

# >PC Update

March 2021



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# Publishing Information



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

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

SIG Listings and up to date calendar are available on our homepage

# From The Editor March 2021



**Hugh Macdonald**

Hello and welcome to the March edition of PC Update.

Our magazine this month covers a range of topics: A discussion of various types of ads that annoy us as we're using our devices, a look at the recent hack of Microsoft Exchange servers around the world, a discussion on just how many Australians have ditched social media, and another article on one user's rationale for ditching Windows for Linux.

If there's a theme running through this edition, it is that commercialism can get in the way of our computing, and sometimes the antidote is a non commercial approach as found in Linux.

There's also the regular features you've come to expect from PC Update: DOTW Winners, Yammer highlights and the East SIG Report.

Thanks as always go to the regular contributors, the technical editors and the proof readers for their help in putting each issue together.

Happy Reading!

# Monthly Meeting March 2021

The February 2021 Monthly Meeting and Annual General Meeting was held online on Wednesday 3rd February 2021, with over 75 members in attendance. This was the program for the evening:

**Guest Speaker: Colin Pudsey**

**Topic: Virtual Reality for Seniors**

## **Colin Pudsey**

Colin is Founder and CEO of SilVR Adventures, a Melbourne based start-up using Virtual Reality to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation among seniors and enrich their quality of life.

SilVR Adventures' vision is a world without barriers for seniors, where their needs are not only met but exceeded using VR.

Colin is a highly experienced entrepreneur & Founder with 15-years of Business Development, Sales & Innovative Solutions Expertise and LASA Next Gen. Young Leader Award Finalist.

For more information, please visit: <https://silvradventures.com.au/> or @SilVRAdventures on social media.

## **iHelp Online**

In a similar vein to the Q&A segment that ran for many years at Moorabbin face to face monthly meetings, a member of the iHelp team will join the meeting each month to answer your technical questions.

This month it is Bert Alesich.

You are invited to submit your questions to iHelp for responses during the meeting. Please send your questions by email to: [ihelp-questions@melbpc.org.au](mailto:ihelp-questions@melbpc.org.au) to arrive by 6pm on Wednesday, 3 March.

## **Meeting Agenda**

7.00pm sharp: Meeting opens. Host is Stewart Gruneklee.

Guest Speaker: Colin Pudsey

Q & A with Peter Bacon

Break and casual chat

President's Report with David Stonier-Gibson

What improvements will you receive when you upgrade your RAM from 8GB to 16GB with George Skarbek

iHelp Online: Bert Alesich and iHelp Team.

9.30pm (approx): Close.

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If you missed out the first time and would like to view any of these presentations, you can do so at <http://services.melbpc.org.au/videos/>

The username is videos and the password is drum286.

# Those Nasty Pop Up Ads

**Jim Cerny, Help Desk Host, The Saratoga Users Group**

You're going along just fine, enjoying a fun game on your device, you don't know how it happened or maybe you touched the screen just a teeny bit out of place, and BAM, there is a pop-up add or window! It overlays part of your screen and now you are playing a new game you didn't download called "try to get rid of this ad!"

I guess it is pretty standard now that all "free" games on your device come with ads, so here are some tips on how to get rid of them and get back to your game or app.

Naturally, no one way will always work, they are always trying to fool you!

**Simple notice box** - a short message in a small box that, thankfully, has a small "X" you can touch to get rid of it. It may be an important notice, however, so read it in case you have a problem. Usually, these notices appear in the middle of your screen or the lower right corner "notification area" on your Windows computer.

-

**Larger ad** - behold a company catalog page offering clothes or shoes or whatever. Look carefully - where is that "X"? Is it missing? Well, it could be hidden out of sight. Try touching the upper right corner (and if that doesn't work, try EVERY corner) to see if an "X" appears. If so, you "win", now you can touch the "X" and get rid of the ad.

-

**Touch screen ads to swipe away** - Ok, some ads do NOT have an "X", these people are getting more clever every year! Try putting your finger on the ad and "swiping" the ad (up, down, left, or right) to get it off your screen. I had a nasty one the other day which appeared on the far left on my iPad and the only way I could get rid of it was to swipe it all the way to the RIGHT to get it off.

-

**An unwelcome web page** - Somehow you must have touched on something to open up (or "go to") a web page. Yes, they can do this to you without you opening up your web browser. Good luck finding an "X" on this one. On a touch screen, try swiping up and hope the window goes up and off your screen. Otherwise, hit your "home" button twice (on your device) or swipe HALFWay up on your iPhone from the bottom to get all your open apps. Find the one you want to delete and swipe it up to get rid of it. It is a very good idea to do this often on your device to delete all your apps that are remaining open and perhaps slowing up your response on your device.

-

**Timed ads** - These, at least, are almost expected. An ad appears (if they are nice they will warn you first) and these ads are "timed" to run for several seconds or a minute. Look for a moving blue bar at the bottom of the ad to see it countdown the clock. Sometimes no bar or timer appears. Sometimes it is hidden in the corner and when you touch on it only then will it show you the time remaining. As far as I know, there is nothing you can do with a timed ad other than wait until the time runs out - even then you

will still have to look for an “X” or something to touch to get rid of it.

-

**Your anti-virus software** app on your Windows computer may already have an ad blocker as part of it, so look and see what options are already available for you. Apple products do not have anti-virus apps as they are already part of the iOS (operating system).

-

**Ad blockers.** Now having said all that, there are many ad “blockers” and “removers” that are available on the internet. Some are “free” (with pop-up ads of their own!). I would be a little careful here - it would be best to ask someone who is already using the blocker tool before you download it and start using it. Will it work on your device? Will it work on multiple devices? Will it block all ads? Will it work only with your browser (i.e. Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Safari, Firefox, etc.)? Nothing is perfect and those company marketing people are working hard to get you to see their ads. Always look up any ad blocker, or any app for that matter, on Google and read what others have experienced. Pretty soon ads will be popping up on our car screens. Imagine driving along and having an auto insurance ad popping up over your speedometer! Well, I suppose that is a bit better than driving through a billboard!

*Reproduced with permission from the August 2020 edition of STUG Monitor.*

# Why Linux?

**Jim Quinn, Vice President, Under the Computer Hood User Group**

In 2008 we (my wife & I) decided to do the 5-year plan to retire in 2012. We calculated our retirement income and expenses (including taxes) to make sure we could live satisfactory on that amount.

This forced me to think about technology for us and our two daughters, and how to support them with hardware, software (Win 7), tech support, and what it would cost. I was always helping my daughters with problems fixing Windows 7 and computer hardware. So, I built 2 new computers for myself, specifications listed below, one was for Linux and one for Windows 7 (hardware to replace current Win 7 machine).

I also had to face the issue of software. A problem with propriety software is that updates to the Operating System (OS) and applications may prevent them from running on your current hardware. Also, propriety applications may no longer be supported by the OS (security updates) or abandoned.

Linux offers free software (the OS and the applications) with many choices of OS (distributions aka distros) and applications. That way, if either becomes unavailable or unsupported there are many alternatives available. Linux distros vary from the highly technical (you choose what is included and you compile your own) to ready to use distros (Linux Mint and many others, aka many flavors). You also have a choice of desktops; you can use a distro that looks like Windows, Mac, or any other desktop styles. The good thing about Linux is you have many choices of distros, desktops, and applications.

In 2010 I found Linux Mint 9 and started my quest to see if it would work for me and my daughters, as I'm the tech support for them. I finally settled on Mint 9 Maté as the replacement for Win 7 as it seemed to have all the software applications the daughters would need and hopefully would also meet my needs. The Linux Mint 9 Maté interface was easy to learn and I really liked the multiple workspaces.

Within about a year, the daughters' computers started having Win 7 problems and hardware issues.

I started looking around for replacement computers and ordered a refurbished computer to test out Mint 9. TigerDirect & Newegg seemed to have good prices for prior models, so I ordered one. The testing went great, so I added a second hard drive (for automated backups) and a USB drive backup for the daughter to use.

Since moving my daughter's computers to Linux, my support calls have gone to almost nil. Most of the questions are related to how to accomplish a task with the applications. Linux is a multiuser system.



My daughters and I have been using the long-term support (LTS) releases (around 5 years) of Linux Mint. The current release of Mint (LTS) is 20. The only time-consuming support with my daughter's computers is when I upgrade to a new release of the long-term support distro. This is due to both my daughters having multiple users. It requires backing up their home folders, creating users with the same id, restoring their home folders, and changing back the ownership of their respective files because my backup is done with admin rights. I'm seriously considering creating an application to perform this automatically or finding a backup program that will do this.

## SO WHY LINUX?

Windows 7 is no longer supported; this requires the possibility of purchasing a new computer as it wouldn't update my machine and definitely not my daughter's computers. This would also require purchasing new versions of the programs we need as they are not supported under Windows 7.

Now that Windows 10 is in full swing there have been many problems when installing updates. Also, Microsoft states this is the last version of Windows. It appears that most commercial programs are going to a monthly subscription or yearly subscription, which benefits them but not the user. For most of us, this means you cannot continue to use a program for years even if you do not need the updated features (lack of choice forced upgrades). Windows feature updates are only supported for two years, so does that indicate that you'll need to update your computer, or are they preparing to implement a subscription service for Windows?

I'll step down from my soapbox now.

Jim Quinn

Each of my 2 new computers specifications:

Corsair Case Black, 300R

Motherboard: ASUS P8Z77-V Deluxe

CPU: Intel i7-3770K

Memory: G.Skill, F3-1866C10D-16GSR - total 32GB

Asus DRW-24B1ST

Pioneer DVD BDR-207UBK

Western Digital, WD1003FZEX (2 each) for windows RAID 1 and 1 for Linux Computer

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# Security flaws in Microsoft email software raise questions over Australia's cybersecurity approach

**Carsten Rudolph, Monash University**

On March 2, 2021, Microsoft published information about four critical vulnerabilities in its widely used Exchange email server software that are being actively exploited. It also released security updates for all versions of Exchange back to 2010.

Microsoft has told cybersecurity expert Brian Krebs it was notified of the vulnerabilities in "early January". The Australian Cyber Security Centre has also issued a notice on the vulnerabilities.

The situation has been widely reported in the general media as well as specialist cybersecurity sites, but often inaccurately. But the situation also highlights a contradiction in government cybersecurity policy.

When governments find flaws in widely used software, they may not publish the details in order to build up their own offensive cybersecurity capabilities, i.e. the ability to target computers and networks for spying, manipulation and disruption. Operations like this often rely on exploiting vulnerabilities in commercial software — thus leaving their own citizens vulnerable to attack as a consequence.

## What happened?

Microsoft has issued patches to fix the vulnerabilities and provided advice on how to respond if systems have already been affected.

These vulnerabilities can be really damaging for anybody running their own Exchange mail server. Attackers can run any code on the server and fully compromise a business's email, allowing them to impersonate anybody in the business. They could also read all email stored on the server and potentially compromise more systems within the businesses' network.

## Who was affected?

It's important to clear up exactly who the vulnerabilities affected: anybody running their own instance of Exchange, and the risk was higher if web access was turned on.

An ABC/Reuters report said:

All of those affected appear to run Web versions of email client Outlook and host them on their own machines, instead of relying on cloud providers.

But using a cloud-hosted version of Exchange wouldn't necessarily solve the problem, as the vulnerabilities still exist. What's more, larger enterprises will most probably still choose or be required by regulation to also run a local Exchange server that can be exploited in the same way.

Another open issue with moving mail servers to the cloud is that it also gives the provider access to all unencrypted emails by default. End-to-end encryption would increase security, but this is not currently standard practice.

## Questions for Microsoft

As vulnerabilities existed in versions of the software released as long ago as 2010, we can assume more skilled attackers have already used them. This raises a fundamental question about the quality of the software, which Microsoft has been developing since 1996. Why did Microsoft not spot these vulnerabilities earlier?

Another question: if Microsoft knew about the vulnerabilities in early January, why did it take two months to alert its customers?

## Questions for cybersecurity policy

We also need to consider the bigger picture of how we deal with vulnerabilities in software that builds the backbone of our computer and network infrastructure. Obviously, these vulnerabilities would have been a great offensive cybersecurity tool for any number of actors.

There is a basic conflict between building offensive cybersecurity capabilities and protecting our own businesses and citizens.

Imagine you are tasked with building offensive cybersecurity capabilities. You discover these vulnerabilities in Microsoft Exchange. Would you alert the vendor, Microsoft in this case, to make sure they are fixed as soon as possible, or would you keep them secret to not to lose your great new cyber weapon? Secretly having access to an organisation's email could be very valuable for law enforcement or intelligence agencies.

Australia's Cyber Security Strategy 2020 does not address the contradiction between establishing offensive cybersecurity capabilities and protecting Australians from cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

The establishment of offensive cybersecurity capabilities is explicitly mentioned in the strategy. In contrast, the detection of vulnerabilities with the goal of mitigation is not a clear goal.

Nor is openness about existing vulnerabilities — which would empower Australian citizens to react to them — part of the strategy. Australia has the expertise across the public sector, private sector and civil society to have this important dialogue on how to best protect Australian citizens and businesses.

Carsten Rudolph, Associate professor, *Monash University*

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# New evidence shows half of Australians have ditched social media at some point, but millennials lag behind

**Roger Patulny, *University of Wollongong***

A recent nationally representative survey has shown Australians are willing and able to pull the plug on social media.

But it turns out the generation you were born in, as well as your level of education, will likely have a bearing on whether you do. This is important, as recent events have set the precedent for tech giants to pull or change content at any time.

Short-lived as it was, Facebook's removal of Australian news raised interesting questions about our dependence on social media and whether we can do without it.

## **Growing frustration with platforms**

Facebook's actions (coupled with Google's earlier threat to pull its Search function from Australia) prompted widespread criticism.

Twitter users got #deletefacebook trending, while news columns called on Australians to consider distancing themselves from the platform. But it's difficult to know exactly how many did.

The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AUSSA) is one of few studies uniquely placed to provide a balanced view on Australians' social media use.

The randomised, nationally representative sample of the Australian population captures those who have never used social media, those who have curbed their use and those who have never stopped or reduced their use.

Results from the 2019–20 survey show many Australians have either cut back on social media, or quit it altogether. Half the respondents had reduced their use at some point.

## **Reasons for disconnecting**

People disconnect from social media for various reasons. These include concerns over privacy, an "always on" digital culture, pressure from being on display to the public and pressure from comparing oneself to others.

Others hold practical concerns such as wasting time, being too busy to use social media, losing interest or being bored. The majority (52%) of AUSSA respondents cited "boredom" and "time wasting" as the main reasons for limiting social media use.

Considering this, Facebook's threat to become news-free may have constituted self-sabotage; it would have made the platform a blander, less informative and more disposable space.

Australians registered other concerns too, but in lower numbers. For instance, 18% cited frustration with online personas (such as excessive social comparisons and inauthenticity) as their main reason for disconnecting, while 15% cited privacy concerns.

Meanwhile, 14% of respondents had never used social media and 36% continued to use it consistently.

## Breakdown by education

Past research has raised concerns over “internet addiction”, which refers to becoming so embedded in social media it becomes difficult to exit.

And the AUSSA survey reveals some of us seem more likely (and possibly more able) than others to disconnect from digital life.

Education was an important predictor of social media use and disconnection. Of those who hadn't completed high school, 45% had reduced their social media use.

This rose to 51% among those with a high-school or post-school certificate — and to 56% among degree holders.

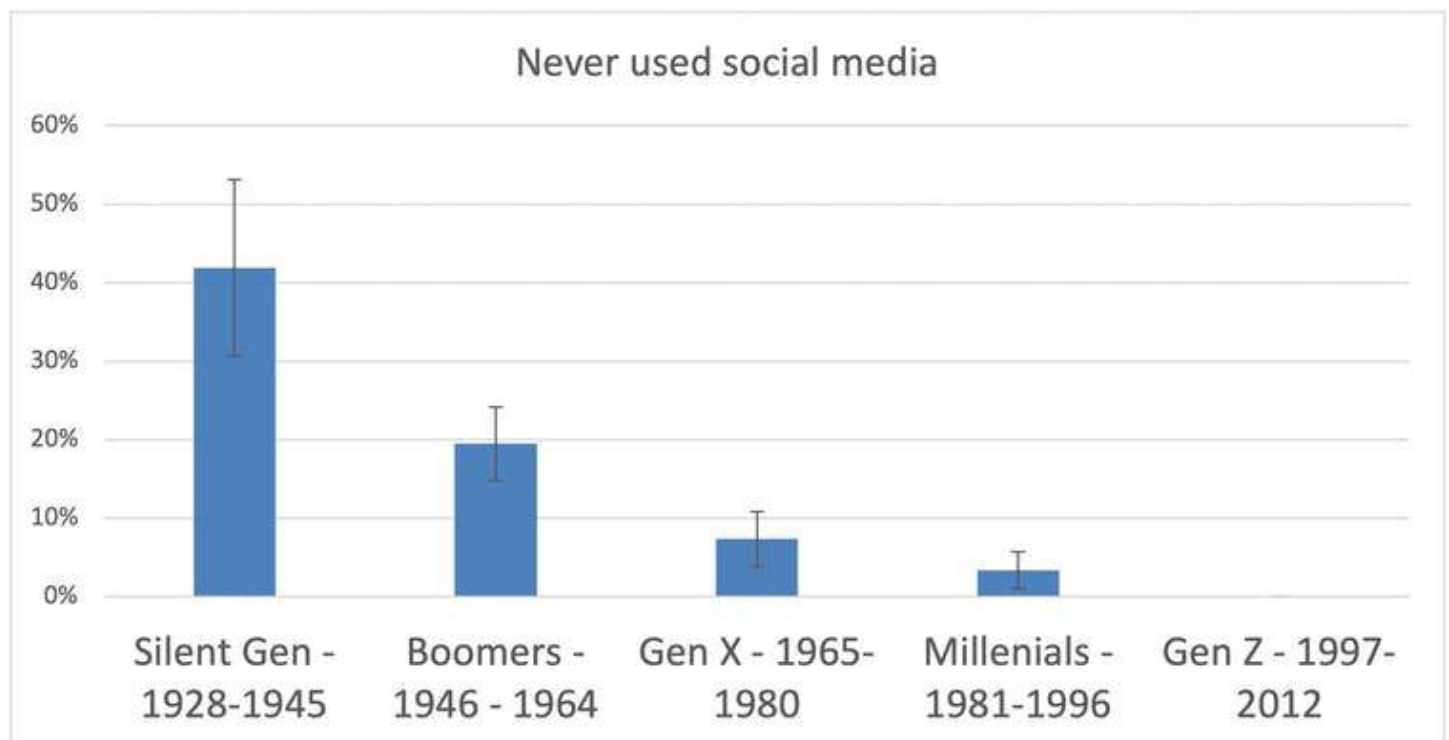
The link between higher education and social media use speaks to a certain “privilege of disconnection”, whereby the choice to disengage is easier for those with certain resources.

For example, when tertiary-educated people give up social media, they may be better placed to replace the networks and information lost with other sources of connection and capital.

## Generational gaps

There were also notable differences in social media use between generations, although usage generally increased as generations became younger.

Of the Silent Generation (currently 76-93 years old), 40% had never used social media. This dropped to 0% among Gen Z (9-24 years old).



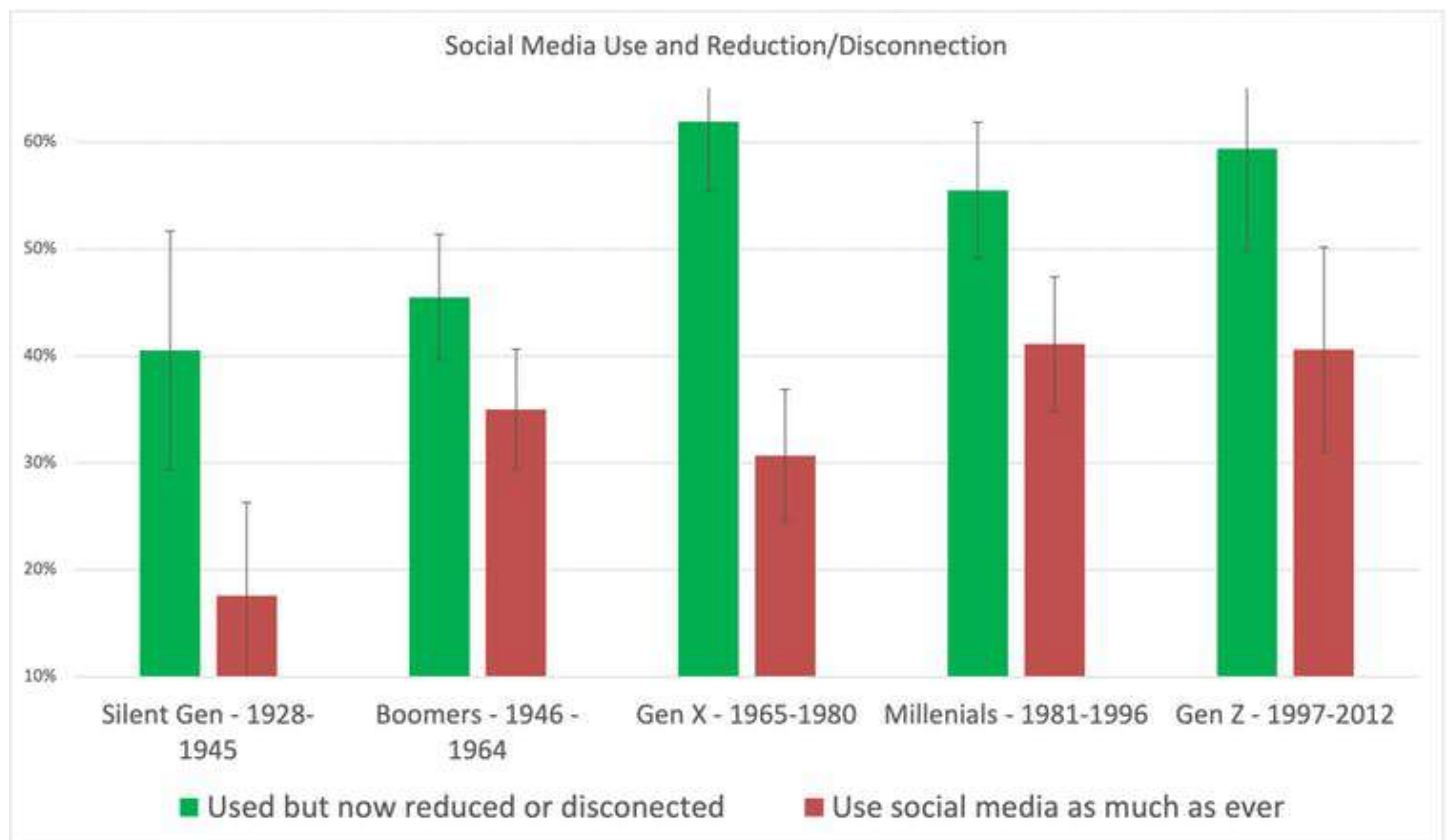
This graph shows the proportion of respondents from each generation who'd never used social media platforms.

Roger Patulny

At 62%, Gen X (41-56 years old) led the way in social media reduction and disconnection. They were

significantly more likely to have used and disconnected than baby boomers (57-75 years old).

But the rates of reduction and disconnection among millennials (25-40 years old) decreased, before increasing again for Gen Z. Millennials were also much more likely than Gen X to have never reduced their social media use at any point.



The proportion of each generation which either reduced or ceased social media usage.

Roger Patulny

The relatively lower disconnection rate and higher usage rate among millennials is perhaps concerning.

This group may simply not have found a good reason to disconnect. However, since millennials were raised with social media strongly integrated into their teenage and adult lives, it may be harder for them to kick the habit when needed.

The slight increase in disconnection among Gen Z is telling here, as it suggests the generation to follow may have developed a little more critical awareness of the downsides of making social media omnipresent in one's life.



It's often assumed school-aged kids are the most obsessed with social media. But while they might use it often, this happens alongside a growing awareness of the potential harms of excessive use. Shutterstock

## **Managing a challenging relationship**

The survey findings suggest social media use is indeed ubiquitous among young people.

But they also suggest claims of a widespread rise in “internet addiction” are excessive, since the majority of respondents from Gen X onward had either reduced or halted their social media use.

This is good news. Tech platforms at times have shown an ethically questionable willingness to sacrifice our privacy and agency for personal gain, with both Facebook and Google guilty of covertly experimenting on users in the past.

These survey findings suggest we have some agency of our own. Tech giants can't rely on user loyalty, or inertia and certainly not addiction.

Users may happily switch platforms — or switch off altogether — if they continue to be treated like bargaining chips in business deals. Big tech, take note.

Roger Patulny, Associate Professor of Sociology, *University of Wollongong*

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# Interesting Internet Finds

Steve Costello, SEFCUG

## *Gmail's New Quick Settings*

<https://cynmackley.com/2020/08/04/gmails-new-quick-settings/>

<https://cynmackley.com/2020/08/05/gmail-quick-settings-part-2/>

<https://cynmackley.com/2020/08/06/gmail-quick-settings-part-3/>

If you use Gmail, you should know how to use its quick settings feature. Cyn Mackley explains the quick settings in the three blog posts above.

## *Mind The Metadata*

<https://firewallsdontstopdragons.com/mind-the-metadata/>

Did you know that your digital photos contain a lot of data that you don't want to be available when you share them? Do you know how to remove that data, before sharing the photos? Check out this post to learn about that data, and how to prevent it from getting away from your control.

## *How Live View Makes Google Maps More Accurate.*

<https://geeksontour.com/2020/08/how-live-view-makes-google-maps-more-accurate/>

I use Google Maps frequently when traveling. I have noticed that sometimes it doesn't correctly show where I am. Thanks to this post from Geeks On Tour, I now know how to calibrate the compass for better accuracy.

## *My Shift Key is Stuck. How Do I Unstick It?*

<https://askleo.com/shift-key-stuck/>

Little things like this drive me crazy, but they are usually easy to fix if I can just keep my head and think about what might be causing the problem. Leo explains the most common cause and the fix for sticking keys in this post.

## *How To Fix My Display Name In A Zoom Meeting Or Chat?*

<https://www.askdavetaylor.com/how-to-fix-display-name-in-zoom-meeting-or-chat/>

With all the Zoom meetings these days, it is very useful to be able to change your display name. Dave Taylor explains how to do this and how to make the display name more relevant to your role in the meeting.



*The Dark Side Of Amazon Returns*

[https://askbobrankin.com/the\\_dark\\_side\\_of\\_amazon\\_returns.html](https://askbobrankin.com/the_dark_side_of_amazon_returns.html)

In this post, Bob Rankin explains what can happen to Amazon return items. Also, he gives some advice about liquidation reselling. I have had no experience with liquidation reselling myself.

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# DOTW Winners February 2021

**Roger Brown**

DOTW is a lighthearted look at some of the sillier events of the week. Don't take it too seriously and do pop over to Chit Chat and vote each week. Thanks to those of our members who occasionally 'feature' for taking the gentle humour in such good part.

DOTW returned from vacation in February 2021 with the hope that it would do so in better circumstances than 2020.

We think the jury is still out on that hope!!

February winners were:

- Liberal back-bencher Craig Kelly after the outspoken MP supported calls from a Brazilian medical association to use unproven drugs to treat COVID-19
- Health Minister Greg Hunt for completely failing to answer a media question about why the Liberal Party is associating its logo with the Pfizer vaccine rollout and instead accusing ABC presenter Michael Rowland of "identifying with the left".
- NSW's deputy premier John Barilaro who says his department will explore all legal options to "find a way forward" for a major Illawarra coalmine expansion after the Independent Planning Commission rejected the proposal.
- The crowd at the Australian Open tennis who apparently started loudly booing Tennis Australia president Jayne Hrdlicka at the mention of COVID 19 vaccines.

Thanks to all participants.

# East SIG Report February 2021

**Neil Muller**

Host Frank Maher opened the first East SIG's meeting for 2021 again hosted via Zoom. After welcoming members, the meeting then commenced with **George Skarbek** presenting Q&A.

1. The first question of the night related to connecting to the meeting via Zoom.  
On my notebook, why is the F7 key with "mute" written on it, not toggling sound on?

A My F7 key increases the brightness of the screen. You'll find the function keys F1 to F12 vary from manufacturer to manufacturer and sometimes between models. Otherwise, I can't help with your F7 mute key.

1. I'm preparing a PowerPoint presentation for the first time. In the presentation, I want to include a hyperlink to a YouTube video. Can you put hyperlinks into PowerPoint?  
From the Insert tab I used the link icon, put a name in, and copied and pasted the hyperlink from the YouTube URL. The link then appeared on the PowerPoint page. When I click on the link it doesn't work. I also tried to run the hyperlink while in presentation mode and that didn't work either.

A You definitely can use hyperlinks in a PowerPoint presentation. Copying and pasting the URL from the YouTube video is also correct, so you appear to have done all the right things.

[Dave Botherway] I've used hyperlinks in PowerPoint presentations numerous times without any problems. What I do to insert a hyperlink is to move to the page where I want the hyperlink. From the Insert tab, I select the Link icon on the ribbon bar. In the dialogue box that opens, I enter a description for the hyperlink and paste the URL of the YouTube video in the address box. This seems to work okay but you need to be running the presentation for the hyperlink to work.

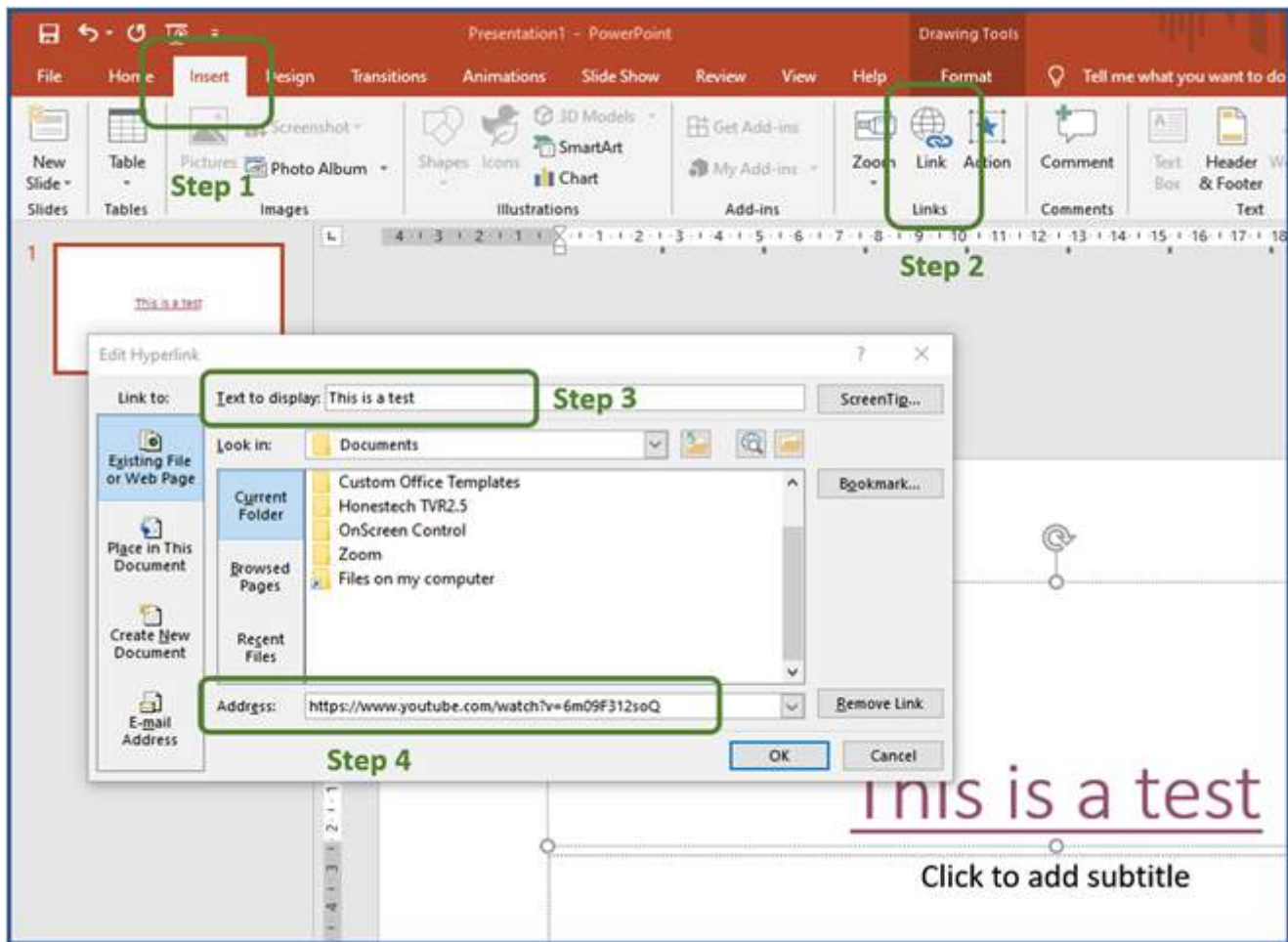


Figure 1 - Inserting hyperlinks in PowerPoint.

[George] A tip that may help when testing a PowerPoint presentation is the F5 function key will start the presentation at the beginning, but Shift + F5 will start the presentation from the current slide that you need to verify is working.

[Dave Botherway] Another thing I do is to download the video to my PC. I then run the video from my PC when presenting it. That way I'm not dependent on downloading the video to my PC while broadcasting it out again via Zoom. The more I can broadcast from the desktop the better. You'll therefore need to find some software that will allow you to download the video from YouTube. "Download Helper" and "4K Video Downloader" were 2 programs mentioned by audience members that they found work for them.

The future format of EAST SIG Meetings for the remainder of 2021 was the next item discussed. The session was run by Dave Botherway, who is one of six members who form the East SIG committee. The committee is keen to restart face-to-face meetings as they see a lot of value in the informal social interaction that occurs at those meetings. Members were advised they would be presented with meeting options and conditions, following which a poll will be taken to determine their preference.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Whitehorse City Council has added extra requirements on our members attending face-to-face meetings at Eley Park. Dave outlined the council's requirements which are currently set to run for the remainder of 2021. These requirements would necessitate extra work and conditions placed on those members attending face-to-face meetings.

The alternative to face-to-face meetings was to hold meetings via Zoom. Dave indicated it was too early to determine whether hybrid meetings would be practical, due mainly to audio quality issues, so this option was not included. He also noted that if Zoom meetings were to replace face-to-face meetings, there is a risk that East SIG would lose the booking for the Eley Park hall. If the preference of members was for Zoom meetings, the committee is considering allowing extra time for ad-hoc social interaction. "Breakout rooms" are a possible option to create smaller groups of 5 or 6 people. Dave plans to include a

presentation on Zoom “Breakout rooms” next month.

A Zoom poll comprising 2 options was then run to gauge members meeting preferences. The outcome was approximately two-thirds favoured Zoom and one-third face-to-face meetings. Comments by some of those supporting Zoom were that they would not be able to attend otherwise due to distance, having to travel at night in winter, and some for COVID-19 health concerns.

Following on from Dave, **Trevor Hudson** presented a video he’d prepared titled “How to enable Audio Description on TV”. Trevor researched this topic to assist his elderly father who is visually impaired. Audio description is available on some SBS, ABC, and Netflix programs and works with most common brands of smart TV’s.

Audio Description is the narration of visual and non-verbal parts of a program, vocalised in gaps of the program’s audio or dialogue. Its purpose is to inform visually impaired people, so they have a greater understanding of what is presented on the TV screen. Along with subtitles, audio descriptions can be turned on and off. Trevor’s video displayed the menus needed and steps involved to setup audio descriptions on a smart TV. To show audio description in action, Trevor then played two different TV scenes, the first with audio description turned off and then turned on. Trevor mentioned that on occasions he’s left audio description turned on when watching a program and found it picked up details he’s missed.

Trevor’s video along with “How to enable Audio Description on Netflix” is available on YouTube by searching the video’s title or Trevor’s pseudonym HX7V.

After a short break Neil Muller gave a presentation on “Simple TAB Groups” and posed the question is this a better bookmark manager? Simple Tab Groups is a Firefox add-on that creates and modifies tab groups. It’s a very easy way to declutter your browser tab bar and organise your tabs to make webpages easier to find. It does much more than just combining tabs into groups which Neil demonstrated during the presentation.

When browsing the internet, Neil found it more convenient to leave tabs open, rather than creating bookmarks and closing the tabs. After a while, tabs had accumulated and the websites he needed to refer back to were becoming harder and harder to find. After searching the internet for a solution, Neil discovered Simple Tab Groups and gave it a try. It’s now become one of Neil’s must-have apps on his computer.

After a brief introduction to Simple Tab Groups, Neil demonstrated how to install the add-on using screen captures to show the process involved. Installation commenced by selecting the 3 horizontal bar icon at the top right of the Firefox toolbar. A drop-down menu appears and “Add-ons” is selected. A Window opens that displays the Firefox extensions page, where the name Simple Tab Groups is entered in the “Find more add-ons” box. Clicking the magnifier glass takes you to Firefox’s Add-ons page, where Simple Tab Groups is shown and selected. The developer’s (Drive4ik) webpage now appears where you click the “+ Add to Firefox” button. Two further windows appear where you give your permission to add Simple Tab Groups to Firefox and to acknowledge that Simple Tab Groups has been installed. The default icon for Simple Tab Groups is a 3 x 3 dot matrix.

Neil then played the video by Percy Jules that convinced him to give Simple Tab Groups a try. The video is now over 2 years old but still gives a very good introduction to the add-on for anyone wanting to give it a try. As you would expect new features have been added and there are some minor differences from those shown in the video. These updates have improved Simple Tab Groups even further. The video is called Simple Tab Groups My new favorite Firefox add-on...?” by Percy Jules at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6m09F312soQ>



Figure 2 - Percy Jules video Simple Tab Groups

The Percy Jules video assumes an installation of Simple Tab Groups with no previous tabs open. However, many users like Neil will already have many tabs open. Neil then demonstrated how those users with tabs already open would run Simple Tab Groups for the first time. The initial step is to list all the tab group headings you think you'll need. Next, select the Simple Tab Groups toolbar icon and click "Create new group" (refer Figure 3). This will create your first group which will contain all the tabs on the tab bar. From here you create new tab groups using the topic headings you listed earlier. From the toolbar icon select "Manage Groups" and from the window that opens, tabs are dragged from the first group into their appropriate named groups.

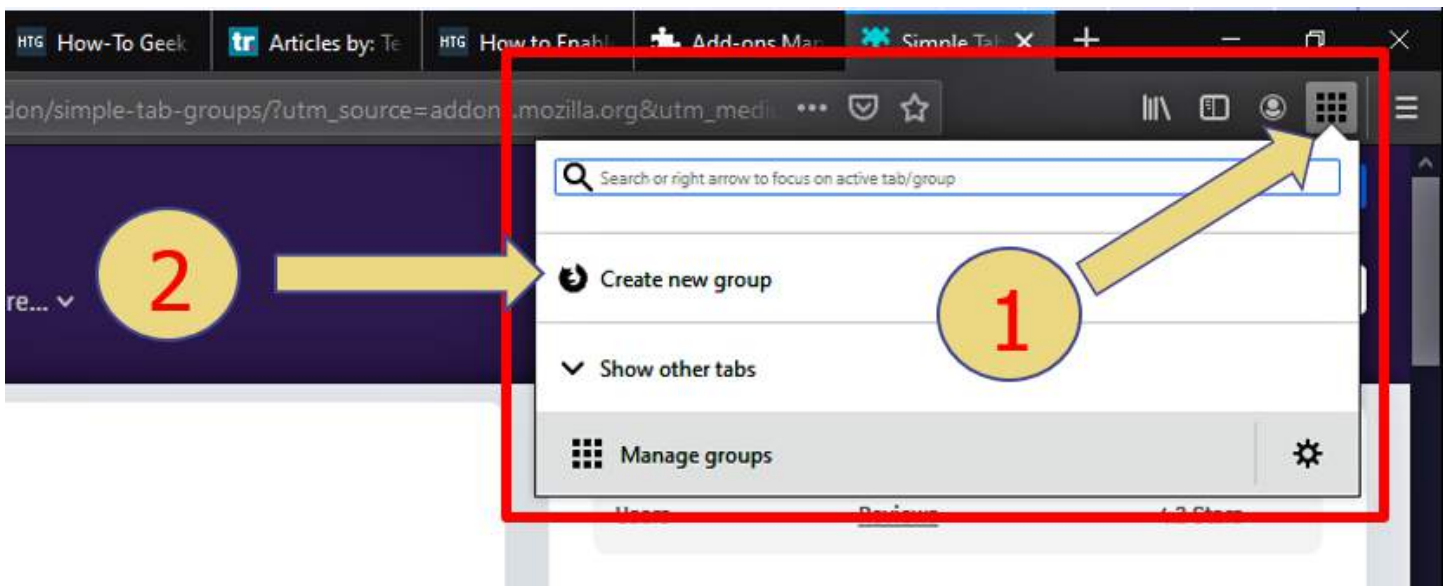


Figure 3 - Simple Tab Groups Toolbar menu prior to creating the first group

An alternate method of moving tabs into groups is to right-click on a tab and select "Move tab to group". This adds the tab to one of the newly created groups and removes it from the initial (current) group and it disappears from view. Neil found this method more time-consuming for the initial sort (more clicks), but

the best option later when you find a tab in the wrong group and wish to move it to another group. (refer to Figure 4)

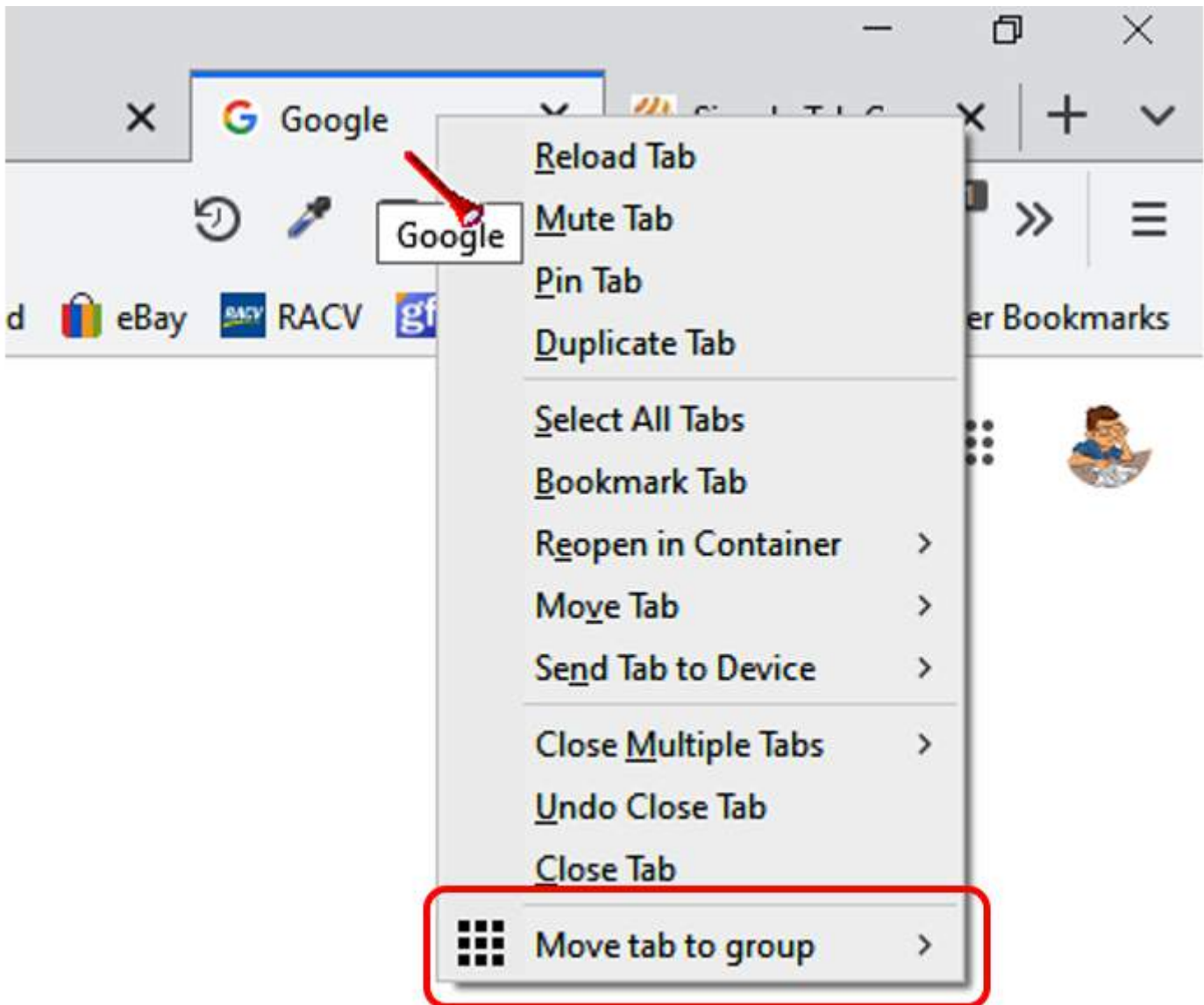


Figure 4 - Simple Tab Groups Right-click menu

After demonstrating how to initially move tabs into their correct Tab Groups, Neil looked at some of the most useful features of Simple Tab Groups and how to access them.

From the Firefox toolbar, select the Simple Tab Groups icon to open the toolbar menu. (refer to Figure 5). This menu offers 3 options, the first is to select which Tab Groups to display on the Firefox tab bar. Selecting one of the many Tab Groups will then display all tabs in that group and hide all other groups from view. A feature of Simple Tab Groups is tabs are active (open) or inactive (closed). Therefore, when you load a tab group, only those tabs accessed in the current session will be active. All other tabs in that group will remain inactive until you click on the tab to open it.

The remaining 2 options in the Toolbar menu allow you to "Create a new group" or "Manage groups".



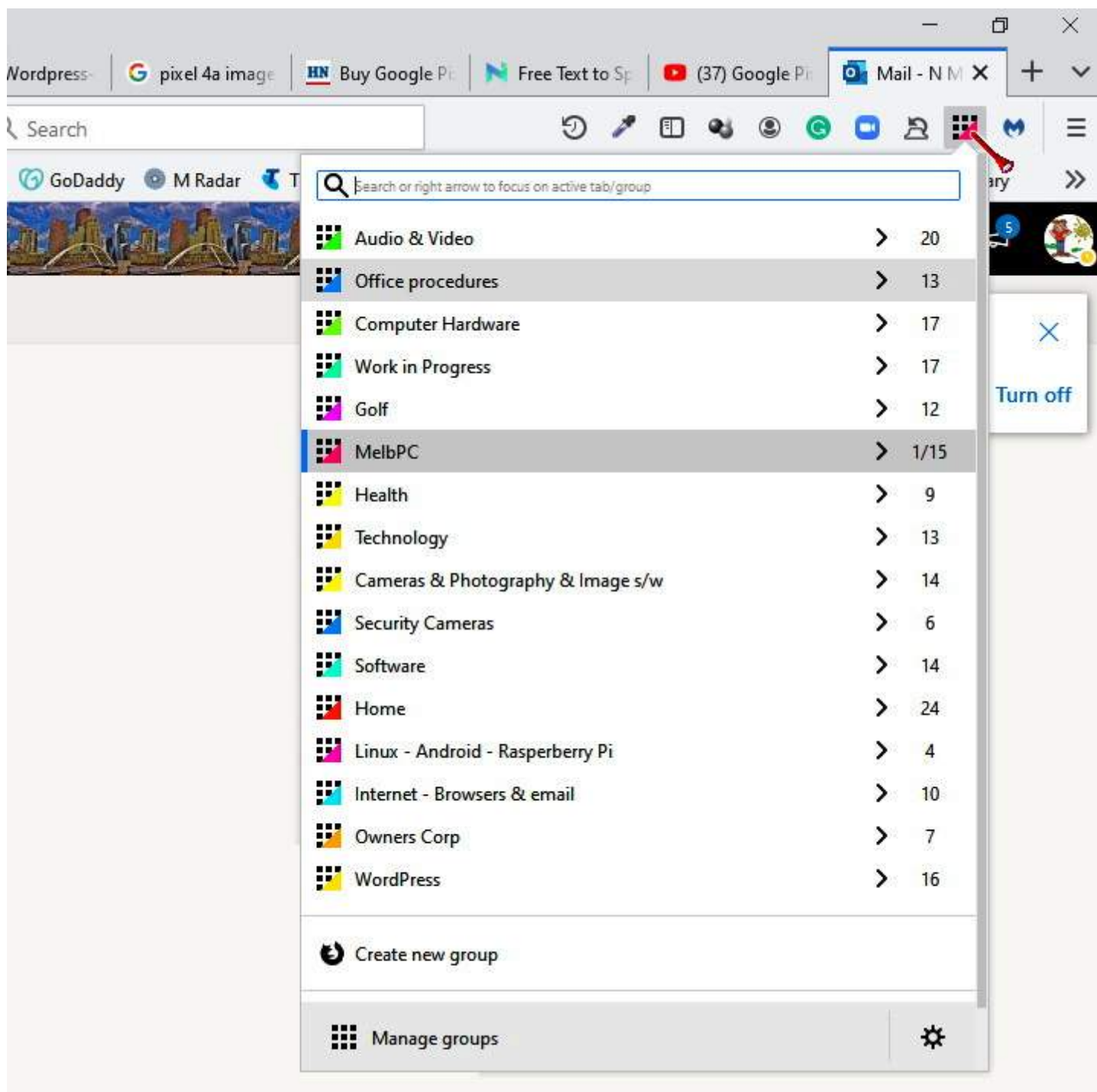


Figure 5 - Simple Tab Groups Toolbar Menu

### Toolbar Menu - Tab Groups Options & Features:

Selecting the Simple Tab Groups icon on the Firefox toolbar opens the toolbar menu. The first item in the menu displays all the Tab Groups you've created. There is a wealth of information available from this section of the menu, the most important I've listed below including 2 screenshots used by Neil in his presentation.

- One method to determine which Tab Group is currently displayed on the Firefox tab bar is from the toolbar menu. In Figure 5 you can see Neil's "MelbPC" tab group is highlighted by a grey band and a vertical blue bar to the left of the group name. This indicates "MelbPC" is the current tab group loaded in Firefox's tab bar. All other Tab Groups are now hidden from view.
- On the right side of the grey bar, a numeral displays the number of tabs in the group and how many



are active. In the above example, 1/15 refers to one active (open) tab out of a total of 15 tabs in the group.

- By hovering the mouse cursor over the numeral mentioned above, another window appears showing a brief description of the contents of each tab. This window disappears when the cursor is removed. The description for active tabs is preceded by a zero and inactive tabs by a star.
- If you click on the caret icon beside the numeral, a permanent display of the group contents window is displayed. Here you can scroll through all the tabs in the group and select a tab to open in your browser. Unlike the former window, active tabs appear in heavier text. It also allows the user to close any tabs no longer needed. Both of these features are depicted in Figure 6.
- Selecting any of the Tab Groups from the Toolbar menu opens that group and displays it on the Firefox tab bar. The previous Tab Group is replaced by the new Tab Group.
- Right-clicking on any of the Tab Groups in the toolbar menu opens a context menu. (Figure 7) Options available in the context menu include Open group in a new window, Sort groups alphabetically, export the selected group to bookmarks, and to reload all tabs in the group. You can discard the selected group or all other groups, or delete the group completely.
- When audio is playing and the source is unknown, the Toolbar menu helps by displaying a speaker symbol beside the culprit's Tab Group name.
- During question time Neil was asked whether there was an option to move all bookmarks to Tab Groups. As can be seen in the context menu in Figure 7, it's possible to "export group to bookmarks", however, Neil was not aware of the reverse action.

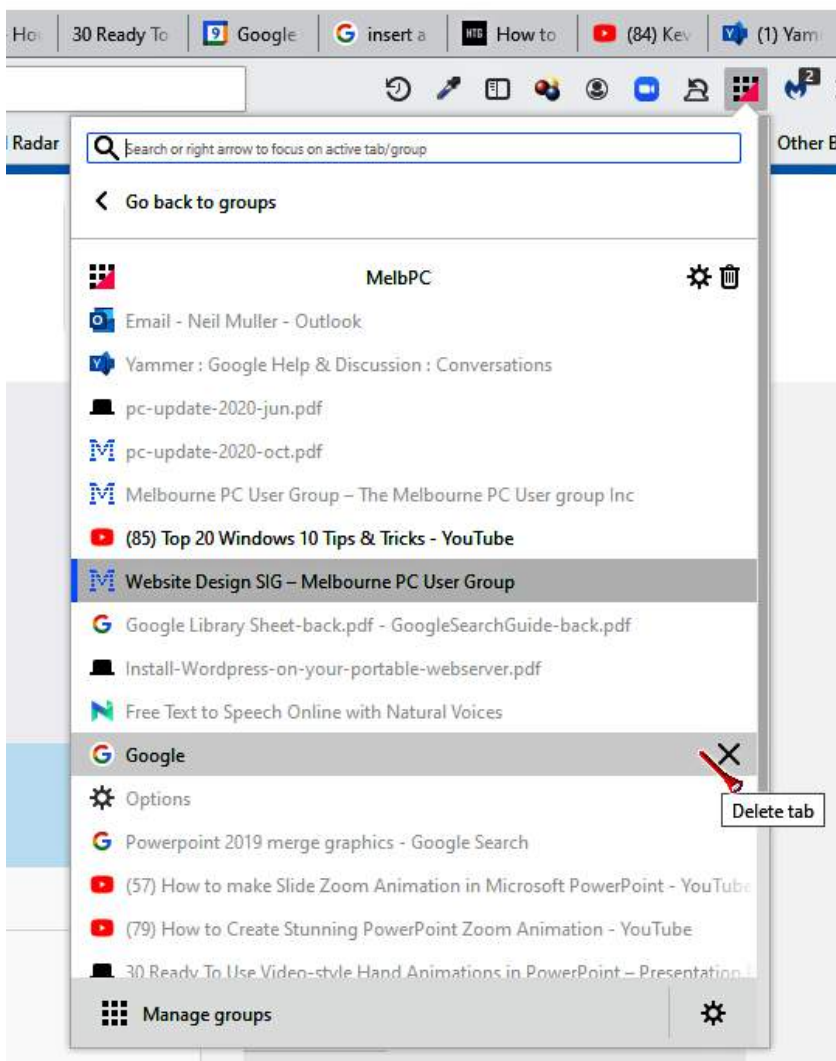


Figure 6 - "MelbPC" Tab Group contents window

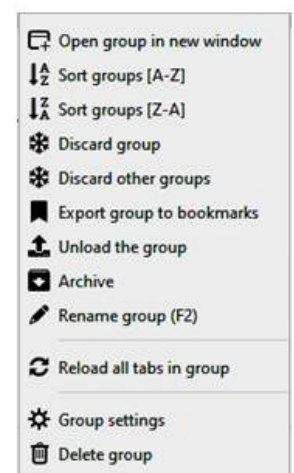


Figure 7 - Context menu

### **Toolbar Menu - Create new group:**

The second item on the Toolbar menu is to create a new tab group. Here you create a new and empty Tab Group. Refer to Figures 3 and 5. This option is one of a number of ways you can create a new tab group.

### **Toolbar Menu - Manage groups:**

There are 2 options available under this menu item.

- Select “Manage groups” and a new window opens with all Tab Groups displayed in a grid pattern. Each Tab Group in the grid is represented by a window listing all tabs in that group, similar to that shown in Figure 6. Various display options are available and searching for keywords within all groups is a handy feature for finding a “lost” website or article. Neil still uses the Firefox bookmark bar for sites visited regularly but finds the Simple Tab Groups search feature more convenient for finding previously visited web pages.
- The gear icon to the right of “Manage groups” is used to access Simple Tab Groups General settings area. This is one area you will rarely use with the default settings adequate for most needs. There is a backup option available in this area that you may wish to change from the once-a-day backup. Unfortunately, Simple Tab Groups auto backups can only backup to the download folder.

After a live demonstration of Simple Tab Groups, Neil briefly looked at how other browsers are implementing tab groupings. Chromium based browsers, namely Google Chrome, Opera and Microsoft Edge are currently introducing tab grouping into their browsers. As yet Firefox has not implemented this feature into their browser, however, Neil felt Firefox couldn't improve on Simple Tab Groups.

The tab grouping feature in the Opera browser is called Workspaces and impressed Neil more than the other Chromium based browsers he investigated. Workspaces is accessed via Opera's sidebar and is simple and easy to use. Much like Simple Tab Groups, when you select a tab group from the sidebar, only those tabs in that group are displayed on the tab bar.

# Opera - Workspaces

Right mouse click  
on the sidebars  
Workspace icon for  
the options menu.

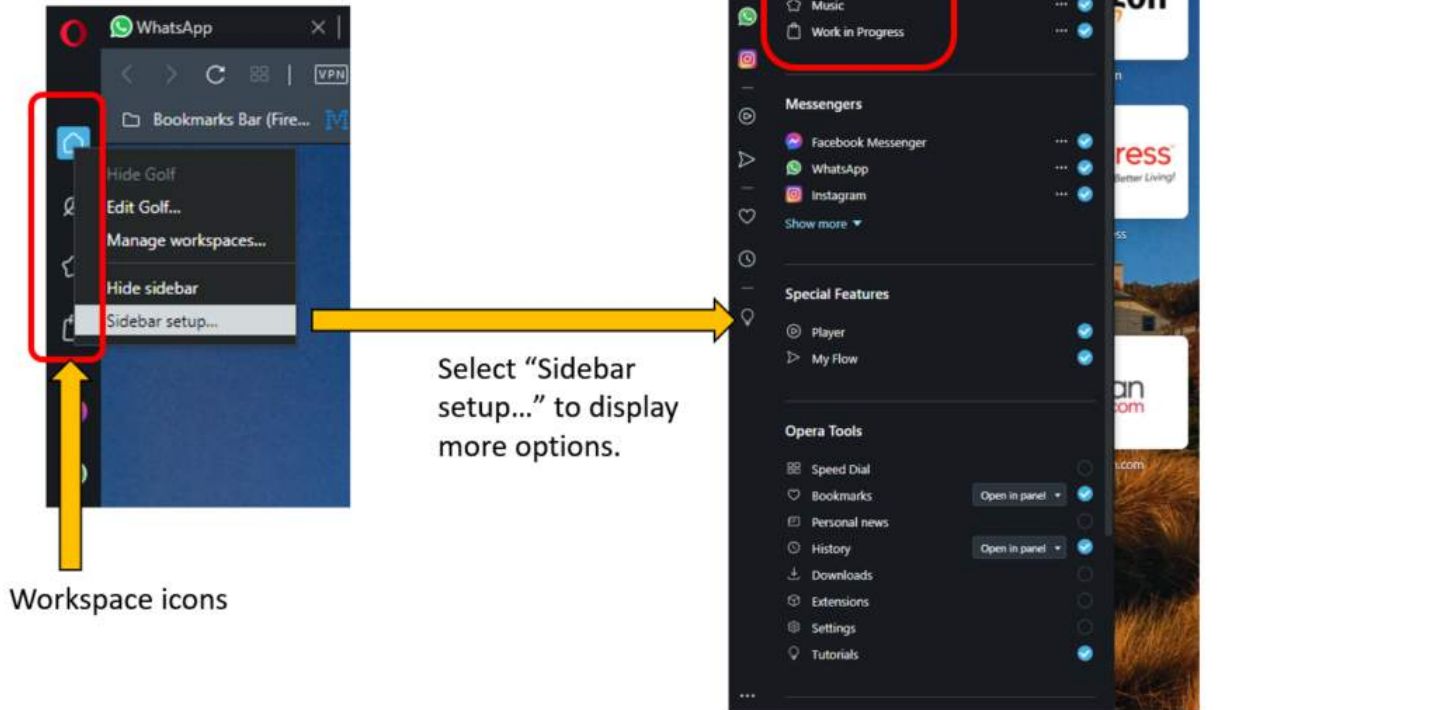


Figure 8 - Opera Workspaces

At the time of writing Google Chrome's tab group feature, called "Tab Groups Collapse", warns it's an experimental feature. "Tab Groups Collapse" allows tab groups to collapse and expand, but unlike Opera, closed tab groups remain on the tab bar (Figure 9). Neil felt this a disadvantage because the closed tab groups take up space on the tab bar, leaving less room for open tabs.

# Google Chrome – Tab Groups Collapse

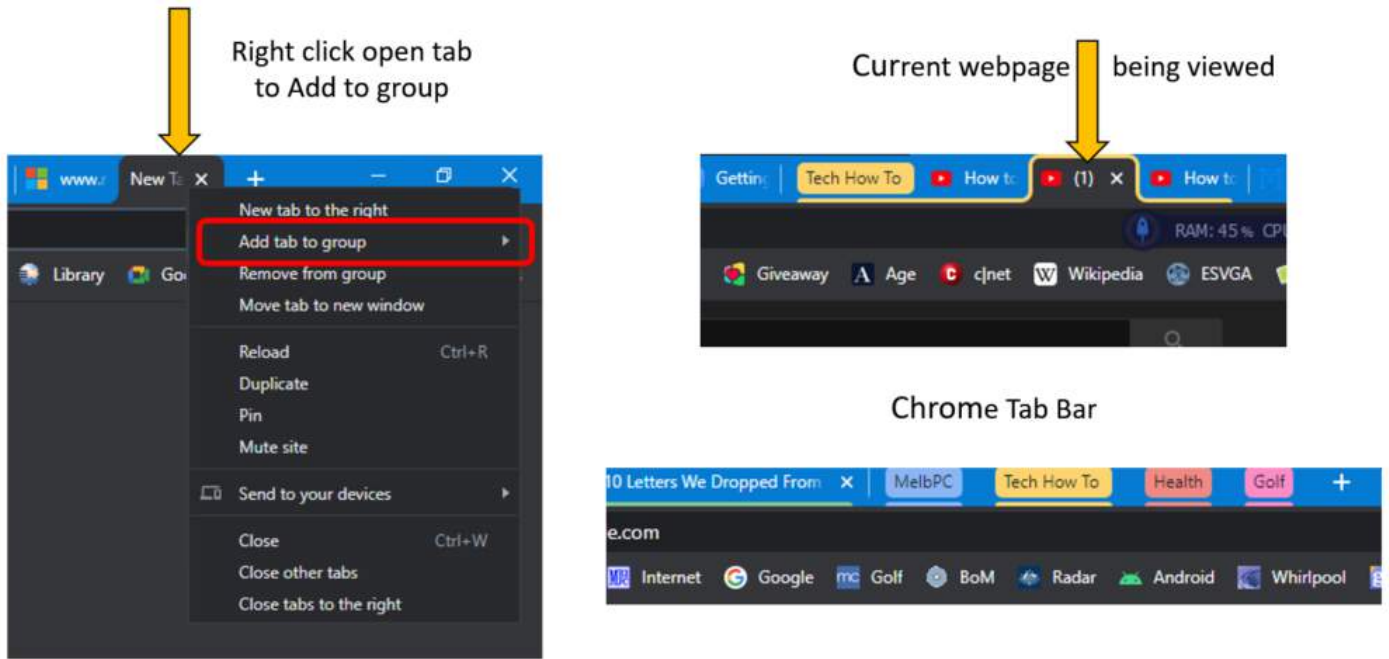


Figure 9 – Google Chrome “Tab Groups Collapse”

Microsoft Edge’s tab group feature is called Collections. Neil spent less time investigating Collections but felt it looked promising but was not likely to change his preference for Simple Tab Groups.

# Microsoft Edge - Collections

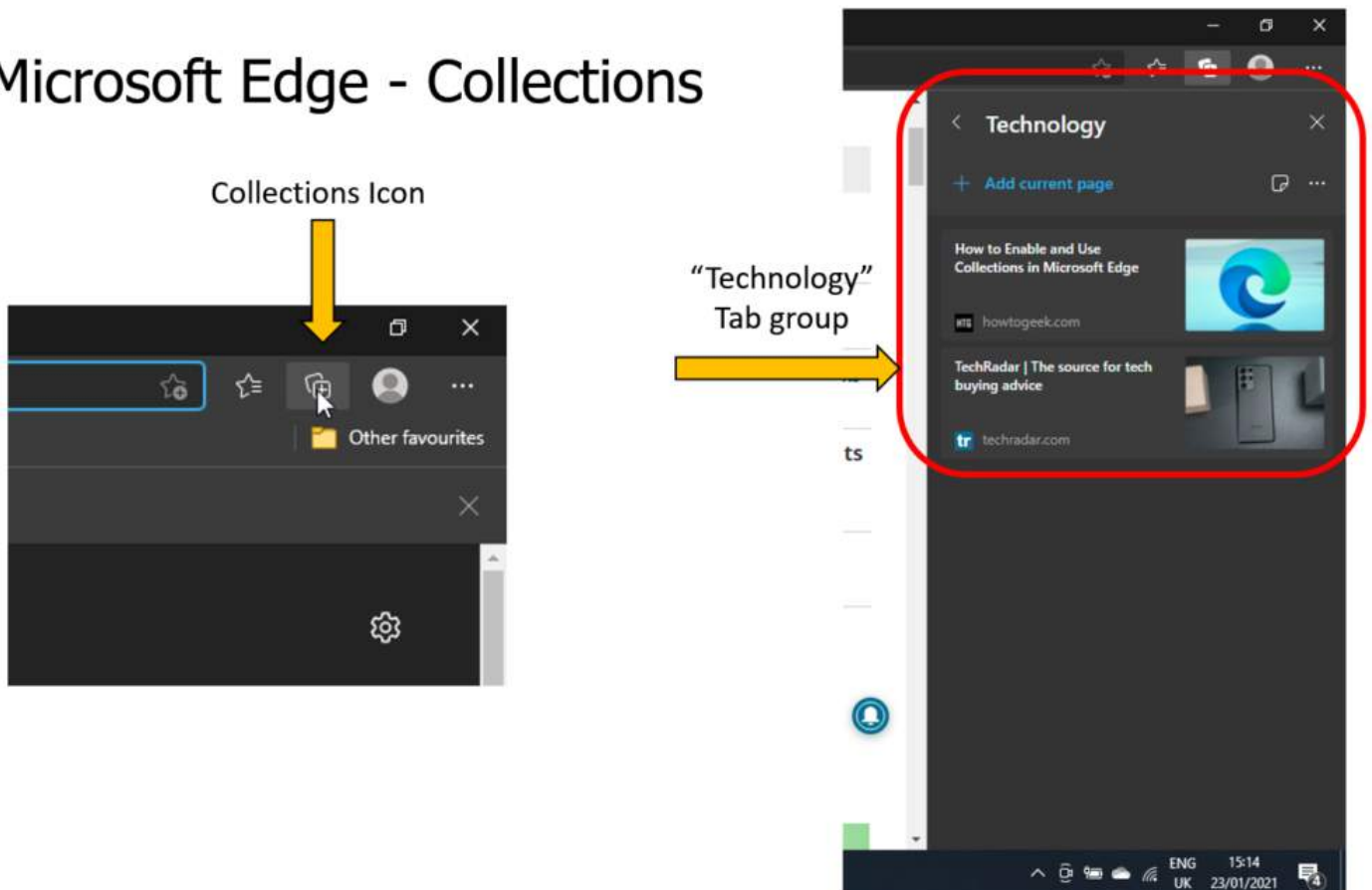


Figure 10 – Microsoft Edge – Collections

# Yammer Highlights February 2021

Dennis Parsons

## Computer Help

Occasionally members raise the issue of readability of the Yammer posts, not the quality of the content, but the combination of the dark grey text colour on light grey background. For most of us (presuming the lack of complaints reflects acceptability) Yammer and similar pages look perfectly fine and aren't difficult to read, but for a few the text appears faint and hard to read.

Unfortunately there's no simple solution as I suspect the problem is a combination of monitor settings, monitor and user eyeballs. Without actually sitting side by side with the individuals having the problems and trading seats by directly comparing their screens with one that another person finds easily readable I don't think we'll be able to progress the situation.

I did create a configuration file for the Stylish add-on that displays Yammer message text in bold and black which helps with legibility.

<[https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/threads/inGroup?type=in\\_group&feedId=4798907&view=all](https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/threads/inGroup?type=in_group&feedId=4798907&view=all)>

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=183401267437568>>

## NBN Questions and Comments

Not all issues with Internet speed can be laid at the feet of NBNCo. You also need to consider the networking technologies used in your home as anything other than Ethernet cabling introduces the possibility of interference or limitations that may reduce the speeds achieved and the reliability of the connection.

If you're wanting to test your connection speed it's best to use a network cable to connect your computer directly to the router. WiFi can suffer from range issues such as distance from the router and attenuation by walls reducing signal strength, and interference from neighbouring WiFi or other electrical devices. Ethernet over power line or EoP (adaptors you plug into power points that provide networking over your electrical cabling) suffer from electrical interference.

On a 50/20 connection Bill was only getting 35/9 on one system through one EoP adaptor and 20/5 on another system after going through a second EoP adaptor. After a visit from Kevin, our resident cabler, who ran Cat6 cable to replace the EoP connections Bill was getting 50+Mbps down and 18+Mbps up and rather happy with the new situation.

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=1095110760169472>>

## Market Place

The question was asked on behalf of the proverbial friend about where to source a couple of monitors from - the usual suspects ranging from eBay to OzStock to Hardly Normal were suggested, and then Sean came along with one that surprised most of us, namely ye olde Sunday Computer Swapmeet for recycled computer gear. Many of us had thought they'd gone the way of the dodo and were no longer running but they're still alive and kicking, albeit no longer in places such as Box Hill, Camberwell or Malvern. Might just have to cart the kids along for the memories and explain what a floppy disc is at the same time.

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=1046745279594496>>

## **Security, Scams and Phishing**

Cedric relayed the sad tale of a friend who unfortunately doesn't understand modern technology or how scammers work and was scammed out of over \$2,000 by a cold caller from "Telstra". Not only was he scammed but he gave them full ID details, bank account details and remote access to his computer leaving him wide open to identity theft and further financial damage.

It's sad that people are still getting caught by these scammers but it's clearly all too easy because enough are falling victim to make it worthwhile.

Changing his e-mail password and activating 2FA if possible was suggested to prevent further access by the scammers along with formatting and reinstalling Windows from scratch via a USB drive to remove anything the scammers may have installed.

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=1073233684094976>>

Malcolm mentioned that Telstra is actively blocking 6.5 million suspected scam calls per month which has got to be a good thing.

<<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=1085869902807040>>

# Member Wanted Ad

Expert tuition and assistance needed in using software to improve vinyl records and cassettes. I have a basic knowledge of Adobe Audition 1 and hope to use Izotope RX 8, X Click, and Samplitude - some of them anyway. I will pay well for this. I live in the South Eastern suburbs.

Further details ph. 0416705811, [swabian7@live.com](mailto:swabian7@live.com)

Denis