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Next Meeting

August 6th

8PM

Paul French

“How we Perceive Colour”

Newstream Articles

Deadline : 10 Days before Meeting

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Membership

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LCG Committee 2008/9

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Publicity Officer: Karia Wicks
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OPEN Co-ordinator: Robert Tierney
Webmaster/Content: Tom Olsen
Auditor: Ron Baker
VICTOR Liason: Robert Tierney
General Committee: Glenn Gilpin, Harvey Tavener,
Reinhard von Samorzewski, Judy Hall

OPEN Committee 2008/9

Chairperson OPEN: Robert Tierney.
Chair all meetings of OPEN and ensure that they run smoothly
Vice Chairperson OPEN: (to be clarified)
Chair meeting when the Chairperson is unavailable.
Secretary: Marny Poole.
Handles all incoming and outgoing communications
Responsible for the documentation and distribution of all meeting minutes

Assistant Secretary: - open -. Help the Secretary where necessary
Treasurer: Dennis Murray.
Responsible for all monies and banking
Assistant Treasurer: Karia Wicks and Don Cooper.
Help the Treasurer where necessary.
Publicity Officer: Karia Wicks.
Responsible for all advertising
OPEN Co-ordinator: Robert Tierney.
Responsible for the smooth running of Centre on a daily basis
Membership Co-ordinator: Karia Wicks.
Keep Membership database up to date.
Beginners Project Co-ordinator: Eleanor Horder.
Tutor Co-ordinator: Jenny Napier.
Keep regular contact with Tutors to bring ideas and concerns to meetings
Newsletter Editors Assistant: Dennis Murray.
Collates and produces the OPEN Newsletter for inclusion in LCG monthly 'Newstream'
Maintenance Co-ordinators: Dennis Murray (PC's) and Joel Harbottle (Mac). Responsible for the maintenance and repairs to all computer equipment
Co-ordinator of "VICTOR": Robert Tierney.
Webmaster/Content: Tom Olsen.
OPEN Committee: June Hazzlewood, Marny Poole, Iris Meek, Janet Headlam, Don Cooper, Barry Symons, Tom Olsen.

OPEN NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2008

FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR

If any reader thinks that they may have been suffering from 'Rip Van Winkle Syndrome' and were asleep for a month, fear not ... I didn't manage to produce a July Newsletter due to a serious illness within my employer's family.

Consequently I was spending a heck of a lot of time at work and as the days of July ticked by it seemed less and less sensible to create a newsletter when the month had nearly finished.

I might also mention that some of our members and tutors have been experiencing a variety of illnesses so I think we would all wish them a speedy recovery and we look forward to seeing you back at OPEN in the near future.

So here we are, it's already August, so let's focus on what lies ahead.

Committee member Don Cooper will be representing the club at the ASCCA conference in Sydney at the end of August, so I hope that Don enjoys the opportunity to see how other Seniors' organisations are coming to grips with various aspects of computing.

In September and October OPEN will be involved in Adult Learners Week and Seniors Week respectively and it is traditional for us to open our doors to the general public. If any member can think of a topic or a function that would appeal to members and visitors please mention it to a member of the committee.

Finally, there may be a gap or two in the August roster on page 3, as a result of an illness suffered by our senior tutor Judy, so keep in touch with club to check out the details of classes on those days. We hope to re-schedule the cancelled CD-Burning class soon.

Dennis Murray

NETWORK PRINTERS

It seems that members in general are often experiencing difficulties when trying to print their documents, photos and other class work. Our two main printers, the Canon IP4300 (near OPEN3) and the HP2600 (near the filing cabinets at the front of the room) are set up as **shared or network printers**.

Translation? Unlike your printer at home which is connected directly to your computer, network printers are connected to each OPEN computer 'electronically' via the blue cables that stretch around the room.

There is a host computer or print-server (usually OPEN1 or OPEN3) that must be turned on for network printing facilities to be available.

From time to time there will be changes to the network—there may be a printer added, or there may be one removed. Making sure that all 20-plus PCs and 7 or 8 Macs have the proper network connections configured is a demanding task and I will be the first to admit that at times we may get it wrong.

As a user you can make (printing) life easier by going to the File Menu and selecting Print, and then making sure that you select the appropriate printer from the drop-down list. (*NOTE For some programs, such as Print Artist you must select the default printer before you open the program.*)

While on the subject of the File Menu I'd suggest that most people will find they have better control in regard to Saving, Printing and other functions if they use the File Menu. When you click the Printer icon, or the Save icon you can't always be 100% certain of which printer your file is being sent to, or which folder your file is being saved in. Using the File Menu allow you to see dialog boxes which display the various options.

OPEN MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING

Will be held at 1 pm on August 6 2008.

All members, both old and new, are welcome to attend our monthly meetings. Please take this opportunity to have an input into the way the club

LAUNCESTON COMPUTER GROUP MEETING & MONTHLY WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 6th 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Following a short committee meeting there will be a presentation by :

PAUL FRENCH from Tasmanian Printer Cartridge Co. with the subject being "How we perceive colour."

Paul's talks are always entertaining and informative so it's worth setting aside a couple of hours to attend this session.

EMBROIDERY GROUP

The Friday afternoon Embroidery Group

will meet on a **MONTHLY** basis this year. The next meeting will be on September 3 2008 at 1 pm.

(subject to school holidays)

OPEN NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2008

Launceston Computer Group SOFTWARE LIBRARY Dated 2nd August 2008

DISK 2000 - Your Library on Disk

Disk 2000 is now available. The change from a floppy disk to a CD has enabled us to include much more in the way of games, information and utilities. Existing members can upgrade to the new CD version for just \$1.50. Ask at the club or contact Judy via the e-mail address shown below. This disk is free of charge to all new members.

AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY

At present the Shareware Library is only available during the club's opening hours.

Speak to one of the tutors at the venue -
Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Road, South L'ton.

Email: opencomputing@bigpond.com

OTHER CLUB RESOURCES

In addition to the 'physical' library OPEN and VICTOR may be able to provide members with a variety of free-ware programs as an alternative to downloading from the Internet. Free antivirus programs such as AVG can now be as large as 45 Megabytes and would take hours to download for someone who only had a dial-up Internet connection.

There are also quite a few video tutorials and ASCCA teaching material on our server and these can be quite helpful in explaining how certain programs and utilities work.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN 2008 ALL OF JUDY'S MORNING CLASSES WILL **START AT 10 AM** AND NOT 9 AM AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS

FAMILY HISTORY ON-LINE

August 13 — 1 pm to 3.30 pm

August 27 — 10 am to 12 noon

Join Judy, Robin and the Family History group to help trace your ancestors.

New information is being added to our resources on an on-going basis to help you trace your family's origins. Contact the club for more information

Classes are limited to 8 people.

SPECIAL WEDNESDAY CLASS

AUGUST 20

(Tentative)

10 am to 12 noon

How to burn CDs and DVDs, and then produce your own labels (may include printing direct on to CD or DVD's surface)..

VENUE TELEPHONE NUMBER

Don't forget that the club telephone is available during class hours.

***** 6343 4928 *****

Members and tutors can be contacted at the clubrooms **during class hours** by telephoning the number shown above.

Monday to Friday 10am – 3pm

Tuesday evenings 7pm—9 pm

GRAPHICS

Please check the registration sheets at the club to find out if there are places available.

The dates for the next classes are :

Extra Class August 6 - 10 am to 12 noon

Basic Graphics August 13 - 10 am to 12 noon

During the year additional 'catch-up' and practice classes will be held so please keep in touch with your tutor and check

LEVEL 2 & 3 GRAPHICS

With Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8

Wednesday August 20 1 pm to 3.30 pm

This class is designed for people who have completed the Basic Graphics classes, and involves more advanced features of the Paint Shop Pro graphics programs.

Numbers are limited to 8 people. Please check the notice-board or

OPEN Session Times

At Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Rd, L'ton

Standard Sessions \$5.00

[Some special tutorial materials may incur additional charges]

OPEN NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2008

SPECIAL WEDNESDAY SESSIONS Please register on the sheets – numbers may be limited

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Monday | 10 am –12 | E-Learn & Beginners |
| | 1 pm – 3 pm | Basics and Beyond |
| Tuesday | 10 am –12 | E-Learn & Beginners [all day] |
| | 1 pm – 3 pm | Mac [all day] |
| | 7 pm–9 pm | Basics (Night Class) |
| Wednesday | | Special sessions or Meetings |
| | | As for mornings (see rosters) |
| Thursday | 10 am –12 | E-Learn & Beginners |
| | 1 pm – 3 pm | E-Learn & Beginners |
| Friday | 10 am –12 | E-Learn & Beginners |
| 1st Friday of each month | 1 pm – 3 pm | Embroidery Group |

| Date | Time | Topic | Details |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| August 6 | 10 am–12 noon | Graphics Workshop | An additional class to utilise the skills learned earlier in the Basic Graphics course. |
| | 1 pm onwards | OPEN's Monthly meeting | Come along and contribute your views. |
| | 7.00 to 9.00 pm | LCG Meeting and | Guest presenter Paul French will conduct this session on "How we perceive colour." |
| August 13 | 10 am–12 noon | Basic Graphics | Judy Hall and the Graphics team continue the course on all aspects of graphics manipulation. |
| | 1 pm–3.30 pm | Family History | Judy Hall and the Family History tutors will assist you in tracing your Ancestry. |
| August 20 | 10am–12 noon | To Be Advised ***** | Tentatively a re-scheduling of the CD Burning and Labeling Class that was cancelled on July 30. |
| | 1 pm–3.30 pm | Level 2 and 3 Graphics | Advanced graphics techniques using the Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8 programs. |
| August 27 | 10 am–12 noon | Family History | Trace your Family History using the various resources available at the club. |
| | 1 pm–3.30 pm | Paint Shop Pro 11 | Graphics Class using the most recent version of the popular Paint Shop Pro program. |
| Coming up In September | Adult Learners Week | OPEN and LCG Meetings | Full roster available in September newsletter |
| | | | |

OPEN NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2008

ROB'S BITS AND BOBS FOR AUGUST

The Internet these days has given rise to terms such as Cyberspace and the ever popular Information Super Highway. The problem with whoever coined those terms is that they never made a road-map to give you a bit of a hand if you get lost or come across road-blocks. This month I would like to share an experience in the hope that people who are new to the Internet will be encouraged in the sense that others who have been involved with computers for some time can also have problems that they can't solve, and may get totally frustrated. But by not giving in, and despite the headaches, you do have some rights as a consumer.

My story starts six months ago when I changed Internet providers simply for the fact that I was no longer getting value for money. In a sense I was hamstrung from Day One, and a few months into my Internet adventure I found that I had a faulty modem and needed to be given a new one.

OK ... that was sorted out and I sent the old modem back as instructed. Then two months after I had received the new one I was sent a nice letter telling me that I had not sent everything back that I should have – the modem, the cords, the power source etc etc. (*I was only told to send back the modem and power pack*). I scratched my head in disbelief when, at the end of the letter, I was told I would be charged \$79.00 but it would be cheerfully refunded if I sent everything back within seven

No!!!!!!! That was just the beginning of my Cyber-space 'dizzy-wizzy'. My new modem stopped working and I couldn't connect to the internet. I thought "Oh no ... not again!" and I started to feel my blood pressure just rise a little.

I rang my Internet provider like a good little consumer would and there started my merry-go-round of no one knowing what to do or what the problem could be. I would be told every time "We will look into it" and "It should be fixed in a couple of days". This went on for two weeks and still nothing was working, so by this time I wanted to get off the merry-go-round and my blood pressure was rising a little bit more.

Someone suggested I ring the Telecommunications Ombudsman. They were very good and gave me the excellent suggestion to ring my ISP's upper management. So I did and they told me that the Ombudsman could step in after 10 days if nothing was resolved. So I then found out that "upper management" was the ISP's complaints department and I could hear in the background that they were very busy.

In the meantime my ISP had finally thrown up their hands and said "We don't know what's wrong ... we will pass it onto another company". After nearly three weeks I had a 'Eureka' experience - I asked a friend who is with the same ISP what size power pack they had. It was a larger size like my old power pack had been. I had a crazy thought—"Why not see if the power pack would work on my modem."

I thought "Hey ... all I have to do is ring my ISP, and let them know what they had done and it would all be fixed". No such luck ... I was treated like I wasn't playing with the full deck of cards. My ISP told me to ring the makers of the modem and tell them about the incorrect power-pack, but when I did that I was told "Sorry, we can't help you with another power-pack - you will have to ring your ISP and they will have to send a whole new modem. (*If you didn't laugh you would cry*).

The point of all this, and believe it or not there is a point, is don't let any company treat you like you're an idiot. If you don't know the channels that you can go to for help, ask questions, hound your Internet provider, and if they cant give you any satisfaction after a reasonable amount of time contact the Telecommunications Ombudsman, and set the ball rolling. You are paying for a service and if it is not working properly you don't have to accept that you do not have options, because you do.

They can send men to the moon and unmanned craft to mars but they haven't taught companies how to show good customer relations.

Happy Computing (????)



 ☆ VICTOR PHONE NUMBER 0408 174 235 ☆
 ☆
 ☆ Contact the Coordinator Rob Tierney for ☆
 ☆ assistance with computer problems at home ☆
 ☆ (Bookings are subject to availability of tutors.) ☆
 ☆

NEWBIE CLUB TUTORIAL

Tutorial ... "How To Adjust Your Monitor Settings"

I'm amazed at how many monitors I see being used by Newbies that are either difficult to read because the icons and fonts are too small. Or they are too large. Or the colors are garish and hard on the eyes. I can spot a new PC user when I see someone wearing sun glasses after sundown:-)

To check your settings ...

XP users; Start/Control Panel/Display.

98 and others; Go to your Desktop.

Click on My Computer.

Control Panel Display Settings.

Your Screen Area setting should be on 800x600, or 1024x768.

Unless you are a graphic designer or other professional that is.

There are many other settings you can use, but for 'normal' people like you and me, any settings higher or lower than those above are not recommended. Mess about a bit by sliding the settings pointer across and click OK. You'll be prompted for confirmation, and your computer will blink for a second or so.

Now view a Website with your new setting and see if it's more comfortable. If not try another setting.

Don't worry, it's very easy to restore your original settings just by repeating the process.

I personally use 1024x768, but you may feel differently.

----- "Optimize Your Monitor"

How do you know that your monitor is set correctly?

If you've never changed its settings since it came out of the box, then perhaps you should see what it CAN look like.

I've seen some absolutely awful colours and distorted pictures on monitors that were badly adjusted.

You'll find the setting buttons on the front of your monitor.

Every make is different, so I can't give precise directions. Look at your manufacturer's handbook for instructions.

Adjust the contrast and brightness to 100% maximum. This reduces eye strain by making everything crisp and bright.

Black should be black and not gray for instance. Then adjust back to suit your own preferences.

If you monitor allows it, tweak the picture for horizontal and vertical settings so that it's perfectly central and fills the screen.

Then throw away those sunglasses:-)

Tutorial: "How To Test Your Sound Card And Speakers"

No sound? We get lots of emails asking for a solution.

OK let's investigate...

This may seem basic but it happened to me once.

Try plugging your speakers into a different jack point on the back of your PC. I had a PC that had been wired up wrong, and the jack point that the speakers were supposed to plug in to were incorrectly wired up. Plugging

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them into the other available point worked a treat.

OK let's test ...

Down at the bottom right of your Desktop in the task bar is a little speaker icon - near where the clock sits.

Click it to open it up.

Crank the volume up to maximum. If it has a slider use that, or use the 'Page Up' key on your keyboard.

Now click on Start Control Panel Or in Win 98; Now back to your desktop and click Start Settings Control Panel Double click the 'Sounds and Audio Devices' icon.

This opens up the Sounds Properties window.

Open the 'Sounds' tab Click the 'Down' arrow until you see a sound with a speaker icon beside it.

Click on one of the speaker icons.

In the centre right of the 'Sounds Properties' dialogue is an arrow pointing right.

That's the 'Play' button.

Click it and you should hear a sound from your speakers.

If not, then double check your connections and power/battery supply to your speakers.

If they're still not working you may have a hardware problem that needs sorting by your PC supplier.

Geek Speak Buster "Image File"

An image file is just another type of file found on your computer's hard drive. Image files will have a three letter "file extension" that tells your operating system (Windows) what program to use to open that file.

The most common image files have either a ".jpg" or ".gif" file extension. Files with ".jpg" extensions are usually photographs, but not always. Files with ".gif" extensions are usually graphics with fewer colours.

Photographs taken with a digital camera are almost always in .jpg format. They have millions of colours. A typical file name could be: my-placid-bullpit-terrier.jpg

Image files are different from text, sound, or video files.

Whether you call them "pictures", "graphics", "photos" or "art", they're an image file.

Tutorial ... "Who Says A PC Can't Injure You?"

A couple of years ago I had a replacement monitor delivered under warranty. It was a big brute and came with a fancy swivel 'n tilt stand which I'd used for the previous 10 months. But this time around I couldn't figure out how to clip the stand into place, so I just plonked the monitor onto my desk 'temporarily'.

After 3 days in its 'temporary' position I realized that my neck and shoulders no longer needed periodic stretching to relieve stiffness - especially at the end of the day.

Then I realized that my fancy monitor stand actually positioned the screen so that I had to tilt my head slightly upward - causing aching joints.

And I had been doing that 12-14 hours a day for nearly a year! I also realized that once in position, I had never needed to reposition it, so the

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super-duper star-trek stand was merely an ornament.

Since then I've been astonished at how many times I see people using a PC with their monitor and/or keyboard which is badly positioned - in stores, offices and such.

So here's a few tips on how to avoid injuries when using your computer.

What about injuries? Can you be injured using your computer, or is this just a joke passed from one person to another? Well, you might be amazed to know that doctors report an increase in the number of injuries associated with computer use.

Strains, muscle pain, chronic headache, or repetitive strain injuries may occur. Here's some tips to make life in front of the monitor more rewarding.

Adjust your chair. When you slouch forward, problems occur with your back, neck, shoulders, and legs. Make sure you have enough padding not only for comfort, but for support. If you move a lot, get a chair that swivels. Padded armrests will help if you do a lot of typing.

Adjust the height of your chair so your feet rest flat on the floor and your thighs have enough room under the desk or table. You don't want to hunch forward, lifting your shoulders.

You may want to get a footrest as well. Just lifting your feet a bit can make work more pleasant.

If your keyboard is too high, you lift your shoulders in a constant shrug during the day. This causes muscle aches in you neck and shoulders. If you drop your wrists in an attempt to rest your arms and shoulders, you can stretch tendons and ligaments, and press on nerves in the hands. Position your keyboard directly in front of you, and as close as possible. The most natural and comfortable position is right on your lap. This may not be

practical, however, but getting it right down low really helps.

Your mother told you stand up straight, and now I'm telling you to sit up straight. Like a lazy dog who leans over on one haunch, you may tend to slouch. (No, I'm not saying you're a lazy dog!) Keep your elbows near your body and your forearms parallel with the floor. Your muscles will thank you by not complaining.

Use a light touch on your keyboard. No need to bang away at the keys and scare the mouse. Stay relaxed throughout your entire upper body. And hold your mouse like you would a baby kitten. Stay loose. And stay in shape.

Your monitor should be a comfortable height. You'll find that a poorly positioned monitor causes more fatigue than anything.

Ever go home after a day at work thinking, "What did I do to make me so tired?" Invest in ergonomically designed furniture.

You'll thank yourself.

Glare off your monitor's screen can be reduced by angling it 90 degrees to the source of light, or getting an anti glare filter.

These filters make viewing a lot easier if stray photons are the problem.

What's the ideal height for your monitor? The top edge should be at eye level when you sit up straight, so your eyes have to look just a little bit downward when viewing the middle of the screen.

You should be able to see the screen without tilting your head or using your back muscles. Additionally, make sure the monitor is about an arm's length from your eyes. You may want to change the brightness or contrast of your screen if you have problems seeing it. Or check with your optometrist and have your vision analysed. You may find some

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lightweight reading glasses are just the ticket.

So what if you type a lot of stuff from printed notes? Try to keep the material as close to the monitor as possible. There are nifty devices made to hang your notes to the left or right, so you can focus easily without cranking your head constantly.

Don't forget to move your butt every 20 to 30 minutes.

Stretching exercises and frequent short breaks as opposed to long, infrequent breaks. I don't know your exact situation, but if you spend much time working with a computer, you'll appreciate "doing it right."

Kwik Tips and PC Tricks"

Mouse cursors number in the millions and you can make yours uniquely yours. Oh, and the cursor tells you what's happening, too!

The cursor, as you move it around the screen, doesn't remain a plain white arrow. It may change to a double headed arrow, an "I" beam, or even an hourglass. You may want to change your cursor from a plain white arrow to a bumblebee or a flea. Or to a big black arrow. It doesn't matter. Windows can do that.

For a look at the various cursor options, just visit your local Control Panel (Start, Settings, Control Panel) and double click the Mouse object. Depending your own unique setup, you'll find a lot of cool information.

Shortcuts are excellent choices ...

...if you know where they lead. Never take a shortcut that hasn't been proven.

If you feel lost in the land of gee-whiz, that's ok. Everyone enters, but only a few exit without first going through the infernal frustration zone. If you

knew of a shortcut that would bypass that zone, you'd take it, right?

Well, shortcuts in Windows are similar. Instead of digging through lists looking for a file or program you use all the time, you can create a shortcut to it that circumvents the search.

Your desktop is the location of choice for shortcut creation, as it's readily accessible by you. Shortcuts can be created to any file, folder, or even your hard disk.

Create a shortcut by right dragging an object to a new location. To right drag, just right click on the object, hold the button down while dragging, then release over your target drop zone (your desktop in this case). When you release the mouse button, you'll see a little menu with questions. Answer "Create shortcut" and you've done it. Try it now. It's easy.



Protect yourself from software-vendor 'snarketing'

By Scott Dunn

These days, even the software we like often comes with hidden annoyances designed to help the vendor at the expense of us poor customers.

Here are five examples of sneaky marketing - snarketing, as I call it - and what you can do to mitigate the practice's ill effects.

Software downloads are rife with deceptions

Clicking a link on a Web page to download software certainly beats strolling the aisles of your local computer superstore. But anyone who has spent much time acquiring freeware or buying and registering shareware or other software products knows that some of this convenience is undercut by the very people who say they want us to use their products.

These companies want to make a sale so badly that they're willing to resort to underhanded and obnoxious marketing practices to close the deal.

Too often, these sneaky marketing — or snarketing — practices go unpunished because not enough of us complain. Well, I've found five examples of software-marketing practices that a snake-oil salesman would love.

Install crapware by default.

When you need a Web plug-in to use a particular site, you just want to click your way through the essential download and be done with it. Similarly, if you're just trying to install a security update, you may think you can click the Install button and download only the code you require.

Unfortunately, if you go with the installer's default settings, you might end up with a lot of unwanted software cluttering your system. For example, both Adobe Reader and Adobe's Flash Player install the Google Toolbar

unless you opt out; Sun's Java applet installs the Yahoo Toolbar; and unless you uncheck their options in the installer, Apple's QuickTime updates include the Safari browser and iTunes player, whether you want them or not.

Initially, the QuickTime updater installed Safari without the user's knowledge or consent. According to a story in InformationWeek, that practice was halted a few months ago. But the Apple updater still defaults to installing Safari and iTunes unless you uncheck their respective boxes.

A close cousin of this practice is the tendency of some online stores to use purchase forms that surreptitiously gain your consent to share your e-mail address with other companies or to receive additional mail from the seller itself.

What can you do to protect yourself? Read before you click.

Fortunately, most of these sneaky, bundled installations are not buried in the fine print the way many other license-agreement tricks are. Still, you have to train yourself to look carefully at every field and option in a form and decide for each whether the default is the option you really want.

Hide the freebie

. Software publishers often make a less full-featured version of their product available for free as a way to promote sales of the commercial version. Then they make the link to download the free version as difficult to find as possible.

It's as if the company had no confidence in the power of the free version to sell the full version. Moreover, the frustration of hunting for the free version causes some people to give up and choose an alternative program — or none at all.

Some of the more egregious examples of this scheme are the EditPad and

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Foxit Reader [intro.a PDF-viewing alternative to Adobe Reader \(resist the temptation to click the big, misleading "Get It Free" buttons and instead click the tiny "Download" link just above them\).](#)

Similarly, you can waste a lot of time hunting around Grisoft's site [looking for the free version of the company's AVG Anti-Virus program unless you know that the freeware has its own separate Web address \(free.avg.com\).](#)

To give credit where it's due, not all software publishers pull this trick. For example, in recent years both Real and Apple have made it much simpler to find the free version of their respective media players. Just go to each company's main page and use Real's "Get Real Player — Free" button and Apple's "Free Download" button.

If you find yourself spending too much time looking for the free version of a program, search for it at a big-name download site such as CNET's Download.com or SnapFiles. The chances are good that you'll get the very same product without all the up-sell pitches and other marketing distractions.

Keep on charging. As I reported in my May 17, 2007, **column** -Microsoft-McAfee-Symantec-charge-cards-repeatedly, purchasing a security application may automatically sign you up for a subscription to updates or virus-definition files — a fact that is often buried in a lengthy license agreement or hidden behind an optional link (or both).

Many customers discover this catch only after an automatically recurring charge appears on their credit cards some time later. Furthermore, many of these companies provide no easy way to cancel the subscription.

To avoid hidden charges in online purchases, ask your credit-card company to issue you a disposable credit-card number that can be used only once per purchase. Another strategy is to see whether the product you're buying has a pay-by-check option, which means you don't have to provide a credit card

number at all.

Finally, consider buying your security software at a brick-and-mortar store. Doing so is less convenient, but if you watch for sales, you can sometimes get a new security program every year for less than you'd pay for an online subscription renewal.

Faking the grade. It's common knowledge that many major software-download sites (including Download.com) and online merchants (such as Amazon) let customers post their own ratings and reviews. It would be nice to think that all the user-authored reviews are from unbiased customers giving their honest opinions.

Unfortunately, it's all too easy for developers to post their own stealth reviews and comments, praising their own products or slamming the competition — or both.

Similarly, a Venture Chronicles article [from last April](#) described how employees of the company Parallels posted 5-star reviews of the firm's own product on Amazon and added less-than-kind reviews of a competing product, VMware Fusion.

Such practices are certainly nothing new, but the fact that they persist in 2008 shows that corporations still have a long way to go in their ethical practices.

Software publishers need to establish clear policies for employee behaviour that — at a minimum — require their staff members to identify themselves and their employer in any reviews they post.

Unfortunately, there is little that we can do to distinguish between the authentic and fake customer comments. The only way to avoid falling into the trap is to rely on reviews in Windows Secrets and other reputable publications and Web sites.

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In addition, if a company makes available trial versions of its products, you can try them out yourself with no financial risk and form your own opinion. Just make sure the trial download has all the functionality of the full release.

Nag, nag, nag. It's reasonable to assume that a free program or the trial version of a commercial product will nudge you now and then to upgrade to the paid version. But when a program you've already bought and registered keeps hitting you up for money, it's difficult to avoid getting irked.

But that's exactly what McAfee Internet Security and some other security programs do. Either they're reminding you to renew your subscription months before it's set to expire or they're pushing you to buy related products that claim to offer more protection.

Recently, a Windows Secrets editor starting seeing notices from Symantec pop up every time he booted his PC. The nag notes pointed out that he had X number of days (starting with 30) to renew his subscription to the Norton 360 security suite. The pop-ups came in bunches of five or six in quick succession, requiring that he close each one before he could continue with his work.

This went on for two weeks before he received an e-mail notice from Symantec stating that he had signed up for automatic renewals. Were the two weeks of pop-ups an attempt to double-bill a paid-up customer? Or were the bogus warnings simply an indication of Symantec not having its renewal act together? In either case, the company comes across as hostile toward its customers.

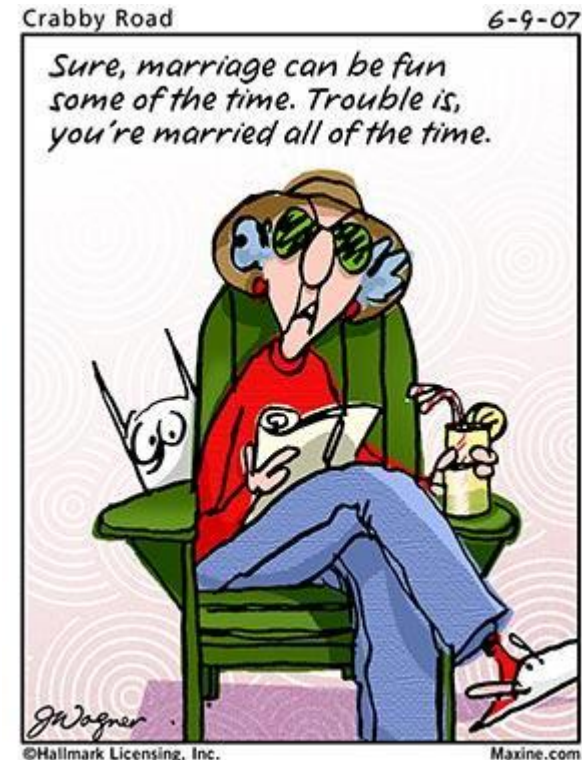
I wish I could tell you some easy way to avoid these kinds of shameless marketing tactics. Sadly, there is none. Your best bet may be to wait until your subscription expires and then try a different (and less annoying) security product.

Don't patronize obnoxious snarketers

In olden days, merchants at least paid lip service to the idea that the customer is always right. But snarketing practices such as these show total disrespect for the needs and convenience of software consumers. Such behaviour by vendors suggests only a blind interest in an immediate sale without regard to encouraging brand loyalty.

If these companies think they can thrive by courting first-time buyers only, then that's their decision. But as consumers, we have a choice. Personally, I'm boycotting any vendor that isn't on the up-and-up, even if theirs is the better product.

From Windows Secrets 18/07/2008



OLDER THAN DIRT

"Hey Dad," one of my kids asked the other day, "What was your favourite fast food when you were growing up?"

"We didn't have fast food when I was growing up," I informed him. "All the food was slow." "C'mon, seriously. Where did you eat?" "It was a place called 'at home,'" I explained.

"Grandma cooked every day and when Grandpa got home from work, we sat down together at the dining room table, and if I didn't like what she put on my plate I was allowed to sit there until I did like it."

By this time, the kid was laughing so hard I was afraid he was going to suffer serious internal damage, so I didn't tell him the part about how I had to have permission to leave the table. But here are some other things I would have told him about my childhood if I figured his system could have handled it:

Some parents NEVER owned their own house, wore Levis, set foot on a golf course, travelled out of the country or had a credit card. In their later years they had something called a store card. The card was good

only at Farmers (now Myers). My parents never drove me to soccer practice. This was mostly because we never had heard of soccer.

I had a bicycle that weighed probably 50 pounds, and only had one speed, (slow). We didn't have a television in our house until I was 11, but my grandparents had one before that.

It was, of course, black and white, but they bought a piece of collared plastic to cover the screen. The top third was blue, like the sky, and the bottom third was green, like grass. The middle third was red. It was perfect for programs that had scenes of fire trucks riding across someone's lawn on a sunny day. Some people had a lens taped to the front of the TV to make the picture look larger.

I was 13 before I tasted my first pizza, it was called "pizza pie." When I bit into it, I burned the roof of my mouth and the cheese slid off, swung down, plastered itself against my chin and burned that, too. It's still the best pizza I ever had.

We didn't have a car until I was 15. Before that, the only car in our family was my grandfather's Ford. He called it a "machine." I never had a telephone in my

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room. The only phone in the house was in the living room and it was on a party line. Before you could dial, you had to listen and make sure some people you didn't know weren't already using the line.

Pizzas were not delivered to our home. But milk was. All newspapers were delivered by boys and all boys delivered newspapers.

I delivered a newspaper, six days a week. It cost 7 cents a paper, of which I got to keep 2 cents. I had to get up at 4 AM every morning. On Saturday, I had to collect the 42 cents from my customers. My favourite customers were the ones who gave me 50 cents and told me to keep the change. My least favourite customers were the ones who seemed to never be home on collection day.

Movie stars kissed with their mouths shut. At least, they did in the movies. Touching someone else's tongue with yours was called French kissing and they didn't do that in movies. I don't know what they did in French movies. French movies were dirty and we weren't allowed to see them.

If you grew up in a generation before there was fast

food, you may want to share some of these memories with your children or grandchildren. Just don't blame me if they bust a gut laughing. Growing up isn't what it used to be, is it

Older Than Dirt Quiz: How many do you remember? Count all the ones that you remember not the ones you were told about . Ratings at the bottom.

1. Cho Cho bar
2. Drive ins
3. Candy cigarettes
4. Soft drink machines that dispensed glass bottles
5. Coffee shops or milk bars with tableside juke boxes
6. Home milk delivery in glass bottles with foil

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Stoppers

7. Party lines
8. Newsreels before the movie
9. Packards
10. Blue flashbulb
11. Telephone numbers with 2 letters and 4 numbers
12. Peashooters
13. Wash tub wringer
14. 78 RPM records
15. Metal ice trays with lever
16. Studebakers
17. Cracker night
18. Using hand signals for cars without turn signals
19. Bread delivered by horse and cart
20. Head lights dimmer switches on the floor

21. Ignition switches on the dashboard
22. Heaters mounted on the inside of the wall
23. Real ice boxes
24. Pant leg clips for bicycles without chain guards
25. Soldering irons you heat on a gas burner

If you remembered 0-5 = You're still young
If you remembered 6-10 = You are getting older
If you remembered 11-15 = Don't tell your age,
If you remembered 16-25 = You're older than dirt!

I might be older than dirt but those memories are the best part of my life.

Sent to me by Iris Meek, who may be younger than me



Office 2003 Service Pack 3 – yes or no?

When Service Pack 3 for Office 2003 was released we had reservations about whether to install and, as is our custom, voiced those concerns in Office Watch. Later we detailed our concerns in a longer article that was posted on the Office Watch <<http://office-watch.com>> web site. Recently we've heard from readers who didn't catch up with that article. Some have been waiting to hear from us, others installed SP3 and spent a lot of time trying to work out why Office would not behave. Problems with accessing older documents and the Access problems are more common than Microsoft would like to think.

So in this issue we're publishing our concerns about Office 2003 SP3 - most of these are disclosed by Microsoft but, as is often the case, you have to dig deep and read carefully to realise the downside of the update.

There's a big question mark over the third service pack for Office 2003 – should you install it or not? Microsoft has chosen to make that decision a difficult one for all Office 2003 users.

There's nothing wrong with Office 2003 Service Pack 3 but you need to be very aware of the limitations imposed on SP3 users. They aren't immediate or obvious but might strike you in the future.

SP3 is full of blatant Microsoft cost-cutting measures. Instead of making Office 2003 more secure and fully functional the company chose to block existing Office 2003 features that would have been too expensive for them to fix. It's cheaper for Microsoft to disable a feature instead of making it work properly.

Microsoft had a pile of security problems with Office 2003, the corporate answer is to disable features with security risks instead of fixing them.

So before you rush off to install SP3 you need to be aware of the changes it brings. Most of them might be considered minor but they might cause a

problem if you're not aware. Microsoft is deploying SP3 automatically via the Microsoft Update service so you might be in for an unwanted 'surprise' when using Office 2003.

The online documentation on these changes isn't clear. The main description of the reduced functionality in Service Pack 3 is buried deep in a long Knowledge Base article <<http://office-watch.com/kb?923618>> . Even then the descriptions are deliberately obscure. For example "You receive an error message when you try to open a file or to save a file after you install Office 2003 Service Pack 3" doesn't tell you which file types are affected and nor does the KB article with that title. You have to hunt around for yet another article that finally lists which file types are affected.

Traps in Office 2003 Service Pack 3

Here's a summary of the major changes in Service Pack 3 which may strike you at some stage. In many cases the changes won't be immediately apparent but at some time in the future you'll spend time trying to work out why something won't work.

Many file types are blocked Many older file types that could be opened in Office 2003 and earlier versions of Office will suddenly stop opening with Office 2003 SP3. There's no warning message or explanation.

The file types blocked by Service Pack 3 include:

- All Word documents created before (but not including) Word 6 for Windows. This includes all Word 1 and Word 2 documents, Word 4 for Mac plus early versions of Word for some Asian countries.
- All Powerpoint files created before Powerpoint 97.
- Excel 4 binary files in .xlc format.
- dBase II files – the once very common .dbf format. Lotus and

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- Quattro files “.wk1, .wk4, .wj3, wk1 FMT, .wks, .wk3, wk3 FM3, .wj2, .wq1, .fm3, .wj1 “
- Corel Draw .cdr This was done because of the security risks in converting older file formats.

Instead of dealing with those problems, Microsoft took the easy way out and just blocked access to the older formats.

While the formats might seem old and even archaic they are important when you want to retrieve old files from years past. Most people and companies don't convert all their documents to the latest format – documents are opened as needed and then re-saved to newer formats. When you go digging into your archives you might find documents you can't open with SP3. That might not happen often but could be quite confusing when you try.

You can reverse these SP3 changes in various ways that are detailed here <<http://office-watch.com/kb?938810>>.

Can't save to some formats Linked to the restriction on File Open are new limitations on formats you can save to. SP3 imposes restrictions on saving to Powerpoint pre-97 formats, Lotus & Quattro formats, Excel 4 binary formats and .dbf formats.

Most of these aren't a real problem since there are presumably other formats you can use instead. But the .dbf format was once very commonly used and is very handy for transferring data across older systems.

You can reverse these SP3 changes in various ways that are detailed here <<http://office-watch.com/kb?938810>>.

No Fast Saves in Word 2003

Fast Save is a Word feature to speed up saving your Word documents. SP3 disables this feature – the check-box option is still there but the 'choice'

does nothing.

Some Add-ins don't work

ActiveX controls, and COM add-ins are checked by SP3 when they load up – if SP3 believes them to be security risks they'll be disabled. That's somewhat reasonable but it means that an add-in that worked fine in Office 2003 will stop unceremoniously once you install SP3.

Office Document Imaging changes The Document Imaging part of Office 2003 changes with SP3 – some you can change back and others you can't.

The Microsoft Office Document Image Writer printer driver may be reset to the TIFF output format. .Tif files and .mdi files are no longer associated with Microsoft Office Document Imaging. Save a .tif file using JPEG compression isn't available. Points 1 and 2 can be reversed by changing the settings to your wishes

Access issues: Microsoft made two important changes to Access 2003 with Service Pack 3. It's a sign of the flawed judgement used by Microsoft that these changes were considered acceptable in a publicly released product. Service Packs are meant to fix bugs not introduce new ones.

While SP3 wasn't fixed there is now a hotfix available to reverse these 'improvements'

Access: Combo box and List box errors A combo or list box populated with a SQL statement can return no values. You can workaroud these problems or apply the hotfix mentioned above.

Access: Bit data columns in SQL tables Access 2003 SP3 dropped support for bit data columns (0 or 1) in Access projects linked to a table on Microsoft's own SQL Server

From Office Watch 13.09

Now it can be told !!!

INTERESTING STORY ABOUT WW II

Starting in 1941, an increasing number of British airmen found themselves as the involuntary guests of the Third Reich, and the Crown was casting-about for ways and means to facilitate their escape.

Now obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is a useful and accurate map, one showing not only where-stuff-was, but also showing the locations of "safe houses", where a POW on-the-lam could go for food and shelter

Paper maps had some real drawbacks: They make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear-out rapidly, and if they get wet, they turn into mush.

Someone in MI-5 (similar to America 's CIA) got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It's durable, can be scrunched-up into tiny wads, and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise what-so-ever.

At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, and that was John Waddington, Ltd.

When approached by the government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort. By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the U.K. licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly.

As it happened, "games and pastimes" was a category of item qualified for insertion into "CARE packages", dispatched by the International Red Cross, to prisoners of war.

Under the strictest of secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-to-secrecy

employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany or Italy where Allied POW camps were located (Red Cross packages were delivered to prisoners in accordance with that same regional system).

When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny dots that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece. As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:

1. .A playing token, containing a small magnetic compass,
2. A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together
3. .Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency, hidden within the piles of Monopoly money!

British and American air-crews were advised, before taking off on their first mission, how to identify a "rigged" Monopoly set ----- by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch, located in the corner of the Free Parking square!

Of the estimated 35,000 Allied POWS who successfully escaped, an estimated one-third were aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy indefinitely, since the British Government might want to use this highly successful ruse in still another, future war. The story wasn't de-classified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honoured in a public ceremony.



Children writing about the ocean

You're going to love these.

(there are no pictures, just remarks from the kids)

Children writing about the ocean Some of these are too much!!

- 1) - An octopus has eight testicles. (Kelly, age 6)
- 2) - Oysters' balls are called pearls. (Jerry, age 6)
- 3) - If you are surrounded by ocean you are an Island. If you don't have ocean all round you, you are incontinent. (Wayne, age 7)
- 4) - Sharks are ugly and mean, and have big teeth, just like Emily Richardson. She's not my friend any more. (Kylie, age 6)
- 5) - A dolphin breaths through an asshole on the top of its head. (Billy, age 8)
- 6) - My uncle goes out in his boat with 2 other men and a woman and pots and comes back with crabs. (Millie, age 6)
- 7) - When ships had sails, they used to use the trade winds to cross the ocean. Sometimes when the wind didn't blow the sailors would whistle to make the wind come. My brother said they would have been better off eating beans. (William, age 7)
- 8) - Mermaids live in the ocean. I like mermaids. They are beautiful and I like their shiny tails, but how on earth do mermaids get pregnant? Like, really? (Helen, age 6)
- 9) - I'm not going to write about the ocean. My baby brother is always crying, my Dad keeps yelling at my Mom, and my big sister has just got pregnant, so I can't think what to write. (Amy, age

- 10) - Some fish are dangerous. Jellyfish can sting. Electric eels can give you a shock. They have to live in caves under the sea where I think they have to plug themselves into chargers. (Christopher, age 7)
- 11) - When you go swimming in the ocean, it is very cold, and it makes my willy small. (Kevin, age 6)
- 12) - Divers have to be safe when they go under the water. Divers can't go down alone, so they have to go down on each other. (Becky, age 8)
- 13) - On vacation my Mom went water skiing. She fell off when she was going very fast. She says she won't do it again because water fired right up her big fat ass. (Julie, age 7)
- 14) - The ocean is made up of water and fish. Why the fish don't drown I don't know. (Bobby, age 6)
- 15) - My dad was a sailor on the ocean. He knows all about the ocean. What he doesn't know is why he quit being a sailor and married my mom. (James, age 7)

