Switched on Seniors

Newsletter of ComputerPals for Seniors – Newcastle
A Member of ASCCA

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our year is already off to a flying start with the Technical Team having been in from the day school resumed to update all the computers and to install the new Microsoft Office 2010 suite in Windows 7. This latest Microsoft donation, worth $13,200, has added to the tremendous support the company has given us over the years and is greatly appreciated as it has allowed us to ensure that our hardware items are kept fully up-to-date.

Tutors have already attended the year's first train-the-trainer session where the new methods of presentation of our courses were explained. Some tutors have also attended an afternoon of role-playing where they have actually presented the courses to each other.

Courses have either been completely rewritten or greatly revised so that we can accommodate as many people as possible and so avoid people having to wait too long before they can attend classes. Our separate courses for Windows XP, Vista and 7 have been amalgamated so that instead of having 12 separate courses, we now have only three. Similarly, Outlook Express and Windows Mail have been combined into two courses instead of four.

Entirely new courses in Windows Live Mail and Google's Gmail have been prepared, so it is essential that people enrol for the correct e-mail courses because we will only be presenting the nominated programs in the course, so if you have Windows Mail, please do not enrol for Windows LIVE Mail, instead, attend that special course.

We have ceased presenting word processing in Office 2003, so all word processing, spreadsheets and presentations will be using Office 2007 and Office 2010 because the new "ribbons" have superseded the drop-down menus of former versions and this looks like being the way things are going in future. Even if you have a previous version of an Office program, many of the techniques are common to all word processors or spreadsheets. The only difference is in the way to apply them.

New noticeboards have been erected in the vestibule and all notices will be displayed only there in future. Please READ the information about each of the upcoming course requirements before you complete your application. They will be displayed in large print about two sessions ahead of presentation.

On all of the CDs used in the club, there is a special file "Important Information for Members". Please read it carefully as it contains essential information. By all means, print it out so that you can refer to it from time to time.

We know that quite a few members have purchased laptop computers during the past few months but at this stage we will not be using laptops and also discourage people from bringing in their own machines as they are not connected to our network and possible don't have the same software installed. In any case, the layout of the keyboards on laptops varies considerably from brand to brand and model to model, so the desktop keyboards that we use are all the same.

That, I think, covers some of the information you need for starting the new year, so WELCOME BACK to our "old" members and WELCOME to our "new" members. We hope that with the changes that have been made, our great club will be even more successful.

Thanks to Barry Keen who has volunteered to take on the role of Social Activities director. He has offered to do this with a small sub-committee to help him.

All tutors look forward to meeting you and helping you come to grips with your computers.
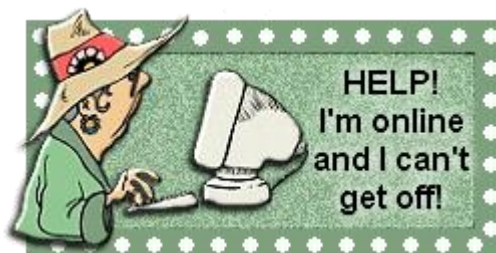
Come along and enjoy the challenge!

Bruce Deitz

President Computerpals Newcastle Inc.

Committee Report

- Microsoft have over the years provided $13,200 in software savings for us. The club over it's 10 years has received from all sources approximately $60,000 in grants.

- The new groups for genealogy and creative writing will again be running in 2011. The genealogy group will investigate for the committee possible useful resources which may assist this group.

- The committee wants to thank all those members who have forwarded payments for 2011 courses within two weeks of enrolling. This has been helpful and much appreciated.

- We ask that is any member changes their email address could they please let the Roster Team know by emailing islingtonpals@gmail.com

- Many courses for 2011 have been reviewed and updated to take account of the many operating systems, email programs and Office packages people have on their computers. It is no longer feasible to present programs which are exclusive to one operating system or version. However it is possible to use a core system and account for differences with participants. See the webpage for the new courses.

Digipals Report

The New Year has arrived, full of promise. During the year we will celebrate the third anniversary of Digipals. What started as a bright idea on a Computerpals cruise up the Hunter River has become a lively group of enthusiasts who meet monthly and enjoy their cameras and the company of their fellow members. This year we have some fun outings planned and our Social Secretary and Travel Consultant Extraordinaire is planning to make some of our trips even more interesting than the recent train trip to Sydney which was a great success. In case you are wondering who this character is, he is our happy official photographer, Barry Keen, currently enjoying the scenery of beautiful Tasmania.

Classes begin again and we start with a "Know your Camera Course" on February the 4th. Courses fill up fairly quickly so check our website or the booking sheets at the clubroom.

We also have an outdoor shoot planned for Saturday the 5th at Stockton, all members will have received an email giving the details. We plan to cover the use of Wide angle and Telephoto settings and lenses. (it might be an idea to bring a chair)

Our teaching has evolved and thanks to a very professional screen we are now able to show video tutorials very easily in the classroom. This is important as we now use video tutorials in much of our teaching.

With summer here in all its glory bright skies and exposure can be a problem. An over exposed photo cannot be rescued but a slightly under exposed one can be. I suggest you try experimenting with your exposure settings, try -1, or try manually adjusting you aperture setting by closing the aperture a little. If you have a DSLR you can even think about a Neutral Density filter, some of the more expensive point and shoot cameras have an in built filter setting, so check your manual.

There is lots of fun ahead, so it is important to know what your camera can do and must of it is in your manual. You can also learn an enormous amount from some of the excellent online tutorial videos.

Practicing with your digital camera only costs you time, so fit in 20/30 minutes occasionally, you will be surprised how much you will learn.

Happy snapping, Graham.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

DigiPals Contact Person :

Carolyn Keane

Next Outdoor Photo Shoot: Saturday 5th February. It will be at Stockton.

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Thanks to Barry with his reports on behalf of the committee.

Our photos are a small sample from the Australian Museum trip.

Digipals Report - Australian Museum Outing

It was a great day out for the 19 members/& partners who attended starting with our Senior's (or Pensioner's) excursion tickets ($2.50) for all day on public transport and concession entry into the museum.
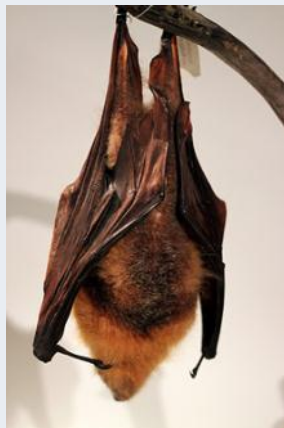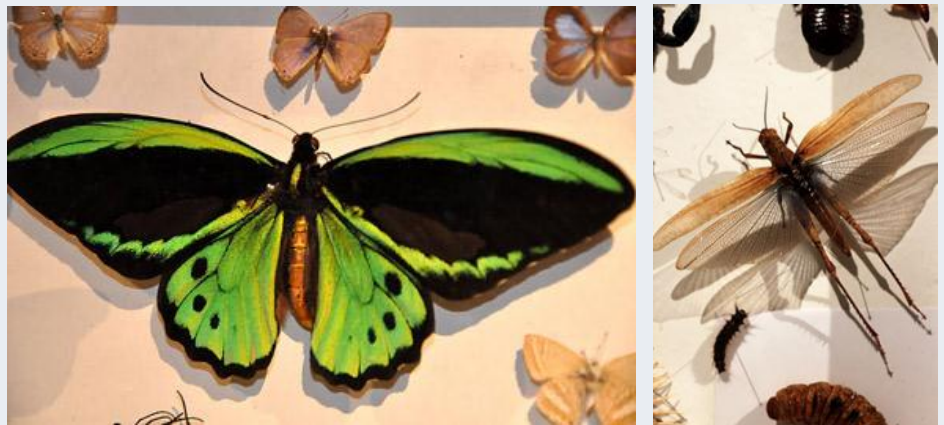
The weather was kind to us being fine, warm (but humid), and cloudy. Inside the museum with the air-conditioning was very comfortable. We enjoyed a quick lunch in the museum cafeteria before viewing the 'Wildlife Photographer of the Year' exhibition and then went to the 'My Photo Studio' area where we got some practise in still life photography, macro and micro shots and some photos of live snails and insects.

In all a very interesting day enjoyed by everyone.

Next Outing

Our next outdoor 'shoot' will be on Saturday 5th February. It will be at Stockton. We will meet at the Stockton Ferry Wharf at 2:25pm. We can then take photos of the city from a different perspective and the activity on the harbour with emphasis on using telephoto and wide-angle shots.

Bring your camera (batteries fully charged or spares), camera manual, tripod if you have one. Slip, Slop, Slap + a hat for the sun and maybe insect repellent. After our shoot we can adjourn to either the General Washington Hotel or Lexi's on the Beach for a coffee/refreshment.

SOCIAL REPORT

As Dawn is no longer able to be the social director then it falls to a team to devise future directions.

DigiPals will of course provide opportunities for members to develop their photography skills and also socialise. See their page for activities.

The Christmas Luncheon was most enjoyable.

In the December edition we published some photos. Here are some more.

BITS & PIECES

We ask that is any member changes their email address could they please let the us know by emailing :

islingtonpals@gmail.com

Regards

Denise (Roster team)

Next Enrolment Day : 11th February, 2011 from 10:00am to 11:30

Next Morning Tea : 21st March, 2011

So Far

Courses are well under way and continue to be very well patronised.

To check availability of courses please phone 4961 6576 during office hours.

And the Next Course?

An outline of the courses is available on the website and on notices in the Clubroom. If you need further explanation, the Tutors will be more than happy to advise which course is the most suitable for you to take.

Demand for the courses is high so it is imperative to enrol early and confirm your position by forwarding your payment.

Please check that a vacancy exists in the course before sending payment.

New Members
Welcome to our club

Bella Aghan	Marcia Martine
Janet Allan	Richard O'Malley
Barbara Bartlett	Pat Richard
Andrew Focic	Lola Steel
Diane Focic	Pam Vidal
Joyce Fox	Kaye Stuart
Beverley Harvey	Margaret Prout
Gay Ilett	Jeffrey Wilson
Frank Mahoney	Doreen Bailey
Yvonne Marr	

Best Wishes

- For our members who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries - congratulations!

- To those who are ill our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

The Tutors and their assistants are also Seniors and conduct the courses in a relaxed atmosphere. Your questions are welcome during the classes and there is no need to feel embarrassed if you need to ask for something to be repeated.

The classroom is fitted with a hearing loop for those people who wear hearing aids.

Condolences

To all of our members who have lost loved ones recently, please accept our condolences.

Thank You members

The committee wants to thank all those members who have forwarded payments for 2011 courses within two weeks of enrolling. This has been helpful

HINTS & TIPS

Microsoft Office File Formats

You have a Microsoft Office program such as Word or Excel. Things used to be straight forward. All Word documents save as .doc files - you knew where you were. Mostly you sent copies to others and they could open them in their version of Word.
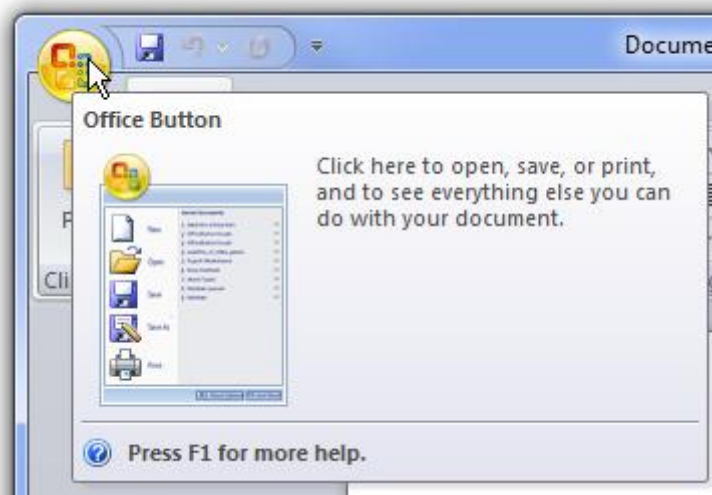
Then Microsoft introduced Office 2007 and 2010 and suddenly the default was different. Your friends who used a different version started saying the file wouldn't open on their version.
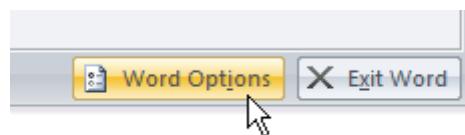
Lets' make something very clear.

If you want to save your files in .doc format in Office 2007 and 2010 then you still can. You can even make it the default. Or if you're brave you can save in the newer .docx format. Who would think one extra "x" would cause so much trouble.

How Can I Set Word 2007 to automatically still save in .doc format?

To change this setting, click on the Office Button in the upper left hand corner.

Now click the Word Options button in the menu.

Click on the Save tab, and then change the drop-down menu for "Save files in this format" to be "Word 97-2003 Document".

What about Word 2010?

Similar process but there now is no Office button. Instead use the FILE button, click on the Options button then click on the Save tab, and then change the drop-down menu for "Save files in this format" to be "Word 97-2003 Document".

MORE HINTS & TIPS

Thanks to those who have contributed stories, puzzles, help articles for the Newsletter.

Carolyn reminded me of the Microsoft Office Compatibility pack on the right - very useful for those with an earlier version of Office to read newer formats.

On the right Barry has provided a very interesting puzzle.

Maura Rainbow has given me quite a number of "cartoons" to keep you on your toes. We will feature one new one each month

How Can I Open Documents in Word 2003 that was created in Word 2007 0r 2010?

A free Microsoft program will convert any Word 2007/2010 document to a file compatible with earlier versions of Word. The converter available is the Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack. The program also converts 2007/2010 Excel and PowerPoint files to earlier versions.

Just click on this hyperlink to download - Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack . Once downloaded just install as you would any other program. That's it!

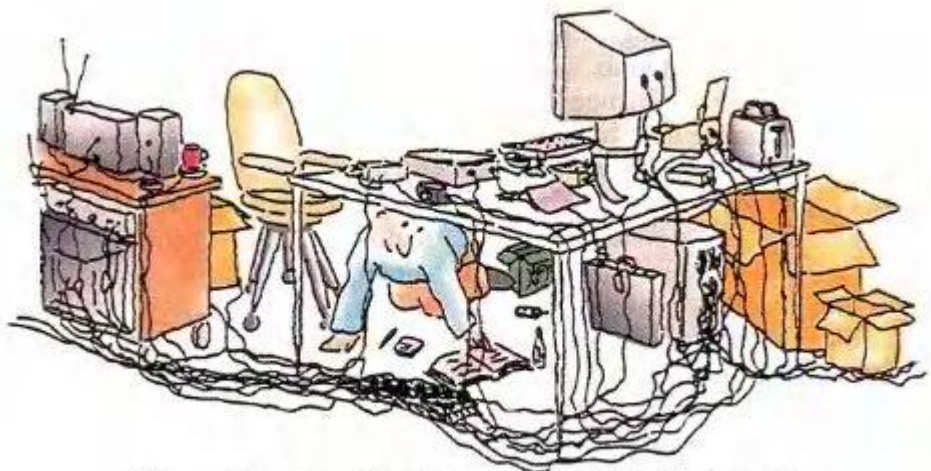Now open your friend's Word 2007 or 2010 file. It will also open their Excel or Power Point files also.

Very Puzzling Barry

This year we will experience 4 unusual dates.... 1/1/11, 11/1/11, 1/11/11, 11/11/11 ....

 NOW go figure this out.... take the last 2 digits of the year you were born plus the age you will be this year

and it WILL EQUAL .... 111 (as long as you were born before 2000, then it adds up to 11?)

A puzzle from Barry.

"Now, if you can find the power switch, flip it on."

I'm stupid when it comes to computers.

(Another contribution forwarded by one of our members - original source acknowledged below)

As you might expect, I hear a lot of things as people ask me questions. I get lots of different scenarios, problems and complaints, as well as excuses and justifications.

There's one statement that stands out as the most frustrating. I just shake my head when I hear it, and it sometimes makes me wonder if there would be any point in answering whatever question is being asked.

That statement?

I'm stupid when it comes to computers.

Why does this bother me so much? Because the folks who say it have already been defeated - by themselves. Their "I can't" attitude will get in the way of everything they might try. They'll stop trying to learn, because they don't believe they can. They'll give up trying to do things, because they don't believe that they're capable.

What a waste. What a terrible waste.

The secret that they won't accept is simply that it's likely that it's only their attitude that's stopping them. If that weren't in the way, they could learn, and they could do.

Computers can be damned complicated, and yes, they often are very frustrating, but that's not your fault.

Sadly, it's when problems arise I see person after person giving up, and putting the blame on themselves.

Unfortunately our fast-paced society has set up some really high standards: if you don't "get" this stuff instantly, you must be stupid. That couldn't be more wrong, particularly when it comes to computers. In fact, there's a good chance that the faster you think you're getting it, the more likely you are to be getting it wrong.

Stepping back and calmly and patiently taking a little time to understand what was happening, how things work, and how things interrelate is a worthwhile investment. Particularly if spending some time understanding some basic concepts can save you hours of frustration later on. In fact, it's one of the reasons I rarely give "just the answer" without a little gentle education as to why something might be the way it is. That little bit of knowledge might help you figure out similar situations on your own, and with less frustration, in the future.

One of the most rewarding comments I get from time to time are from senior citizens who've resolved an issue and have gotten themselves online, perhaps enabling a new level of communication between the generations.

One of the saddest thoughts are all those out there who think that they're "too dumb when it comes to computers" who could have been doing the same if not for that attitude in the way.

Please, don't let that be you.

I'd love to hear what you think. Visit askleo.info and enter 11721 in the go to article number box to access the show notes, the transcript and to leave me a comment. While you're there, browse over 1,200 technical questions and answers on the site.

Till next time, I'm Leo Notenboom, for askleo.info.   http://ask-leo.com/