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# [Publishing Information](#)



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**Responsibility for content in this newsletter lies with individually named authors**

**Monthly Meeting Live Stream** from 7.00pm on Wednesday 6th May 2020 at <http://melcc.org.au/streaming>

**Please remember to always bring your membership card to meetings**

[SIG Listings](#) and up to date calendar are available on our [homepage](#)

# Editorial May 2020



**Hugh Macdonald**

Welcome to the May 2020 edition of PC Update.

Although it has been a month since I last wrote to you in this capacity, it feels more like seven years.

Once again, this month features a mix of articles that I hope will keep you entertained and informed during this difficult time. There are operating system and software reviews, tips and tricks for your computer and your home network, and a couple of newsworthy items. Also, there is the usual fun of the DOTW winners and highlights of some of the goings-on of Yammer, our internal social network.

In From The President, David Stonier-Gibson extolls the benefits of Yammer, but let me add that although I've been a user since I joined the club, I've also found much more comfort in it in recent times. So if you've never checked it out, it is a great time to do so. If you're unsure how to, then refer back to last month's PC Update where I provided a step by step guide to logging in and finding some interesting groups.

Also to amplify another point of David's, if you find that the SIG you always wanted to attend but never did because it was located on the other side of town is meeting through video conferencing, make the most of the opportunity and attend. Also if you don't attend the monthly meeting regularly, make the most of its online format and check it out. This month features a range of interesting presenters, and should be a very good discussion.

That's all from me, until next month. Keep safe and well.

# From The President May 2020



**David Stonier-Gibson**

It's all a little weird at the moment. We have been forced to do a complete pivot on our plans and aspirations for things like the Maker Room. I am trying to grasp the opportunities that the CV crisis presents, as well as handling the challenges.

## **April monthly meeting**

This was conducted with Google Meet for the people "on the stage" and streaming out to YouTube for the members. Thank you to Stephen Zuluaga and Hugh Macdonald for cobbling together the technology. There were problems with the audio, so as far as I can tell much of an otherwise really good guest presentation was lost.

## **May monthly meeting plan**

For the May meeting, I am negotiating with several fairly prominent people to have a panel discussion on something along the lines of "What long term impact this crisis could have on society". Will there be some significant changes, re-assessments of our values, or will we simply revert to the same old, same old?

I want to extract the max possible exposure out of this event, which I intend to promote far and wide. It will be open to non-members, but if I can get everything lined up I will put out some heavy club messaging.

## **Online SIG meetings**

Several SIGs have moved to online meetings. The committee decided to support one particular platform, Google G-Suite Meet. G-Suite is a commercial strength toolset for which we have a free not for profit (NFP) license. The Meet online meeting component is fully browser-based, no download required, and works on all hardware platforms, albeit with varying results. Our support page is at <https://melcc.org.au/online-meeting-platforms>

## **By the way ...**

All SIG meetings are open to all members. While meetings are conducted online you have an opportunity to attend any meeting without having to drive halfway across town. So why not sample some of the topic-

specific SIGs, or simply see how people in other regions are conducting their meetings. You may e-meet some new people and enjoy a yarn.

## **Special projects**

I have made the first steps toward several initiatives to keep members engaged. I intend to go public with these gradually over the coming days and weeks. Some I will go outside the club with, and use short (3/6 month) memberships as prizes. That work has unfortunately taken a back seat to the Big One: ....

## **... The transition**

As I have stated in email to all members and on our members-only forum, this is a big job that will take time, patience and understanding. While we subscribe totally to openness and transparency, we simply cannot and will not debate detailed points and concerns with individual members. It would leave no time for doing the actual job. All inputs from members *are* being noted, recorded and considered. Our response will be in the form of an evolving FAQ posted behind our members' sign-on.

**Do not use the transition team address for general inquiries about routine renewal notices, suspected spam. We will not reply to individual emails to that address.**

## **Yammer**

I confess to being a social media addict. Maybe it's an aspect of a personality that is also not suffering hugely due to isolation. I understand that not everyone likes social media, so some members won't use them. But I have noticed several new names pop up in posts and likes on our members-only social platform, Yammer, since the lock-down started. I find that encouraging.

Yammer got something of a bad rap a few years ago when we had a president who, to put it mildly, was lacking in social and diplomatic skills. That is all history, and Yammer is now a safe place to hang out. During the lock-down, it offers a place to interact with fellow members either on specific topic groups or the all-encompassing "Chit Chat" group. If you are the personality type who is suffering from the isolation, Yammer could be the place to find some online socialising.

Give it a go. Have your sign-in credentials ready and go to: <https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au>

**You may be in isolation but you needn't be isolated.**

## **Special offers from printer supplier.**

I received 2 or 3 emails from the company we lease our big laser printer from, with special offers to "help valued customers through the crisis". I see them as nothing more than cynical attempts to incite people to extend their contracts in return for somewhat deferred payments.

# Monthly Meeting May 2020

The main event for the May monthly meeting will be a panel discussion on the topic “Society after Corona”. We will be exploring how society may change permanently as a result of the pandemic. Will working from home become the new normal? How will our value systems change? Could it be the beginning of the end for some traditional political and economic systems? Will we become a more caring society? Will there be deep and profound socioeconomic changes, or will we revert inexorably back to business as usual?

We have a panel of notable experts in relevant domains (in order of acceptance of our invitation).



**Dr Anthony Richardson, RMIT.** His special area of interest is the impact on society of major disruptive events like earthquakes, bush fires and, yes, pandemics.



**Air Vice-Marshal John Blackburn AO (Retd.),** former Air Force deputy chief. Infrastructure and supply chain security.



**Shaun Whitaker** is a very senior member of a major corporation, concerned with IT systems resilience in banking and similar industries.



**Jessica Macpherson, OAM.** Founder and CEO of the charity St Kilda Mums.



**James Jansson, PhD,** founder of The Science Party, social/moral philosopher and expert on computer modelling of epidemics.

Members are encouraged to submit written questions in advance. They can be directed at nominated panellists or open-ended. Instructions for submitting questions will be circulated separately. We are unfortunately unable to handle real-time questions with our small crew.

The discussion is expected to take an hour or more. There will then be a short break. When we resume we will have a brief report from our president **David Stonier-Gibson**, and then the customary What's New segment from **George Skarbek**.

The meeting will be streamed live to members at <https://melcc.org.au/streaming> on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, at 7 pm. The stream will be started approximately 30 minutes before.

*Please remember: We are all learning how to use this technology.*

# [COVIDSafe tracking app reviewed: the government delivers on data security, but other issues remain](#)

[Mahmoud Elkhodr, CQUniversity Australia](#)

About 1.13 million people had downloaded the federal government's [COVIDSafe](#) app by 6 am today, just 12 hours after its release last night, [said](#) Health Minister Greg Hunt. The government is hoping at least 40% of the population will make use of the app, designed to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease.

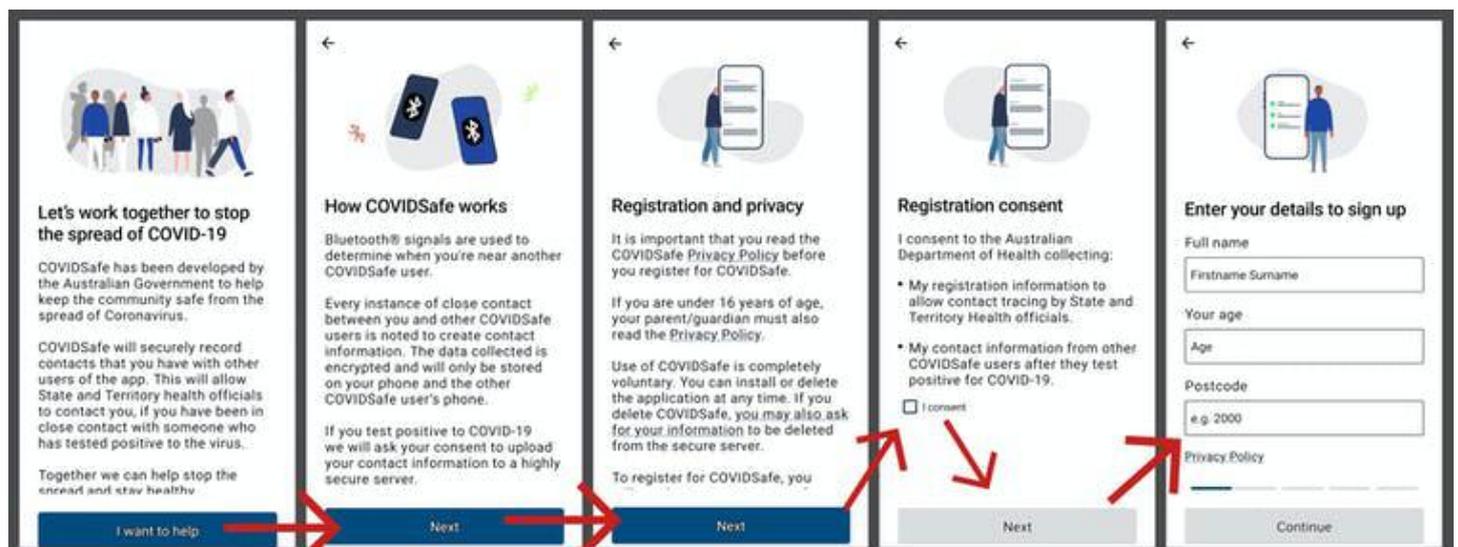
Previously dubbed TraceTogether - [in line with a similar app](#) rolled out in Singapore - the coronavirus contact tracing app has been an ongoing [cause of contention](#) among the public. Many people have voiced concerns about an erosion of privacy and potential misuse of citizen data by the government.

But how does COVIDSafe work? And to what extent has the app addressed our privacy concerns?

## Getting started

The app's landing page outlines its purpose: to help Australian health authorities trace and prevent COVID-19's spread by contacting people who may have been in proximity (to a distance of [about 1.5 metres](#)) with a confirmed case, for 15 minutes or more.

The second screen explains how Bluetooth technology is used to record users' contact with other app users. This screen says collected data is encrypted and can't be accessed by other apps or users without a decryption mechanism. It also says the data is stored locally on users' phones and isn't sent to the government (remote server storage).



These screens that show up upon app installation explain the app's functions and guide users through registration.



## App permissions

COVIDSafe needs Bluetooth® and notifications enabled to work.

Select 'Proceed' to enable:

1. Bluetooth®
2. Location Permissions
3. Battery Optimiser

Android needs Location Permissions for Bluetooth® to



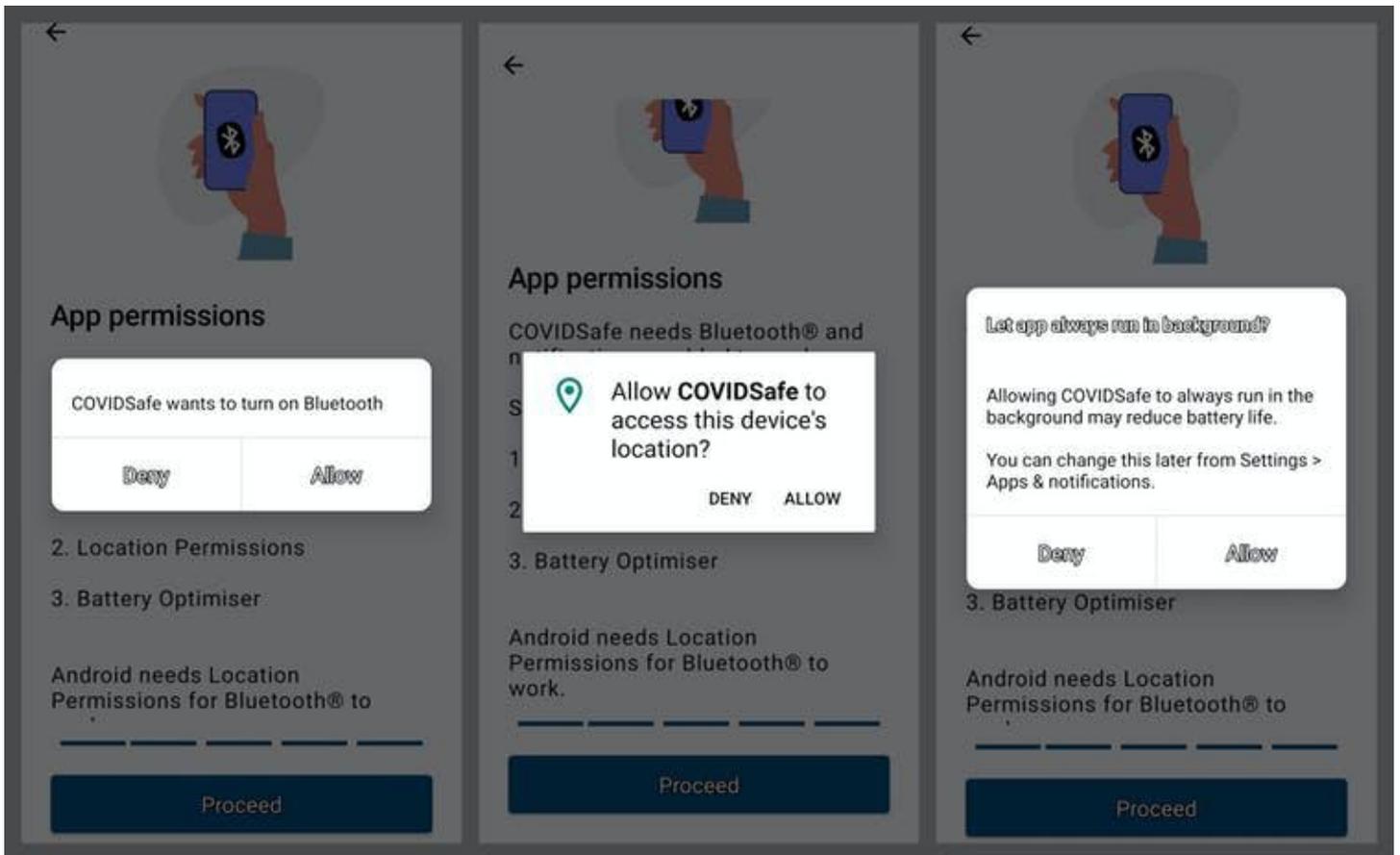
COVIDSafe requires certain permissions to run.

In subsequent screens, the app links to its [privacy policy](#), seeks user consent to retrieve registration details, and lets users register by entering their name, age range, postcode and mobile number.

This is followed by a declaration page where the user must give consent to enable Bluetooth, “location permissions” and “battery optimiser”.

In regards to enabling location permissions, it's important to note this isn't the same as turning on-location services. Location permissions must be enabled for COVIDSafe to [access Bluetooth](#) on [Android and Apple devices](#). And access to your phone's battery optimiser is required to keep the app running in the [background](#).

Once the user is registered, a notification should confirm the app is up and running.



Users will have to manually grant some permissions.

Importantly, COVIDSafe doesn't have an option for users to exit or "log-off".

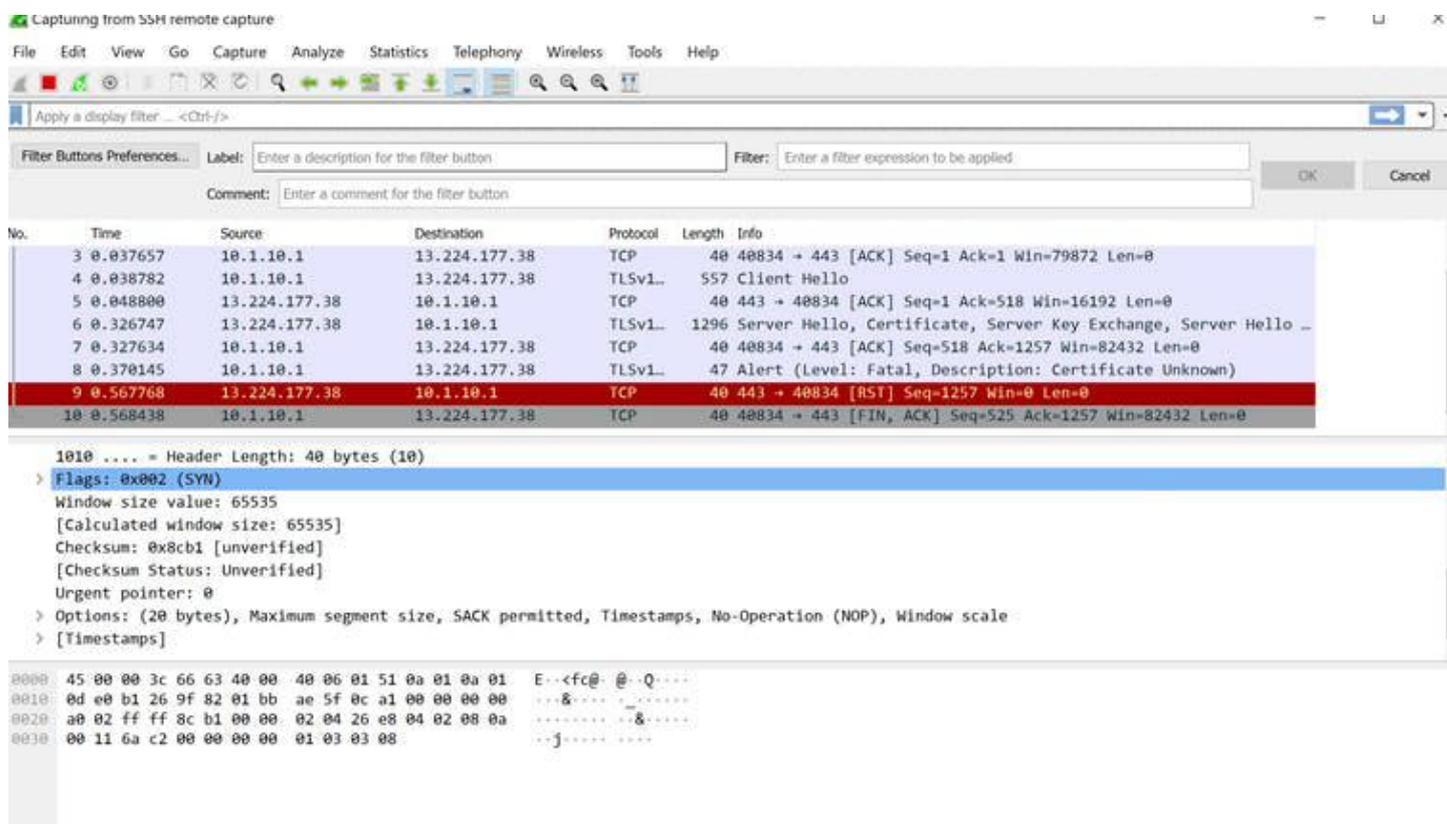
Currently, the only way to stop the app is to uninstall it, or turn off Bluetooth. The app's reliance on prolonged Bluetooth usage also has users worried it might quickly [drain their phone batteries](#).

## Preliminary tests

Upon preliminary testing of the app, it seems the federal government has delivered on its promises surrounding data security.

Tests run for one hour showed the app didn't transmit data to any external or remote server, and the only external communication made was a "handshake" to a remote server. This is simply a way of establishing [a secure communication](#).

Additional tests should be carried out on this front.



This screenshot shows test results run via the Wireshark software to determine whether data from COVIDSafe was being transmitted to external servers.

## Issues for iPhone users

[According to reports](#), if COVIDSafe is being used on an iPhone in low-power mode, this may impact the app's ability to track contacts.

Also, iPhone users must have the app open (in the foreground) for Bluetooth functionality to work. The federal government plans to fix this hitch "in a few weeks", according to [The Guardian](#).

This complication may be because Apple's operating system generally doesn't allow apps to run Bluetooth-related tasks, or perform Bluetooth-related events [unless running in the foreground](#).

## Source code

"[Source code](#)" is the term used to describe the set of instructions written during the development of a program. These instructions are understandable to other programmers.

In a privacy impact assessment [response from the Department of Health](#), the federal government said it would make COVIDSafe's source code publicly available, "subject to consultation with" the Australian Cyber Security Centre. It's unclear exactly when or how much of the source code will be released.

Making the app's source code publicly available, or making it "open source", would allow experts to examine the code to evaluate security risks (and potentially help fix them). For example, experts could determine whether the app collects any personal user information without user consent. This would ensure COVIDSafe's transparency and enable auditing of the app.

Releasing the source code isn't only important for transparency, but also for understanding the app's functionality.

Some COVIDSafe users [reported](#) the app wouldn't accept their mobile number until they turned off wifi

and used their mobile network (4G) instead. Until the app is made open source, it's difficult to say exactly why this happens.

## **Civic duty**

Overall, it seems COVIDSafe is a promising start to the national effort to ease lockdown restrictions, a luxury [already afforded to some states](#) including Queensland.

Questions have been raised around whether the app will later [be made compulsory](#) to download, to reach the 40% uptake target. But current growth in download numbers suggests such enforcement may not be necessary as more people rise up to their “civic duty”.

That said, only time will reveal the extent to which Australians embrace this new contact tracing technology.

[Mahmoud Elkhodr](#), Lecturer in Information and Communication Technologies, [CQUniversity Australia](#)

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# [How to boost your Internet speed when everyone is working from home](#)

[James Jin Kang, Edith Cowan University](#) and [Paul Haskell-Dowland, Edith Cowan University](#)

With #StayAtHome and social distancing now becoming a way of life, an increasing number of people are relying on the internet for work, education, and entertainment. This has placed greater demand on our network infrastructure, reducing the [bandwidth](#) available for each user, and is leaving people frustrated at seemingly slow internet speeds.

While internet service providers such as TPG or Telstra may not be able to instantly respond to these changes, there are a few tricks you can use to boost your home Internet speed.

## **Why is your internet slow?**

There may be many reasons why your internet speed is slow. Internet use requires a reliable connection between your device and the destination, which may be a server that is physically located on the other side of the world.

Your connection to that server could pass through [hundreds](#) of devices on its journey. Each one of these is a potential failure, or weak point. If one point along this path isn't functioning optimally, this can significantly affect your internet experience.

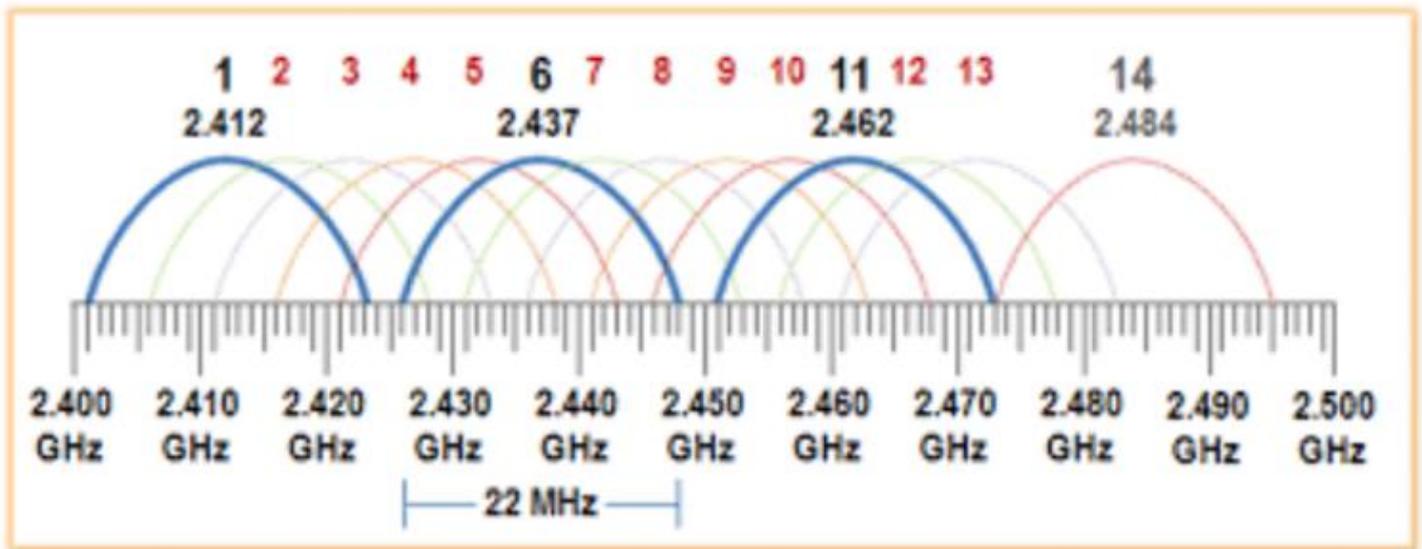
Web servers in particular are often affected by external factors, including [Denial of Service \(DOS\)](#) attacks, wherein an overload of traffic causes congestion in the server, and impedes proper functioning.

While you may not have control over these things from your home network, that doesn't mean you don't have options to improve your internet speed.

## **Wifi signal boost**

The [access point](#) (wireless router) in your home network is used to connect your devices to your internet service provider. Most access points provide a wireless signal with limited channels, which can suffer interference from nearby signals, like your neighbour's. A "channel" is a kind of virtual "pipe" through which data is transferred.

Although your devices are designed to avoid interference by switching channels automatically (there are usually 14 available), it may help to check your router settings, as some are set to a single channel by default. When trying different options to reduce interference, it's advisable to select [channels 1, 6 or 11](#) as they can help to minimise problems (for 2.4GHz wireless).



This diagram shows the frequency and channel distribution for 2.4GHz.

[Rob/Stack Exchange](#), [CC BY-SA](#)

## What else can you do?

There are further things you can try to improve your wifi signal. If your router supports 5GHz wifi signals, [switching to this](#) can provide a faster data rate, but over shorter distances. Reposition your router for the best coverage (usually a central position).

The difference between 2.4GHz and 5GHz wifi signals is they have different data transmission speeds. While 5GHz can transfer data faster (with 23 available channels), 2.4GHz provides a wider range. If you want speed, go for 5GHz. For better coverage, choose 2.4GHz.

Some domestic appliances can cause interference with your router. It's worth checking if using your microwave oven, cordless phone or baby monitor affects your connection, as they may be using the same frequency as your router.

Using a [wifi extender](#) can help with coverage by boosting or extending the signal.

## Viruses and malware

To avoid computer viruses, make sure you regularly check for updates on your devices and use antivirus software. It's also worth rebooting your router to clear specific malware (malicious software designed to damage your device or server), such as [VPNFilter](#) - a malware that [infects more than half a million routers](#) in more than 50 countries.

You should also check the following:

- does your router need to be replaced with a newer model? This may be the case if it has been used for many years. Newer models support enhanced functions and faster internet speeds
- is the [firmware](#) of your wireless router [updated](#)? You can do this by visiting the device manufacturer's website. This will help fix problems and allow additional functionality. It's unlikely this update is done automatically.

## Planning your internet usage

If multiple people are streaming video at your home, which often requires [ten times the daytime demand](#), a limited internet connection will soon be fully used.

Try to plan your and family members' online activities around peak times. Before the pandemic hit, most internet usage was likely oriented around the early evenings, after close of business. With the shift to remote working and schooling, more internet access is likely during the day, [with a 10% usage increase overall, and a 30% increase at peak times](#).

Outside your home, connectivity is likely to be on a "best-effort" plan, which shares a fixed bandwidth with other users. In other words, your mobile internet bandwidth is shared with others in your area when they access the internet at the same time. A shared bandwidth results in slower individual speeds.

You can't control how many people access the internet, but you can manage your own internet activity by downloading large files or content overnight, or outside of peak hours (when there is less traffic).

## **How to improve your ISP's network issues**

While you can try to fix issues and optimise the setup inside your home, unfortunately you can't really influence network performance outside of it. Thus, contacting your internet service provider's call centre and seeking support is your best option.

All of the above considered, it's important to remember that when using the internet, we're sharing a limited resource. Just like buying pasta or toilet paper, there are many who need it just as much as you, so use it wisely.

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# 5G is Coming

**Jeff Wilkinson**

5G is the designation for the upcoming fifth-generation cellular network technology. This technology, which had the standards set at the end of 2017, promises to bring faster speeds than the current 4G technology in use by most cell phones today. This technology will not only affect your cell phones, tablets, and laptops, but also the myriad of other connected devices such as door locks, autonomous vehicles, security cameras, home appliances, and many more devices included in the IoT space - Internet of Things!

It's estimated that over 20 billion devices will be connected to the internet by the end of 2020 up from the 6 Billion plus currently connected. The promised latency (the delay in sending data from one point to the next) reduction of 5G is critical to the growth of driverless vehicles and many other applications.

Shipments of 5G smartphones will surge to more than 100 million units by the end of 2020 as the coverage of 5G networks grows and the premium prices of today's handsets come down, according to a [report](#) by International Data Corporation. IDC said that next year 5G handsets could account for close to 10% of global volumes, which have been hammered in recent years by consumers taking longer and longer to upgrade to new models.

## **Driverless Cars and 5G Technology**

For autonomous car technology to be unlocked, many experts agree that large-scale adoption of 5G is required.

If you've been following the news about 5G, you know that it has the potential to significantly boost bandwidth up to 10 Gbits/sec. It also has sub-1-millisecond system latency paired with a considerable reduction in power consumption over existing networks. 5G will enable a host of new applications in the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), vehicle-to-vehicle communication, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence applications.

Said Nokia's Jane Rygaard in a [recent interview with the BBC](#): *"We need to look at how long it takes for the message to be transmitted between sensors and then get to the computer in each car, and then how long it takes for the computer to make a decision, and all of this has to be in less time than a human would take to make a decision—2 milliseconds. We need a network supporting this, and 5G is that network."*

Still, with self-driving features already in widespread use, it does appear that fully autonomous cars will appear on our roads, and perhaps sooner than people realize. Even more surprising, they will also be considered much safer than human-controlled vehicles. The current 4G network is fast enough to online stream full HD content and play online games, but it can't support safer and smarter [autonomous cars](#). Autonomous cars, systems require incredible data processing capabilities and speeds to mimic the timing of human reflexes.

The rollout of 5G technology is likely to begin in high usage areas and will certainly experience some growing pains but it is coming.

*Republished from The Gigabyte Gazette, the journal of The Sun City Computer Club*

# Understanding File Extensions

**Jim Cerny, Sarasota Technology Users Group**

So someone sends you a file attached to their email - you try to open the file and you can't, why is that? I mean they obviously could open the file on their computer, why couldn't you open it on yours? Unfortunately, this is the frustrating part about FILE EXTENSIONS (also known as "file types").

If you use a program to CREATE a file, it is nice to have the SAME PROGRAM to open or work with the file you created. Naturally, if you use your computer to create a file then your computer has the program needed to open the file later. The problem is when someone creates a file on their computer and sends it to you - you need to have a program that can open the file on your computer. Let's look at one example:

I have the Microsoft Word app (or program) on my computer and I create a new document with it. I save the document as a file, and the computer assigns it a "file extension" or "file type" of ".docx". The file extension is always the last three or four characters of the file name right after the dot. This indicates that this file was created using the latest version of Word. If I send this file (as an attachment to an email) to someone else and they do NOT have Word, they cannot open the file!

It is an option in Windows whether to display the file extension, so your computer may not show you the file extension as part of the file name. To see the file extension when you use File Explorer, open the File Explorer app, click on the "View" menu tab and check the box labelled "File Name Extensions". This will display the file extensions (file type) as part of the file name for all files.

Things have changed over the past few years as there are more options to open the file to READ it or to EDIT it. Your computer may suggest some internet sites or free apps that may be able to open the file for you.

A good app like Microsoft Word may allow you to save your file as a different type of file - so you can pick one that is easier for more people to open. You could save it as a ".pdf" or ".rtf" file type if you want. A ".pdf" file can be opened by many apps but usually, the contents, or text, of the file can NOT be edited, only read. The ".rtf" file type (Rich Text File) can also be opened by several other apps and can be edited, BUT the text will have lost any formatting or options used in Microsoft Word.

Are you working with photo files? Most photos or pictures today are saved as a ".jpg" file type and any app that can open or work with photos will be able to open this file. That's nice.

Here are just a few of the most popular file extensions (types):

**.doc or .docx** - Microsoft Word

**.html** - webpage

**.jpg** - picture or photo image

**.pdf** - a document file that can be open or read by many apps but cannot be edited

**.rtf** - rich text file that contains formatting (the Wordpad app creates these files)

**.txt** - plain text file will no formatting

**.xls and .xlsx** - Microsoft Excel spreadsheet

There are probably many thousands of different file types, but thankfully you do not have to know them

all. If you have any questions about a particular file type, just Ask Google and you will find out what apps could have created the file and which apps can open or work with that file.

I know this all sounds a bit confusing, but you should only run into a problem when you try to open a file that you did not create on your computer. Should this happen you may have to contact the person who sent you the file and ask them to send it to you again as a different file type - one that you know you can open.

Hopefully, you will become comfortable with the most common file types that you use. Remember you can always Ask Google for help!

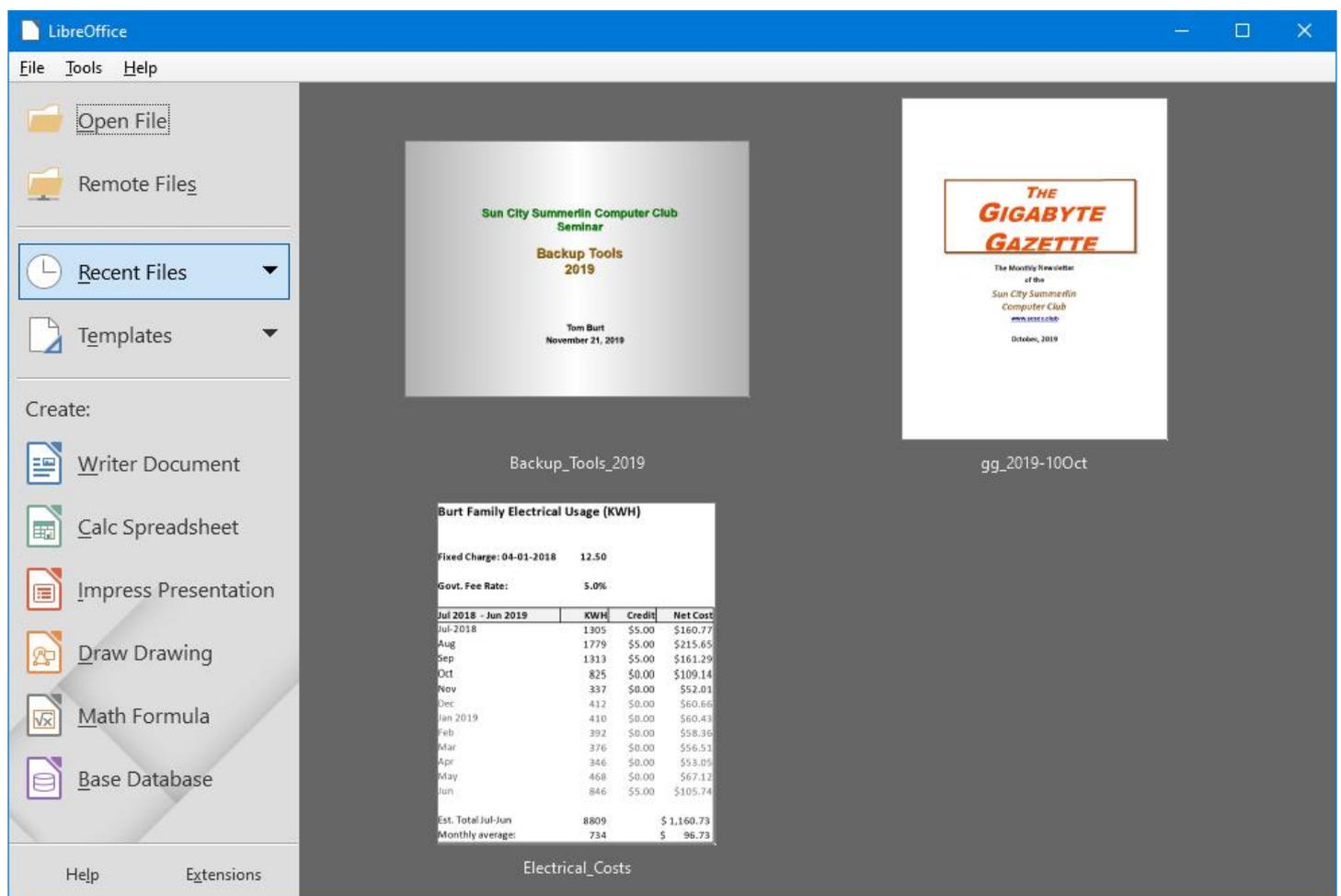
*Republished from Sarasota Monitor, the journal of Sarasota Technology Users Group*

# LibreOffice: A Powerful, Free Office Suite

**Tom Burt, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club**

About every 18 months I teach an introductory seminar on how to use LibreOffice. Attendance is usually good, but I still have been only reaching about 20 of our members at any one time. So, I decided this month to write about it here. Also, I had a recent question about “deals” for Microsoft Office 2019 Professional being offered online for prices like \$49.99. These offers are very dubious. I suggested the questioner consider LibreOffice as a legitimate alternative.

LibreOffice is a free full-featured open-source office suite that is very highly compatible with Microsoft Office. LibreOffice is offered and supported by the Open Document Foundation. The latest version is 6.3.3. You can download it at [www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org). There are versions for Windows, Mac, and Linux. LibreOffice can open and save documents in Microsoft Office format or its native (.odf) formats.



## LibreOffice Home Screen

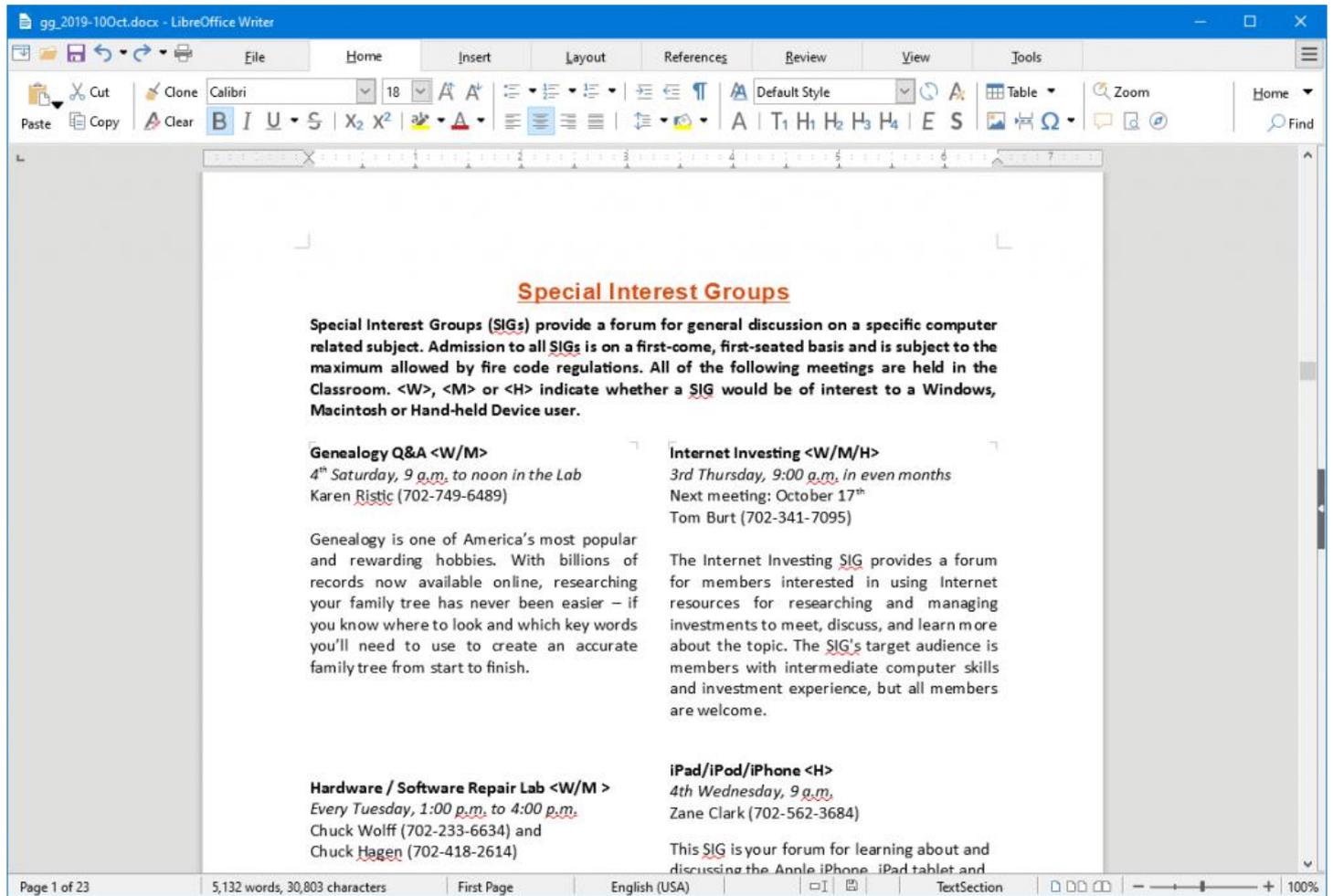
The LibreOffice home screen displays thumbnails of recently used documents. You can reopen one by simply clicking on it. You can also click in the Create section to create a new document.

The LibreOffice suite includes six components:

- **Writer** word processor, compatible with Microsoft Word
- **Calc** spreadsheet tool, compatible with Microsoft Excel
- **Impress** presentation graphics, compatible with Microsoft PowerPoint
- **Draw** diagramming and drawing tool, compatible with Microsoft Visio

- **Math**, a tool for laying out complex mathematical formulas and expressions
- **Base**, a database tool for creating and interfacing to relational databases

Space limits here preclude my covering all of the components. Let's look at Writer to get a sense of how LibreOffice looks and feels.



## LibreOffice Writer Using the New Tabbed Interface

Beginning with release 6.3.3, LibreOffice offers a choice of several user interfaces, including a ribbon-style tabbed interface similar to that in Microsoft Office 2007-2019. Also available is a “classical” menus and toolbar interface, similar to that in Microsoft Office 2003. Shown in the screenshot is part of the SIGs page of the Computer Club's monthly Gigabyte Gazette newsletter. I opened this document, which I usually edit with MS Word 365 (2019) and almost everything came in fine (styles, graphics, tables, etc.). The only flaw I saw was that my running footers stopped showing after the 5<sup>th</sup> page. This was caused by an embedded Section break to a new page. Happily, I was able to easily fix this in Writer by copying the footer from page 4 to page 5.

Let's look at a screenshot from the Calc spreadsheet.

The screenshot shows a LibreOffice Calc spreadsheet titled "Electrical\_Costs.xlsx". The formula bar displays the formula:  $=ROUND(((\$G\$2*B17+\$B\$4)*(1+\$B\$6)),2)-C17$ . The spreadsheet data is as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	<b>Burt Family Electrical Usage (KWH)</b>														
2						Rate: 10-01-2018	0.10989								
3						Rate: 08-01-2018	0.11110								
4	Fixed Charge: 04-01-2018	12.50				Rate: 04-01-2018	0.11140								
5															
6	Govt. Fee Rate:	5.0%													
7															
8	<b>Jul 2018 - Jun 2019</b>	<b>KWH</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Net Cost</b>											
9	Jul-2018	1305	\$5.00	\$160.77											
10	Aug	1779	\$5.00	\$215.65											
11	Sep	1313	\$5.00	\$161.29											
12	Oct	825	\$0.00	\$109.14											
13	Nov	337	\$0.00	\$52.01											
14	Dec	412	\$0.00	\$60.66											
15	Jan 2019	410	\$0.00	\$60.43											
16	Feb	392	\$0.00	\$58.36											
17	Mar	376	\$0.00	\$56.51											
18	Apr	346	\$0.00	\$53.05											
19	May	468	\$0.00	\$67.12											
20	Jun	846	\$5.00	\$105.74											
21															
22	Est. Total Jul-Jun	8809		\$1,160.73											
23	Monthly average:	734		\$ 96.73											
24															
25															

The bottom status bar shows: Sheet 1 of 4, PageStyle\_July 2018- June 2019, English (USA), Average: \$56.51; Sum: \$56.51, 100%.

## LibreOffice Calc Spreadsheet Using the New Tabbed Interface

This is a fairly simple Excel spreadsheet I use to track my monthly electrical costs. It has multiple worksheets in a single workbook. I opened it with Calc and everything came in fine. This sheet only has formulas; no macros.

In summary, if you're looking for a powerful, free office suite with very high compatibility to MS Office, LibreOffice 6.3 would be an excellent choice. However, after opening a Microsoft Office document in LibreOffice, it's wise to scan through and make sure everything looks right.

Finally, if you see a "too good to be true" offer for Microsoft Office Professional on the web, it almost certainly is. Many of these are selling Enterprise product keys and downloadable media as a retail product, in violation of the Enterprise licenses. Microsoft can kill these product keys at any time and the buyer has no recourse. So, Buyer Beware!

*Republished from The Gigabyte Gazette, the journal of the Sun City Summerlin Computer Club*

# First Look: Ubuntu 20.04 LTS

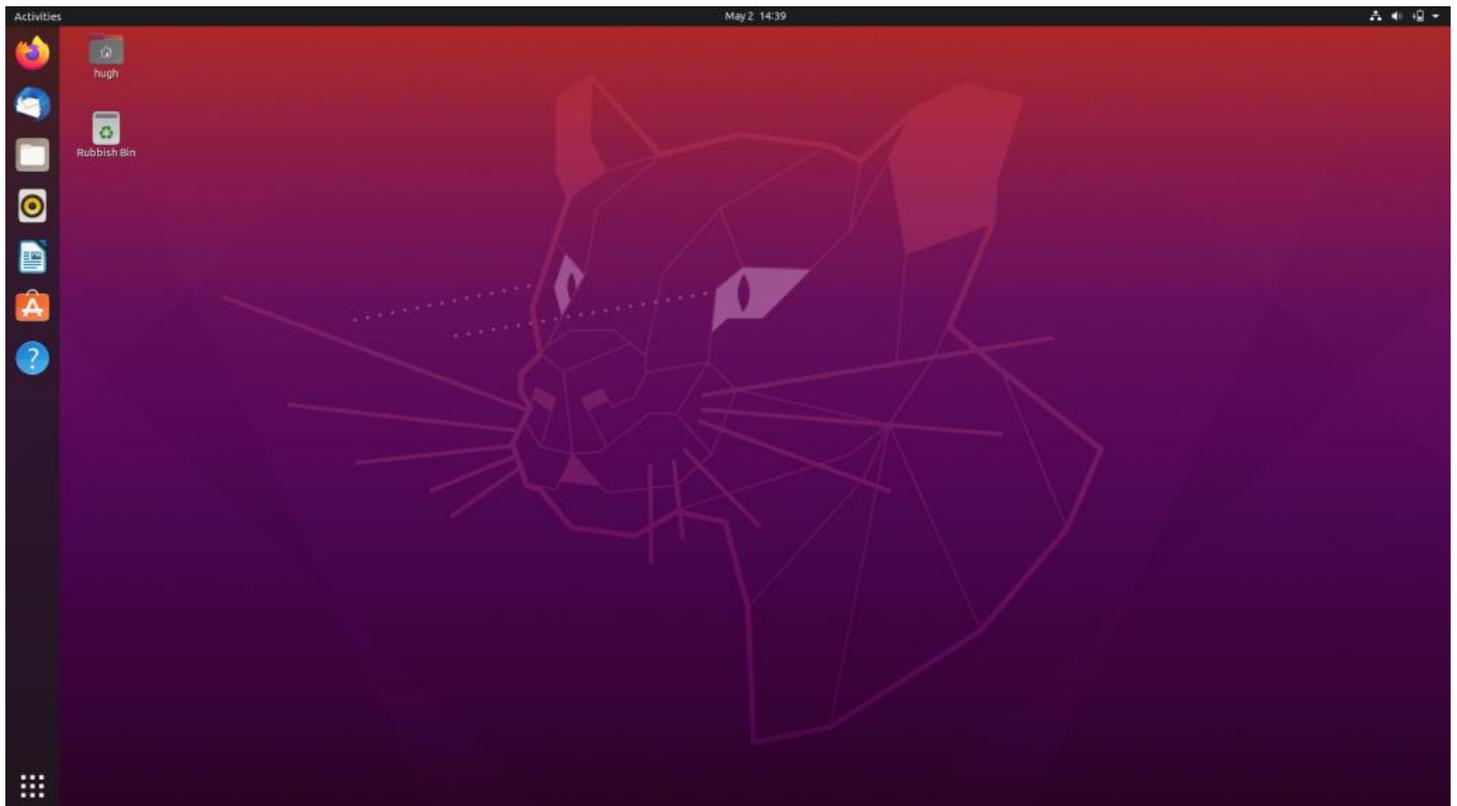
**Hugh Macdonald**

Ubuntu is arguably one of the most widely used Linux distributions, and arguably one of the most popular and easiest to use for consumers. On April 23 2020, they introduced their latest long term support (LTS) version, which will be supported with updates for the next five years. In the interest of making more members aware of a very credible alternative to Windows 10, I've decided to offer my initial thoughts on it.

## **Installation**

Installation is as simple as ever. Step 1 is to pick your keyboard which will be English (Australian) for most people. Step 2 is to choose whether you want a normal installation with all the trimmings or a minimal one, and whether you want updates downloaded and third-party software installed. Step 3 is to choose the Installation type. Unless you are setting up a dual boot system you can accept the default which is to erase the disk and install Ubuntu. Step 4 is to tell Ubuntu where in the world you're located, which it normally works out from your IP address. Step 6 is the final step you need to think about, where you create a user account and set a password. All in all, if you've ever installed or upgraded Windows, the Ubuntu installation process is no more complicated than that.

## **User Interface**



For anyone coming across from Windows, the user interface is a little different to what you might be used to. By default, the taskbar is on the left-hand side of the screen, rather than at the bottom. Pressing the button with nine dots at the bottom of the taskbar brings up an overlaid view of all applications and you can choose any from this screen open them, and then pin them to the taskbar as you would in Windows. For anyone already familiar with Ubuntu, it will all be much the same. There have been some visual refinements, and it feels a bit quicker and smoother to respond than in previous versions.

## **Included applications**

Nothing has changed here. For anyone coming from Windows, Ubuntu includes most of the applications you'd need for your day to day use. A normal installation includes Mozilla Firefox for web browsing, Thunderbird for email, and Libre Office (also reviewed in this edition of PC Update) for documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings and databases. It also has an inbuilt calendar program, and Shotwell for managing your photo collection. All up the applications are of a very good standard, easy to use, and some have been improved since the last LTS edition of Ubuntu.

## **Adding new applications**

Adding new software to Ubuntu is easier than doing the same in Windows, because it's all available through Ubuntu Software. It's just a matter of opening this up, searching for what you want and installing it. Although you won't find all the big-name Windows applications, you'll find many credible open-source alternatives. Applications like GIMP (Photoshop alternative) and Krita (Illustrator alternative) and Shotcut (video editing program) are some of the good ones to try out. In recent years Ubuntu has embraced Snaps, which are self-contained packages developers create for installing their apps. Although there are some performance issues with them, they save the need for installing dependencies, which has traditionally been something to manage in Linux distributions. They are also much easier to remove if you decide you don't need the application anymore. For existing Ubuntu users, this seems to be a change, where Snaps are preferred over finding applications in the repositories, when using Ubuntu Software.

## **Overall impressions**

For anyone running a previous version of Ubuntu, this is a worthy upgrade. It has some new and important enhancements under the hood, the user interface of Gnome 3.0 has matured further, and from first impressions, it is better performance-wise. For anyone considering a move from Windows, this is one of the best Linux distributions to try. Installation is easy, the operation is similar enough to Windows (although probably not as similar as Linux Mint 19.3 that was reviewed last month) and as one of the most popular Linux distributions, there is plenty of support available online.

# [DOTW Winners April 2020](#)

**Roger Brown**

DOTW (whatever that stands for) our weekly Yammer poll and light-hearted review of the sillier events of the week, continues - social isolation rules notwithstanding. Thanks to those who vote and also to the odd member who might "feature" - all in fun of course.

And perhaps we should all thank George Pell for giving us at least ONE non-Covid 19 prizewinner!!

Last month's "winners" were:

**Andrew Bolt** who advised his readers we could all be back at work in two weeks if we're just pragmatic. "They should quarantine just the potentially infectious and isolate the vulnerable - the frail and people over 65."

Celebrity chef **Pete Evans** for promoting a \$24,000 "light machine" that he says offers "thousands of recipes" and can treat the "Wuhan coronavirus".

**George Pell**, who after his very fortunate acquittal, following which he should have quietly retired, has continued to seek the limelight with a public interview with Andrew Bolt, of all people.

The **Beaumaris woman** who believed herself to be exempt from social distancing requirements to the extent that she hosted a front yard children's birthday party involving a dozen parents and their children.

# [Yammer Highlights April 2020](#)

Dennis Parsons

## Coronavirus Discussion & Comments

The COVID-19 situation of course continues to be a big topic of discussion and the release of the government's COVIDSafe app was a particularly popular one. How does it work? Will it track me? Should I install it?

The conclusion was the risk to privacy was minimal and the pay-off is we might have the lockdown eased off sooner and it might just save lives.

The comment of the year would have to be this one from Ian Willett:

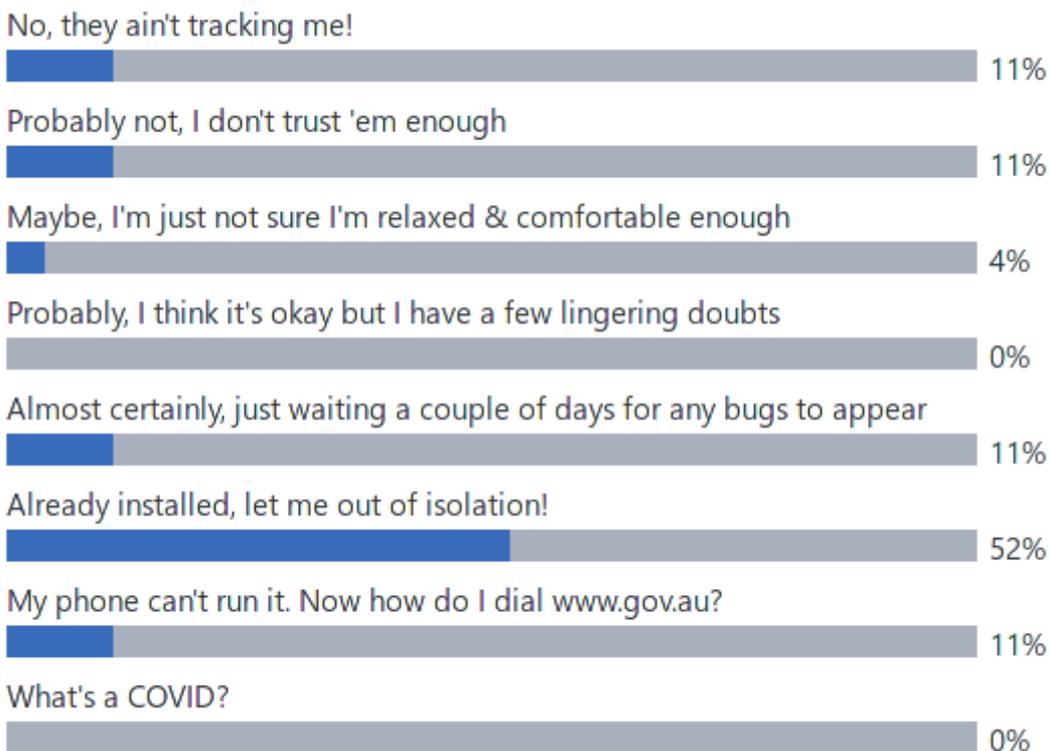
"As a retired Doctor - I have downloaded and installed the App. The small privacy risk is outweighed by the prompt contact tracing which may save my elderly life. I find it a little amusing that most people have at least 4 Apps on their phone that are tracking their movements in more detail than this App but suddenly they are worried about privacy - sorry but get a grip and get the App!"

Says it all.

I've run another couple of my quick and dirty statistically irrelevant polls. The first was asking if members intended to install the COVIDSafe app. Roughly 2/3 of us indicated we'd already installed or almost certainly would, 1/4 said they definitely or probably wouldn't be installing it.

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=655190539984896>>

### Do you intend installing the Australian Government's COVIDSafe app?



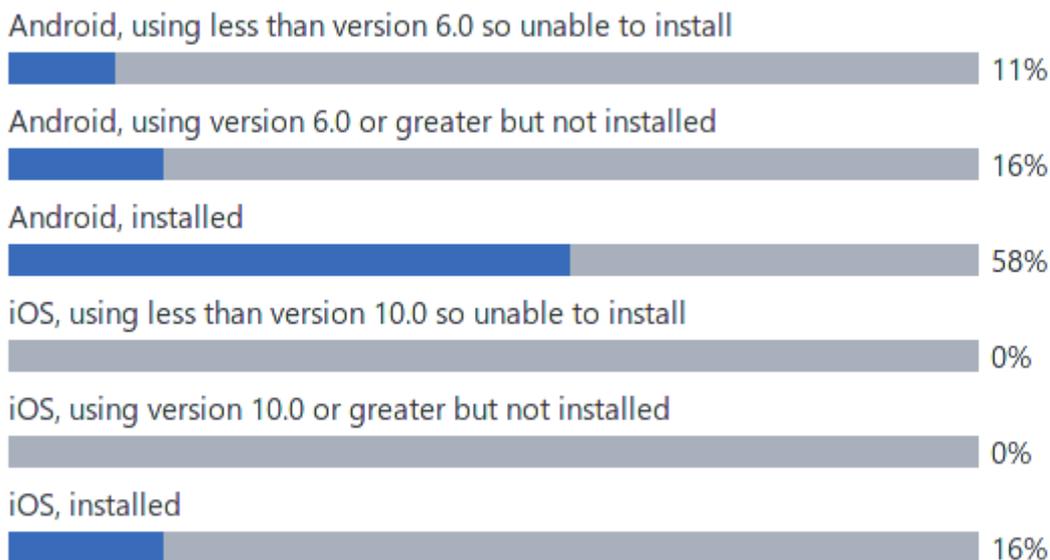
27 total votes · [Change vote](#) · [Reload](#)

The second was asking which phone OS was being used. The large majority of us reported using Android

with a few being unable to install the app due to the version of Android being older than the required v6.0.

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=655381998542848>>

🗳 For the COVIDSafe app which phone OS are you using and have you installed/can you install?



19 total votes · [Change vote](#) · [Reload](#)

## Phones

A friend has a Samsung Galaxy S9 and mentioned it had very low volume - the only way she could hear calls was to put it on speaker. Optus had suggested water damage but no solution. I had a bit of a Google and it seems the grille over the speaker is subject to clogging, with makeup seeming a likely candidate and a gentle clean with an old toothbrush might clear it out. I suggested doing it with the phone face down & giving the phone a bit of a tap after to hopefully dislodge any loose particles.

She gave it a go & voila! Instant cure & one very happy friend. I love it when simple low tech fixes work ☐

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=629714576310272>>

## Computer Help

With kids being kept home from school Julie was trying to help a family member decide how to best set up the family computer for their teenage son to use for schoolwork. She was canvassing opinion on using a separate account, the pros and cons.

A separate limited user account was considered essential to protect the computer from malware and to prevent the installation of programs, wanted or otherwise. An even better solution was proposed - purchasing a cheap used computer such as those mentioned from time to time in our Market Place group. Suitable for schoolwork but not for games, which is probably a plus!

<[https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/threads/inGroup?type=in\\_group&feedId=5063709](https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/threads/inGroup?type=in_group&feedId=5063709)>

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=625186539175936>>

# May Calendar



## SIG & Other Meetings — May-2020

Latest version of this Calendar is at: <https://www.melbpc.org.au/> (see Quick Links)

This version is: V2-updated-28-apr-2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Legend</b> SIG meeting at Melb PC HQ, Moorabbin. Non-Moorabbin meeting. Meeting Cancelled To be Confirmed Meeting Confirmed Changed Details Video Conference	<b>Changes</b> Please advise changes to: <a href="mailto:calendar-admin@melbpc.org.au">calendar-admin@melbpc.org.au</a>	<b>Other SIG (Special Interest Group) information:</b> <a href="https://www.melbpc.org.au/sigs/about/">https://www.melbpc.org.au/sigs/about/</a> <b>Recent Changes:</b> <a href="https://www.melbpc.org.au/sigs/about/recent-changes/">https://www.melbpc.org.au/sigs/about/recent-changes/</a>		<b>Have A Question Post it on Yammer</b>  Yammer: <a href="http://yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/">http://yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/</a>	<b>1</b> <b>Essendon SIG</b> <i>Main meeting</i> <i>Avondale-Heights</i> 9:30am - 12noon  <b>Multimedia Home Entertainment SIG</b> <i>Mount Waverley</i> 10am - 12noon	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> <b>Science &amp; Tech Projects Group</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 1pm - 5pm	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <b>North East Genealogy SIG</b> <i>Heidelberg</i> 10am - 12noon  <b>MONTHLY MEETING</b> <i>Melb PC HQ, Moorabbin</i> 7pm - 9:30pm then Supper (WAFFLE) at Fong's 9:35pm	<b>7</b> <b>Sunbury Daytime SIG</b> <i>New Users</i> 9:30am - 12noon	<b>8</b> <b>Essendon SIG</b> <i>Open Forum</i> <i>Avondale-Heights</i> 9:30am - 12noon  <b>Hardware SIG</b> <i>Mount Waverley</i> 10am - 12noon  <b>Casey SIG</b> <i>Beaconsfield</i> 1pm - 3:30pm	<b>9</b> <b>Microcontroller Workshop SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 12noon - 5pm  <b>Raspberry Pi - Moorabbin SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 2pm - 4pm
<b>10</b> <b>East Workshop SIG</b> <i>Mount Waverley</i> 10am - 12noon	<b>11</b> <b>Access (database) and Excel SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 6:30pm - 8:30pm	<b>12</b> <b>Investment Tools - WASINT SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 10:30am - 12:30pm	<b>13</b> <b>Video Production - Sony SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 10am - 12noon  <b>North East Daytime &amp; Photography SIG</b> <i>Heidelberg</i> 10am - 12noon  <b>Communications SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 7pm - 9:30pm  <b>Microcontroller SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin</i> 7pm - 9:30pm	<b>14</b> <b>Sunbury Daytime SIG</b> <i>Advanced</i> 9:30am - 12noon  <b>East SIG</b> <i>Blackburn-South</i> 7:30pm - 9:30pm	<b>15</b> <b>Essendon SIG</b> <i>Various topics</i> <i>Avondale-Heights</i> 9:30am - 12noon  <b>Digital Images SIG</b> <i>Including Photoshop</i> <i>Mount Waverley</i> 10am - 12noon	<b>16</b> <b>Windows Plus SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 10am - 12noon
<b>17</b> <b>Beginners East (BEAST) SIG</b> <i>Vermont-South</i> 10am - 12noon  <b>MACE (Atari Computers) SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 10am - 2pm  <b>Genealogy East SIG</b> <i>Vermont-South</i> 12:30pm - 2:30pm  <b>Science &amp; Tech Projects Group</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 1pm - 5pm	<b>18</b> <b>Mornington Peninsula SIG</b> <i>General inc Q&amp;A</i> <i>Mornington</i> 9:30am - 12noon - <i>Family History</i> <i>Mornington</i> 1:30pm - 4:30pm  <b>Northern Suburbs Linux SIG</b> <i>Watsonia</i> 7:30pm - 9:30pm	<b>19</b>  <b>Melb PC Committee</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 7pm	<b>20</b> <b>North East Android SIG</b> <i>Heidelberg</i> 10am - 12noon	<b>21</b> <b>Sunbury Daytime SIG</b> <i>Main Meeting</i> 9:30am - 12noon  <b>Bayside SIG</b> <i>Brighton</i> 10am - 12noon	<b>22</b> <b>Video Production - Mt Waverley SIG</b> <i>Mount Waverley</i> 10am - 12noon  <b>PC Update - Articles Deadline</b>	<b>23</b> <b>Microcontroller Workshop SIG</b> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 12noon - 5pm
<b>24</b> <b>Website Design SIG</b> <i>Tutorials</i> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 2pm - 4pm - <i>Troubleshooting</i> <i>Moorabbin HQ</i> 4pm - 6pm	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Mornington Peninsula SIG</b> <i>Family History - Advanced DNA (LAST Wed of month)</i> <i>Mornington</i> 2pm - 4pm  <b>PC Update - Reports deadline</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Sunbury Daytime SIG</b> <i>Maintenance &amp; Linux (Fourth &amp; fifth Thu of month)</i> 9:30am - 12noon	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>						

**Video Conference?** Video Conferencing: your SIG might be "meeting" remotely online from your home. Check with your meeting leader &/or see our guide here: <https://melcc.org.au/online-meeting-platforms>