



MANLY MOUSE

Newsletter of Computerpals for Seniors – Manly Inc.

May 2009

Bob Bellini will talk about Failed Mail at the next General Meeting on Thursday 14 May at 2 pm in the Manly Library Meeting Room "Through rain or sleet or dark of night, the mail must get through". But what if it doesn't? What if it bounces back or disappears? What to do, what to do ... is it me, is it the PC, is it Bill Gates, is the whole world against me??? Maybe a simple chat with your mail server "Post Office" might shed some light on the mystery? After Bob's presentation there will be the usual refreshments and the opportunity to talk to tutors and other members.



Stupid computer keeps saying "you got mail"



We all enjoyed April's General Meeting. Ted Hulbert made the subject very interesting, starting by showing how computer hard drives have got smaller in size but can store an enormous amount more data nowadays. He gave us a useful handout showing what the different drives, etc. do. If you were unable to come to the meeting you can pick up a copy in the club room. He warned us that no matter how careful you are computers can crash and backing up is really important. During an electric storm you should not only have your computer switched off but pull out the plug from the wall. Your surge protector will not save you from a lightning strike.



On-Screen Keyboard

is an accessibility utility that displays a virtual keyboard on the computer screen that allows people with mobility impairments to type data by using a pointing device or joystick. Besides providing a minimum level of functionality for some people with mobility impairments, On-Screen Keyboard can also help people who do not know how to type. It can also be used when security is important as in internet banking in order to avoid key-logging. The procedure on the Right tells you how to turn on On-Screen Keyboard.



On the XP Start menu Point to All Programs Point to Accessories Point to Accessibility Select On-Screen Keyboard. Note A message box with a link to more information about the On-Screen Keyboard may appear. To close the box, select OK.



Once were convicts, now we are pirates Heckler SMH March 25, 2009

Perhaps we began as we intended to go on, a bunch of petty thieves. Copyright theft has become so pervasive that it boggles my mind. It was my birthday yesterday. My mother asked me what I wanted, and I told her the first season of the acclaimed TV series *The Wire*.

I even told her where she could buy it. She got me a woollen jumper. Not what I asked for, but a good thing to have when it is cold. I only started yelling at her when she suggested that she chose the jumper because her mate Adam could download all five seasons of *The Wire* free. Get behind me, Satan.

We went out for dinner that night. My uncle brought a selection of pirated DVDs to trade with my grandmother. My brother-in-law tells my wife where she can get her Wii console "chipped" to play pirated games. My father talks of a Russian website from which to download music for 1 cent a megabyte. I assume these are scenes of a common conspiracy, because I would not like to think our family barrel is full of rotten apples. And our family is extended enough to rule out a genetic defect.

I know of at least one pirate DVD store in the city. I have been tempted to burn it down. But there must be many others. What are police doing? It has been documented that DVD piracy in the Philippines is a big fundraising activity for al-Qaeda. With the ratio of legitimate to pirated DVDs in Australia almost one to one, copyright theft must be a good business for someone.

But I am pissed-off because this crime is damaging my future as a filmmaker in this country. I would be OK with paying nothing for movies but only if other industries gave away their goods and services for free. It is not only the material cost but also the attitude that the product is not worth paying for. If it is worthless, then the pursuit to create it must be utter foolishness. Yet the self-same are willing to surrender hours of their limited free time enjoying these products. Do they not value their time?

Mother, for my next birthday, please, stop stealing from and devaluing the industry I work in. Complicity in this illegal and immoral activity costs Australian film \$230 million dollars a year, all the jobs that figure represents, all the talent nurtured in those jobs and the quality and quantity of films crafted from that talent.

Felix (name supplied to SMH)



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- Use your existing mobile phone handset
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The cards cost \$50 and are available online, at Australia Post stores or by phoning 1300851676

If your phone is locked (that is if you put in the new card and it won't work) you can ask your provider to unlock it for you.

Similar cards from Lonely Planet ekit (lonelyplanet.ekit.com) and

RoamingSIM (roamingsim.com.au)

Full story: [/www.smh.com.au/travel/traveller-tips/overseas-mobile-calls-can-be-cheap-20090319-9339.html](http://www.smh.com.au/travel/traveller-tips/overseas-mobile-calls-can-be-cheap-20090319-9339.html)

Duty-free shopping

Useful websites:

- Thedutyfreepriceguide.com
- Dutyfree.com.au
- Customs.gov.au



Australian travellers can make or collect duty-free purchases on their way back into Australia. You can order online before you leave and not have to worry about the goods

until you clear customs in Australia.

You no longer have to buy electronic goods in a duty-free store and keep them sealed until after departure. You can now buy the goods from any retailer and claim back the GST at the airport on departure.

Sun-Herald



Analysis of the National Broadband Network Announcement Australia

Australia starts leading the world. The Government's plan sees us skipping the halfway house of so called 'fibre to the node' which would have seen street cabinets being installed around the country. The government will now bring the fibre network straight to people's homes.

This is the most ambitious infrastructure ever undertaken in Australia and will be the most ambitious FttH network anywhere undertaken in the world.

The Australian Government is one of the few governments who, in a holistic way, understand the importance of broadband across the various sectors. This network is not just for high-speed Internet and entertainment but, more importantly, for healthcare, education, smart grids, etc.

The \$43 billion also clearly indicates that the investment will go well beyond Internet and broadband and that it understands the need to use it for the digital economy. This will set Australia up as potentially one of the international leaders here. This Government understands the trans-sector approach that is needed to stimulate the digital economy. The nature of the investment further highlights this: it is an open network and the infrastructure will be made available on a wholesale level. This makes it possible to deliver that infrastructure on a utilities' basis which, of course, is going to make access to the network very affordable to the end users.

While the concepts are right - high quality broadband and an open access infrastructure - at the same time, such a massive project requires planning and design that is going to take time. The Government had foreshadowed two quick wins:

- the first project will start in Tasmania perhaps as early as within the next few weeks.
- The government has indicated it will also immediately start work on the backbone network. This has been discussed for many years and indeed work can start on this rather quickly.

But the big work will require replacing the copper cables that are going into people's homes by fibre. Examples from around the world have indicated that it is very difficult to build a business plan around this, just based on Internet access - you simply will not be able to generate enough revenue from such services that warrant such an investment.

The government is taking the sting out of this by basically guaranteeing the investment money for the project and also indicating the use of the infrastructure for other sectors (healthcare, etc). What this means is that, for example, healthcare can independently provide e-health services to all Australians over the network, without these people needing to have a paid subscription. Media companies could do the same if, for example, they want to finance their applications through advertising. So what is happening is that there won't be a gatekeeper involved who clips the ticket of everything that is happening over the network.

The accompanying regulatory documentation doesn't give Telstra any room to manoeuvre. The company can of course participate but based on the rules of the government and not based on the monopolistic structure of its current vertical integrated service offerings. Most current players in the industry have already indicated that they have no problems with this concept, so there is a good chance that some, if not all, of the players involved in the tender become partners in the National Broadband Corporation.

Open network = innovation and affordability

The open network approach makes it possible to offer the basic infrastructure on a utility basis to content and service providers, and this paves the way for the development of the digital economy. In this way the FttH investment will deliver an economic multiplier effect that will benefit the healthcare, education, energy and environment sectors as well as the digital media and Internet providers.

These content and service organisations can now independently develop their own products and services without being controlled by a gateway-keeping and ticket-clipping, vertically-integrated telco.

The structurally separated model of the FttH plan also allows the National Broadband Corporation to work very efficiently using infrastructure construction companies in the most effective way of building a network. This allows Telstra, Optus and the other telcos to concentrate on developing the intelligent structure on top of that, and this will deliver innovative new applications and services in the most cost-effective way, securing an affordable service for everyone.

As we see with the Tasmanian State Government the project allows regional organisations to add their own local and regional touch to it and it supports local competition and local development, while at the same time fitting into the overall national picture.

What's next for Telstra? Telstra now has another choice to make. It can continue its obstructive behaviour and launch new court cases or (let us hope!) it can look at the business opportunities that are now available to it. It can



work with the new Corporation and establish working relationships, based on the new rules set by the government. What the new plans are doing is providing a bigger cake - not just another telephone or Internet network, but an infrastructure that will attract a large number of new services.

BuddeComm estimates that once the network is deployed healthcare alone could account for 25% of its capacity. Equally, given the right business circumstances, services related to education and energy/environment could take up another 25%. Over time the traditional telecoms and Internet services will only account for perhaps 25% of the NBN.

Not that these latter services have shrunk in volume or revenue - this simply demonstrates the volume of additional growth that will be unleashed on this open network infrastructure.

While Telstra's NEXT G network is certainly impressive and its cable network upgrade will also help it to move forward, it will be no match for this new state-of-the-art FttH.

FttH and wireless. There may be many steps along the way but the FttH is the final destination. Once fully deployed the FttH infrastructure will deliver 100 Mb/s and who knows what else? We can only guess what might be possible in five or ten years' time.

And wireless broadband will be weaved into all of this, partly to make sure that people don't have to wait five or ten years before a fully-deployed FttH network is available to them, and partly because this technology is also evolving rapidly and in less densely populated areas it will be able to deliver a service equal to FttH.

Source Paul Budde (www.budde.com.au)

Comforting thought:
No price hike for fast broadband. The Communications Minister, Stephen Conroy, has said consumers would pay about the same for the new super-fast broadband service as they do now.

\$ 43 Billion Broadband Project – Kevin Rudd's Shiny New Network In April 2009, the Australian Government announced its plan to construct an internet superhighway, SNN, Shiny New Network, as Simon Hackett of the Business Spectator called it in a recent article. SNN is forecast to provide download speeds of 100Mbps (100 million bits per second). Compare this speed with that of just over 10 years ago when the dial-up speed was just 28.8Kbps. This tremendous increase in speed has the potential to change the way we live. SNN cannot be evaluated solely in economic terms as typified by estimating its return on shareholders' funds - its impact goes far beyond the dollar as its non-monetary benefits will almost certainly exceed its monetary costs. There is no hyperbole in predicting that an internet superhighway will, in fact, become the 21st century equivalent of the 19th century development of paved roads—the car introduced a discontinuity into the existing transport system and better roads were needed. Similarly, the internet has introduced a discontinuity into communications which in turn demands a better electronic pathway—the internet superhighway will meet that need.

But while SNN will put Australia up among the world leaders, complacency is not justified as Japan already has a 100 Mbps broadband service and a Japanese company, KDDI¹, has just launched a 1 Gbps (1,000 million bits per second) fibre optics service. Also, the Korean Communications Commission plans to take Korean broadband speeds up to 1 Gbps by 2012 and, like Japan, a broadband speed of 100 Mbps is already available from Korea's main ISPs¹.

Do not ask whether we can afford the Australian Government's \$43 billion project, we cannot afford not to do it, what we can ask and should demand is that it is done and completed in a manner similar to that which Australia designed and completed the Snowy Mountain Scheme - with imagination, with vigour and with engineering excellence.

J. Newton April 2009

¹ Source: The Inquirer, www.theinquirer.net

Bob Bellini has alerted us to an article in the Washington Post http://voices.washingtonpost.com/securityfix/2009/04/microsoft_cites_dramatic_rise.html?wprss=securityfix which quotes Microsoft saying "Scareware" or programs that masquerade as legitimate security and anti-virus software and then frighten and bully users into paying for them have emerged as the most prolific and fastest-growing threats facing PC users. Bob says he has seen a rise in these malware types and wants members to know that it is most prevalent on PCs that have not applied Microsoft or other application updates. This is not unusual when users have dial up, or these tiny download



quota broadband plans. They just don't apply updates in many cases. The last PC he had to remove scareware from (multiple instances on the same PC) took him 13 hours. Probably cost more than a bigger quota broadband plan would cost.

Another risk is the email that appears to come from a reputable source such as your bank asking you to give your details. An example of this is given by Telstra in BigPond Ponderings - Warning: Hoax email attempting to capture customer username and password and billing information. This most recent hoax email is known to have the subject line: BigPond Notification: Account Update Needed. The email advises Members that BigPond was unable to process their most recent payment for their bill. It asks members to confirm and update billing information to prevent their service being interrupted. The email directs you to a false BigPond page to login. This email is designed to trick Members into providing their details which can then be used to gain unauthorised access to your service. If you receive this email, delete it.



Flash memory "wears out". Flash memory chips are called "flash" because in order to write to it, the memory is loaded, and then a signal is sent to the memory circuitry that says "remember this" - kind of like the flash on a camera. (In all honesty, I don't know if modern flash memory uses this exact technique, but it remains a fairly accurate metaphor for the process.) Once the memory has been "flashed", power can be completely removed and the memory will retain whatever was written to it.



The "problem" is that memory can be flashed only so many times. I'm finding numbers between 10,000 and 100,000 times - though as with anything, I'm sure that is increasing over time as well. Regardless, there is a limit. When that limit is approached, some portion of the memory may not properly remember what was written to it, resulting in corruption. It may only take a single bit of information to be wrong, or to "wear out", for the entire contents of a flash memory chip to be lost.

Some flash memory chips, perhaps even most, now also include circuitry to avoid "bad bits". Meaning that if portion of the flash memory finally wears out and goes bad, the chip itself can compensate and look like everything is fine. But that only lasts so long ... it doesn't prevent failure, it only postpones it.

The best use of USB thumb drives and other flash memory based devices is simply copy-to and copy-from. By that I mean copy the information to the thumbdrive to store it, copy it from the thumbdrive to a local hard disk to use it, and then copy it back to the thumb drive to store it. Never run disk-intensive applications directly against files stored on the thumb drive. If you copy to and from even 10 times a day, that's still close to three years of usage for the low end of the flash memory lifespan. (Yes, I know that's not exact. In fact, it's way more complex than that, factoring in things like the type of file system, FAT or NTFS, the efficiency of the device driver, and even the circuitry on the specific flash memory device - but it's a good order of magnitude.)



If you really need external storage, a thumbdrive may simply be the wrong solution to your problem. There are plenty of external hard drives that could do the same job without the write limitations. *Ask-leo.com*

EU slaps UK over Phorm fiasco Snooping software contravenes European law. The European Commission started legal action today against the UK over its decision to allow BT to snoop on its users' Internet browsing habits. The UK government decided that Phorm's software, which serves advertising based on previously visited Web sites, was legal. But the folks in grey suits from Brussels insisted that the way Phorm intercepted user data without consent, and failed to keep that data confidential, was illegal and that Britain should be forced to change its laws. The Commission has also expressed concerns that the UK does not have an independent body to watch the watchers and protect from unscrupulous data mining. *The Inquirer*

Query? What happens in Australia?



Puns. The least intolerable puns are those that avoid the pun's essential puerility. Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, was a specialist. He could effortlessly execute the double pun: Noah's Ark was made of gopher-wood, he would say, but Joan of Arc was maid of Orleans. Some Whately-isms are so complex that they nearly amount to honest jokes: "Why can a man never starve in the Great Desert? Because he can eat the sand which is there. But what brought the sandwiches there? Why, Noah sent Ham, and his descendants mustered and bred."

Whately shows us that it is the punner himself who gives his art a bad name, by so frequently reaching for the obvious.



Nothing vexes so much as a pun on a name, for instance. Yet even these can rise to wit if turned with finesse. Jean Harlow, the platinum-blond star of the 1930s, on being introduced to Lady Margot Asquith, mispronounced her given name to rhyme with "rot." "My dear, the 't' is silent," said Asquith, "as in Harlow."

Wordsmith. To subscribe to Wordsmith (A Word a Day) go to <http://wordsmith.org/awad/sub.html>

Wisdom of a Retiree.....

I've often been asked, 'What do you old folks do now that you're retired?'



Well...I'm fortunate to have a few friends who have chemical engineering backgrounds, and one of the things we enjoy most is turning beer, wine, bourbon, and martinis into urine. (*Thanks Lyall*)

Tutor skills An updated list of tutor skills is now on the noticeboard in the Club Room. So, having learned basic skills if you now want to learn a particular skill then look on the noticeboard to see which tutor can help you.

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 & Elaine Clarke
	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
Susan BROOK; Samuel COHEN;
Warwick GAZZARD; Dorothy
HAITHWAITE; Jose LEGAZ;
Patricia RYDER; Allan ZU-
BRINICH . 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.

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

www.manlycompals.org.au