. A form will appear with all the colours that you can use as shown below. Click on the colour you wish to use. The page will now have that background colour. To make the background a picture, click on the *Bg Picture* button. A form will appear with pictures on it. Click on the picture you wish to use as the background. You can cause this picture background to be faded out somewhat by using the slide switch labelled *Opacity*. To remove a background picture, click on the *No Image* button. To make the background a patterns, click on the *Bg Pattern* button. A window with several different patterns will appear. Click on the pattern you wish to use. To use a background design, click on the *Background* button. A window with background patterns will show. Click on the design you wish to use. (Note. If you wish to use a personal picture as a background for a page, you will use the *Bg Personal* button in the *Pictures* window.)

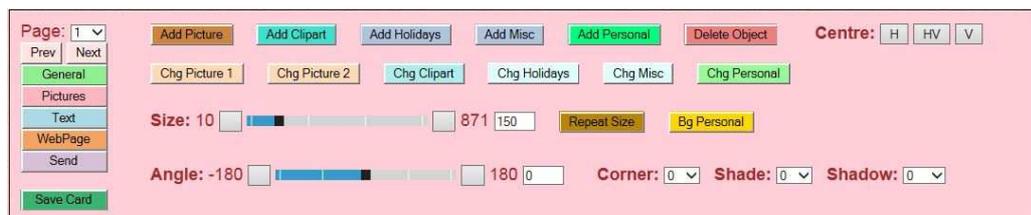


If the ecard has more than one page, then the transition from page to page can be selected for each page. These transitions are 1 - abrupt change, 2 - fade out, fade in change, or 3 - a sliding change. The transition for the currently showing page is by clicking on the *Abrupt*, *Fade* or *Squeeze* circles labelled *Transition for Current Page*.



Add Pictures Window

The *Add Pictures* window allows you to add pictures to an ecard page.



To add a picture click on the *Add Picture*, *Add Clipart*, *Add Holidays*, *Add Misc* or *Add Personal* button. A form showing available pictures will appear. Click on the picture you wish to add to the ecard page. Once on the page you can drag it to wherever you wish on the page.



Use the slide switch labelled *Size* to change the size of the picture. If you wish to use the same size as, say, used on a previous picture, click on the *Repeat Size* button. This makes it easy to create several pictures all the same size on a page.

Use the slide switch labelled *Angle* to change the angle of the picture.

To change a picture, make sure it is selected by clicking on it (a border will appear around it), then proceed as above but use the appropriate *Chg* picture button instead of one of the *Add* picture buttons.

To remove a picture, make sure it is selected by clicking on it then click on the *Delete Object* button.

Personal pictures can only be used if you have uploaded them. There is a separate instruction sheet showing how this can be done. Any *.jpg*, *.gif* or *.png* picture file can be uploaded as a personal picture as long as it is less than one megabyte in size.

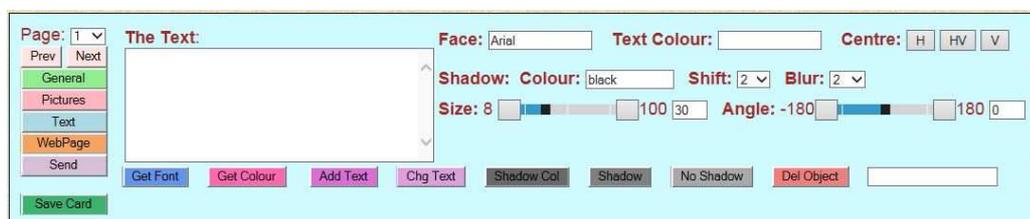
You can make a personal picture a background picture for a page by clicking on the *Bg Personal* button.

To add rounded corners to a picture, make sure that the picture is selected, then click on the drop down list labelled *Corner*. Select the radius of the circular corner from the list. To make the edges of the picture shaded, click on the dropdown menu labelled *Shade* and select the amount of shading. To add a shadow to a picture, click on the dropdown menu labelled *Shadow* and select the intensity of the shadow. Selecting zero in any one of these dropdown menus will remove the effect.

To centre a picture, make sure that it is selected then click on the *H*, *HV* or *V* buttons labelled *Centre*. This will cause the picture to be centered horizontally, both horizontally and vertically, or just vertically on the page, respectively.

Add Text Window

The *Add Text* window is used to add text to a page.



To add text do the following. Click on the *Get Font* button then select which font you wish to use from the form that appears showing various available fonts and click on the *Get Colour* button to select the colour you wish to text to be. Then type one or more lines of text in the box labelled *Text* and click on the *Add Text* button. The text will appear in the card at the top, left. Drag the text to wherever you wish it to be on the page. You can change the size of the text by using the slide switch labelled *Size*. You can change the angle of the text by using the slide switch labelled *Angle*.



If you wish to add a shadow to the text, make sure the text is selected (click on it if it does not have a rectangle showing around it) then click on the *Shadow* button. To remove the shadow, make sure the text is selected then click on the *No Shadow* button. To select some colour for the shadow, click on the *Shadow Col* button.

You can change how far away the text shadow is from the text by using the dropdown menu labelled *Shift* to choose a value. Similarly, you can use the dropdown menu labelled *Blur* to choose how blurry the shadow is.

Text with shadow.

Shadow blurred.

Red shadow under text and blurred.

Shadow farther away.

To centre a text block, make sure that it is selected then click on the *H*, *HV* or *V* buttons labelled *Centre*. This will cause the text to be centered horizontally, both horizontally and vertically, or just vertically on the page, respectively.

If desired, add other blocks of text as described above, changing the font and colour if desired.

If you wish to change text that has already been added, make sure it is selected then do as you would do to add text (select font and colour and change the characters in the text) but click on the *Chg Text* button instead of the *Add Text* button.

To remove text, make sure it is selected then click on the *Del Object* button.

Some fonts are to be used for decoration rather than text. This is covered in a separate section below.

WebPage Window

The *WebPage* window is used to select options for the web page that is used to display the ecard.

For example you can select a background colour to replace the default black colour for the web page that displays the ecard. You do this by clicking on the *Win Colour* button and clicking on the colour you wish to use.

You can select to have background music for the web page that displays the ecard. To select music, click on the *Get Music* button. A form will appear listing pieces of music. Click on the piece you wish to use. Then, if you wish to listen to it to make sure that is the piece you want, click on the *Play* button.

If you decide not to use music after you have selected a piece, simply delete the name of the piece from the text box showing.

The text box at the right of the webpage window lets you change the comment that will appear below your ecard when it is displayed as a web page. Simply alter the text that is in this window to what you would like it to be.

If the ecard has more than one page, then the transition from page to page can be selected for each page. These transitions are 1 - abrupt change, 2 - fade out, fade in change, or 3 - a sliding change. While these transitions are selected in the *General Window*, they are shown in the *WebPage* window.

Send Window

The *Send* window is used to actually create the ecard and the web page that will be used to show it. It also sends an email message to each person you wish to receive the card and to yourself if desired.

To send the ecard, fill in the *Email From* box with your own email address then type one or more email addresses of the person(s) you wish to receive the card in the *Email To* box. (Depress the *Enter* key after each address so that they appear in separate lines or have the addresses separated by semicolons.) Then select whether you wish to receive a copy of the message or not by selecting either *Yes* or *No* in the box labelled *Send a copy to yourself*.

You can export the contact list from your email package and import it into this ecard facility. If you do this, then you can simply select a name from the drop down list at the right of the *Send Window* to put it into the *Email To* box. This is described in a separate instruction sheet (*Importing Your Contact List into Ecard*).

You can change the contents of the email message that will be sent by changing the information in the box labelled *Email Message*. However note that you must **not** change the phrase *^e-card address^* since it will contain the actual web address that the recipient will need to click on to see his or her ecard.

To create the ecard, click on the *Create Ecard* button.

When the ecard has been created (on the web server), a review window will appear with a message saying that you can review the card before sending it. To review the card click on the *REVIEW* word and then after viewing the card, click on the back button of the browser to return to the review page to continue.

If the card review was successful you can then, if desired, change the *From* address, the *To* address(es), the message subject or the message itself by changing the contents of the appropriate text boxes.

To actually send the email messages click on the *Send Ecard* button.

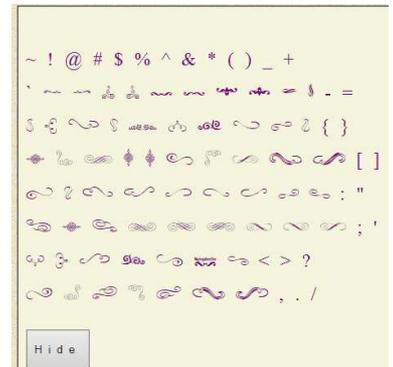
When the messages about the cards have been sent, a new window will appear indicating that they have been sent. It will list the addresses of the sent messages.

Note, however, that this page simply shows which addresses messages were sent to. If incorrect email addresses were used, they will appear in this list but the messages will not be received.

If the review was unsuccessful and you need to change the ecard before sending it, you can click on the *Back* button to return to editing the ecard. You will have to sign in again then retrieve the card in order to make changes and re-send the card.

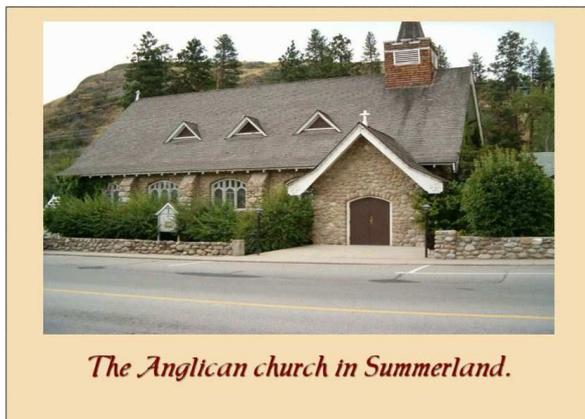
Special Decoration Fonts

Several of the fonts available for your ecard are not alphabetic fonts. That is, they do not contain letters of the alphabet. Instead they contain ornaments. When one of these fonts is selected, then a form appears with all of these ornaments showing (see the form at the left). To select an ornament, click on it. The letter representing that ornament will appear in the text box wherever the cursor happens to be. Select one or more ornaments to form some decoration then click on the *Hide* button. Then add the decoration by clicking on the *Add Text* button. The colour and position of the decoration is adjusted in the same way as they are for ordinary text.



Samples of Ecard Pages

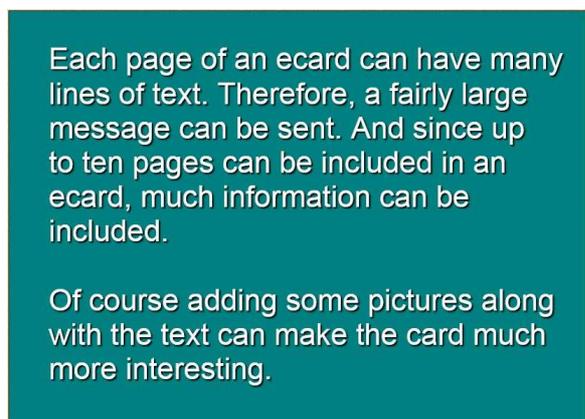
The following are examples of ecard pages that one can use. Of course, each person can develop his or her own page designs.



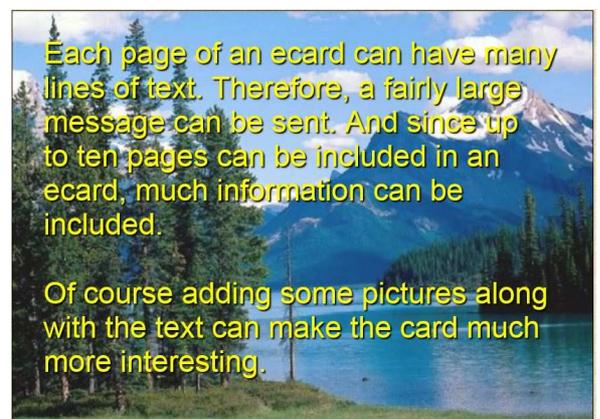
A single picture with a coloured background and caption



More than one picture, each with captions and a page caption.



A coloured background with a text message on it.



A background picture with a text message on it. The picture is slightly faded to make the print clearer.



A patterned background with a picture, clipart and text.



A background picture with a holiday clipart picture on it.



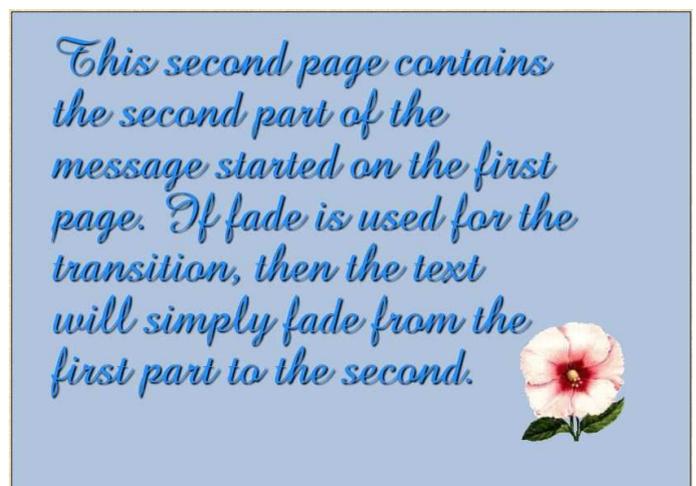
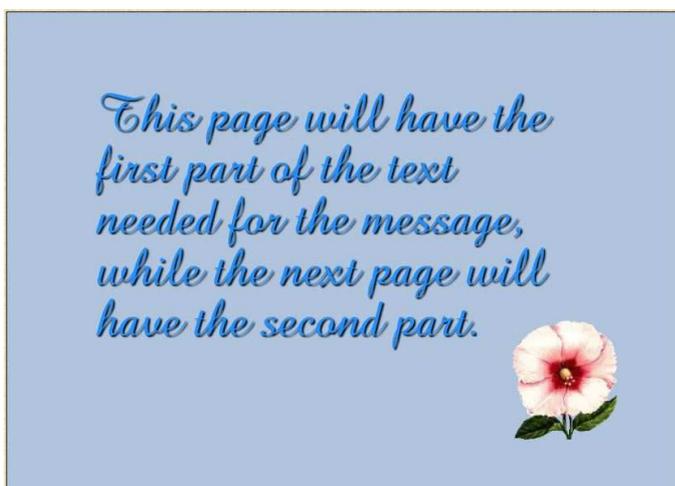
A selected background with text.



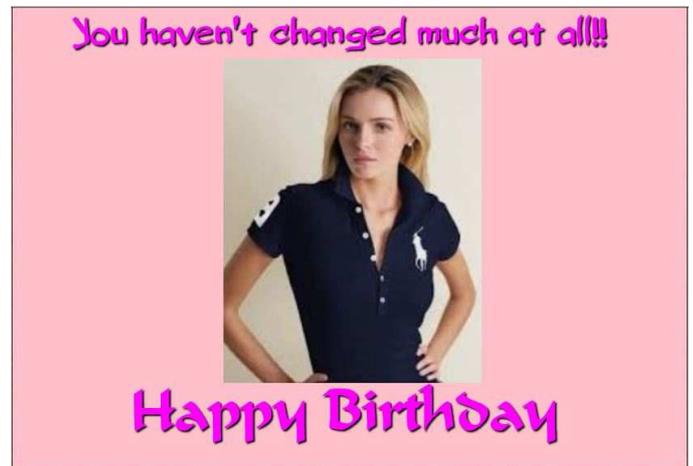
A selected background with pictures and text.

Since an ecard can have more than one page with an abrupt, fade out/fade in, or squeeze transition between them, some useful effects can be included in a card.

For example, if you have a full page of text on, say, a background colour but the text is too long to fit nicely on the page, you can copy the page to be the next page, then change the text in the first to be just the first part of it and the text in the second to be the second part of it as shown below.



An interesting birthday card can be made by having two pages, one with a picture of the birthday person when he or she was very young and then the second with a more current picture. Of course other pages could also be included to provide space for a more detailed messages.



Ecards can be used to let friends know that you are thinking of them on various occasions as shown in the example pictures below.



Personal Pictures

Although the ecard facility provides pictures and clipart for you to use, often you will want to use your own pictures. In the current version of the ecard facility, you can upload your own personal pictures. (See the separate instruction sheet *How to Upload Personal Pictures for Ecards.*) Otherwise, once you have enrolled to use ecards you can attend a Wednesday afternoon workshop at the computer club computing centre, bringing pictures to be scanned or picture files which will be uploaded as your *personal pictures*. You can then use them in your ecards.

At any one time you can have up to 30 personal pictures, each of which can be in .jpg, .gif or .png format. Of course, you can delete any of them when they are no longer needed. Note that even if you delete or replace a personal picture, any of them that have been used in an already created ecard will still be available for that ecard.

You can insert your personal pictures onto card pages and adjust their sizes as required. However, if you use a personal picture as a page background, then the picture is automatically adjusted in size to fit the whole page. Therefore any small pictures should not be used as background pictures.

When a personal picture is used in an ecard, it is automatically copied for use in that ecard. Therefore you can replace it in your cache of personal pictures without affecting its use in that ecard at some later time.

Saving Ecards

When people receive ecards, they may wish to save them on their own computers. Then they can view them whenever they wish without worrying about whether or not they still remain on the computer club web server. This is easy to do.

Saving in Internet Explorer If you are using *Internet Explorer* you can save an ecard as follows.

1. View the ecard by clicking on the link to it in the message you received.
2. Click on *File* in the top, left corner, then on *Save As..* Then click on the arrow at the right of the *Save as type* box and click on *Web Archive, single file (*.mht)*.
3. Browse to find where you wish to save the ecard, perhaps the *Desktop*.
4. Click on *Save*.

You can now view the ecard by double clicking on the file that was saved on the desktop or some other place in your computer.

For now, saving an ecard does not work with *Chrome* nor *Firefox*.