

A Change to PC Update Subscriptions

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The Committee has decided not to accept any new subscriptions for the printed version of PC Update. Here's why:

The large, fancy colour laser printer we use in the office is costing us well over \$6,000 p.a. on a lease/rental agreement. We tried a couple of years ago to get out of that agreement, but it is watertight. The supplier even increased the monthly charge well beyond CPI last year, in the middle of Covid, when the printer was getting even less use than usual. We asked about a pay-out and were told the payout figure equals the full rental charge for the remainder of the contract. I am pretty sure they are indulging in unfair trade practices, but the chances of getting any resolution through regulatory or legal channels would be vanishingly small.

The contract, finally, expires in September next year. You won't be surprised to know we have no intention of renewing! We will probably just go to OfficeWorks and buy a middle of the range A3 inkjet multifunction centre for well under \$1000.

We have investigated alternative ways of printing PC Update, none of which are remotely economical compared to the current subscription charge. So the decision is to accept no new subscriptions.

For the handful of existing print subscribers we will continue to print and mail for at least the one year from now. Thereafter the next committee can decide what to do. This committee is leaning towards allowing renewals for members over say 75 years of age for another 3 years, then discontinuing entirely. That may combine with ramping up the charge to reflect actual costs, so it will depend on circumstances at the time. For example, I would offer to buy the existing machine for a fair residual price, say \$500, this time next year.

Some fun facts: The agreement actually covers the big A3 colour machine and a smaller A4 mono laser(?) in the back office. As far as I know the latter is never or very seldom used. The big machine is worth about \$6,500 new, plus an inbuilt automatic stapler, which adds maybe \$2000. So we have been charged \$6,500 p.a. for 5 years for maybe \$10,000 worth of equipment. That does include some consumables, but hardly enough to justify the extortionate charges. I should add that the contract was entered into when the club was in deep turmoil over other matters, so to the committee of the day it would have felt more like simply renewing and extending an exiting arrangement.