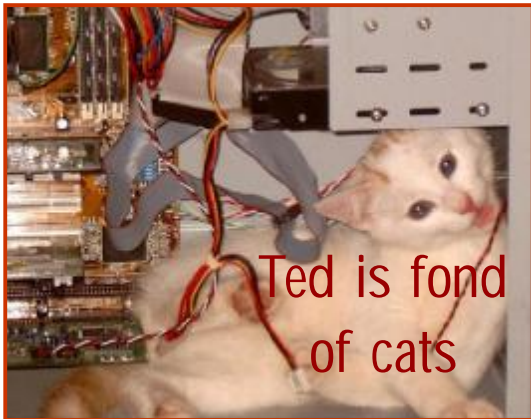


MANLY MOUSE

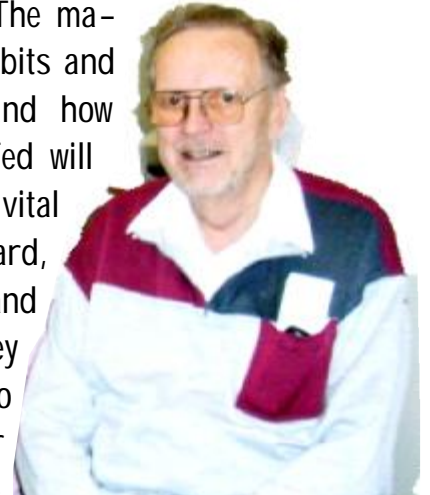
Newsletter of Computerpals for Seniors – Manly Inc.

April 2009

At our April meeting, 2 pm Thursday 9 April in Manly Library Meeting Room, Ted Hulbert will be demonstrating to you the inner workings of your computer. The ma-



jority of us have no idea what bits and pieces are inside the case and how they all work on our behalf. Ted will show you some of these vital "organs" such as a Motherboard, Hard disk, RAM, CPU, Fan and Heatsink and tell you how they operate and why they are so vital to your computer. After Ted's presentation there will be



the usual refreshments and the opportunity to talk to tutors and other members.

Last month, we were fortunate to have a most interesting glimpse into the future when Jack Newton gave us a preview of Microsoft's Windows 7 operating system (OS) that was recently made available to testers in its beta pre-general release state. In his usual friendly and easy to understand manner he gave us a rundown on the functions of an OS and their development from the early DOS systems to those currently used by Apple and Microsoft. He compared the hardware needs and the performance of Windows XP and Vista with those of Windows 7 Beta. In conclusion, members were shown some of the advantages Windows 7 has over Vista including its Action Centre with its Security and Maintenance options; its improved User Account Control; its reduced RAM demands; and its overall slimmer and faster performance – factors that Jack thought should make Windows 7 Microsoft's best ever OS.



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WolframAlpha A Computational Knowledge Engine for the Web. Stephen Wolfram is building something new – and it is really impressive and significant. In fact it may be as important for the Web (and the world) as Google, but for a different purpose.



In a nutshell, Wolfram and his team have built what he calls a “computational knowledge engine” for the Web. OK, so what does that really mean? Basically it means that you can ask it factual questions and it computes answers for you.

It doesn't simply return documents that (might) contain the answers, like Google does, and it isn't just a giant database of knowledge, like the Wikipedia. It doesn't simply parse natural language and then use that to retrieve documents, like Powerset, for example. Instead, Wolfram Alpha actually computes the answers to a wide range of questions – like questions that have factual answers such as “What country is Timbuktu in?” or “How many protons are in a hydrogen atom?” or “What is the average rainfall in Seattle?”

Think about that for a minute. It computes the answers. Wolfram Alpha doesn't simply contain huge amounts of manually entered pairs of questions and answers, nor does it search for answers in a database of facts. Instead, it understands and then computes answers to certain kinds of questions. (*Bob Bellini*)

Thank you, members, for your response to our query about the format, one column or two, for the Manly Mouse. It is clear that most members prefer the single column.

How to tell if your PC is infected – Computer-virus infections don't cause your machine to crash anymore. Nowadays, the criminals behind the infections usually want your computer operating in top form so you don't know something's wrong.

That way, they can log your keystrokes and steal any passwords or credit-card numbers you enter at websites, or they can link your infected computer with others to send out spam.

Here are some signs your computer is infected, tapped to serve as part of “botnet” armies run by criminals:

- + You experience new, prolonged slowdowns. This can be a sign that a malicious program is running in the background.
- + You continually get pop-up ads that you can't make go away. This is a sure sign you have “adware,” and possibly more, on your machine.
- + You're being directed to sites you didn't intend to visit, or your search results are coming back funky. This is another sign that hackers have gotten to your machine.

So what do you do?

Having anti-virus software here is hugely helpful. For one, it can identify known malicious programs and disable them. If the virus that has infected your machine isn't detected, many anti-virus vendors offer a service in which they can remotely take over your computer and delete the malware for a fee.

Some anti-virus vendors also offer free, online virus-scanning services.

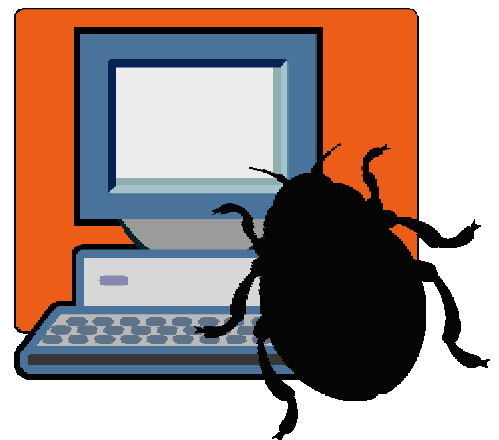
You may have to reinstall your operating system if your computer is still experiencing problems. It's a good idea even if you believe you've cleaned up the mess because malware can still be hidden on your machine. You will need to back up your files before you do this.

How do I know what information has been taken?

It's very hard to tell what's been taken. Not every infection steals your data. Some just serve unwanted ads. Others poison your search result or steer you to websites you don't want to see. Others log your every keystroke.

The anti-virus vendors have extensive databases about what the known infections do and don't do. Comparing the results from your virus scans to those entries will give you a good idea about what criminals may have snatched up.

SMH 16 March 09





Low-Tech Fixes for High-Tech Problems By PAUL BOUTIN New York Times

Remote Car Key Suppose your remote car door opener does not have the range to reach your car across the parking lot. Hold the metal key part of your key fob against your chin, then push the unlock button. The trick turns your head into an antenna, says Tim Pozar, a Silicon Valley radio engineer. Explanation, "You are capacitively coupling the fob to your head. With all the fluids in your head it ends up being a nice conductor. Not a great one, but it works." Using your head can extend the key's wireless range by a few car lengths.

Dry Ink Cartridge If your printer's ink cartridge runs dry near the end of an important print job, remove the cartridge and run a hair dryer on it for two to three minutes. Then place the cartridge back into the printer and try again while it is still warm. "The heat from the hair dryer heats the thick ink, and helps it to flow through the tiny nozzles in the cartridge," says Alex Cox, a software engineer in Seattle. "When the cartridge is almost dead, those nozzles are often nearly clogged with dried ink, so helping the ink to flow will let more ink out of the nozzles." The hair dryer trick can squeeze a few more pages out of a cartridge after the printer declares it is empty.



Cellphone in the Toilet It could happen to anyone: you dropped your cellphone in the toilet. Take the battery out immediately, to prevent electrical short circuits from frying your phone's fragile internals. Then, wipe the phone gently with a towel, and shove it into a jar full of uncooked rice. It works for the same reason you may keep few grains of rice in your salt shaker to keep the salt dry. Rice has a high chemical affinity for water — that means the molecules in the rice have a nearly magnetic attraction for water molecules, which will be soaked up into the rice rather than beading up inside the phone. It is a low-tech version of the "Do Not Eat" desiccant packets that may have been packed in the box the phone came in, to keep moisture away from the circuitry during shipping and storage.

Longer Wi-Fi Reach If your home Wi-Fi router doesn't reach the other end of the house, don't rush out to buy more wireless gear to stretch your network. Instead, build a six-inch-high passive radio wave reflector from kitchen items, like an aluminium cookie sheet. Follow the instructions at freeantennas.com/projects/template. Place the completed reflector — a small, curved piece of metal that reflects radio waves just like a satellite TV dish — behind your Wi-Fi router. It focuses the router's energy in one direction — toward the other end of the house — rather than letting it dissipate its strength in a full circle. No cables, no batteries, no technical knowledge required. Yet it can easily double the range of your network.

Dirty Discs You need to clean a skipping DVD or CD, but as a bachelor you don't have any sissy cleaning fluids? Soak a washcloth with vodka or mouthwash. Alcohol is a powerful solvent, perfectly capable of dissolving fingerprints and grime on the surface of a disc. A \$5 bottle of Listerine in your medicine cabinet may do the job as effectively as a \$75 bottle of DVD cleaning fluid. Also, swabbing your copy of "Lost Weekend" with Stolli instead of fussing with a Discwasher kit is a lot more manly.



Too Much Flash If your cellphone's built-in camera flash is much too bright, washing out photos, tape a small piece of paper over the flash. Experiment with different colours and thicknesses of paper to tone down the flash from superbright white to a more pleasing glow for evening photos.

Crashed Hard Drive If — no, make that when — your PC's hard drive crashes and can't be read, don't be too quick to throw it out. Stick it in the freezer overnight.

"The trick is a real and proven, albeit last resort, recovery technique for some kinds of otherwise-fatal hard-drive problems," writes Fred Langa on his Windows Secrets Web site. Many hard drive failures are caused by worn parts that no longer align properly, making it impossible to read data from the drive. Lowering the drive's temperature causes its metal and plastic internals to contract ever so slightly. Taking the drive out of the freezer, and returning it to room temperature can cause those parts to expand again.

That may help free up binding parts, Mr. Langa explains, or at least let a failing electrical component remain within specs long enough for you to recover your essential data.

That's the spirit of folk remedies: They may or may not work, but what have you got to lose?



Cloud Computing

When my editor asked me to write something on Cloud Computing (CC), I didn't realise the difficulty of her request.

For instance, one CEO described CC as "complete gibberish", another company describes its CC as 'utilis[ing] a battle-tested, web-scale infrastructure that handles whatever you throw at it'.... 'gibberish', 'battle-tested'? Is CC a nonsense or a weapon in cyber-space I wondered before realising that it was just computer-speak and to paraphrase Humpty Dumpty:

'CC means just what an IT person chooses it to mean –neither more nor less'.

So, to keep my editor happy, I'll pretend to be an IT guy and give you my take on it.

To start with, the term Cloud Computing is a buzzword that describes a particular aspect of internet computing that has been around for yonks. A simple explanation of what CC is comes from considering the difference between the two email programs Outlook Express (OE) and Hotmail: OE runs on the user's PC, whereas Hotmail can be termed Cloud Computing because it runs on the cloud, that is, on the internet. OE's program and files are stored on the user's PC whereas the Hotmail program and files are stored somewhere in the cloud. Generalising from this specific case, CC offers programs and services that run in the cloud and do not reside on the user's computer. Consequently the user does not need to buy software and hardware to use any of the apps and services that are on offer from Cloud computing companies.

CC products come to us in a manner analogous to the way electricity comes to us: we get it from the electricity grid—we do not need to buy a generator to get what we want when we want it and we pay for what we use as an operating cost without incurring a capital cost. Eliminating or reducing capital costs for computational services has significant financial advantages for both the commercial and private user. However, it is beyond the scope of this article to list the points for and against Cloud Computing. But there is one aspect you might wish to consider: would you feel more secure using Outlook Express to store your confidential emails on your PC's hard disk or in Hotmail where they are stored somewhere up in the cloud? JN Mar 2009

Naked DSL - Another new term - Whilst some people might think there is something slightly rude or perverse about the name, the 'naked' in naked DSL (NDSL) just means there is no phone service connected to the DSL (digital subscriber line). In plain English, you get broadband, but you don't have a phone service on the telephone line and don't pay a monthly rental fee. Of course you'll need to use your mobile or VOIP to make your telephone calls.

How is this possible? With naked DSL, a portion of cable from the switch to the splitter is removed, allowing the dial tone to be removed from the line. Interestingly naked DSL has been technically possible since 1999. It's only just turning up now after more than six years of regulatory disputes.

Optus is offering naked DSL plans with 7GB of download quota at \$59.99 per month or \$49.99 when bundled with an Optus mobile plan, although these plans are for a "limited time".

Naked DSL allows customers to access broadband without having to rent a traditional phone line, although it is often bundled with Voice over IP (VoIP) telephony, which runs over the broadband connection. ISPs such as Internode and iiNet were the first to offer the service in Australia, with iiNet adding 50,000 customers since the product's launch in November 2007. pcauthority.com.au





Symantec warns a third variant of the Conficker virus is on the loose. It's the nastiest strain yet, by dint of a new ability to disable security software, and block attempts to track where it phones home on the web.

In a tactical switch, Conficker's authors are sending the new strain to already-infected PCs, helping the worm burrow deeper and become more resistant to attempts to dig it out.

De-worming

The two key defences against Conficker remain.

1. Keep your antivirus software up-to-date as possible through live updates.
2. Install Microsoft's Conficker patch, which makes Windows less vulnerable. Microsoft has made patches available for all editions of Windows, but points out that the most recent version, Vista, is the most resistant to the worm.

Microsoft's worm response centre (Microsoft.com/conficker [2]) has links to the patch, plus information and advice on Conficker's A and B strains, but has yet to be updated for the new C strain.

Increase Your Font Size Tired of squinting at tiny type on the screen all day? In Windows Vista, you can bump up the font size — right-click on the desktop, select Personalize and click on "Adjust font size." Once the "DPI Scaling" window comes up (probably after a Vista security alert), select the larger "120 dpi" setting and click OK. Illustrated instructions are at snipurl.com/d5b19. NYT

Recuva (pronounced "recover") is a freeware Windows utility to restore files that have been accidentally deleted from your computer. This includes files emptied from the Recycle bin as well as images and other files that have been deleted by user error from digital camera memory cards or MP3 players. It will even bring back files that have been deleted by bugs, crashes and viruses! <http://www.recuva.com/download>

Very many thanks to all members who made suggestions for the Special Courses we hold on Thursday afternoons. We will give you news of the courses as soon as they are available. Watch this space!

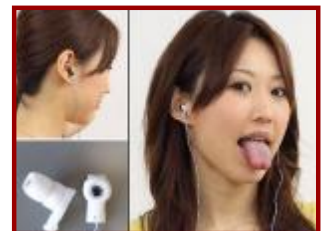
Nudge and wink may turn on all your gadgets This handout picture, taken by Osaka University researcher Kazuhiro Taniguchi shows a woman wearing a prototype earphone-shaped device used to operate electronic devices such as digital music players.

A wink, a smile or a raised eyebrow could soon change the music on your iPod or start up the washing machine, thanks to a new Japanese gadget.

The device looks like a normal set of headphones but is fitted with a set of infrared sensors that measure tiny movements inside the ear that result from different facial expressions. The gizmo - called the "Mimi Switch" or "Ear Switch" - is connected to a micro-computer that can control electronic devices, essentially making it a hands-free remote control for anything.

"You will be able to turn on room lights or swing your washing machine into action with a quick twitch of your mouth," said its inventor, Kazuhiro Taniguchi of Osaka University.

"An iPod can start or stop music when the wearer sticks his tongue out, like in the famous Einstein picture. If he opens his eyes wide, the machine skips to the next tune. A wink with the right eye makes it go back.



Google has launched its controversial "Street View" service in Britain, giving internet users panoramic street-level images of 25 cities. The internet giant said 360-degree pictures of street life in cities from Southampton to Edinburgh are available on the free mapping service. GC was thrilled to see the house where she was born.

Saving All Open Documents Word allows you to open multiple documents at the same time. You can even view all of these documents at the same time. This makes it very easy to work on several files at once. After a long editing session, it is hard to remember which files you have changed and which you haven't. Word provides a way



you can update all your open documents with one command. To do this, hold down the Shift key as you open the File menu. You'll see a command that normally isn't there - Save All. (The command replaces the regular Save command; holding down the Shift key adds the "All" qualifier.) Select the command and you'll then be asked whether you want each document saved. You can click your answer on either the Yes or No buttons.

WordTips - applies to Microsoft Word versions: 97 | 2000 | 2002 | 2003

Seniors Days at the Show on Tuesday 14 & Wednesday 15 April

Bring your grandkids along on Seniors Days and receive FREE Carnival rides when accompanied by a paying child. There's free tea & coffee and free promotions bags for members who visit the Seniors Card stand.



Joke made by Computer What kind of criminal has moral fibre? The answer is: A cereal killer. According to article "Computer crack funnier than many human jokes" in New Scientist Magazine that was the joke made up by a computer!

A number of interested people turned up to our Seniors Week Open Day on 19 March. Some signed up as members. Jack Newton gave a well received talk. The Open Day was successful enough to encourage us to have more publicity next year.

Tutors' Roster (subject to change)

Monday	9 am - 1 pm	Graham Clark & Lyn Nicholls
	1 pm - 5 pm	David McAdam & Arthur Johnson
Tuesday	9 am - 1 pm	Jim Wade & Wally Gora
	1 pm - 5 pm	Lyall McNeish & Harry Brabin
Wednesday	9 am - 1 pm	Ted Hulbert & Bridget Mahoney
	1 pm - 5 pm	Harry Aguerro & Elaine Johns
Thursday	9 am - 1 pm	Dorothy Peters
	1 pm - 5 pm	
Friday	9 am - 1 pm	Ern Cohen & Hugh Walker
	1 pm - 5 pm	Bob Bellini

IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND A CLASS PLEASE PHONE THE CLUB 9976 0930 AND ADVISE THE DUTY TUTOR TO ALTER LIST.

Welcome to new members
Evelyn BUCKINGHAM-JONES;
Jill CARR; Margaret FEENEY;
Maureen HYDE; Helen STRACHAN;
Marea SWANSON;
Helen TUCKERMAN; Elaine WITHERS.
 If you are not mentioned here you will be next month.

The assistance provided by Manly Council to Manly Computerpals is gratefully acknowledged.



Disclaimers

Members who bring equipment such as a laptop computer or digital camera to the Club, do so at their own risk and Computerpals accepts no responsibility for damages or loss.

Each reader of the Manly Mouse newsletter assumes complete risk as to the accuracy and subsequent use of its contents.

This newsletter is provided "As Is" without warranty of any kind.

Our Website is kept up to date by Graham and includes photos, latest news and recent and former copies of the Manly Mouse.

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