

PC Update

Melbourne PC

User Group Inc.

Celebrating our

30th Anniversary

December 2014



OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

THE PURPOSES OF THE GROUP are to conduct, on a non-profit basis, activities aimed at the effective utilisation of the personal computer and to endeavour to achieve this by:

- * Advancing computer literacy
- * Advancing the art and science of information processing through education and interchange of ideas
- * Keeping members abreast of developments in computing and information technology and enabling members to exchange information and experience
- * Representing computer users in public debate and by acting and speaking on their behalf where they would be affected by proposed legislation or other regulatory measures
- * Providing a forum for the exchange of views among computer users and between computer users and the computer industry
- * Co-operating supporting or joining with, or in, other organisations with similar purposes
- * Undertaking other activities beneficial to the Group

In order to further its purposes the Group shall have the rights, powers and privileges of a natural person.

PC UPDATE

December 2014 Volume 31 Issue 6

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President's Report

Harry Lewis

Welcome to our 30th Anniversary issue of PC Update. Many thanks to Gary Taig for volunteering to edit it.

Our Anniversary celebration took place on Tuesday 18 November. We are most grateful to George Skarbek for organising the event, and to Dianne Vogt for vital assistance, not least in commissioning our delicious birthday cake. Elsewhere in this issue you'll find the text of some of the talks that we heard from members who were central to Melb PC's outstanding successes in the years following its formation.

There is change happening on many fronts just now.

Internet migration: Burnley to Moorabbin

Yes long-promised. At the time of this writing we expect to make the background switch of Internet connections starting on Friday 5 December. Already our new website is hosted at Moorabbin and should not suffer any outages. Our legacy website has been copied to Moorabbin so we're expecting it to be available shortly after the connections are moved. We are planning to place changing content on the new website but to maintain access to our legacy website for the time being. But some changing content, such as Committee minutes, will be placed on the legacy website pending full implementation of the member login facility on the new site.

We shall be reinstating the newsgroups at Moorabbin but the timing depends on how easily the existing support hardware (and the member login) can be reinstated at Moorabbin. Newsgroup users have been alerted and many are already using our alternative discussion forum at Yammer (see later in this Report).

Members using our servers for their own web sites will have to wait a little longer I'm afraid. This is another service behind the member login.

More work will be needed to recover the website archive.

Melb PC major Raffle

Our promised major raffle is now open for business, with those eye-watering prizes. See the announcement on page 50. Contact the Office to obtain a ticket book and sell them to all your friends — entry is not restricted to members of Melb PC.

Vacancies for Volunteers

We need volunteers to take over the role of Melb PC Librarian, and two roles needed for our monthly meetings at Moorabbin (Presentation impresario and Video streaming technician.)

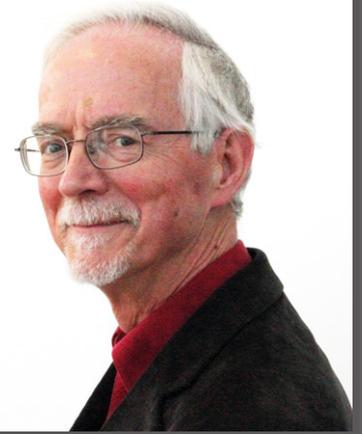
Please read the notice on page 51 and consider volunteering, or encourage your friends to do so.

melbpc.org.au

Email Migration to

Office 365 Enterprise E1

As previously announced, we are moving our email hosting from outlook.com to another Microsoft cloud service, Office 365 Enterprise E1 ('O365' for short.) This will immediately affect all members with active email accounts at melbpc.org.au—and no one else (unless they apply for a new account: any member may do so). Your new account at O365 already exists, and by the time you read this I hope



you will have received a message including your personal temporary password. I have described the startup process in a separate article in this issue— please see pages **43-46**. We expect to make the actual switch of incoming mail from outlook.com to O365 in mid-December.

The reason for this change is that Microsoft took away our management tools from our current domain at outlook.com. This meant that (among other things) we could not reset your password for you, and that we could not create new accounts for new members. The service we have in its place (also free to us as a nonprofit organisation) provides all that our outlook.com service offers, and more. We are concentrating on the email change at first. Active melbpc.org.au email accounts hosted at outlook.com will not disappear when we shift to O365. But they will not receive incoming mail to that address. You will still be able to login to see your old mail (and anything else you have stored there — addresses, calendar; also the OneDrive).

New Member Services

With O365 we receive an upgrade to the OneDrive that comes with our email accounts — from 15GB to unlimited storage. (If you have a melbpc.org.au account you will have two OneDrives now: one at outlook.com, the other at Office 365.) There are other services that come with O365 that we have not previously had access to at all. Most of them support sharing and communication within and across groups in an organization. There is potential for shared mailboxes, and for a public folder including email sharing and file-sharing. There's Lync which is so like Skype (but intended for business) that Microsoft have just announced they're relabelling it 'Skype for Business'. They have also recently announced introduction of a video-sharing service.

Then there's Yammer. This is a (web-based) chat facility. Already there's a Yammer service for mem-

bers with email addresses at melbpc.org.au. This is the free service which we shall be able to manage ourselves once we move our email to O365. It's currently under evaluation by several members and anyone with a melbpc.org.au email address can join in: just point your browser at yammer.com and follow the prompts.

At present Yammer looks to me like the most promising new service to support wider online communication in Melb PC — both among members of identified groups (eg SIGs) and between any members at all who wish to discuss a topic. (One big advantage of Yammer is that anyone with Internet access and a web browser can join in, provided only they have an email account in our domain.) You get the full package only with a melbpc.org.au account; but there is provision for 'external' groups which can include members without a melbpc.org.au account. Aside from what comes to us in the O365 package, your Committee is actively pursuing some other new member services.

Following discussion after our AGM, we are expecting to be able to offer key Microsoft software items to members: Windows, and desktop Office. These are available on favourable terms to Melb PC but we still need to work out some implementation issues. We may need to take the different items one at a time. Please watch for announcements in the new year.

All of the above will be exclusive to members.

Annual General Meeting and Subscription Changes

Our AGM on 5 November approved all the motions before it, including the one to increase our subscriptions. We are grateful to the members who voted in the room and by proxy for their strong support (the positive vote was overwhelming) but we recognise that we need to continue to explain to all members

why we felt it necessary to make what seems to be a sudden large change. Our Treasurer has prepared some very helpful briefing material to add to the more formal reporting required for the AGM, and we shall make that more widely available via our website. (He will also be speaking on this topic at our December monthly meeting.)

Your new Committee

I would like to welcome our new Committee members: John Bade, John Hollow, and Gary Taig. We are sorry to see our departing members go but thank them very warmly for their service as Committee members: Norman Elliman and Lance Lloyd. Last but by no means least: thanks too to the members who are soldiering on: Roger Wragg as Vice-President, Geoffrey Keenan as Treasurer, Ian Rankin as Secretary, Philip Lew and Don McKenzie.

2015 Committee



Harry Lewis
President



Ian Rankin
Secretary



Roger Wragg
Vice-President



Geoffrey Keenan
Treasurer



Don McKenzie
Committee



Philip Lew
Committee



John Bade
Committee



John Hollow
Committee



Gary Taig
Committee

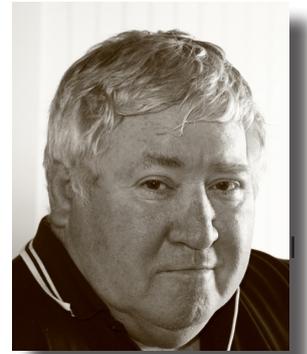
Editorial

Gary Taig

Editing this issue of PC Update has been an exhilarating task. For almost a decade I single-handedly found the material, built, printed and delivered a PC Update every month. Some were exciting, most were satisfying, some more than others but none of them came near this one in terms of pure enjoyment. Having been a member since the middle 1980s, not long after the Group began, I've met and experienced sometimes close working relationships with most of the people who wrote for this issue and reading, researching, checking facts in this document has brought back a million wonderful memories.

On your behalf I sincerely thank those who gave up their time to write about their experiences. Not the least of those is one of our oldest active members, Doug Brooke. I recall in early times, one day at a SIG meeting Doug talked about the speech recognition (PCB) plug-in card he had recently completed building, and it worked okay, he claimed. Entirely fascinated by this I approached him after the meeting and asked how he did it; I was most interested. Anyway, out of the blue Doug said, *"Here, you can take it home and have a play with it if you like"*. That alone sold me on the joys and benefits of membership and probably established within me forever an attitude of sharing knowledge and experiences with your fellow members.

That theme flows through this entire document in a way that makes you sit bolt upright and think. These guys all enjoyed what they did and here they are still enjoying it. Then you'll read the truly marvellous pieces written by Barry Andrews and that wonderful Intellectual come dairy farmer from central Victoria Louis Cook. You will probably never delete this document. It's a pity the Group's resources hit a low



spot in recent times because I would have enjoyed sending it to the printer; every member should have this on their desk. In fact you can if you wish, contact Dianne Vogt in the office, she will arrange a printed copy for members; \$4 for a full colour print.

Speaking of the Office, the Group will now have a monster raffle once a year to help with fund-raising. We need all members to pitch in, whether it be to sell a book of tickets or buy some. Please call the Office on 9276 4000 to arrange to buy your tickets or obtain that book. Tickets are \$10 each, the first prize is a powerful Gigabyte Auros Laptop and the total prize value exceeds \$4600.00. See page 50 for details.

Another thing I noticed working through this is the way that every past president took ownership of his job at hand. The task was so important to them that they took it on board with a passion. Of course, some of that may not be entirely obvious from their words but having served on about seven different committees in the past I knew them and worked with them at the time. Melb PC has gained tremendously from their commitment. That brings to mind another contribution, by Richard Solly. Richard was deeply involved with the Group's Internet service and he has compiled an extensive history of the service, a written history that has already received accolades during the peer review process prior to publication.

A while back I mentioned Louis Cook. While caring for the membership database in the early 1990s I noticed that Lou had a membership number just six away from mine. Lou has a better memory than I do,

he remembers it was Tom Coleman who sold him his \$25 membership; I don't remember. Anyway at the time I was also holding down the job of the Group's first ever SIG Coordinator, because I had to make formal contact on a regular basis with all the SIG conveners in order to expedite their monthly reports for PC Update. SIG Coordinator was the title bestowed by the management of the day. I would edit those reports and have them ready for Peter Smith to include in the following magazine and I still remember the day when Peter said, "Gary, you are now also an Associate Editor". My association with the SIGs grew over time and I enjoyed much contact with Lou Cook. When I was volunteered to create this PC Update Lou was the first guy I thought of and was truly delighted to find he was still a member. You will be delighted too when you read his full story.

The editing of SIG Reports in 1991 and thereafter also led to a greater involvement with PC Update and whilst assisting Peter Smith in every way possible, in about 1993 I took over the role of putting together the entire magazine. That involved running the output from Ventura Publisher to Postscript files and sending that off to fellow member Steven Davey in Geelong who would run them through his Imagesetter to make film for the printer. The task also involved gathering film from advertisers and at the end of each production month I would drive to Geelong, collect our film from Stephen, assemble it all in correct order, write instructions for the printer and take it all to Wilke printer in Clayton.

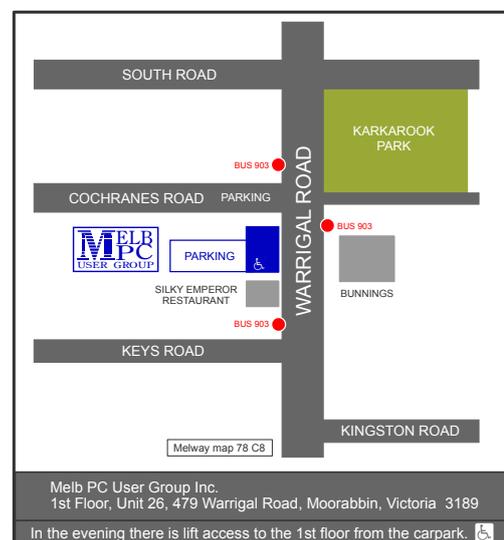
It's not surprising how one thing leads to another. My involvement with the SIGs led to the experience of chairing the SIG Conveners Round Table at the November 1994 APCUG conference in Las Vegas. That was an experience and a half; a jet-lagged chairman. That was after putting together both November and December PC Update and delivering both magazines to the printer about six hours before the flight was due to leave Melbourne on the

Friday. Activities like that gave a whole new meaning to burning the candle at both ends.

Talking of memories, I will never forget my first formal meeting with the Wilke print manager, name long forgotten. When I asked about deadlines he replied, "Gary, we don't have any deadlines". Then came the bit that sunk in, deeply. He continued, "We have what is known as a Window of Opportunity. The window comes along at a predetermined time and that's your opportunity. These machines are worth about \$20 million each and they stop only long enough to load the next job. You miss your window and the next guy has his opportunity, perhaps an hour earlier than expected".

Experiencing the growth of computing power over the years has been mind boggling. The growth in brute power is extraordinary. I'm reminded of Doug's elementary Speech Recognition Card every time my eldest daughter driving down the freeway says to her dashboard, "Ring Dad" and moments later I'm chatting to grandchildren in the back seat. I wonder what their story will contain in 60 or 70 years time.

Like almost every other person who wrote for this issue, my lasting impression is that you get heaps more out of being a volunteer than you put in. The journey has been exciting and yet satisfying, educational, most enjoyable and often very entertaining. Happy Birthday Melb PC.



Congratulations Melbourne PC User Group on 30 years of outstanding service to the IT community in Melbourne!

I am proud to support the Melbourne PC User Group since the early 90's.

Many members will be familiar with eStore. For those interested, here is a little of our history!

City Software was established in 1991, now delivering over 15,000 quality IT and technology products to consumers, corporates, government, education, charities and small to medium sized businesses.

City Software, renamed in 2010 to eStore.com.au, was the first company in Australia to sell software via courier delivery with same day dispatch, made possible by pioneering payment by credit card over the telephone. It quickly grew to become one of the largest software resellers in Australia. In 1994, City Software was the first IT reseller to go online, expanding in 1998 to offer "live" product availability and pricing.

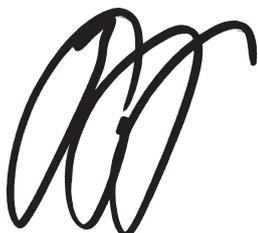
We continued to expand, acquiring Sydney-based International Software Warehouse (ISWH) in 2001 and e-tailer eStore in 2003, significantly growing the company's client base and product service offering.

In 2006, a specialist division trading as CSW-IT, serves the IT needs of corporates, government, health, education, and charities was formed. CSW-IT specialises in server, storage, networking, PC's, tablets, printers & consumables with a full range of software licensing. Our service includes design, installation and maintenance services.

The team at eStore and CSW-IT work hard to deliver fast, reliable and efficient service with over 80% of orders dispatched the same day, resulting in next day delivery to capital cities across Australia.

Our significant buying power combined with an efficient business model delivers what businesses need with market leading value.

Thank you Melbourne PC User group for your important part in our story, also serving Australians.



Lorenzo Coppa
 Founder and Managing Director

BONUS
 Logitech K400R
 Wireless Touch
 Keyboard

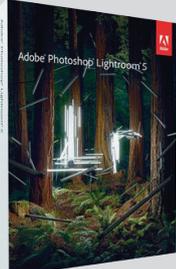


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Melb PC 30th Anniversary Celebration

Harry Lewis



Held Tuesday 18 November 2014, it was an enjoyable and memorable event!

The highlight was a series of short talks by our founders, movers and shakers, some of which you can read in this special edition of PC Update. Don't miss them, they are fascinating.

Some 70 members attended, of whom 70% had been members of Melb PC for at least 15 years. Their membership numbers ranged from 1 to 46796 — a figure to put alongside our Group's peak membership of 13,000, as a measure of the significant proportion of the population of greater Melbourne who have been members of Melb PC at one time or another. (Membership numbers are awarded sequentially as new members join, and are not reused. The very last awarded was 46801.)

Order of play: lunch (good); talks; free time to chat (again) and to enjoy the slide shows; cutting and sharing the birthday cake (delicious); finally, time to depart in order to avoid the worst of the so-called 'rush' hour.

Apart from meeting old friends (old: having been friends for a long time) members were reminded of a different era. An era in which Melb PC didn't just ride the waves, it made its own waves. For all the thousands of members it has had, a comparatively tiny group of dedicated volunteers gave unstintingly of their time and not inconsiderable skills to run our Internet service, to produce our magazine, and to educate our members about the exploding

world of personal computers. We were privileged to hear from several of those dedicated people, including past presidents and honorary life members.

Making waves: Melb PC was voted the best ISP in Australia by Choice magazine in two successive years. PC Update was voted the best user group magazine in the world in its class on several occasions.

George Skarbek, our master of ceremonies, had assembled an impressive display of slides illustrating the history of the computer, and of our Group's Internet services.

Things we learned:

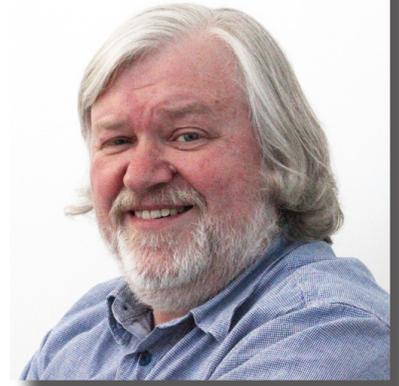
1. The first meeting of which our present Group is a lineal descendant took place (not 30 but) 31 years ago (in 1983).

Yes, Lloyd. What we're celebrating this year is the 30th anniversary of the birth of Melbourne PC User Group Inc. We added the 'Inc.' when the Group was incorporated under Victorian law in December 1984. But as we're a Group dedicated to the digital computer, perhaps we should have waited another year and then celebrated our 100000th birthday?

2. If you own a black 128GB USB stick it's a good idea to buy it a low-cost but brightly-coloured lanyard (available from OfficeWorks) to attach to it, for easy discovery when it hides from you.

A History of Melb PC

Lloyd Borrett — Founder



While enjoying dinner in the Sciences Club at Clunies Ross House after the September meeting I had a dig at David Jilts, our revered editor, for getting a historical fact about Melb PC wrong in the magazine. In the manner of any true editor he responded by saying, "Well why don't you write it up for the magazine." And as this month is the fourth birthday of Melb PC I thought it just might be worth while.

The Beginning

Back in 1983 I was working as BHP's only full-time PC Specialist at their head office in Melbourne. I was also writing the "Your IBM Computer" column for "Your Computer" magazine. In one of the columns I put forward the idea of a user group for PC users.

At the time none existed. There were user groups for Apple, CP/M, Commodore, etc... users, but these seemed to be all aimed at hobbyist users. The market for PC/MS-DOS PCs was almost all corporate, government and education. Such people were unlikely to be attracted to the existing user groups. I had been a President of the Data General User Group and felt that a group based on similar principles would be appropriate for PC users.

Editorial Note

Readers, be aware this piece was written at the end of 1987. Many thanks to Lloyd for allowing us to run this history of the first four years. It provides an historical summary that would be difficult to recreate accurately, 27 years later. Here you have it in its original form.

Gary Taig

Well the response was such that I started to plan for a first meeting. Computer Power, then an IBM PC dealer, offered the meeting room in their St Kilda Road offices as a venue and we held the first meeting in November 1983.

Some forty people showed up, which was excellent considering the limited publicity the meeting had. I can remember giving a very nervous presentation about the work I was doing at BHP. Then we got down to the serious business of appointing a three person working committee to get a group going.

Christopher Leptos, Robert Taylor and yours truly were it. We started to organise a second meeting for February 1984. Chris was able to obtain the use of the meeting room at IBM's Sturt Street premises. He also achieved much better publicity of the event.

Two days before the meeting IBM tried to withdraw the offer of their meeting room! Some of the IBM mainframe and mini computer related groups had complained. Apparently they didn't have use of IBM's facilities and felt we shouldn't be given special treatment: They conveniently forgot that their groups met during the day when IBM's facilities were used for other purposes. Fortunately, Chris managed to convince IBM to keep its commitment to us.

Approximately 150 people turned up for the meeting. Standing room only. The presentations were about networks and mainframe communications.

Heavy!

We elected a full committee of:

President	Lloyd Borrett (BHP)
Vice President	Christopher Leptos (PKF)
Secretary	Stephen Wagen (PKF)
Assistant Sec.	John Rundle (BHP)
Treasurer	Martin Nicholson (DDP)
Publicity Officer	Robert Taylor (WM&S)
Editor	Terry Adair

Public Domain Software

I had a collection of 40 public domain software diskettes from the PC/Blue collection which I handed over to the group. That together with the names of some contacts at other groups in the USA became the basis of our current software collection.

David Jitts took on the role of software librarian, a role he was to continue in brilliant style until handing over to the current librarian, Leon Cohen, some years later. Back then there was no way we could convince David that the librarian should take a place on the committee. How times have changed, for David has since become a valuable committee member.

A Magazine

Christopher Leptos arranged for us to have the assistance of Teksetgraphics to typeset our magazine, and Terry Adair and myself got stuck into producing it. The first edition, all 12 pages of it, came out in March 1984. We were the first user group in Australia to have a professionally typeset magazine!

Unfortunately for this first edition and many subsequent ones, most by-lines read "By Lloyd Borrett". It has never been easy to get people to write for the magazine. But in spite of that I think it was an acceptable first effort.

We had blatantly ripped off cartoons from other magazines in an effort to tart it up a bit. And we had hunted high and low to find a few humorous items. I had also placed little quotations in appropriate places. (Perhaps David Jitts could consider reinstating this practise. I think it added a lot of character to the publication.)

Chris Leptos also arranged for the group to become an affiliate of the Australian Computer Society. This gave us access to Clunies Ross House at reasonable rates and this is where our third, and all subsequent meetings, were held.

Controversy

Our third meeting was perhaps the most controversial we have ever had. At the time copyright was a major issue in the computer world. Our guest speaker was Albert Langer who had some very radical proposals on copyright protection and the place of computer-based technology in Australian society.

Few, if any, on the committee agreed with these views but we all agreed that providing a forum for such a debate was a valid role for Melb PC. In fact the intolerance of the computer industry to user groups and the fact that we held this meeting probably did Melb PC some harm.

At the time users groups were seen as a forum for hobbyists and hackers. Another PC related group had been formed. Their meetings consisted of about 10-15 people bringing their systems along to the meeting and spending the night copying proprietary software. All user groups were being portrayed by our "ever accurate" media interests in this light.

Robert Taylor had all but ceased to be involved with Melb PC as he was heavily involved in getting

the Lotus 1-2-3 User Association up and running. MelbPC and the Lotus groups were probably the only groups at the time actively trying to create a more professional image for microcomputer user groups.

Special Interest Groups

Melb PC actively tried to get various SIGs started right from the beginning. We believed that they would be the vehicle to keep the group responsive and relevant as it grew. A main monthly meeting and a magazine was but a fine basis on which to build. By forming a SIG when enough members showed interest in a particular topic we could not only provide a better service to our existing members, but also attract many new members.

However it's people that make such things happen and in some cases these people didn't want to be associated with Melb PC. So other separate groups formed. Since then some of these groups, such as the Turbo Pascal Group, have merged with Melb PC. Some have disbanded. Still others continue to this day.

Continued Growth

In July 1984 Melb PC had its first stand at a computer show. PC'84 was held at the World Trade Centre and we manned a stand with enthusiastic volunteers. Chris Leptos and myself were able to

get various computer companies to provide us with furniture and systems. I had just started up the PC Connection BBS which was then freely accessible to anyone who dialled up, so we demonstrated the system on the stand.

Perhaps the greatest find of the show was Ian Min-tern from Hamilton. Ian came down from the country to visit the show and someone convinced him to join the group. They also convinced him to help man the stand. He took to the role of recruiting new members like a duck to water.

I will never forget the moment when Ian met a fellow PC user from Hamilton on the last day of the show. They got together in a corner of the stand and started to organise a Hamilton Branch of Melb PC. Since then Ian has showed up at almost every show Melb PC has been involved in. Always keen to help and brilliant at convincing others of the groups benefits.

The show saw a significant increase in our membership. And in August 1984, as President of Melb PC, I was invited by IBM to attend the official opening of their Wangaratta plant. Recognition at last!

United We Stand...

It is sad that we were unable to convince the Lotus 1-23 User Group to form as a SIG of Melb PC instead of as a separate organisation. And when Les Bell started the dBASE User Group I tried to convince him

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that it should be a SIG of Melb PC. Apparently most of the people attending the dBASE meetings were CP/M users and very anti the increasingly dominant PC/MSDOS marketplace.

However Melb PC was taking an active role in trying to assist other groups interstate to get up and going. Believing that similar groups around Australia should share appropriate resources, such as a combined magazine and a public domain software collection, we formed the Australian PC User Association.

The idea was to set up a central public domain librarian responsible for sourcing software from all contacts and seeing that the librarian of each affiliated group was kept up-to-date. It would be each individual groups responsibility to decide how to best provide access to the library to its members.

PC Update Is Born

Aust-PC would also produce a national newsletter to be distributed to the members of all affiliated groups. In September 1984, the Melb PC magazine was renamed to PC Update, and it became an Aust-PC publication. Rod Thompson had taken on the role of editor - arguably the best we've had to date. Copies of PC Update were sent to the then forming Perth and Sydney user groups.

We had lost the use of Teksetgraphics' typesetting facilities, but Rod quickly came up with a new format for the magazine. First the articles were printed using a 15 pitch daisywheel on a letter quality printer. Then a photocopier was used to reduce the subsequent galleys even further. Rod would then paste the magazine together on layout boards ready for the printer.

Although Rod was totally new to all of this he did a magnificent job, spending up to 60 hours a month producing the magazine. (David Jitts probably doesn't realize how easy our magazine production is today, in comparison.)

Changes At The Helm

In February 1985, because of changed work commitments Chris Leptos, Stephen Wagen, John Rundle and myself all resigned from the committee. Thus the committee lost four key members in one hit and had to look around for new blood.

Felix Hofmann took on the role of President. Mike Hosking became Vice President (or President of Vice, as he always put it). Tim O'Connor became Secretary, and Joe De Simone became Publicity Officer. As it turned out I needn't have resigned and continued to serve on the committee as the Past President.

Then in March 1985, just as the new committee was starting to get organised, Rod Thompson announced he was going to have to step down as Editor in April.

Volunteers Get More Than They Give

By July 1985, David Watson had taken on the role of editor. Because he was unable to devote the amount of time that seemed necessary to produce the magazine, David tried to get a Newsletter SIG going. This was never as quite as successful as planned but the magazine continued to be produced on time and be improved.

I remember well the paste-up sessions that would take place each month. A group of people, mostly committee members, would gather to paste-up the magazine. My favourite role was doing the fiddly little bits (like Slartibartfast) putting the page numbers and magazine name at the bottom of each page.

Later in the month a similar group, often the same people, would gather and stuff magazines into plastic bags, seal them, label them, and then make sure they were correctly bundled for Australia Post.

Editorial Note

Readers, be aware this piece was written at the end of 1987. Many thanks to Lloyd for allowing us to run this history of the first four years. It provides an historical summary that would be difficult to recreate accurately, 27 years later. Here you have it in its original form.

Gary Taig

During such sessions interesting discussions would frequently start. I think we shared more of our experiences and learnt more about PCs at these sessions than at any of the other Melb PC activities.

There have been many people who have contributed by performing numerous similar tasks during the history of Melb PC. And yet every single one I ever questioned, always believed that he or she received a lot more than they ever contributed.

Moving On...

At the AGM in July 1985 a new committee was elected:

President	Lloyd Borrett
Vice President	Mike Hosking
Secretary	Tim O'Connor
Assistant Secretary	Loi Sin Choi
Treasurer	Joe De Simone
Meetings Coordinator	Gary Bryant
Publicity Officer	Ian Robinson
Senior Editor	David Watson
Past President	Felix Hofmann

We had five SIGs. David Jitts was still the Group Librarian and there were some 200 disks in the collection.

PC Update magazine was typically 44 pages. Much of the material was being sourced via exchanges with USA user groups such as Capital PC and the

Boston Computer Society. We never seemed to be able to get enough Melb PC members to contribute their experiences, reviews, and ideas.

The Group was getting big, and the administration workload was often becoming too much for the too few left with the task. This situation was to get a lot worse before it got better.

Aust-PC Fails

Aust-PC was formed the idea was that all groups affiliated to it would solicit advertising for the magazine and thus cover production costs. Each group would contribute articles and news items to the national publication. Affiliated groups were still free to produce their own newsletter, and they were responsible for distribution of PC Update to their own members.

Naturally until advertising could cover costs we had to charge for the magazine. So we passed on the \$1.00 per copy charge to these other groups. Unfortunately our efforts at cooperation weren't returned.

In Melbourne we regarded the magazine as a part of the membership subscription. Sydney were charging the same fee for membership but selling the magazine to members who turned up at meetings at a significant profit! Sydney members who couldn't attend meetings or wouldn't pay for it, didn't get the magazine.

The Sydney committee were unwilling to contribute any advertising revenue or articles towards the magazine. When we pointed out that significant numbers of NSW people were joining Melb PC simply for access to PC Update, the Sydney committee responded with a proposal that we introduce a special subscription rate for PC Update that would apply to members of the Sydney group.

With attitudes like these prevailing, PC Update went back to being a publication of Melb PC and Aust-PC

was disbanded. This perhaps explains why future Melb PC committees have been less than enthusiastic at subsequent proposals of co-operation from the Sydney group.

One day perhaps we will see a national body created and thus achieve greater interaction and co-operation between all groups. Certainly they would all become better because of it.

Another Show

Melbourne hosted the Pan Pacific show in September 1985. Melb PC didn't intend to man a stand at the show, but after the show had been running a few days the organisers approached us. There were a few spare stands and they asked us if we could man one.

Joe De Simone did a magnificent job of getting furniture and computers for the stand from numerous companies who had displays at the show. David Watson and Anne Rouse did a fantastic job at short notice in arranging for leaflets to be available. Liz Klar showed up to help man the stand together with the above people. And then just as we were about to get going Ian Mintern showed up!

For two days this team did a great job fielding questions and handing out promotional material. We even met a number of members from the Capital PC User Group and the Boston Computer Society, two U.S. groups we have close contacts with.

The membership numbers underwent yet another rapid increase.

Training Gets Off The Ground

Towards the end of 1985 we finally started to get some organised training sessions being run by Melb PC. Gary Bryant, Anne Rouse, Tim O'Connor and Tom Coleman all played significant roles in establishing this service.

The level of activity in the running of training courses has varied substantially in the last two years. For quite a while most of the burden sat firmly on the shoulders of Tom Coleman and Gordon Castle.

As always, it comes down to having the people prepared to but in the time. You would think that with membership numbers growing rapidly, more people would be available to improve existing services and introduce new ones. And yet the number of active volunteers within the group has remained fairly constant.

Membership Continues To Increase

The huge increase in membership between mid '85 and mid '86 started to put a lot of pressure on the volunteers involved with providing the groups services. Some dropped out and others stepped in, but overall the actual number of active volunteers remained fairly constant.

However members came from everywhere to set up and man the stand at PC'86. (Ian Mintern maintained tradition by showing up yet again.) This show alone saw membership increase by 400 in just two months. The June '86 monthly meeting saw us fill the room at Clunies Ross House for the first time. Standing room only with some 350 people packed in.

At this time the Turbo Pascal Group joined forces with Melb PC.

Crisis Point

We were perhaps being a bit too ambitious in the rush to introduce new services. Certainly I thought more volunteers would come forward to help provide these services.

But the result was severe overload on the existing volunteers. And many functions, especially the

overall administration of the group, was suffering badly. We seemed to be doing well financially, but the records were a mess and no serious attempt at budgeting and forward planning was happening.

By the middle of 1986 the strain was starting to show. Under ever increasing pressure to keep things going those actively involved with the running of Melb PC were starting to come apart at the seams. One of the biggest problems during the period '85-'86 was that a number of people took up "positions" within the group, but didn't actually carry out the actual functions of the position. And the active volunteers were not prepared to call a slacker a slacker, force the issue, and if necessary get rid of the inactive volunteer and attempt to recruit someone else.

In the lead up to the July '86 AGM and elections, the active volunteers tried to work out an acceptable basis on which the group could be organised and services be maintained. With this largely in place I was persuaded to continue as President. However at the AGM it all started to unravel, and I felt compelled to resign and let someone else take over.

This seemed to shock many members, most of whom would have been totally unaware of the strain being placed on those actively involved in running Melb PC.

Turbulent Times

The committee after the July 1986 AGM was:

President	Anne Rouse
Vice President	Joe De Simone
Secretary	Liz Klar
Treasurer	John Swale
Committee Members	Alan Barkauskas
	John Beck
	Gordon Castle
	Leon Cohen
	Tom Coleman

Little happened to relieve the strain on active volunteers, and it started to show as services began to suffer. The volunteers seemed to split into three camps. Two camps took up opposing positions. Nothing the other camp would do was right. The third camp desperately tried to resolve the conflicts without taking sides.

It all came to a head some three months later. One camp had effectively frozen the assets and funds of the Group. The other was trying to carry on as if nothing was happening, manoeuvring to gain control of the committee. Things were not looking good.

I had become a rather inactive member of the group by now, starting to concentrate on my professional career for a change. Eventually members of the "neutral" camp approached me, and asked for my assistance in resolving the differences. A Special General Meeting was held in November and new elections were held. Prior to the meeting agreement was reached that members of the two opposing camps would not seek re-election.

I had reluctantly agreed to serve again as President, but when Ron Lyth stepped forward prepared to take on the task, I happily stepped aside.

The committee elected was:

President	Ron Lyth
Vice President	John Beck
Secretary	David Owen
Assistant Secretary	Leon Cohen
Treasurer	Alan Barkauskas
Publicity Officer	Gordon Castle
Editor	David Jitts
Past President	Felix Hofmann

David Jitts had stepped up to take on the formidable job of editing PC Update magazine. And this time he finally became a committee member.

Rebuilding

Some changes to that line-up have happened since then, notably John Drake taking on the position of Treasurer in March 1987. John Drake and David Owen have done a magnificent job in the many months since in getting the administration of Melb PC up to the highest standard it has ever been.

And if you knew the mess it was in you'd appreciate it even more. A huge backlog of work had to be cleared up. And at the same time the group was going through its highest growth phase ever!

Better Than Ever

David Jitts assisted, by John Wilkins, has taken our magazine into yet another new era. Somehow the members have found inspiration and are contributing great material. We are now making full use of the power available to use by desktop publishing tools. Dudley Horque has done a great job adding a touch of humour with his cartoons. John Swale has made sure the magazine is distributed properly and efficiently to all members.

Leon Cohen and John Beck have kept the public domain collection growing at ever increasing rate. The collection is now HUGE, and must surely be the largest in Australia.

New volunteers have stepped forward from time to time to start new services, form new SIGs, run training courses, and fill vacancies.

Gordon Castle has been brilliant at organising training courses. He has gained permission for the group to use the facilities at RMIT, and has run many of the courses himself.

Charles Sandercock and Colin Macauley have done a great job in establishing and maintaining the Melb PC bulletin board. It's arguably the most popular and best in Australia.

We have seen the creation of the DBMS SIG (Ray Watson), the Desktop Publishing SIG (John Wilkins and Roger de Salis), the Tech SIG (Patrick Kearney), and the Hardware SIG (Wayne Coutts and Felix Hofmann). And then there are the regional SIGs, Geelong (Alan Edwards) and Bendigo (Frank Bourke). We now even have "THE MANIFESTO" proposed by David Jitts, and later modified and adopted by the Committee. The stand at the PC'87 show saw yet another huge increase in members. Will it ever stop? I doubt it!

The Future

As we celebrate the fourth birthday of Melb PC and look back over its history we find it is in better shape than ever. A working administration. More services than ever before.

There are so many exciting things which have happened over the last four years within Melb PC that it would be impossible to tell you about all of them. (Though by the length of this article it must seem I have!) But remember, none of it would have been possible without the contributions of you and your fellow members.

This "brief" history has highlighted some of the names of people who played major roles in Melb PC. Some are still with us, some have moved on to other things. It's the efforts of these people who have been significant in making Melb PC what it is today. We should thank them all.

I've been the President of Melb PC or on committee for most of its life, but there were many times when the spirit was not there. Things start to get a little difficult and the hurdles seem larger than ever. Amazingly, just as the gloom sets in, along comes someone new who is prepared to throw themselves into the fray.

Someone who was merely out there in the membership responds by taking responsibility and carrying

it through. Contributing some of their own time to help others and, in doing so, themselves. Suddenly everything sorts itself out and we all feed off the injection of new energy.

Four years old, and more successful than ever. But we are not stopping there. There are ambitious plans for the coming year. A group headquarters, a paid administrator, expansion of existing services, and new services to be nurtured. Our fifth year should be better than ever.

But remember its your financial support and your help that makes it all happen. Those you have come forward to help in the past have all benefited from the opportunity to test their talents. I'm sure that those who come forward in the future will also find it a positive and worthwhile experience. After all, isn't that the real purpose of a user group.

Reprinted from November 1987 issue of PC Update.

It Was all Mainframes, until...



Ian Rankin

Having retired in 1992 after some 30 years in the IT industry working entirely with mainframes, my knowledge of personal computers was zero — I regarded them as a toy for little kids and peculiar geeks.

Finding retirement a bit boring, I decided to have a look at the personal computers other retirees were all talking about, then in 1992 bought one from Rod Irving Electronics. It sported a 105 MB hard drive, 4MB RAM and a '386 chip running windows 3.1. I played around with the new toy for a while then someone mentioned Melbourne PC User Group, so I joined in 1994.

After attending a couple of meetings at the Pharmacy College, I was asked to help out at the Camberwell Swap meet. This was followed by going to the Swap Meets at Springvale and Moorabbin. I did this for three Sundays out of every four. In 1997 it was suggested that I should help in the Training area, which I did, becoming Training Coordinator in around 1998. Stayed with this until about 2003.

In 2000 I moved into the freeware/shareware portfolio and realised very quickly that the sales were so insignificant we had to improve; the members did not want what we had on offer. So with the help of a small team, developed the Monthly Disc and the first disc was produced in February 2002. I stayed with this until December 2013 when I retired, hoping others might take over. Sadly that has not eventuated.

In 2008 I joined the Committee and became Secretary in 2010, a position I still hold. In April 2014 I began editing the Melb PC Newsletter on a one month on, one month off basis. I continue to do this.

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Members helping Members, Indeed

Doug Brooke

“Members helping Members, Users helping Users” Those were the words displayed on the banner at the front of the meeting room and they were to play a significant part throughout my membership of Melb PC.

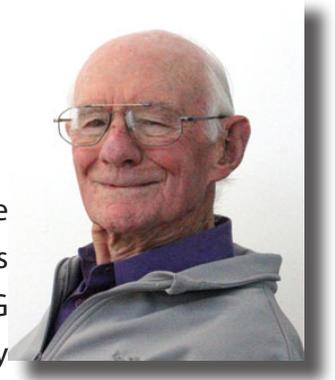
Some years ago a friend had recently joined Melb PC and invited me to the next meeting. It was a pleasant surprise to see the assembled group of enthusiasts there. I was intrigued by their motto which I thought to be so appropriate to such a group. As a result I joined Melb PC in June 1986, just over two years after Lloyd Borrett founded the Group.

There were already about 600 members eager to learn more about recently purchased PCs and associated equipment and to explore other possible uses. The Industry hosted an annual PC Show at which Melb PC's participation always resulted in a busy time answering attendees' questions about their computers and other equipment and about membership of the Group. The PC Shows were a fruitful source of members and usually many enrolled either at the Show or within a few weeks thereafter.

It was a time of rapid formation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) — groups of members having similar interests meeting regularly to discuss and solve their problems. In the period 1984–1993, forty-five SIGs were formed. They were then the great strength of Melb PC and remain so today.

My main interest at the time was in topics concerning communication and how members were able to remain in touch. It was no surprise then that a Communication SIG was formed in 1985 and I joined.

George Skarbek was the convener. The meetings were popular and that SIG is still active nearly thirty years later. Other than attending meetings, members were in contact with other members to seek answers to questions, solutions to problems, exchange messages and information, and to exchange files through the Bulletin Board System (BBS).



A BBS is a computer system running specialised software that enabled users to connect and log into the system using a terminal program such as QMODEM or TELEMATE and a mail reader perhaps BLUEWAVE. After logging in, a user can upload and download software and exchange messages that are subsequently forwarded to the relevant addressees. Operation was essentially store and forward; a member's work was held at the Group's BBS for sending later to its zone centre. Normal telephone lines were used and all transmissions were limited to short nominated daily periods because of the cost of telephone calls. Similar action took place between Zones and Regional centres through to the addressee's service provider; all call charges were borne by the relevant BBS owner/operator, sometimes assisted by a benefactor.

In Melb PC's early days, Lloyd Borrett generously offered BBS facilities on his personal system at a data rate of 300 bits/sec later upgraded to 1200 bits/sec. At the time these were top speeds but extremely slow by present day achievements. The facility was popular and in 1987 the Group assembled its own BBS with an XT computer and access up to 2400 bit/s, operating with OPUS software and connected to FIDONET, a global network. Melb PC was allocated the time slot 5.30–6.00am daily in which to send accumulated member data to our zone centre and

download any incoming data for our members. Because of high transmission costs and time restricted daily exchange of messages, replies often took several days or more to arrive. Nevertheless it was a very popular facility with constant calls by members for more access lines and faster data rates.

The Group's BBS system operators (Sysops) were Colin Macauley and Charles Sandercock working remotely from their homes. I became Colin Macauley's assistant in 1989 and shortly thereafter the BBS operating system was upgraded to MAXIMUS V2 and a second computer and several more access lines were commissioned. Additional lines were added from time to time and by 1992, 16 lines were available. Data rates increased further with the availability of advanced technology for the BBS and for member's equipment. The system was stable and well used by many members with a surprising number of members logging in at all times throughout the day, even in the early morning hours.

Over time, evolving computer communication tech-

nology became reality, providing rapid increases in versatility and performance. In the mid 1990s the Internet became available and Melb PC joined the rush. At that time a much improved level of communication was possible.

Throughout my membership I have upheld the group's motto. A short listing includes: running a number of training courses on computer communication equipment, coordinating a New User SIG for a number of years, regularly attending several SIGs, being a member of Management Committee, the Melb PC Election Returning Officer for a number of years — all of which have given me enormous satisfaction and pleasure from my membership as well as a few long time friends.

I look back at the enormous changes in facilities now available to members, advancements that have occurred over the past 30 years, and could perhaps be forgiven for thinking that the future is already here. "Members helping Members, Users helping Users" indeed.

Knowing the Operating System was Crucial

Tom Coleman

I joined Melbourne PC User Group just before purchasing my first computer. Having made the decision to purchase I was dithering and brain picking before taking the big jump

Melb PC was in its early days. Upon joining I was allocated a three-digit membership number. The Group went on to become the greatest pool of home computing know how in Australia. It is still true today that regardless of your problem there is someone here who knows the answer. It functioned as the RACV of computing, without the roadside assistance



It was in the mid 1980s when I purchased my first computer. It was an IBM PC clone. I had been interested and fiddled with various desktop computers for a few years before that but hadn't taken the plunge. Apart from early elementary programming capability and a few games those early computers did nothing compelling.

Then, slowly the IBM clones matured and ran a form of word processor and a spreadsheet. It was word processing that won me over; I bit the bullet and purchased my first computer. It cost close to \$3500; that's 1984 dollars.

This had a green screen and 512KB of RAM. It came standard with 256KB of RAM but I lashed out and added the extra 256KB for around \$300. It ran DOS 2.1 as the Operating System. It did not have a hard drive but sported two, 360KB, 5.25 inch floppy disc drives for storage. Hard disks were exotic and enormously expensive add-ons that nobody would use. Who needed that much storage? You simply could not justify the expense.

A word for the youngsters who have been using computers for less than about twenty years. The Operating System is the program that runs the computer. Once you had the computer running you could then load a program like a word processor. Knowing the workings of the Operating System was crucial to using a computer.

In those days there was no mouse, no icons and no Windows. All you saw was the Command Prompt. This was `c:\` and a flashing cursor. This was where you entered the commands that made the computer do something. Of course you needed to know what these commands were and how to vary them. The more you knew the better operator you were. I loved it

Most users were not really interested in the Operating System. They just wanted to fire up the computer and get on with processing their words. This meant that once they struck a problem they needed some handholding. It did not take long before I was elevated to the ranks of troubleshooter. Naturally, the more problems I solved the better I became at problem solving and acquired an undeserved reputation as a computer whiz.

Sure, I knew the Operating System and became familiar with the kinds of problems that users wished upon themselves but I was hopeless at running programs and getting the computer to do anything useful. All I was good at was understanding the bloody mindedness of the Operating System.

In its own way it was a string of words with various parameters you could add on to give dimension to what you wanted to achieve. A language, if you like.

It was inevitable that users should feel restricted by DOS, the Operating System, and *user friendliness* became the buzzword of the day. The upshot was Windows with its Mouse and Icons and clicking became the way to control the computer.

It follows from this that you could only click on icons with a predetermined function, and naturally you were stuck with whatever Microsoft thought you 'should' want to do. The user sacrificed control for convenience. And it worked. Look at where we are today. It is magic.

However, way back then it was not so obvious. I was not trying to resist the oncoming wave of Windows computing but I was disillusioned. Somehow the elegant language of DOS had been replaced with pointing and grunting.

It was enough to cause me to ease my way down the ladder and finally return to sea where I had been skippering vessels and teaching diving for years before I started computing. Over the past fifteen or twenty years I have seen the navigation, meteorology, communications and the whole world of seamanship improved out of sight by computers.

Most of what I learned about computing and seamanship is now redundant.

I am a dinosaur.

You'll have to Milk the Cows Tomorrow

Louis Cook

Around 1985 I thought I would like to learn about computers, not that I had anything special in mind but what price do you put on learning?

There was a bit of additional background but that could be a long story so I will cut to the chase.

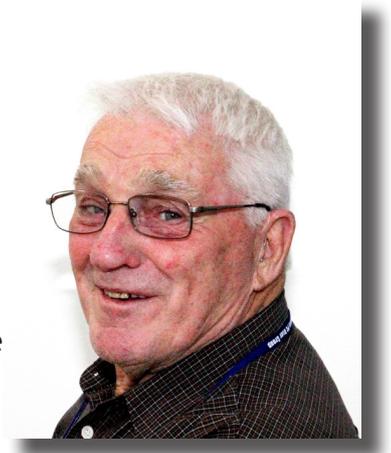
I purchased an IBM JX in late 1986 then proceeded to annoy the blazes out of the salesmen who it turns out didn't know much at all about the product he sold and the books that came with it were all written in a foreign language, computerese, wasn't it? The box cost a lot and it didn't even have any wheels.

For about "five grand" I got a brand-name, two floppy drives of 360 KB, (A and B drives) 256 KB of memory, colour CGA monitor and a very good bi-directional dot-matrix Brother Printer that could print A3 size.

It was a long time before I could afford a 10 megabyte hard-drive and now you can buy terabytes of storage from the Post Office at lower cost than a case of Jim Bean. The kids today don't know what limited memory is and they're likely to think it's something associated with old gits like me!

About nine frustrating months after buying the JX, I was listening to the radio whilst milking cows; there was discussion about a computer expo at the Exhibition Buildings. I think it was the very first at that location. I told my wife that she and the kids would have to milk the cows while I went looking for a computer club. Already I knew there were Atari and Commodore clubs; there may have been more. I set off for Melbourne the next day and walked in the front door and there it was, a great banner pro-

claiming "Melbourne PC User Group".



Tom Coleman was lying in wait to ambush the first unwary person coming past the stand, bless him, he got me! A few moments later he showed me how to use my credit card for the first time ever and relieved me of one of the best \$25 dollars ever spent. Thanks Tom.

That was the start of my real introduction to computers and it has never been regretted. I love the things. Well almost. Perhaps it's the technology bug.

Tom presented me with a complimentary copy of PC UPDATE and I still have it as a memento of the occasion. It is Vol. 4.4 May 1987. Cost \$2.50, Circulation 1350 and 24 pages chock-full of helpful information. (See next page)

Before leaving Melbourne I rang secretary, David Owen, for advice on a computer book for beginners and purchased his recommendation from Technical Book and Magazine in Swanston Street on my way back to the railway station. It was the start of a marvellous journey into an exciting and creative experience... although I didn't quite know it then.

Thanks Tom and everyone else who helped me along the way.

Later, at the urging of David Sloan, I became the volunteer coordinator of the Goulburn Valley Computer User Group meeting in Shepparton. I did this for a few years until we had to move from the host

school due to its closure. I was beginning to feel a bit stale but nobody else wanted to take over as convener so it lapsed.

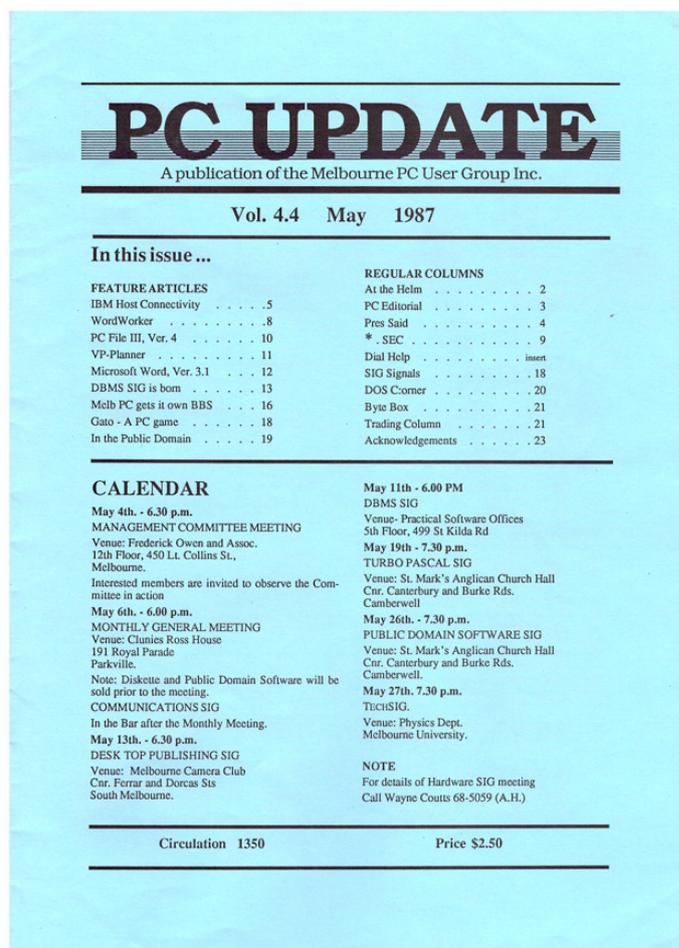
It had all been good fun and I made many friends.

Due to the travelling required I rarely saw monthly meetings in Melbourne but I did volunteer as a helper at a couple of computer shows and enjoyed the company of Doug Brooke, Murray Nelson, John Beck and others lost to memory.

Thanks Melb PC and all who made it possible. I believe the motto "Users helping Users" or "Members helping Members" as they prefer to phrase it these days, has its corollary in the Great Commandment — "Love Thy Neighbour".

Times have changed, computing and other technology has not only changed but advanced in ways never dreamt of 30 years ago and it will continue to do so at an ever increasing rate.

As robots replace people in the workplace a new way of thinking will be necessary to stop modern



Australian society developing into groups of "have"s and "have not"s. This could well be where "Members helping Members" will come to the fore.

Upon his return to the farm, Lou put down some thoughts...

Yesterday members of Melbourne PC User Group Inc. celebrated their 30th Birthday in fine style and by the time I returned home to Regional Victoria feeling ragged and tired but elated from meeting many friends made during my approximately 27 years with the Group, it set me thinking.

In a little more time than the 30 years of Melb PC, mankind has seen technical progress at an astounding rate; the valve was replaced by the transistor then came the advent of the microchip.

Melb PC members embraced these advances with unbridled enthusiasm and saw a need to help and share their knowledge with others. But why or what is it about computers that makes it possible? I believe it is a good line of thinking.

The desktop computer enabled the individual to develop his/her creative talents in many different ways and you are limited only by your imagination; herein lay the attraction of mastering the microchip.

It is now all embracing in our daily life. It drives every form of communication and it's that easy and simple communication between individuals that threatens the "dark-side" big omnipotent government. With modern technology it is possible not only to construct almost anything with limited human input, the human factor is also being progressively eliminated. Why is leisure or 'no work at all' something to be abhorred. Surely it is the mark of an enlightened society and desirable!

The world of the individual is enhanced by the likes of Julian Assange exposing government secret business to the general public. The dead hand of bureaucracy seeks to control the individual from the cradle to the grave.

Computer generated rule is the norm; witness automatic interest added to overdue accounts and late payment fines without judge or jury, this is the world of George Orwell's BIG BROTHER. Just as the use of computers can enslave us, it can also be used to set us free.

With modern technology it is possible to duplicate almost anything from the Statue of David, music and works of literature in such a way that makes copyright laws an impediment to the general progress of mankind.

So the question needing to be asked is "how do we reward people for their efforts without penalising the rest of mankind?" Surely modern progress is the cultural inheritance of everyone!

The answer to this question will not be found in the technical or administrative sphere of human associations but very surely in the philosophical realm of thinking.

It is also necessary to be involved politically and here I do not include Party Political (God forbid) but along the lines of "politics is the art of the possible". Given the "correct association" then anything is possible.

The hook has been baited, would anyone like to bite?

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The Foundation Years

Ash Nallawalla

I clearly remember how I joined Melb PC. It was at a PC show around 1987 and Melb PC had a booth. Member #1 Lloyd Borrett was in the aisle, spruiking the benefits of joining. I had built my first Z80 computer, the Microbee, written some books about it and had belonged to two computer clubs by then. I didn't need much convincing to join Melb PC as member #799.

PC Update

In June 1988 I was recruited by PC Update editor David Jitts as the Assistant Editor. I must have impressed him so much that by July he resigned and I found myself as Editor, a title I held on and off for 20 years, latterly as Reviews Editor.

The make-up of members was largely technical, as many worked in computing or scientific occupations. Computer companies were keen to engage with users, so some of our notable speakers included Bill Gates (Microsoft), Gordon Eubanks (Symantec), Philippe Kahn and Gene Wang (Borland) and others of that calibre.

The early issues contained a lot of technical content obtained from Usenet newsgroups through my student account at Deakin University and later, from a connection at my employer, Unisys. I was bitten by the Internet bug and tried to get the Melb PC Committee interested in offering a connection fed by Unisys. In their wisdom, the committee responded, "We have a two-line BBS that serves our members well."

Internet Service

In February 1994, I set up a Waffle BBS in my living room and gave the Group its first Internet

service. It had just one phone line and subscribers capped at 200.



On 1 April 1994, the melbpc.org.au Internet service was announced, with an initial cap of 300 members, for an annual fee of \$60. The computer was a Dell 486, donated by Dell. It ran NetBSD Unix and had eight modems donated by my employer, Hayes. Its operator was APANA president Andrew Herbert and it was located in his bedroom in Mount Waverley. This was in exchange for Melb PC paying half the cost of its 128 kBit/s ISDN connection to the world. The service was launched in August 1994.

Richard Solly came forth to help with the service and we were independent of APANA within a year. Stan Johnstone and I were among its administrators for some years. Twice, Computer Choice ranked it #1 in customer service, thanks to numerous volunteers who patiently helped newbies to get online. Technology kept advancing and subscribers took up commercial cable and ADSL offerings, so our dial-up subscribers dropped. Earlier this year, the Committee voted to migrate the email service to Outlook.com, so all members are able to maintain their free melbpc.org.au account.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Internet service and I am pleased to see that Richard is still helping the Group as its administrator. I served the group in various capacities for 21 years within the constraints of my employment and have nothing but fond memories.

By Then We Had Outgrown the Space Anyway..

Stan Johnstone

I stood for President in 1996 and was elected with a total of just over 600 votes, with my nearest rival scoring just on 400 votes. This meant that over 1000 out of a total of almost 12,000 members took the time and trouble to vote for their committee. That was an enormous turnout, and the interest and support of the members for their committee.

This was the beginning of a very busy time for us as so much was happening. I hope you will forgive, whenever I use the expression "I" and when all the work is being done by volunteers, all the major activities could only be done by a team, so when I say "I", please understand that I really mean "we".

In 1987 I was blessed with a full committee, especially with Bill Ford as Secretary, and Bruce Elliott who as Treasurer made us answer for every dollar we spent. This was at a time when we had an income of nearly \$2 million a year so a very good treasurer was essential.

As usual there was one committee man who whenever I asked for a volunteer he was always the first to put up his hand — I refer of course to John Morris who took up so many tasks that it was almost easier not to ask for volunteers, but just to hand them straight over to John.

The day-to-day running of the office was made easy under the control of our office manager, Tricia Swan, who had two assistants and a rotating group of volunteers. Tricia was one of our greatest assets who made it so much easier to run this organisation, which was growing so fast.



I joined Melb PC back in 1986 mainly attracted by the excellent PC Update magazine which at the time was also available on sale in newsagents. Early member surveys always listed PC Update as their main reason for joining Melb PC. The product reviews were written by the members themselves and were very popular, and these independent reviews were a valuable resource for the various editors, and each month's issue was eagerly awaited.

I had remained an inactive member until retiring in 1993, and then in 1994 was invited to join the committee. This was at a time when the BBS (Bulletin Board) was showing how computers could be used for communication to the outside world. Our Internet service was just being started, and I was lucky enough to be invited to join the Internet team. I had just turned 60, and retiring after a rewarding professional working life, was fit, and well able to get fully involved in something new and challenging.

One of my earlier activities with the Internet team was in the dial-help area together with John Morris. On some occasions we might each take up to 30 phone calls in a day, but often with the modems available in those days, it was easier to visit the member in their own home and try and sort out their problems from there.

In later years, Ian Felsenthal offered himself to create a similar home help team to help members who

could not get to meetings, with their problems by arranging for a volunteer to help them in their own homes.

I became Secretary in 1995 and again in 1996, and then late in 1997 decided to stand for President.

In November 1995, following on from a visit by Gary Taig just 12 months earlier, Ash Nallawalla and I visited the Boston Computer Society which at that time was the largest PC User Group in the world. We wanted to see how they did things, and to ascertain what we could learn from them. From a peak of 30,000 members their membership had declined to 24,000; they were still the largest by far, and we were number two. They had a full-time staff of 16 and it was a most amazing organisation. However just eight months after we visited, the staff and members woke one morning to read in the Boston Globe that BCS had suddenly closed its doors, as they put it — “their purpose had been fulfilled”. Perhaps the real reason was financial as they had a loss of \$120,000 in the previous year? Now we were number one. However, it was a shock to see how such a large organisation could suddenly fold.

After becoming president, one of the first new innovations I started at the beginning of 1997 was to hold an Orientation Day each month on a Saturday morning, aimed at new members and to make them aware of all the activities that Melb PC offered. Among the many faces, one I remember from those early days is Dave Botherway, who later became president, and he is still one of the main stalwarts today and has been part of many changes.

A year or so earlier I had conducted two one-day seminars at the Camberwell Civic Centre, open to the public as well as to our members. The first one was named “Windows 95 Explained” as this new version of Windows featured many new and different characteristics to be learned. Months later we followed up with another seminar “Using the Internet”

which at that time was still a mystery to many, but a subject everyone wanted to know about it. We charged only a nominal fee for these seminars, just enough to cover expenses, but also with the idea of showing what an active organisation we were, and the hope to attract more members. At that time most of our new members were joining us so as to share in what had become our highly respected Internet service.

In late 1997 the lease on our premises in Albert Road was due to expire. By then we had outgrown the space anyway, and an option to purchase the space for \$525,000 was impractical. Instead, we found a larger space in the Dorcas Street building close by. This had a larger floor area, and the rental charge little different from what we had been paying previously. We refurbished these offices to meet our growing requirements, and we were able to provide all the space we needed for our equipment, the office, meeting and training areas.

It was also a most opportune time technically, as the first 56K modems were just becoming available. Although the 33.6K modems we had been using were the best available at the time, they often become unstable and required constant checking and resetting. But with the introduction of 58K modems, suddenly we had become one of the few ISPs who could offer the fastest dial-up connections in Melbourne.

I acted as project manager for this work, and although almost half the total cost was for the new Internet equipment, we were successful in fitting out the new offices and bringing it all together, under the budgeted estimate.

I stood for President again in 1997 and again in 1998 and was unchallenged. Bill Ford changed roles from Secretary to Treasurer, and Gary Taig returned as Secretary. Unfortunately in the 1998 elections not all the positions were filled (perhaps I had been too de-

manding), but George Skarbek and John Swale then joined the committee to bring it up to full strength. Due to pressure of his own work, Gary later had to resign and John Swale took over as Secretary where he continued for many years.

However early in 1999 I had to also had to resign rather abruptly after it was found I was carrying around the first of a series of cancers, and advised to ease up. My shoes were then filled by Morris Tobias at very short notice.

However it didn't all stop there. I was still a member of the Internet team. In November 2002, the Association of PC User Groups held a competition for the best web site. With a matter of days to prepare something, George Skarbek asked for help and I created the external web pages in just 30 hours. It won Best Overall and First Place, winners announced at the APCUG conference. However, ever since then I am amused when every few months the subject of a new updated web page is raised. What you see there (well, up to about a month ago) are the very basic pages I created in very short order 12 years ago, and apart from a little fiddling it was never changed until very recently. However, I do miss the online versions of PC Update that I created back to the very first issue produced in 1983 almost 2000 pages in total. Unfortunately these are no longer available online in the current version. However I still have all the originals even through to the present on my own equipment. These have always been a great resource when trying to piece together a "history" of Melb PC.

In 2003 and 2004 we were aware from the many calls for help that many of our Internet subscribers were lacking adequate knowledge to use it fully. As a result I ran a series of one-day courses "Free to the Retired and Unemployed", limiting the number in each group to about 25 in a seminar type mode. Over 400

members came to these presentations which were held in the office, and to improve understanding included a view of our Internet equipment and an explanation of the processes. These classes were in addition to the paid hands-on training courses that were being run by the Group at weekends; the cost of those courses was too high for many of our older members. Some members came more than once, including George Skarbek's mother-in-law who came three times.

Today I still have a small group of about a dozen or so older ex-members whom I continue to help in any capacity when they are in trouble. I have worked with some of these people for up to 18 years, and although as a couple of them have since moved away to such places as Horsham and Pakenham, using the Teamviewer program I am able to connect direct to their equipment which in turn saves a lot of time and petrol.

I have enjoyed all my years with Melbourne PC User Group, and as we enter its fourth decade, I wish you all every success for the future.

Postscript: While assisting members with their first connection to the Internet, often the cry would be "Where do I go now". I created my own "members page" which was basically just a list of interesting links on a broad range of topics to illustrate "where to go" and to promote a better understanding of browsing. At the 30th Anniversary party one member stopped me and said she had learned more about the Internet from that page than in any other way. I knew many members had used it as their homepage, but hearing this was a great boost to my ego. Unfortunately this page is no longer available from the Melb PC pages, but it is continues at

<http://www.stanjohnstone.id.au>

and continues to attract 80 to 100 visitors each day.

A Writ for Me to Attend Court In the UK

Bill Ford

One evening in 1996 the doorbell rang and I was greeted by a stranger who, after ascertaining who I was, thrust a wad of documents into my hands. These documents included a writ for me to attend a Court in the UK as the Public Officer of Melb PC. We were to answer defamation charges instigated by a notorious UK-based Internet defamation litigant against a member of our group who had been provoked into comments on our BBS or Internet some time before. I was Secretary and thus Public Officer of Melb PC. This was but one of the challenges faced during my time on the Committee in the 10 years from 1995, mostly as Treasurer.

I had joined Melb PC in 1990, after a working life in which I had sought to avoid computers and their impact. My first job in the 1950s was accounts clerk in a large oil company which installed a large computer. It was less powerful than my current laptop yet precipitated a vast reduction in staff numbers over coming years. After qualifying as an accountant I was involved in setting up manual accounting systems in many organisations and companies that I worked for in Australia and Asia, removing existing and inadequate computer programs as necessary. Later, while working for a plastics company I worked *unsuccessfully* to try to make sure that computerised systems reflected *operational reality* rather than the computer being an all-devouring god in itself. I don't think that I ever found the perfect accounting computer program. However, my long-term interest in genealogy gained a new impetus and direction in about 1990 as I learned of the benefits of using computer programs and the Internet for genealogical research, replacing the use of paper and pencil in libraries and cemeteries here and overseas. So I bought my first PC in 1990 and on the advice of the computer vendor, joined Melb PC and began attending monthly meetings to understand how to use a computer.



At one of these monthly meetings in 1995 I became upset at some verbal attacks on the President at the time and stood up and appealed for a fair go in the best interests of the majority of members. I don't think that appeal had any real effect on the meeting, but later I approached the President, offered my services and was co-opted to Committee with responsibility to review and oversee training.

With little computing knowledge I brought to committee a practical accounting, business and administrative background, which I believe complemented the various skills and experiences of the many Committee members I worked with over the years. My vision was that Melb PC would operate efficiently as a business, promoting itself so well that it would always become the first port of call from the media for comment whenever any public issue arose relating to computers and their use.

Alas we were unable to market or promote ourselves effectively enough, in my opinion, but we operated efficiently within the context of the times. By the 2004 financial year our income statements show \$755,000 from Internet, \$458,000 from Memberships, \$34,000 from Training and about \$143,000 from Investments — we achieved an operating cash surplus of about \$370,000 — in sad contrast to our current financial situation.

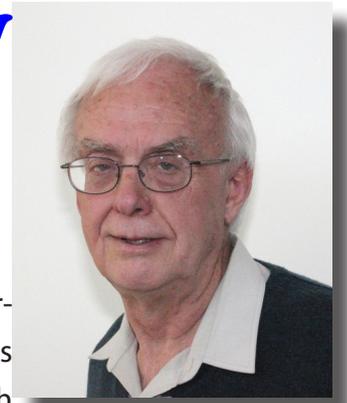
It is interesting to recall that many of those committees had strong representation of good business sense from people still in the paid work force at the time. I did enjoy my time on Committee, learned a lot and am still learning from being part of Melb PC. Importantly, I have made some wonderful lasting friendships and particularly enjoy the learning and the social aspects of SIG membership.

The Melb PC Internet Journey — The Birth

Richard Solly

Like all births, the birth of the Melb PC Internet started prior to being launched into the world. In 1993, the use of the Internet was largely (but not exclusively) by means of the Australian Academic Research Network (AARNet). Among the limited means to obtain access to the Internet for those outside Universities was the Australia Public Access Network Association (APANA). APANA was a not-for-profit association which largely provided text based systems for Internet email and bulletin board news-groups on a non-commercial basis. The main distribution of information was by *store and forward*, with the forwarding being done by periodic connection to Internet nodes. In the case of the Victorian APANA network, the connection was by means of 14,400 bytes per second (bps) modem to a University node on AARNET. Members of APANA accessed the APANA node by means of their own 1200 bps or 9600 bps modems dial-up modems. The limitation of a single 14.4 kbps (kilobits per second) link to the Internet for all APANA members was apparent. Ash Nallawalla was a member user of APANA and also of Melb PC.

Towards the end of 1993, discussions were held between the then Victorian President of APANA, Andrew Herbert, the then President of Melb PC, Charles Wright and Ash towards the Group sharing the cost of an ISDN link to the Internet at a greatly increased capacity of 64 kbps. This would provide a much better service for APANA members and enable the Group to have its own computer node to share the link to the AARNet Internet. By having its own computer node, the Group could provide Internet access to its members. The agreement that arose out of these discussions was the formal conception of the Melb PC Internet.



As for all expectant parents, the requirement was for midwives to assist with the birth, baby sitters after the birth and equipment prior to and after the birth. The first call by President Charles Wright to provide the best service to members at the lowest cost was for experienced volunteers for the former and donated equipment for the later. I was among the volunteers recruited prior to the birth and to my knowledge the only one of the original volunteers remaining a member of the Group (excluding Charles and Ash). To assist my memory, in general only those who have been on at least a five year period of the Melb PC Internet journey are specifically named in this contribution. The substantial shorter contributions of others are acknowledged.

The pending birth of the Melb PC Internet was announced to members in the February 1994 issue of PC Update, along with the donation of a \$10,000 Dell 466 computer with *grunt* as described by Charles. There was an expectancy of the donation of eight 14.4 kbps dial-up modems to accept members' calls. The expectant date of birth was later in March. There was a call for members to pre-subscribe to the expectant service for \$60 per annum at a maximum connected time of 90 minutes per day. This was to be a *premium service*, involving interactive access with to developing versions of FTP, Telnet, IRC, GOPHER, and WWW. The older *store and forward* service was offered at \$30 pa for 60 minutes connection time per day. An upper limit of 300 subscribers was placed so as not to *overload* the eight modems accepting calls.

By mid-March 1994 the Dell computer was opera-

tional alongside the APANA computer in the bedroom of Andrew Herbert at his parents' house. The melbpc.org.au domain became visible to the Internet. The Melb PC 14.4 kbps modems had not arrived, so two 9.6 kbps modems were used by the administrator volunteers to enter the members registration details into the NetBSD Unix system. In compensation for the data entry, the administrators had earlier access to the Internet. The 300 member subscription limit was over-subscribed and some members

were placed on a waiting list. Delays in receiving the donated modems continued into April. In late April, Internet access was launched for the 300 subscribers with four borrowed modems and a time limit of 60 minutes per day. By July 1994, eight 14.4 kbps modems were fully operational and the time limit increased to 90 minutes per day. To compensate for the limited access prior to July, the formal commencement of Internet subscription was from the 1st July. In July of 1994, the first www.melbpc.org.au web pages became visible on the Internet.

The Melb PC Internet Journey — The First Decade

After the protracted birth, the Melb PC Internet operated smoothly in the latter half of 1994 with an immediate increase in interest in Melb PC. The usage of the modems was such for the subscribed 90 minutes per day that the number of subscribers was increased to 350. By October, Charles had retired as President and the then President, Colin Lovitt reported that membership of the User Group was 7500 and rising. At the 1994 AGM, Colin was able to report that the User Group's finances had turned around \$127,105 from financial year (FY) 92/93 to FY 93/94 with regular monthly surpluses being recorded into the FY 94/95. A possible dark cloud over the Melb PC Internet was that there was talk of AAR-Net increasing Internet access costs in the form of data volume charging.

Towards the end of 1994 and into the early part of 1995 the clouds darkened. The APANA system, with which Melb PC Internet computer was partnered, planned to become commercial and charge access rates for its services. Plans for the Group to set up its own Internet service became more urgent with a budget for equipment purchases to take the Melb PC Internet into the future. Modem technology had advanced with 28.8 kbps *V-Fast* modem technology competing with newer *V34* 34.4 kbps modems. Connection protocol had advanced from the text

only serial protocol of early 1994 to two alternate packet encapsulation technologies of SLIP (Serial Line Internet Protocol) and PPP (Point to Point Protocol). The more flexible PPP protocol rapidly became the predominant technology for Internet communications. Graphical windows technology was in its early stages and software *Windows sockets* were required for encapsulation of the data with Internet PPP protocol. The software *Trumpet Win Socket*, written in Tasmania, was better and more reliable than that provided in Microsoft Windows 3.1 and at the time found widespread application.

In early 1995 64 kbps ISDN links were established to the then Group headers at 66 Albert Road South Melbourne (the narrow four storey building sandwiched between much taller sky scrapers). The system was planned with dedicated router technology alongside separate servers for Internet news and members' email. Sixteen modems capable of either or both the *VFast* Technology (28.8 kbps) and *V34* (34.4 kbps) were to be available for dial-up access. Communication links, some modems and computer servers were in place by the end of February 1995. The computer and modem system at APANA in Andrew Hebert's bedroom was shut down at 7.30 pm on 28 February and was receiving email and Internet data at Albert Road the next day.

Immediate plans were put in place to increase the number of Internet subscribers to 1000 and the price for the much improved service was established at \$90 for a guaranteed 90 minutes per day. The volunteer written timer system allowed more time if sufficient free modems were available. Stan Johnstone was instrumental in inputting the details of a significant number of the additional subscribers into the new system and Gary Taig contributed his procurement skills to assist in obtaining the equipment and sending out forms to potential Internet subscriber members.

By June 1995 Charles Wright had returned as President and using his communications skills to write for a major Melbourne newspaper and a regular weekly computer session on AM radio. Charles was able to mention the services provided by the non-profit User Group in his public writing and speaking as a contribution to public interest in the Internet. Most likely as a consequence of this, more than 300 new members were signed up within a week following a session in which the User Group was mentioned. As a consequence, the number of Internet subscribers rapidly exceeded 1000. Charles expressed his view that the Group should provide the opportunity for as many members as possible to access the Internet. To provide the required level of service, immediate plans were put in place to treble the number of incoming modems from 16 to 48 and double the link to the Internet from 64 to 128 kbps. The June monthly meeting was at the then regular venue of the Pharmacy College in Royal Parade and more than 800 members attended on a cold wintry evening for sessions focussed on the Internet.

Here I will back track in time a little to the end of 1994 into 1995. A number of the members of APANA who had dial-up links to *Werple*, the sister computer of the original Melb PC computer, established their own commercial dial-up services. *Werple* itself became Mira Networking; Labyrinth and Netspace were established, and a little later Alphalink. The

Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC) decided it no longer wished to provide commercial Internet access via AARNet and this role was sold to Telstra. Connect.com was another Internet provider at the time providing both wholesale and retail access. Connect.com wholesale Internet rates were more competitive than those of the newly established Telstra wholesale Internet services as their rates were based on the capacity of the *pipe* to the Internet rather than the volume of Internet data used. These small Internet providers (including Melb PC) along with iiNet and Westnet in Western Australia and Internode in South Australia were among the early providers of public Internet access in Australia.

There was great comradery among these small, newly established ISPs in Melbourne arising out of the APANA base. These included monthly evening *drinks sessions* in the vicinity of RMIT and technical discussions and assistance in the configuration and running of the ISP. This comradery extended over many years to the establishment of data *peering* links between the ISPs for which there was no volume data charging. These data peering links were particularly invaluable to Melb PC Internet for obtained Internet news, the data volume of which greatly exceed the volume of standard Internet data. Jumping forward many years to recent times in the case of Internet News, the volume of *binary news groups* is now so great that most ISPs have abandoned distribution of Internet news. Information is now generally served directly from the originating server to the Internet subscriber by the multiple protocols available today such as web pages, ftp pages, forums, blogs, Twitter, Facebook and the like.

In October 1997, President Stan Johnstone reported that Internet subscribers had been limited to 4000 from March 1997 as it was not practical to install more than 180 incoming modems at the Albert Rd headquarters, especially as the lease was to expire. A lease was obtained on new premises in Dorcas

Street, South Melbourne and as part of the fit-out, Internet lines and links were pre-established. All Internet and office equipment was moved over the weekend of 4/5 October 1997 from Albert Road to Dorcas Street with full operation resuming on the 6th October.

Moving forward to July 1999, total membership of the Group (full and family) exceeded 12,000. Of these, 10760 were full member subscribers. The number of full Internet subscribers exceeded 10,000 from 1999 to 2005, peaking at 11,100 in 2004. Members accessing the Internet remained above 7000 in the period 1999 to 2005. By the end of the decade, modem technology had increased to 56 kbps and 380 were available as incoming lines to members.

The impact of ADSL Internet access was becoming apparent in 2005, with some members dropping a full Internet dial-up access but retaining Melb PC email services via Internet Associate membership and full Group membership. This is most readily seen in the financial reports. Internet income exceeded \$700,000 in the period 1999 to 2004 with net profit exceeding \$300,000 per annum on average. Internet income peaked at \$800,000 in the FY 2003 with net Group profit being \$480,000 in both 2003 and 2004. Group cash reserves peaked at \$3.2 million at the end of the FY 2004.

It is appropriate to reflect upon the predominantly volunteer skills which turned Group finances from a loss in FY 1993 to \$485,000 profit in FY 2004 with

cash reserves of \$3.2 million. Those mentioned travelling more than five years of the Internet journey in this period (with apologies to shorter term contributors). I will place them in categories, although some had feet in more than one category and all had a toe in most. Firstly there are the communicators, Ash Nallawalla, Charles Wright and George Skarbek with regular communications in PC Update and public newspapers and radio. All three contributed regularly to the Computer Section of a major Melbourne newspaper and to PC Update. John Morris and Stan Johnstone provide home help and telephone assistance to more than 7000 Internet subscribers in the period to 2001. In 2001 the current dial help scheme was introduced with 40 volunteers at the time. In the early years, Stan ran regular free Internet/training sessions on a Saturday. Finally the technical team, initially myself (with other short term travellers) joined by Jason Lee and a little later by Sean Clarke. The engineering skills of Stan Johnstone were invaluable in setting up the racks of equipment. A special mention of the Office Manager, Tricia Swan, in the period 1995 to 2004 who with volunteer written scripts took over much of the Internet member management that was carried out by volunteers in the initial years. The contributions in each of the categories might be considered as being exceptional. It may be noted that Choice Magazine nominated Melb PC as being among the best ISPs in Australia in more than one year in this period.

Melb PC Internet Journey—The Second Decade and Reflections

In 2004, the lease on Dorcas Street expired and the Group Office moved to the Chadstone Shopping Centre. By this time, public use of the Internet was well established and most ISPs made use of data centres to house their equipment. A number of data centres were inspected and that provided by AAPT at Burnley provided services with data and phone line costs significantly less than those be-

ing charged at Dorcas Street. By this period, the 56 kbps modems were all digital. More than a hundred could be accommodated with associated control electronic in cases similar in size to desktop computers. Prior to the digital modems, the analogue modems required several full sized computer racks to accommodate them.

With pre-installation of data links, some computers and telephone lines (but not the modems), the completed Internet was moved from Dorcas Street to Burnley and made fully operational within an 18 hour day on 11th November 2004. Dave Botherway with his management skills and James Cox with Linux skills had joined the Internet team by this time and significantly contributed to the move.

For Melb PC, 2004 was the peak year of Internet membership, general membership and income. The impact of the cost of the move to Chadstone (fit out, rental and bond) was seen immediately in the FY 2005. Internet income dropped to \$560,000 from \$755,000 in FY 2004, but profit dropped to \$97,000 from \$485,000. The profit of \$98,000 in FY2006 was the last year in the recent period that the Group made a profit.

The decline in Internet membership, General membership and cash income has continued to the present time. Concentrating of full membership (those who make a full cash contribution), by the end of FY 2010 the number of general members had decreased to 6000 with an even bigger per cent drop in full Internet subscriber to 1066. Associate Internet membership for email access was 2347. Melb PC Internet income remained above the cash cost in providing the service until 1913. By this time, the Group was offering alternate Internet access via wireless broadband. While this service was consistent with on-going trends to the mobile Internet, it competed directly with its own dial-up access. The Group's dial-up Internet Access was shut down in February 2014. The number of Internet accounts for access to melbpc.org.au email remains above 2000.

Reflecting on the decline in membership, Internet subscribers and income since 2004, could this have been avoided? The answer is probably not as the decline coincided with the increasing adoption of ADSL (and to a lesser extent cable) for Internet ac-

cess. It may be noted that most of the smaller ISPs who started the Internet journey with Melb PC (Mira Networking, Labyrinth and Alphalink) sold their businesses to larger ISPs for a sum based on a unit amount per subscriber and returning sizeable sums to the founders. From a purely business perspective, this would have been the logical course of action for the Group. Netspace on the other hand invested considerable personnel and capital to establish its own ADSL service. This was followed by a substantial increase in advertising to increase their subscriber numbers. As a volunteer organisation, this was not a practical route for Melb PC. It may be noted than many of these mid-tier ADSL providers has seen the writing on the wall with the coming of the National Broadband. The founders of both Netspace and Westnet have now sold their business to iiNet, most likely to retire in financial comfort.

Now is the time for a short reflection on the future after an exciting journey, especially in the first decade. It is now the time of fast Internet access via cable and fibre and mobile access via wireless. Internet access via wireless mobile devices is most likely the most common in terms of the number of unit Internet accesses and will increase to influence every aspect of most people's lives. The major providers are those with large capital resources with all others being resellers of services from the majors. Competition among resellers is intense with net income per subscriber small. Melb PC is a player in this reselling of mobile services providing a very competitive wireless broadband service using the Optus cellular wireless network. For mobile computing, we also provide services to members through the Office 365 services (or currently the equivalent) made available at no cost by Microsoft to Melb PC as a non-profit organisation. It is in the assistance and education to members to better use the increasing number and variety of mobile Internet devices that may provide an interesting and successful future for the Group.



Melbourne PC User Group Inc. Major Raffle

Name:

.....

Address:

.....

Tel:

Email:

.....

1 st Prize	Gigabyte Auros x7v2 Laptop windows 8.1 OS worth	\$2799.00
2 nd Prize	Samsung Galaxy S5 Mobile Phone worth	\$ 787.00
3 rd Prize	Samsung Galaxy Tablet 10.5" worth	\$ 598.00
4 th Prize	Samsung Gear 2 Neo worth	\$ 229.00
5 th Prize	UE Ultimate ears Boom wireless Bluetooth Speaker worth	\$ 188.00

All entries by mail must reach us by 25th February 2015 and all entries close at 12 noon, Sunday 1st March 2015. The draw will be at Melbourne PC User Group Inc. Unit 26/479 Warrigal Road Moorabbin 3189 at 7.30pm 4th March 2015. Results will be published at www.melbpc.org.au and printed in the April 2015 issue of either PCUpdate Magazine or The official Newsletter of Melbourne PC User Group Inc.. For more ticket inquiries Phone: 03 9276 4000 or email office@melbpc.org.au ABN: 43 196 519 351 Raffle permit number 12490/14

Number of tickets 1500 @ \$10.00 per ticket

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Member Facilities

Our members enjoy modern, well equipped facilities. Located in Moorabbin, South east of the CBD. Club rooms provide free WI-FI (high speed fibre), an internet lounge boasting 9 computers running window 7 & 8 and Linux OS, Gaming groups, Computer workshops and Special Interest Groups. Office Hours Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm.

Monthly Meetings

On the first Wednesday of every month (Feb - Dec) our members get together for an entertaining evening where experts present new programs/software, you can discuss your computer problems open session with Q&A –and win thousands' worth of prizes in our raffle. Live streaming from 7pm onwards log on to <http://tv.mpcug.mobi> All visitors welcome!

Microsoft OS Discounts

Members receive huge discounts on upgrades for microsoft OS.s, on any Microsoft OS Packages for less than 1/4 of the retail price.

IP4 Rental/Web Hosting

Melbourne PC User Group has 1000's of static IP4 available to individual members and Corporate/SME's special rates for volume Corporate members.

Email via Office 365 Enterprise

Members receive a free email account via Office 365 Enterprise with a 50GB mailbox and OneDrive with limited capacity.

Lanslide Gaming

Quarterly scheduled Gaming Events at Moorabbin HQ www.lanslide.com.au

Special Interest Groups (SIG)

Melb PC members meet in local groups throughout the Melbourne metro areas and beyond. See full listing at www.melbpc.org.au or see us on Meetup: <http://www.meetup.com/> All visitors are welcome!

Internet Services

- ADSL from \$30 a month via M2 (Telstra Wholesaler) Telephone & ADSL bundles to suit all budgets.
- Mobile Broadbands 3G and 4G available with wide range of plans to suit any budget, including voice and data plans via the Optus Business Network
- Free email, forum and newsgroups for members

Help and Dial Help

Members receive free Dial Help, which is a list of members who can help with over hundreds of topics. Ihelp is available Monday to Friday 10am - 3pm, offering assistance over the phone to members on PC and software related problems.

Digital Magazine - pdf download

PC Update, our award winning magazine is available to members only. Articles by fellow members and invited experts increase your knowledge about computers and emerging technologies. Become a contributor! Free with membership

Newsgroups

Access to the Melb PC newsgroups and a discussion forum where you will find a friendly, helpful bunch of people. Discussions include computing, trouble shooting and Q&A



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Could George Orwell Have Foreseen It?

Barry Andrews

I was born in 1943, six years before the publication of George Orwell's book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, thinking to myself after reading it for the first time "This could never happen here." Could George possibly have foreseen the inception of Melbourne PC User Group in that same year?

As a teenage kid growing up in Sydney in the mid-fifties, I was taken to a large basement in the Physics Department of Sydney University on one of their Open Days, where SILLIAC (the Sydney version of the ILLinois Automatic Computer) resided. Feeding it a paper tape could make it play "*Twinkle, twinkle little star*". But it all seemed as far away as the real stars and the giant computers which featured in stories by Isaac Asimov and A. E. Van Vogt.

Many years later, my interest in computers was revived when the first Altair-vintage 8-bit microcomputers, with tape drives and front-panel programming switches, began to appear. Mine was an IMSAI 8080 with a Z80 CPU and a Cromemco monitor, bought from a knowledgeable friend who could key in programs via its front panel and taught me things like chip creep. Gradually and painfully (particularly when I touched a live component in its open power supply) I too learned to respect the way they worked. I attended MICOM a couple of times but found the atmosphere too technical. Busy with family and other commitments, I did not become aware of the existence of Melbourne PC User Group until several years later, by which time "personal" computer had entered the vocabulary, along with MS-DOS.

Long before the advent of the "For Dummies" books, I did a short introductory course on PCs at a local evening college, then began attending monthly meetings at Melb PC whenever possible. The city venue suited me as I live northwest of there. I still

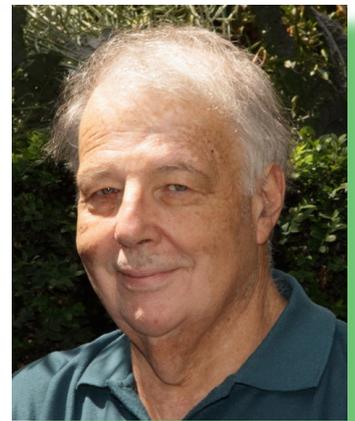
had my *sense of wonder* after many years of reading science fiction, and rushed off to every computer show,

inhibited only by the exorbitant cost of hardware, software and technical books.

Soon I considered myself a Power User, grappling with Windows 95, immortally defined as "a 32 bit extension and graphical shell for a 16 bit patch to an eight bit operating system, originally coded for a four bit microprocessor, written by a two bit company that can't stand one bit of competition." Now that we are up to 64 bits, we still retain the good old MS-DOS command line, so nothing much seems to have changed. How we manage to run our lives dependent on black boxes created by other people never ceases to amaze me.

Connecting to the Internet in the early nineties changed my life; prior to this, a browser usually meant someone in a library, or a herbivore. Thus I will always remember those at Melb PC who took the time to help me get connected, create order in my files, avoid spam in my e-mail and the hundred and one other things not well explained in books or online articles. There is no substitute for hands-on experience, except maybe YouTube. How we all take this for granted now. Anyone remember crystal radios?

Following those early, more innocent years, using a computer now exposes us to incessant infoglut, unwanted pop-ups and malware, not to mention commercial and government surveillance. Pandora's box is open 24/7. We don't seem to care less about "Don't be evil" Google or Echelon and are happy living and working in the Cloud. This is exactly where "they" want us; George Orwell was so prescient.



Organizations such as Melb PC cater for everyman, whose plaintive problem will always be, "But all I wanted to do was ..." (send mail, download a book, etc.). The catch-22 is that one needs to HAVE achieved a modicum of computer literacy before one can perform even a simple task - AND maintain the same level of literacy, year after year as unseen hands slowly move the goalposts. It's nice sometimes to look back and wonder what anyone transported from the seventies and eighties into today's world would make of this lumbering octopus whose tentacles have pervaded our lives. Just when I finally memorized that CGI stood for Common Gateway Interface, a way of generating dynamic Web page content, it acquired its now more common meaning, Computer Generated Imagery, as applied in movies and shoot-em-up games.

Melbourne PC User Group certainly helped me answer my unspoken question "Computers are supposed to be user-friendly now, so why am I still feeling so confused?" It was such a great relief not to feel alone any more, once I realized I was at the receiving end of what some myopic nerd with thick spectacles regarded as an adequate interface between my needs and those of a motherboard.

Oh, I forgot his friend, the marketing guru. Watch Steve Ballmer extol the virtues of Windows 1.0 (yes, 1.0) on YouTube and you'll understand why we need Melb PC more than ever now.

Internet forums by their nature cannot offer the fellowship that Waffle SIGs and other after-meeting refreshments did and still do. I really wonder where the younger generation that grew up with computers, will go to keep up. Facebook? Twitter? Computer shops? Hardly a substitute. Will general computer clubs slowly fade into history, to be replaced by Google, robots and the wearable PC? Will human faces with all their wrinkles and warts be replaced by smooth, clean CGI faces and carefully PROGRAMMED responses? It's the last bit that worries me. What about our elected representatives? Move over, replicants and hubots.

Maybe it's just not worth trying to get to know computers (and by extension, software) intimately any more, now that they are turning into sealed commodity items, along with refrigerators, dishwashers and cars. Tried taking your notebook apart lately? Installed a script to tweak Windows? The reward for doing so seems hardly worth the steep learning curve required and Apple foresaw this a long time ago. Software has become friendlier and more seamless; the profusion of apps available to perform a given task partially compensates for the shortcomings of any one of them.

Yet the organism closest to a human being is not a computer but another human being. We need our fellow users to compare their hardware and software experiences with ours, to help us better determine where to expend time and money, not to mention how to cope when things go wrong. Within reason, we are permitted to display our personal biases more cheerfully at live meetings than on forums, without being branded as trolls.

Live meetings consume ever more precious time; they are equivalent to shining a spotlight on one location after another in a very large warehouse. As years pass, the warehouse grows ever larger and maintaining objectivity in the face of proliferating choice becomes more difficult. Notwithstanding this, the recommendations made by trusted friends at such meetings have proved to be worth far more than a stack of anonymous online, possibly paid-for, testimonials.

Without their guidance as well as assistance from Melb PC Help volunteers, I don't think I would have the knowledge and confidence today to proactively assess my computing needs, which after all is what the game is all about. Nor would I be able to repay some of this hard-won expertise by helping out my non-member friends with their computer difficulties.

There are no problems when something works as it should, but when it doesn't, the quickest and most cost-effective solution is what matters. As the proportion of older citizens in our community slowly

increases, the amount of re-education required increases, exponentially, in my view. For these and other reasons stated earlier, I foresee not a declining but a widening niche for live, general organizations such as Melbourne PC User Group, a resource that cannot be filled by the current profusion of special-

ist online courses and discussion groups.

My association with you guys has been long and fruitful enough to bring me many happy memories. May you all continue to go from strength to strength.

The C64 Had an Enormous 64KB of RAM

William Dair

My initial exposure to computing was in about 1982 when Father Xmas delivered to me a Commodore 64 personal computer. The C64 had an enormous 64k of RAM with a tape cassette drive and was primarily aimed at the games market. However, it proved to be a very flexible computer that provided a sound learning base for understanding the hardware and software fundamentals in computing.

I retired from Telstra in 1993 and after some years realised I was missing the contacts with other technical minded people. In 1997 a neighbour invited me to a Retired and Interested Persons Special Interest Group (RIPPER) and immediately I realised that Melb PC would fill the void I was experiencing.

I became involved in the running of the RIPPER and some 17 years later I am still there as the coconvenor of the RIPPER Hardware Special Interest Group.

In the year 2000 I successfully stood for election to the Melb PC Committee and continued to serve until 2008. The Presidents that I served with included George Skarbek, Lyn Goodall (yes, we did have a lady president) [Ed: Two, also Joan Hegadus in the mid 1990s—GT] and Dave Botherway. I must say that those committees functioned very effectively and it was a pleasure to work with the other members

over the years. From 2003 to 2008 I was the Interest Groups Co-ordinator. Over that time Sunbury and Wyndham Interest Groups were established and Casey was restructured. Also we published a new Manual defining Guidelines for Interest Group Convenors. The move from Dorcas St to Chadstone was completed during my time on the Committee and many challenges were successfully overcome.

An important aspect of Melb PC is the Monthly Meeting and in those years typically 400 to 500 members attended those meetings. I was responsible for arranging the venues and ensuring that all the required equipment was in place and working. Also in recent times, when there was some instability in the Group, I chaired the Monthly Meeting for about 12 months.

Over the years I have been privileged to make many presentations at the Monthly Meetings and various Special Interest Group Meetings. It goes without saying that Melb PC has played an important part in my retirement and has returned to me far more than my input. In 2011 I was very honoured to receive my Honorary Life Membership in recognition of continued contributions to the Group.



Best Internet Service Provider in Australia

George Skarbek

As President of Melbourne PC User Group for four years commencing in 1999 I found that probably the biggest challenge of the time was our move out of Dorcas St.

The task was to find suitable premises with adequate parking close to the centre of population of Melbourne. Several committee members and I looked at about two dozen sites and the intention had been to purchase a building. However, during a lengthy and vigorous debate a small majority suggested renting, so we started looking for what we could rent. The decision to rent was the correct one. Dave Botherway found the Chadstone location which was perfect; lots of car parking space and a central meeting spot for our 12,000 members. We had about \$3,200,000 in the bank earning 8%. The \$1/4million dollars in interest would certainly cover the rent.

One also needed a good and capable committee. I was privileged to have such a good, loyal and hard working group. Everyone had a portfolio of their choice in almost every case. We had vigorous debates about some issues but it was never personal; we remained friends. As a result there was very little change in the committee from year to year. When someone decided to leave I would ring five or six members to find one who would be willing to stand for committee. John Swale was Secretary for over 10 years and Bill Ford remained as Treasurer for almost a decade. At one recent SIG meeting, ten committee members of that era were present. At another recent meeting there were nine of us.

We achieved a lot thanks to that great team of capable, intelligent members with good administrative skills and the dedication to help other members.

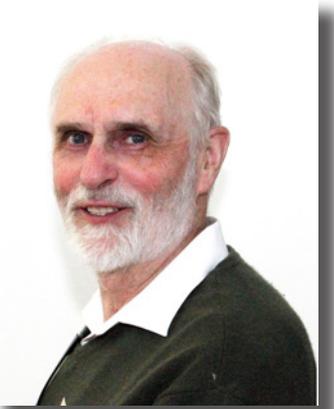
Internet Contribution

The Internet team was and is a very small group, consisting of only seven

members. The team was largely responsible for the growth of the Melb PC and its financial success. We were twice awarded the Best Internet Service Provider in Australia by the consumer magazine Choice. We won by a significant margin. At that time most of the Internet help was provided by just two members, Stan Johnston and John Morris. They had a huge workload.

Although I have some technical skills in that area a significant contribution was to save our group well over \$100,000 over the years by negotiating good data contracts. Early in the growth of our Internet I had contracts with two suppliers for data. Data was our single biggest expense. There was an opportunity to install a 10 Mbit Ethernet cable to Dorcas St which not only offered more bandwidth but allowed access to others who could supply data. As I had contacts in the industry I had a good idea of the market price for data and could haggle and pitch one commercial offer against another. Many large commercial organisations did not have much experience in data contracts.

When it became news that the Southern Cross cable across the Pacific was nearing completion I knew there would soon be a massive drop in price due to its huge spare capacity. Despite pressure from the current suppliers to sign a two year contract and receive a "very good" discount I refused and stayed on a dearer monthly contract. Shortly after there was a massive price drop and this action alone had saved the group tens of thousands of dollars a year.



The 2013 Workhorse PC Workshop

Barry Martin

I was shanghaied into joining the Group at the PC Show at the Royal Exhibition Building in 1993 by two *gentlemen* manning the Group's stand... Ron Wilby and Stan Johnstone.

At the time, I was working as senior systems librarian at the University of Melbourne where, after installing the first online library management system in the Baillieu Library, I was exploring the use of networked PCs to access bibliographic information in databases on CDs... very high technology at the time.

After having *left* the University, I began working with Morris Tobias' Computer Rebuilds organisation. It was through this organisation that I met such Group luminaries as George Skarbek, Stan Johnstone, Ash Nallawalla, Bill Ford, John Swale, Peter Smith, Viv Martin (no relation...or at least none proven) and others. It was during this time that I became more active in Melb PC, and was invited to fill a casual vacancy on the Committee in 1997. I remained on committee until 2006. During my committee tenure, I held the portfolios of Training and Shareware, working closely in both areas with, amongst others, Ian Rankin who spawned the *Monthly Disk* project which he ran for over a decade.

After Morris Tobias sold Computer Rebuilds, I ventured out on my own as a consultant (scary!) and I found Melb PC a great way of meeting like-minded people, making terrific contacts, including overseas. In those halcyon days of the 1990s, we had guests such as Bill Gates and Gene Barlow (with whom a number of us still have contact in his User Group Relations role).

While not immersed in SIGs, I have been a regular attendee at Monthly Meetings. In the early 2000s,



George Skarbek asked me to take over the Random Access session at each Monthly Meeting, which I did with some reluctance, but over a decade later, I really enjoy these sessions... answering members' questions, and helping them with their computing problems. I must acknowledge the work of John Swale who has so ably written up these sessions for PC Update over the years.

In 1999, I represented the Group as a commentator on the forthcoming Y2K issue on some radio sessions run by Peter Moon. My most recent Group project was the 2013 Workhorse PC Workshop which was held at the Meat Market in North Melbourne. I am not certain how many members the Group gained from this exercise, but I did end up with two additional clients for whom I am still providing advice and consulting.

I have been very fortunate to be involved in the halcyon days of the Group, through the transformation of the PC from hobbyist plaything to essential home and business management tool. However, I regret that the Group was not able to transition from leading dial-up ISP to serious broadband provider, as this really did mean the loss of one of our important membership underpinnings.

HOW TO CONNECT TO YOUR NEW EMAIL ACCOUNT AT OFFICE 365

Open your web browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome - any browser will do). Type or copy the following address into the web address field:

office365.melbpc.org.au



FIGURE 1

then press Enter. The following screen comes up, where you type your Melb PC email address and the temporary password sent to you, finally clicking 'Sign in':



FIGURE 2

On the next screen you need to change your password from the temporary password we sent to you, to a new password of your own choosing. Your new password needs to be at least 8 characters long and to contain at least three of the following:

- Lowercase letters
- Uppercase letters
- Numbers (0-9)
- Symbols, including: ! @ # \$ % ^ & * - _ + = [] { } | \ : ' , . ? / ` ~ " < > () ;

Office 365

Update password

You must update your password because this is the first time that you've signed in or your password has expired.

User ID:
memberof@melbpc.org.au

* Old password:

* New password:

* Confirm new password:

Save

Callout 1: Your Old password is the temporary password you just used to login

Callout 2: Enter here a new password of your own choosing, including upper and lower case letters and at least one number

Callout 3: After filling in all three password boxes click Save

For users signing in for the first time: Microsoft Online Services will be contacting you with tips and advice for using our products and services. In regions where permitted, we will also contact you with surveys and promotions. You can unsubscribe at any time. For more information on communication options, please see our [Privacy Notice](#).

FIGURE 3

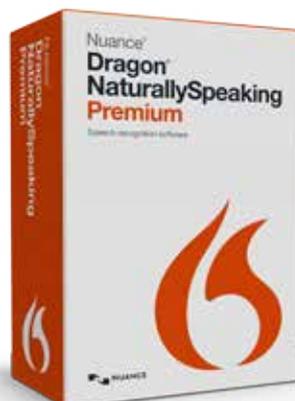
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Now you are at this new login screen. Re-enter the new password you just created and Sign in:



FIGURE 4

On the next screen, you can change the language option if you wish; you should also pick your time zone. Then click Save (see Figure 5 on the next page).

SETTING UP YOUR EMAIL PROGRAM FOR YOUR NEW ACCOUNT

Once you have worked through the startup process at office365.melbpc.org.au, you can, if you wish, set up the email program on your computer (and/or mobile device) to send and receive from your new account. The preferred setting is 'Exchange' if your email program or device supports it. Settings for POP and IMAP were listed on page 3 of our November Newsletter.

For further guidance see our webpage:

<http://stg.mpcug.net.au/early-public-release/email-office365-migration-guide/>

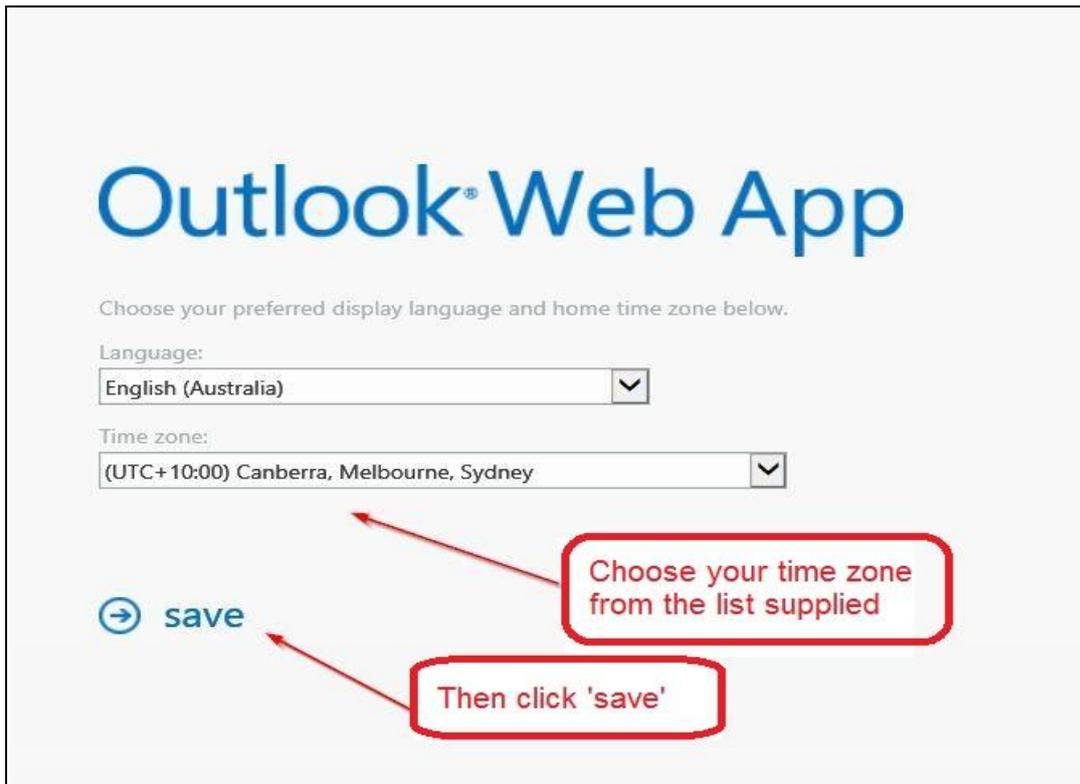


FIGURE 5

Finally you arrive at your new home page. The web interface is called 'Outlook Web App'. On the left is a panel with folder names; in the middle is a panel with a list of your messages (which starts out empty) and on the right is the panel where a message you are reading is displayed. The Settings icon is up there to the right of your own image (which you can replace with a photograph).

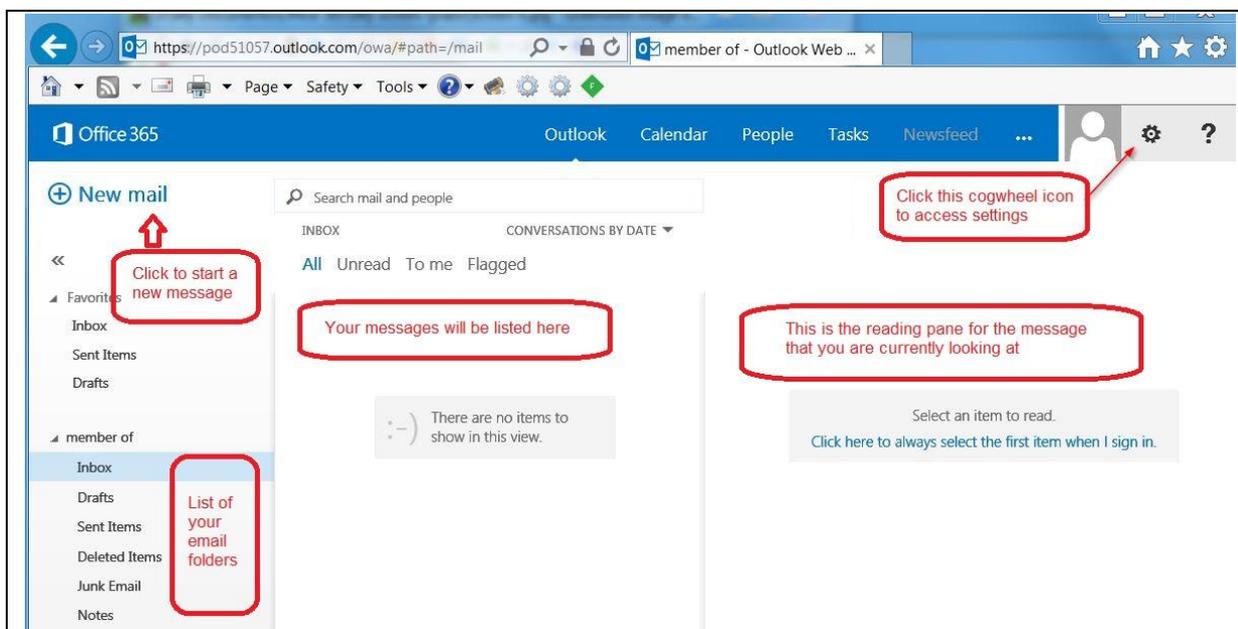


FIGURE 6

For more on Outlook Web App, this video is helpful: http://youtu.be/uIB_V8aDwUQ

Meandering Through Memories

Trevor Jacobs

Melb PC was already flowing when I joined; can't recall precisely when, but my membership number is below 1050 so I've seen a fair bit of the 30 years. And been involved from time to time. So perhaps I can contribute one perspective on Melb PC.

My earliest contacts were at Monthly Meetings in Parkville. The topics were typically equipment and programming. High levels of PC competence were rare — PCs were also new for trained IT folk as well — and members learned rapidly from the experiences of others.

Some moments are determined to remain unforgettable, such as the President of the time declaring that we really needed to use Assembler to get the beast (IBM PC) moving, and sparking murmurs around the room about the value of Pascal subroutines and compilers. Plus an unsociable reception from a couple of members because an invited speaker (Bill Bolton, a luminary of the time) had joined NEC and was therefore commercial. This completely ignored his continuing tutorial contributions to magazines and running a free public BBS offering very useful utility files from his home. Some other members thought this a poor way to treat a guest, and yet others thought the sooner Melb PC embraced commercial suppliers the better. An interesting meeting.

All notions which we have revisited in the years since.

Early PC Update featured similar topics, gleaned from a burgeoning supply of magazines and from other User Groups. Initially, there was technical interest in having the PC run CP/M rather than DOS. PC Update announced the launch of a new version of DOS, explaining that a key value was in massive

simplification of the commands required for actions such as copying a file. Discussions of CP/M waned, and turned to alternative versions of BASIC and the quickly growing number of useful applications. 21st century consumerists aren't the only ones valuing simplification! Through this, and numerous other changes as PC usage spread, PC Update rebalanced its content to changing member competence. Paper magazines are no longer the necessity they were, and PC Update continues to change to meet its circumstances.

Electronic communication was available via *the BBS* (bulletin board system), a congenial place *usually* for exchanging views on a range of topics, and the site of a treasury of interesting files for download. The challenge was access — modem access by dial-up on a telephone line. The Melb PC BBS was a central point for discussion of current topics and dissemination of information. Advice on appropriate dial-up strings (configuration) for common makes and models was a major topic online and, of necessity, in PC Update. The support of members by other members was a critical part of some people getting their start online, and more generally with personal computing. All a bit passé now, with widespread broadband, much higher levels of personal computing competence in the community, and a huge World Wide Web to explore with a browser.

The online discussion/information aspects are now covered by the *domestic* Melb PC newsgroups.

As in the past, special interest groups (SIGs) focusing on a variety of member interests are a key area of Melb PC activity. My primary involvement these days is with a suburban SIG, where I am far more beneficiary than contributor. It is almost commonplace that some issue which has puzzled me

is readily resolved by another attendee, and there's satisfaction in being able to return that favour.

Melb PC is run by members, with the only employees being office staff. In addition to those who run the SIGs, there is a Committee for overall management, as with any community group (cricket, netball, bridge,..). My experience on the Committee in the mid-90s was that there was always plenty to think about "*technologies changing, demand for different services, and so on*" and these challenges spread over the wide range of services Melb PC provides. The provision of relevant services over an extended period reflects the quality of the expertise and effort of the people who have led the Committee, the SIGs and the service areas.

The Melb PC activities and services I've mentioned focus on PCs, but I have found the best value to be in the people I have met, or *met* in the case of online-only meetings. It's not unusual for members to chat before meetings about *what have you been up to?*, every bit as much as technical topics. And, of course, the WAFFLE SIG continues near Moorab-

bin offices just as it did in Carlton many years ago, for getting together after the Monthly Meeting at a local eatery. Again, not too different to other community groups.

What might you distil from this collection of recollections?

To my mind, the enduring theme of Melb PC is that of enhancing user competence, whether that's support for a novice on one topic (or many) or expansion of experience for those who already know a bit or a lot. Support tends to come from within "*that is, other members*" and the expansion of experience from knowledgeable presenters, both members and others.

The topics and methods of delivery of services have evolved, and I dare say will continue to do so, but the range of assistance available in problem solving is broad. The territory covered by the SIGs and the various *help* resources is vast.

Happy 30th, Melb PC.

December Monthly Meeting Presentations

Before the break, **Harry Lewis** will present a short update on progress with the new email system. He will also give an a brief introduction to Yammer, the online chat facility that comes in our new email package.

Then our Treasurer, **Geoffrey Keenan**, will be giving an explanation of our financial position with more background than he was able to present to members at our AGM last month.

After the break, **Brendan Fitzgerald** from **Infoxchange** will tell us about Go Digi, which is a national digital literacy program. You can find an introduction here:

<http://www.infoxchange.net.au/welcome-digital-inclusion-program/go-digi-national-digital-literacy-program>

Go Digi's objectives overlap in interesting ways with Melb PC's, and it will be interesting to hear of Brendan's experiences.

DECEMBER RAFFLE!



Pre purchase tickets available from office, contact us on 9276 4000

or email us at office@melbpc.org.au

The draw will be at the Monthly Meeting 5th November, winners will be contacted via telephone and email.

TICKETS:

1 = \$2 3 = \$5

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- * Plug and Play operation
- * Formatted Windows XP
- * Easy to use with no software to install
- * Accommodates large digital files with spacious storage capacity



NETGEAR A6200 wifi USB adapter

- * Works with any standard Wi-Fi router or modem router
- * Ultimate range and performance with 802.11n
- * Optional antenna positioning for additional performance
- * Stream Multiple HD videos simultaneously



BAUHN bluetooth tablet keyboard and case

- * safe from impacts or scratches.
- * Connect to iPad or M.I.D devices without the need of cables.
- * Silicone Coated Bluetooth Keyboard
- * Leather Case securely holds your tablet, keeping it safe from impacts or scratches.



PHILIPS Action fit sports headphones

- * Ultra light (8 grams)
- * Sweat resistant & washable
- * Contoured secure fit
- * Waterproof Ultra light
- * Extra Durable
- * Excellent sound and extra bass



SanDisk Micro SDHC card with adapter + USB & SD card case

- * Holds 4 micro SD cards
- * 16 standard SD cards
- * 4 USB Flash Drives



- * Ideal for smartphones !
- * 32Gb of storage !
- * Micro SC card with adapter

Melbourne PC User Group Inc.

MAJOR RAFFLE

Raffle starts on the 18th November 2014.

*All entries must reach us by the 25th February 2015 and all entries close at 12noon Sunday 1st March 2015.

*The draw will be at Melbourne PC User Group Inc.

Unit 26/479 Warrigal Road, Moorabbin 3189,

7:30pm 4th March 2015.

*Results will be published on www.melbpc.org.au and printed in the April 2015 issue of either PC Update Magazine/ The official Newsletter of Melbourne PC User Group Inc.

*For more ticket enquiries phone 03 9276 4000 or email office@Melbpc.org.au.

ABN:43 196 519 351

Tickets
\$10.00^{ea.}
Total tickets: 1500

1st Prize - worth \$2799.00

Gigabyte Auros x7x2 Laptop windows 8.10S



2nd Prize - worth \$787.00

Samsung Galaxy S5 Mobile Phone



3rd Prize - worth \$598.00

Samsung Galaxy Tablet 10.5"



4th Prize - worth \$229.00

Samsung Gear 2 Neo



5th Prize - worth \$188.00

UE Ultimate ears Boom wireless Bluetooth Speaker



Buy a ticket today for your chance to win one of our 5 major prizes !

Return all purchased ticket stubs, payments and unsold tickets as soon as possible in the enclosed "reply paid" envelope post to Melbourne PC User Group Inc. 26/479 Warrigal Road Moorabbin 3189 or drop them off at reception 26/479 Warrigal Road Moorabbin 3189 before 25th February 2015.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

We Need You

Please volunteer for one of these posts:

- * **Librarian**
- * **Monthly meeting presentation impresario**
- * **Monthly meeting video streaming technician**

We have vacancies for all three; and without new volunteers the services these people provide will have to be reduced or withdrawn.

Librarian: looks after our Library at Moorabbin. The loan service is an honour system, the Librarian only needs to monitor it from time to time and record members' manual entries into a computer list. They can recommend new books, and then catalogue them after acquisition; they can also remove obsolete titles.

Monthly meeting presentation impresario: With Stewart Gruneklee as our master of ceremonies, the impresario's job is behind the scenes, soliciting ideas for potential presenters, and contacting them to arrange their visits.

Monthly meeting streaming technician: Craig Mattson introduced this service but is resigning from the role. If you value the real-time streaming of our monthly meetings please volunteer. You need to come to the monthly meeting with your laptop, which will interface with the signal from our meeting video camera, and our Internet connection. Melb PC will provide any needed hardware and software (up to and including a dedicated laptop if you do not happen to own a suitable one already).

To volunteer send an email message to: president@melbpc.org.au
Thanks!

My Journey With Melb PC

John Swale



This is my personal story of involvement with the world of PCs and Melbourne PC User Group.

The First Steps

I studied a modified Electrical Engineering (Electronics) degree at Melbourne University. This involved some work with the University computers, both analogue and digital.

On graduating I was offered a job with The State Savings Bank of Victoria. This was in computing as a technical analyst, working on their first online real time system. Initially I was working on an IBM 1401 using assembler language to develop batch jobs. This meant I was close to the hardware and the operating system as well as the software and user requirements.

The online system introduced telecommunications and more learning. So I developed a general interest in new systems and technologies.

This interest continued through some new jobs with bigger business machines. Over that time personal computers arrived. Initially they were hobby and games machines but that was about to change with the release of the IBM PC and IBM XT.

My First PC

In 1983 I had a change of job; this was around the time the IBM PC was announced. So I decided to use some of the payout to buy an IBM PC and not get involved with restoring a vintage car as some friends were doing.

I was interested in the IBM PC as it was more businesslike for the uses I could see for it at home.

Firstly, it was a serious machine capable of doing some of the tasks of business machines but on a smaller scale. Secondly, it could be used as a learning experience for what I could see as its increasing use in business.

Good purchasing advice was hard to come by. There were some magazines available but information was sketchy. With some suggestions from a colleague I decided on an IBM PC because the XT with the 10 MB hard disk cost nearly \$800 more. I did however spend a little extra and ordered two double-sided 5¼inch floppy disk drives instead of single sided ones, and a colour monitor.

Of course it came with an early version of DOS which required close interaction with the machine via the command line. Multimate was recommended as a word processor as it was used on a common word processing machine of the day. Also recommended was a Japanese dot matrix printer for its quality and reasonable price.

An unusual addition was a Quadlink board by Quadram. This was essentially a complete Apple 2E computer on a single board and allowed me to run both Apple and PC software on the same machine. Once I booted into the Quadlink I could boot into DOS and into Apple from separate disks and then switch processors with a hotkey combination. The total cost was around \$9,000. In hindsight, the vintage car option might have been cheaper.

What did I use this PC for? The PC provided home

use of *business* applications such as word processing and spreadsheets as well as entertainment. The Apple software satisfied a household need for Apple software for teaching.

There was a problem as the printer included Japanese character sets and there was no exact driver for English printing. Most things worked but I needed it to do more. I found that I needed to change the new line codes in the driver. The solution was to become a hacker in the original, honourable sense. The driver was a file of undocumented hex characters. So I needed a hex editor, some skill, luck, and persistence to change the correct values.

Joining Melb PC

So how did I get help with this and general PC issues? There were computer magazines such as *Your Computer*. In one 1983 issue I fortuitously saw a notice by Lloyd Borrett for a meeting for IBM PC users in Melbourne. So I attended that first meeting at Computer Power where it was agreed to form an IBM PC computer Group. I agreed to join the new Group when it was formed.

The first meeting of the Group was at IBM in 1984 and it was well attended. I joined, and as many of you may know, I was very proud of my binary membership number of 16 as my PC was 16 bit. I have always wondered who were given the modern numbers of 32 and 64.

My involvement started with attending the Group's meetings. This was a way of learning that was more friendly, accessible and interactive than the computer magazines. You could ask questions and ask follow up questions if the problem was not understood. In those early days, formulating the right question was not always easy.

Many of those involved were using the PCs in business and often they were the people supporting the PCs. Consequently they were very knowledgeable.

In those days it was possible for one person to know a great deal about the major hardware and software and these few experts were much in demand. Fortunately they were not only willing to share their knowledge but were patient with us amateurs.

Volunteering

Then the Group's magazine was started and it was produced by a few volunteers. As the number of members increased so did the workload and there was a call for volunteers to assist in its preparation and distribution. I volunteered and assisted with the envelope stuffing, addressing and bagging in APO mail centre bags ready for posting. This work did not require a lot of concentration or skill. So there were the inevitable discussions of computer problems and solutions, new developments and what businesses were doing with these new desktop computers. Instead of being a chore it was a great way to learn.

As I learned more about the PC I found I was able to assist people who were coming into the Group with little knowledge. This was the start of my learning and helping cycle.

The early history of Melb PC has been written up by Lloyd in *PC Update* and on his blog and is discussed by various long time members on the 30th Anniversary video. So I will mention only a few things.

When we started in telecommunications there was a Bulletin Board System and members could now communicate with each other via their computers. Then we had some talented people who set up our dial-up service so we could easily communicate with the world via the Internet. Others provided an excellent help desk. This was a cheap and reliable service and it increased our membership to a peak of around 11,000 and our finances to the point where we had around 3 million dollars in the bank. This brought the challenge of proper governance

and control of those finances. The Treasurer (Bill Ford) and Secretary (John Swale) developed and implemented strong financial and administrative procedures for the committee. Unfortunately these seem to have been lost or fallen into disuse.

I do not want to give the impression it has all been plain sailing. We have had some down moments apart from the decreasing membership and its implications. There have been occasions when factions developed and threatened to destroy the Group. There was a recent example when an interim Committee of Life Members (including me) was asked to take control and restore proper controls to the Group. We were saddened by this but we all valued the Group and what it meant to us so we acted to have the controls brought back and for new elections to be held.

Members need to take an interest in the elections and the finances to ensure we do everything to keep the Group running efficiently.

On a happier note, I now have a new challenge, my Raspberry Pi. I'm back to electronic engineering, coding at a lower level (device control) and I have another fun hobby. Of course the way for me

to learn is still with Melb PC, this time through the sharing of knowledge in the Raspberry Pi SIG.

Previously I mentioned my learning and helping cycle. Over the years I have had many volunteer roles, including 10 years as Secretary. In 1999 I was made an Honorary Life Member for my service. I am still an active volunteer. Like many others who have had a similar journey I feel I'm still in deficit having gained more in knowledge and friendship than I have been able to give back.

The original slogan for Melb PC was *"Members Helping Members"*. In PC Update dated Feb 1998 there was an article by Lloyd Borrett which stated in part "The Executive were saddened to learn of the death last week of the Group's most valuable member, Someone Else..... When you are asked to help, remember: WE CAN'T RELY ON SOMEONE ELSE — HE'S PASSED ON".

Please remember that quote when there is the next call for volunteers. There are jobs requiring a wide range of skills from the highly technical such as the Internet service to the simple ones of helping set up rooms for SIG meetings. They are all important. We need to keep this wonderful Group alive and healthy but this can only happen with your help. If you do, I'm sure you will find it as rewarding as I have.

Collect your book to sell, from the Office



Melbourne PC User Group Inc. Major Raffle

Return all purchased ticket stubs, payments and unsold tickets as soon as possible and post to Melbourne PC User Group Inc. 26/479 Warrigal Road Moorabbin 3189 or drop them off at Reception 26/479 Warrigal road Moorabbin 3189 before 25th February 2015.

Payment amount \$

Ticket numbers sold: to

Cash (Meetings only) Cheque enclosed, made payable to Melbourne PC User Group Inc.

charge my: Visa Mastercard the above amount

Mainframe to PC

A Journey Shared

Jim Duff

This is a brief summary of my previous and relevant work history, explaining how I came to be a member of Melbourne PC User Group from the very beginning. My story here is mainly related to the first four years of our activities together.

THE 1983-1984 RELATIONSHIP

Having started computer education in 1965 while working in the Department of Social Services, I then began to work as a systems analyst and designer the following year in the Canberra based ADP section. Back in those days it was known as Automatic Data Processing, and later became IT, Information Technology. Soon after I became a COBOL programmer and a year later the Department ordered its first IBM 360/40 Mainframe computer with 128KB (kilobytes, not mega-, giga- or tera- bytes) of memory. In 1980 I left the public service and returned to my home State of Victoria.

Lloyd Borrett, being an employee of BHP (Broken Hill Proprietary — an IBM computer usage company), wrote an IBM associated article and suggested programmers get together to start up a computer user Group. As a result, IBM and associated programmers became aware of and attended this *recommended* meeting. This first gathering of around forty interested people was held at the Computer Power office in St Kilda Road, in November 1983, where Lloyd addressed the gathering. Three months later, at the inaugural User Group meeting, he became the first President. He stayed in this role for nearly three years, and came back eight years later on to help solve some administration issues.

Being an IBM mainframe computer programmer



for a number of years, I attended that first meeting, and later started going along to the monthly meetings at Clunies Ross House, 191 Royal Parade Parkville.

My major recollections from the related 1983/84 years were, building our own mud brick home, one of the last architectural designs of Alistair Knox. This was followed by the purchase of my first Personal Computer, a CP/M based Australian made Microbee with twin floppy drives.

Other major historical events in 1983 were: Ash Wednesday bushfires in Victoria and South Australia; Bob Hawke's election speech prior to becoming the Prime Minister just over two weeks later; and Australia won the America's Cup. Jump forward 31 years and on Tuesday, 18 November 2014, I attended our 30th Birthday Celebrations and met up with several members I've known for many years.

SIG RELATIONSHIPS

Prior to joining Melb PC, I had been attending a Turbo Pascal User Group, run by Ron Savage and meeting in the Union Building at RMIT. It was 1986, the Group was also attended by Ron Lyth, a technical friend of mine. Some time in 1986 I represented the Turbo Pascal User Group and approached Melb PC. At one of its monthly meetings I asked the Melb PC management, whether they thought it would be a good idea if we became a Melb PC Special Interest Group. This was accepted, and from there on Ron Savage became the Turbo Pascal SIG Convener.

In the August 1986 PC Update magazine, in which I wrote an item called "BTRIEVE A Database Manager for Your Turbo Programs", the number of SIGs was four, with three related conveners. As time went by these SIGs became a much larger Group, exceeding forty SIGs. I became the Database SIG Convenor for several years until 1991 when I moved across to New Zealand for about a year. During those years, I wrote a few technical articles, published in PC Update.

At the Melb PC AGM in September 1986, I was one of seven nominees for Committee, but unfortunately was not elected to fill any of the five vacancies. Soon after at a Special General Meeting on November 5, I nominated Ron Lyth and he became Melb PC President.

LATER YEARS ATTENDANCE

After Melb PC moved from having its monthly meetings at Clunies Ross House, I went to only a few subsequent meetings, as I now live in the Melbourne CBD. However, I have remained a member and still have my original membership number 482. Another member number I had was the Australian Com-

puter Society, an affiliate of Melb PC. When I joined in 1966 in Canberra, my number was 262. Hmmm, it feels good be numbered twice in the hundreds.

MAJOR Melb PC BENEFITS

A major benefit to the Group's ongoing life is the official Monthly Magazine, PC Update. Until just a few years ago, many years after the world became aware of the Internet, the magazines were physically mailed out on a monthly basis. They are now issued as monthly downloads, and naturally so for this day and age. Throughout my general discussion above, I have not mentioned too many individuals, but must add those who in my view have made a major positive contribution to the Group. Yes, the ongoing list of Editors. What can I say about their years of hard work to ensure that the magazine has remained a positive and worthwhile publication.

[Ed: Flattery will get you everywhere Jim—GT]

Now that the initial thirty years have passed, I also wish to thank all of the younger members for their active association that has generated the Group's large and popular membership.

Linear or Non-Linear?

John Hall

My first memory of attending a Melbourne PC User Group meeting was at the Video "Linear Editing SIG" which met at the Balwyn Community Centre, 45 Talbot Road, Balwyn on the 4th Monday of the month.

At the time, the main "Camcorder" technology was based on analog video tapes (sometimes known as VHS-C) and the way that videos were made was by playing back the original tape to a second tape deck and rewinding one or other of the tapes to change viewing sequences or cut out unwanted video.



As this was rather laborious there were several specialist "Editing Decks" which would control the two tape recorders but these were quite expensive and not worthwhile for all but the professional videographer.

Then, the PC came along and you were able to control the two tape recorders via specialist hardware which connected to the serial port on the PC and was controlled by an "Edit Decision List" (EDL) on the PC which would then start, stop and rewind the Tape Recorders at the appropriate time markers on the videotape.

The most popular of these PC Hardware interfaces was a product called *Pinnacle Studio 400* which I purchased in 1998 or thereabouts. As I was getting more serious about producing travel videos a friend suggested that I should attend a Melbourne PC User Group Linear Editing SIG meeting to get some help on the PC side of the equation so I attended a couple of meetings and then in early 2000 decided it would be worthwhile joining the Group.

At the time this SIG was being run by Albert Van-zet but Albert was considering retiring at the end of the year 2001 and as no-one else was willing to take it over it looked as though the group would have to be disbanded. I thought that would be a pity as the group had some very knowledgeable attendees and as no-one else was willing to put up their hand I volunteered to become the SIG Convener in November 2001.

Around this time there was another technology coming to the fore — namely *Non-Linear Editing* which comprised of copying your video to a PC hard Drive via an internal capture card. There was another Video Editing SIG covering this technology, the *Non-Linear Video Editing* SIG run by Lawrie Weston in the Melb PC main office rooms in Dorcas Street. The main problem with this technology was cost. In 1999 a 9.1GB IBM SCSI hard drive cost about \$600, but you needed 13GB to store one hour of video. Therefore, you could record only 30 minutes at a time; Non Linear Editing was an expensive business. By 2001 the costs had come down. Suddenly Non Linear Editing was within the reach of the average person and Linear Video Editing became redundant.

In 2004 when Melb PC moved to Chadstone it was decided to combine the two Video SIGs and call them the "Video Production" SIG. Lawrie Weston set up a new General/Video SIG in Wyndham.

At this time we reached our peak attendance for the main Video Production SIG where we had over 130 attendees in the main Chadstone meeting room and I was playing a more active role on The Melb PC management committee.

When the office was still located in Dorcas Street I began working as an office volunteer; for ten years I worked one day a week in the office. This was in the South Melbourne, Chadstone and Moorabbin offices, through until 2010. Joined the committee in 2003 as the Swap Meet Coordinator and held that position until early 2006. I continued my volunteer work in the office after leaving the committee and for this received a Volunteer of the Month award in March 2007. Then I devoted more of my time to creating additional SIGs around the subject of Video and helped to spin off the Pinnacle and Sony Vegas Workshops which are still running today. I also set up the Ulead and 3D animation Workshops which have since dissolved.

I continued as the Video Production SIG Convener until 2011 when I left to devote more time to the Multimedia and Home Entertainment SIG and then the Raspberry Pi SIG in 2012.

In all, Melbourne PC User Group has played a major part in my life, not only in a technical way but also socially. I have made some very good friends amongst the members of the various SIGs that I attend, such as the East SIG which meets in Vermont South.

I continue to recommend Melb PC to my friends.

You mean there was once a time when computers didn't exist, Granddad?

Ray Beatty

Try remembering a world without computers. If you're young enough, you'll have to imagine a time that you can scarcely believe ever existed.

If you made a mistake in your writing, you laboriously had to rub out the word and type it again; cut and paste were literally that — scissors and sticky tape putting the essay together, which you would finally have to type again completely in a "good" version.

Any questions you had on a topic you'd look up from your non-fiction shelf, or if your family was affluent, from the family encyclopaedia. Or you'd work in the local library until chucking-out time.

By the 70s phones had pretty shapes and colours. But they were all anchored to the one line to the wall. And if someone said they'd ring you back, you sat and stared at the phone until finally they called.

Then in the early 80s a friend acquired a personal computer, a Hitachi Peach. It is a long-forgotten machine with 64kB of memory and no hard disk, just an external floppy. At the time of its launch it was lauded as a powerful machine, even winning a "Computer of the Year" award.

I persuaded him to let me use it for my new-business letters and gradually learned how to work it. Then he upgraded, and I bought it from him because I had an important, urgent assignment — to write three sales training videos for Telecom.

I suppose I looked at it as a typewriter where I could keep writing without changing paper. Christmas



passed into New Year 1984 almost unnoticed as I worked away.

Then in the early hours of one morning, with many hours of that day's work nearly completed, it disappeared. The data that is. My precious writing — gone. Later I discovered that, with its small memory, 32KB, the computer would reach its limits and clear the buffer, and all the data within it. That was my first lesson in saving obsessively.

This was also when I decided that I should talk to people who understood computers better than I did. The computer industry was in its period of growth and huge wealth, and displayed it all at the Melbourne Exhibition Building. I went along and found a booth: "Melbourne PC User Group", surrounded by a flow of young men having the same problems I had.

Figuring maybe I could learn something, I signed up. Member 772. And I've been turning up to the monthly meetings ever since.

The club kept us in the groove of what was happening, and in conversation with other enthusiasts. There were the very good ones, the professionals. And thankfully there was always someone who knew less than you did.

For us members of the Group, computers have long been an integral part of our lives. But it wasn't always so.

Nowadays we can't imagine an office without computers, but back then it was a struggle persuading others that there would be benefits in learning that expensive bit of technology.

It took about three years to persuade my accountant to press keys on the keyboard. He figured that his speed and skills with a spreadsheet, a broad sheet of paper covered in squares, could never be matched by a machine. He wouldn't listen to me, I was a mate, but eventually some colleague got to him. Then in another year he was an expert on spreadsheets and accounting packages, and giving me instruction.

My best mate Chris Brewer lives in South Africa and he will tell you that I positively bullied him into tapping the computer keys. Guess what? These days he is CEO of Brewer's Advertising Data, Africa's leader in media information and analysis systems. Come to think of it, I never did ask for my cut.

Persuading staff to get into computers was hard. A secretary with fast, accurate shorthand, typing speeds could see no need for a machine she did not understand and secretly feared.

A smart experienced bookkeeper would look at Lotus 123 as something to slow her down. Boy did I have some struggles! Of course now they're all experts with more than 20 years under their belts.

Journalism has been transformed by this digital revolution. When I was a cadet there were compositors downstairs on their Linotype machines producing sentences out of molten metal. Getting journalists off their typewriters was as hard as getting the fags out of their mouths. But within a few years the compositors and the molten lead were gone and the newspaper had become a big computer.

In an inexorable process, newspapers themselves now face the risk of becoming obsolete. Yet another

obstacle between the written word and its reader. Now we see that both Rupert Murdoch and the Fairfax group are charging for news online. It has been fiercely resisted. After all, everything on the Web was free. But gradually, slowly people are coming round to it.

If there were no newspapers, where would all those online sites get their news from? How would they pay for the huge infrastructure of journalists, editors and administrators needed to make it all happen? No, somewhere along the line something has to give — out of the wallet.

My own preferred model is already practised by The Age and The Herald Sun families. You get access to the web site — if you subscribe to the printed publication.

As someone who gets his news delivered every morning by the paper boy, I figure I make my weekly contribution. As for the others, let them buy their own paper, or pay an online fee.

In 30 years computers have changed the nature of business, communication and news. It has been a painful adjustment for many people. But hey, we couldn't imagine the world without them any more. So we have to create an economic model that supports what we have become.

Meanwhile, there is still this band of enthusiasts, dwindling alas, that gathers every month to celebrate the science, and the art, and the companionship of the computer. We have just seen Melb PC celebrate 30 years since it was founded. We know that computers are definitely here to stay. Let's make sure that Melb PC lives on as well. Happy birthday!

Ray Beatty
ray@ebeatty.com

Blog: themarketeer-raybeatty.blogspot.com

***Melb PC Mobile Broadband Internet Terms and Conditions**

A. Definitions

"Melb PC" means Melbourne PC User Group incorporated or its assignee:

"Member" means a financial member of Melbourne PC User Group and includes:

a) "Full Member" A person accepted into the Group after payment of the current full membership fee, or the related Student or Pensioner concession fee.

b) "Family Member" A domiciled spouse, partner, child or relative of a full member accepted to participate in activities of the Group and use that Member's Internet account after payment of the Family Membership fee;

the subscriber" means the MelbPC full member who has accepted the Melb PC Internet Agreement and paid fees for the subscription period and includes both Full and Email account subscribers. (see Level of

Description): "subscription periods" means the period in advance for which the subscriber has paid in full being one of the periods of subscription offered by Melb PC from time to time.

B. Subscription type & Details.

Subscription Type	Annual Fee or Monthly Fee	email & Newsgroup Storage or Mail Quota (Limit)	Browsing	Time Limit	Home Page Storage	Download Limit	When Limit Reached
3G Mobile Broadband 2GB 3G Mobile Broadband 4GB 3G Mobile Broadband 6GB 3G Mobile Broadband 8GB 3G Mobile Broadband 10GB 3G Mobile Broadband 15GB	\$210pa or \$20 pcm \$30 pcm \$35 pcm \$40 pcm \$45 pcm \$55 pcm		Yes			2GB pcm 4GB pcm 6GB pcm 8GB pcm 10GB pcm 15GB pcm	Excess data usage on all plans costs \$7.50 per 1GB or part thereof
4G Mobile Broadband 3GB 4G Mobile Broadband 6GB 4G Mobile Broadband 9GB 4G Mobile Broadband 12GB	\$30 pcm \$40 pcm \$50 pcm \$60 pcm		Yes			3GB pcm 6GB pcm 9GB pcm 12GB pcm	Excess data usage on all plans costs \$7.50 per 1GB or part thereof
4G Voice and Data Plan	\$35 pcm		Yes			1GB pcm	Excess data usage on all plans costs \$7.50 per 1GB or part thereof
Email account (www.outlook.com)	\$0	5GB	nil		Nil	nil	
ADSL Coming Soon	NA						

The above charges and details are subject to change from time to time. Limits and Time Quota: daily (non-cumulative) plus bonus time in non-peak periods.

Email Account Subscriber (available to all Melb PC Members without charge)

C. Description of Service(s)

General:

Melbourne PC User Group Inc. A0003293V (Melb PC) Internet Service network (the Network) is a service owned and operated by Melb PC for its members. It is a subscriber-funded service administered by the Internet Management Subcommittee (the subcommittee).

Function of the Melb PC Network: The primary function of the Network is to support the transfer of information to and from Melb PC members and the International community, subject to the terms of this agreement.

Access Software: The subscriber will need to acquire suitable mail, news and Web software from our shareware library or other resources. However, Melb PC makes available a configuration kit that automates his process for those who require it.

Accounts: Accounts are issued only to individuals, not company names; Melb PC may reject an application without stating a reason.

Support: Volunteers offer their help in local newsgroups and via an Internet Help team with interaction through Web Boards, e-mail and direct telephone support.

Duration: The subscription to the Network is for one year from the date of acceptance. It automatically terminates upon expiry of membership of MelbPC if that occurs earlier.

Acknowledgment: Successful applicants will include individuals whose forms are correctly filled out and whose funds have been transferred to the Melb PC Bank account.

Net Etiquette: Melb PC endorses adherence to ("Net etiquette" or "Netiquette") as deemed by the subcommittee from time to time and to prevailing International standards widely accepted as suitable behavior for using the Internet.

D. Terms of Agreement

- The subscriber asks Melb PC to provide a level of Internet access and Melb PC agrees to do so.
- This agreement starts when an authorized officer of Melb PC has executed it and Melb PC has received a cleared payment for the subscription period.
- If the subscriber renews this agreement for a further subscription period, this agreement applies to the renewed subscription period unless the parties agree otherwise in writing.
- The subscriber acknowledges that:
 - Continuity and speed of the Internet access depends on a wide range of factors many of which are beyond the control of Melb PC.
 - Melb PC has no control over the accuracy of appropriateness of any information on the internet.
 - Melb PC is not responsible for any material available on the Internet.
 - The subscriber's Internet access may be interrupted by equipment failure, the need for routine maintenance peak demand and so on.
 - Melb PC cannot guarantee that the subscriber will be able to secure access at any given time or that fluctuations in demand by other subscribers will not prevent the subscriber from using the full amount of the maximum daily time allowance on any given day.
 - Melb PC cannot guarantee that subscriber's home pages will always be available.
 - Dial up and Mobile Broadband Internet Subscribers are responsible for writing and uploading their own home pages and keeping backup copies of same. Melb PC does not back up these home pages. Subscribers will need to reload their own home pages in the event that the Melb PC facilities suffer any data loss.
 - The right to publish and communicate using home pages is granted to full Internet subscribers in the spirit of user group activities of sharing and furthering the computing experience. The quality of the Melb PC Internet service will be protected by Melb PC reserving its right to suspend the access to any publications of a subscriber who generates a disproportionate amount of Internet traffic. Subject to matters of the kind referred to in the previous clause and to the subscriber's access limits, Melb PC will use its best endeavors to keep Internet access available continuously and to allow the subscriber to have access for the current daily time allowance as set from time to time.
- The subscriber will indemnify Melb PC against any liability, claim, action, suit, demand, loss, cost or expense arising out of or in any way connected with this agreement or Internet access, including without limitation any negligence by Melb PC, its servants or agents.
- The subscriber will pay fees according to Melb PC's standard pricing list from time to time, and a copy of the list certified by an officer of Melb PC is conclusive evidence of the prices applicable at any time.
- Any notice given about any matter concerning this agreement may be given by clicking an accept button following the display of the agreement on a web page, by fax, e-mail or post at the last fax number email or postal address notified to the sender and is deemed to have been received at the time when it would have arrived in the ordinary course of the relevant type of transmission.
- Melb PC may change any term of this Agreement or make additional rules at any time by means of notification delivered in accordance with clause 9. Subscriber may refuse to accept any such change and terminate or her Internet access and receive a pro-rata refund for any paid subscription if a request to this effect is received within 14 days from the deemed receipt date of a notice of changes. Should a subscriber continue to keep using the service past the date of the notice deemed received as described in clause 9, the subscriber shall be deemed to accept the changes. A copy of the rules certified by an officer of Melb PC is conclusive evidence of the rules applicable at any time. The rules from time to time will apply as if they were set out in full as terms of this agreement.
- The subscriber **must not** deliberately or recklessly do anything that damages Melb PC's equipment, software, setup or services.
- The subscriber must not use Internet access to annoy, harass or harm other Internet users including sending of viruses either wittingly or unwittingly and the sending of spam or unsolicited bulk email.
- The subscriber must not use Internet access for any unlawful purpose or in any unlawful manner.
- Melb PC does not review any publications or communication and does not verify, endorse, or otherwise take responsibility for the content of same.
- Subscribers are legally responsible for their own publications and communications.
- The subscriber will keep safe and confidential any access numbers; codes or passwords allotted to them by Melb PC and notify Melb PC without delay of any compromise of that information.
- Melb PC may suspend or terminate the subscribers Internet access immediately if the subscriber breaches this agreement wittingly or unwittingly or fails to promptly pay any money owed to Melb PC or ceases to be a member of Melb PC.
- Melb PC may delete without notice any material found on its storage disks without giving any reason for doing so.
- Melb PC may make and keep any record it requires for the purpose of this agreement or the rules or for the operation of its services or as required by the law or its officers.
- The subscriber must not transfer, sell or share internet access rights, or allow the account to be used by any other person, other than those Melb PC Family Members who are listed on this application and have paid the relevant charges.
- The user's last name must be displayed in all e-mail and news messages. The user's first name or initials may be displayed as desired.
- Commercial traffic, in the form of private messages and advertisements in newsgroups designated for that purpose, is permitted within the bounds of Net etiquette.
- The "Organisation" field in private email or public newsgroup article headers must always be Melbourne PC User Group Australia, the name of the service provider. Any other organisation or business name is permitted only in the four-line (maximum) "signature" text that is optionally inserted at the end of the message or article.
- The "From" field used in email and news messages may be the Melb PC assigned email address. e.g. j.jones@melbpc.org.au or a "Spam-trap" address, e.g. j.jones@notspam.org.au or, subject to Clause 22 an external address. e.g. j.jones@hotmail.com.
- Melb PC may assign its rights and obligations to full Internet Subscribers under this agreement to an Internet access provider that is of equal standard to Melb PC and after notice of assignment is given to the subscriber, this agreement shall have operation as if it had been entered into between the assignee and the subscriber and Melb PC's rights (except for its right to recover any money owed to it immediately before the assignment) and obligations under this agreement shall be at an end. Services to Associate internet Subscribers shall be limited to the period Melb PC is able to provide them from its own resources.
- The parties submit to the law of Victoria, Australia in relation to any the interpretation of this agreement, or any dispute arising out of it.
- To the extent permitted by law and except as expressly provided to the contrary in this Agreement, all warranties whether express, implied, statutory or otherwise, relating in any way to the subject matter of this Agreement or to this Agreement generally, are excluded Where legislation implies in this Agreement any condition, or warranty and that legislation avoids or prohibits provisions in a contract excluding or modifying the application of or the exercise of or facility under such term, such term shall be deemed to be included in this Agreement. However, the liability of Melb PC for any breach of such term shall be limited at the option of Melb PC, to any one or more of the following if the breach related to goods, the replacement of the goods or the supply of equivalent goods; the repair of such goods; the payment of the cost of replacing the goods or of acquiring equivalent goods, or the payment of the cost of having the goods repaired; and if the breach relates to services the supplying of the services again; or the payment of the cost of having the services supplied again. To the extent permitted by law and except as expressly provided to the contrary in this Agreement Melb PC shall not be under any liability (contractual, tortious or otherwise!) to subscriber in respect of any loss or damage (save for only personal injury and death) howsoever caused, which may be suffered or injured or which may arise directly or indirectly in respect to the supply of goods or services pursuant to this Agreement or the act, failure or omission of Melb PC.
- Accounts may be suspended without notice to stop transmission of network packets that threaten or have the potential to threaten the security or normal operation of any computer or device on the local or wider network. Such packets are categorised solely by the Internet Management Subcommittee. Users of accounts suspended without notice will be advised by telephone or writing within two working days of the nature of the packets originating from their account. Lifting of the suspension will require the registered account holder to provide evidence of confirmed action being taken to prevent further the transmission of such threatening or potentially threatening packets.
- The Description of Service " Internet Access Agreement" and the services as described on this application form constitute the entire agreement between the partner and neither of them relies on any term, condition, warranty, collateral contract, representation or promise not set out in those parts of these forms.
- Authorised by Melb PC Committee, 1st September 2013

I have read the terms and conditions

signed.....dated.....



MELBOURNE PC USER GROUP INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Title	First Name	Last Name
-------	------------	-----------

Address

Suburb	Post Code
--------	-----------

Phone	Mobile Number
-------	---------------

DOB	Preferred Email Address
-----	-------------------------

Referred by member: _____ full name or membership number /SIG _____

Annual 12 Month Membership Fees (see below)

6 Monthly Memberships also available *contact the office

Individuals	\$95 each	Please provide emergency contact details below.
Additional Family Members (Spouse and children)	\$25 each	
Pensioners/Adult students A (25+)*	\$80 each	
Students B (14-25 yrs.)	\$35 each	
Corporate (One membership is two representatives)	\$190 each	
		Full Name
		Phone no.
		Mobile no.

Additional Family Members

Name	Signature
Name	Signature

Terms and conditions

- Adult students A must attach a photocopy of their student card or letter from their educational institution confirming full student status.
 - All student B members must have a Student Card and have evidence of their age at time of joining.
 - Pensioners must attach a photocopy showing both sides of their Centrelink Pension Concession Card.
- Change of family member(s) must be identified in writing to the club secretary.

I hereby apply for membership of Melbourne PC Users Group Inc. (A000329V) and agree to abide by its rules while I remain a member.

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Payment Details

Name on Card	Expiry Date
Credit Card Number	
Signature	Date ____/____/____

Email User Name Selection

List the user ("login") names you would like in order of preference. Write very clearly, to avoid our confusing certain letters. User names are expressed in lower case letters and must represent your real name in some recognisable way e.g. "John J. Jones" might request user names such as "john", "johnj", "jjones", etc. Any user name that is already allocated or deemed unsuitable in the opinion of the system administrators will not be allocated.

- Choice 1. _____@melbpc.org.au
- Choice 2. _____@melbpc.org.au
- Choice 3. _____@melbpc.org.au
- Choice 4. _____@melbpc.org.au

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 North East Genealogy (10am - 12.45pm)	3 Monthly Meeting Melb PC H.Q. Moorabbin 7pm sharp	4 Ballarat (7.30pm - 9.45pm) Sunbury Daytime (New Users 9.30am)	5 Essendon Cancelled Multimedia and Home Entertainment (Wadham House 10am)	6
Have A Question Post it on a Newsgroup http://groups.melbpc.org.au/~anywhere/						
7	8 Access (6.30pm - 8.30pm) Wyndham (General 7.30pm - 9.30pm)	9 WASINT (10.30am - 12.30pm) Everything Apple (2pm - 4pm) Linux Workshop (4pm - 7pm) Linux (7pm - 9.30pm) Melb PC Committee	10 Video Production (Sony Vegas 10am) Communications (7pm - 9.30pm) Microcontroller (7pm - 9.30pm) East (7.30pm - 10pm)	11 E-Book (7pm - 9.30pm) North East Daytime (Includes Photography - Digital Imaging Ivanhoe 10am - 12noon) Sunbury Daytime (New Users 9.30am) North East Android (Ivanhoe 10am - 12noon)	12 Casey PC Christmas Function Essendon (Christmas Function 10.30am) Hardware (Wadham House 10am)	13 Microcontroller Workshop (12noon - 5pm)
14 East Workshop (Wadham House Mt Waverley 10am - 2pm)	15 Graphics & Music Christmas Party and Open Day 6pm Nth Subs Linux (7.30pm - 9.30pm) Mornington Peninsula (Meeting 9.30am Digital Imaging Group 12.30pm Family History Group 2pm)	16 Wyndham (Multimedia 7.30pm)	17 Everything iPad / iPhone (2pm - 4pm)	18 Music (7.30pm - 9.30pm) Bayside BBQ 11-30am Booking Required Sunbury Daytime (General Meeting 9.30am)	19 Essendon (Check website for meeting details. 9.30am) Photoshop (Digital Images Wadham House 10am)	20 Windows Plus (10am - 1pm)
					Melb PC Office Closed	
21 MACE (10am - 2pm) Macedon Ranges (Gisborne 2pm - 4pm) Beginners East (10am - 12.30pm) Genealogy (1pm - 3.30pm)	22 Video Inner East (Bairwyn 7pm - 9.30pm)	23 Programming (6.30pm - 9pm) North East (Evening 7.30pm - 9.30pm) Yarra Ranges (Meeting 9.15am Workshop 11.30am)	24 Video Production (Pinnacle 9.30am) Essendon (7pm - 9pm)	25 Sunbury Daytime (Maintenance 9.30am. Meeting also held on a 5th Thursday) Public Holiday Christmas Day	26 Casey Workshop (Narre Warren Library 12.30pm - 3pm) Essendon (9.30am) Raspberry Pi (Wadham House 10am) Public Holiday Boxing Day	27 Hardware Workshop (10am - 12noon) Microcontroller Workshop (12noon - 5pm)
Melb PC office closed on Friday 19th December 2014, will re-open on Monday 5th January 2015.						
28 Website Design (2pm - 6pm)	29	30	31	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Colour Codes</p> <p>Black: SIG meetings at Melb PC H.Q. Moorabbin.</p> <p>Blue: SIG meetings held at other locations.</p> <p>Dotted Box: No SIG meeting held this month.</p> </div> <p>For information on "Special Interest Group" activities and meeting times see the group details in PC Update or go to http://groups.melbpc.org.au.</p>		
				Melb PC Office Closed		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Colour Codes</p> <p>Black: SIG meetings at Melb PC H.Q. Moorabbin.</p> <p>Blue: SIG meetings held at other locations.</p> <p>Dotted Box: No SIG meeting held this month.</p> </div> <p>For information on "Special Interest Group" activities and meeting times see the group details in PC Update or go to http://groups.melbpc.org.au.</p>				<p>1</p> <p>Ballarat (7.30pm - 9.45pm)</p> <p>Sunbury Daytime (New Users 9.30am)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Essendon (Main Meeting 9.30am)</p> <p>Multimedia and Home Entertainment (Wadham House 10am)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Public Holiday New Years Day</p>		<p>Melb PC Office Closed</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Melb PC Office Re-Opens Today</p>	<p>6</p> <p>North East Genealogy (10am - 12.45pm)</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>E-Book (7pm - 9.30pm)</p> <p>North East Daytime (Includes Photography - Digital Imaging Ivanhoe 10am - 12noon)</p> <p>Sunbury Daytime (New Users 9.30am)</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Casey PC (Narre Warren Library 12.30pm - 3pm)</p> <p>Essendon (Open Forum 9.30am)</p> <p>Hardware (Wadham House 10am)</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Microcontroller Workshop (12noon - 5pm)</p>			
<p>11</p> <p>East Workshop (Wadham House Mt Waverley 10am - 2pm)</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Access (6.30pm - 8.30pm)</p> <p>Wyndham (General 7.30pm - 9.30pm)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>WASINT (10.30am - 12.30pm)</p> <p>Everything Apple (2pm - 4pm)</p> <p>Linux Workshop (4pm - 7pm)</p> <p>Linux (7pm - 9.30pm)</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Video Production (Sony Vegas 10am)</p> <p>Communications (7pm - 9.30pm)</p> <p>Microcontroller (7pm - 9.30pm)</p> <p>East (7.30pm - 10pm)</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Music (7.30pm - 9.30pm)</p> <p>Bayside (10am - 12 noon)</p> <p>Sunbury Daytime (General Meeting 9.30am)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Essendon (Check website for meeting details. 9.30am)</p> <p>Photoshop (Digital Images Wadham House 10am)</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Windows Plus (10am - 1pm)</p>			
<p>18</p> <p>MACE (10am - 2pm)</p> <p>Beginners East (10am - 12.30pm)</p> <p>Genealogy (1pm - 3.30pm)</p> <p>Macedon Ranges (Gisborne 2pm - 4pm)</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Graphics (7pm - 9.30pm)</p> <p>Nth Subs Linux (7.30pm - 9.30pm)</p> <p>Mornington Peninsula (Meeting 9.30am Digital Imaging Group 12.30pm Family History Group 2pm)</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Wyndham (Multimedia 7.30pm)</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Everything iPad / iPhone (2pm - 4pm)</p> <p>North East Android (Ivanhoe 10am - 12noon)</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Sunbury Daytime (Maintenance 9.30am. Meeting also held on a 5th Thursday)</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Casey Workshop (Narre Warren Library 12.30pm - 3pm)</p> <p>Essendon (Check website for Meeting Details 9.30am)</p> <p>Raspberry Pi (Wadham House 10am)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Hardware Workshop (10am - 12noon)</p> <p>Microcontroller Workshop (12noon - 5pm)</p>			
<p>25</p> <p>Website Design (2pm - 6pm)</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Video Inner East (Balwyn 7pm - 9.30pm)</p> <p>Public Holiday Australia Day</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Programming (6.30pm - 9pm)</p> <p>North East (Evening 7.30pm - 9.30pm)</p> <p>Yarra Ranges (Meeting 9.15am Workshop 11.30am)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Video Production (Pinnacle 9.30am)</p> <p>Essendon (7pm - 9pm)</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white;"> <p>Have A Question</p> <p>Post it on a Newsgroup</p> <p>http://groups.melbpc.org.au/~anywhere/</p> </div>									