>PC Update
February 2022

Publishing Information

iHelp – Get the help you need with your computer, Ph: (03) 9276 4088,

Email: ihelp@melbpc.org.au, Online Support Request

Online membership form

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

Editorial February 2022

Hugh Macdonald

Hello and welcome to another edition of PC Update and welcome to another year in the life of Melbourne PC User Group.

I'm sure I wrote something similar last year, but we can only hope that this year is better than the last. Although so far there is no sign that that is going to be the case.

In the meantime PC Update is here to inform and entertain you on all computing matters.

This month we have a few club members who have contributed articles, which is always very much appreciated. Roger Brown has taken time out from DOTW to write about his Linux distribution of choice, Arch. Arch is one of the more challenging Linux distributions to install and use, but Roger goes through the options thoroughly. After reading the article I was about to install Arch, so you should too.

Greg Eden is also along this month to tell you about some of the slightly lesser known features of Google Workspace, which is, of course, the new platform that MelbPC is moving to. [Yammer, and OneDrive, still to go!] So look out for more articles on GWS going forward, as Greg is planning a multi part series.

There's also the East SIG Report from Neil Muller, and Yammer Highlights from Dennis Parsons.

And hopefully as the year progresses there will be stuff happening at the club to report on. But until next month, stay safe and enjoy reading!

Monthly Meeting February 2022

The November 2021 Monthly Meeting was held online on Wednesday 2nd February 2022, with about 90 members in attendance via Zoom.

Guest segment: Zero to One Million Hits in 14 Days

A discussion with Sue Barrett and Jobst Schmalenbach around their experience launching and securing an activism website that was successful beyond all expectation. Hosted by David Stonier-Gibson

When you set up an activism website off the back of community outrage and get 1M hits on day 14 from set-up, you know that the website is likely to be a big target for those who disagree with your cause. So, the right hardware, website performance and security become a big deal. Join Sue Barrett and Jobst Schmalenbach as David Stonier-Gibson discusses with them their roles and lessons learned in activism website build, performance, messaging and security as part of the March4Justice team. The website rallied 110,000+ people in 200 locations around Australia in under 14 days on 15 March 2021. They will also share their work as two of the founding members of Voices of Goldstein, a grass-roots movement focused on better representative democracy in Australia, and their work on ZoeDaniel.com.au, the community-backed independent candidate for Goldstein.

Sue Barrett, BSc., Founder & CEO, www.barrett.com.au
An entrepreneur and systems thinker, Sue is best known for her work as an ethical and sustainable business growth strategist, sales systems specialist, educator, consultant, advisor, writer and change agent for better business, integrity, gender equality and climate action.

Jobst Schmalenbach, General Manager & Systems Administrator, www.barrett.com.au
Jobst is originally from Münster in north west Germany where he completed a trade apprenticeship as a Fitter and Turner then a BEng(Mech) but found the profession to restrictive. Jobst migrated to Australia in 1989 where he switched his focus to completing a Bachelor of Digital Systems with First Class Honours at Monash University. Having found his niche, Jobst has become a highly knowledgeable and proficient IT professional who is very familiar and hands on with both hardware and software. He is passionate about IT security, sustainability, integrity, equality and climate action.

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.

Club Notices February 2022

A Commodore 64 challenge for Melb PC

Harry Lewis

Melb PC was approached recently by local poet Ted Holmes. Between 1999 and 2001 Ted published three volumes of poems. For publication at the time he presented his publisher with 3.5″ Commodore 64 floppy disks. Ted's reason for his approach to Melb PC was his hope to have the contents of the surviving disks converted to a form in which he can pass it for publication on the internet.

Ted is now 100 years old. I append a transcript of his CV from one of his books.

We accepted his challenge. We now have custody of six 3.5″ floppy disks which he tells us include all the poems published in his three books. We are wondering if among our membership there might be someone who still has the key resources to enable Ted's disks to be read and then interpreted into a modern file format.

Preliminary research (and discussion in Yammer) suggests that the conversion requires a computer that can read the disks (as any surviving Commodore 64 with 3.5″ floppy drive can do, and others can apparently be persuaded to do with special hardware support) and software to create a C64 disk image for converting into a usable format. We have found programs claiming to perform the final conversion, but the earlier tasks seem more difficult to achieve.

If you are able to help in this project please post to this Yammer thread:

https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/threads/1339600743219200

or to send an email message to Harry Lewis (halewis@melbpc.org.au).

Ted Holmes CV (from his volume 'Millennium Shift: Poems for the People", Spectrum Publications, 2000)

Born in 1921, Ted Holmes was educated at Scotch College and the University of Melbourne. Graduating in Commerce, he worked as an accountant in industry, chartered accounting, Melbourne Olympic Games Committee 1956-57; as a public relations officer and finance officer, Snowy Mountains Authority, Cooma; lecturer, Melbourne University and performance management adviser with the Victorian Government. He is a widower with two surviving daughters. In retirement, and through his poetry writing which post-dates the deaths of his wife Audrey and daughter Gill in 1997, he is encouraging people to live adventurously.

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Call for Home Visit Volunteers

Cedric Wyndham

While most (more than 99%) of the requests for computing and phone assistance are handled over the phone by iHelp or Dial Help, or by the member visiting a SIG, or referral to a non-club expert person or organisation, some problems require a volunteer to visit the member. In the latter case the member needing assistance often has health problems that prevent him/her visiting a SIG or commercial computer repair shop, also they may find it hard to afford a commercial service.

These are situations where the Home Visit Assist program is called on. But my list of volunteers I can call on, has shrunk in recent times, for various reasons, so this is a request for a few more.

Details

I try to find a volunteer within 20mins driving time of the client member. I have reasonable coverage of the Waverley-Brighton region, which is the "centre of gravity" of our membership. But I would appreciate a few more in many other areas.

I have nil volunteers west of Sydney road (Keilor, Werribee, etc), poor coverage of Frankston and Peninsula area, same for outer East such as Belgrave, also outer North.

Most volunteers would do less than a job a year, but each job can be time consuming – often the computer has a lot more problems than the problem identified over the phone.

Anyone who is interested please contact me, also anyone that wants to know more of what is involved please get in touch. I don't have an IT background, and volunteers don't need that. If you have spent much time in club activities, attending monthly or SIG meetings, and use modern technology for hobbies or work, you have probably picked up sufficient knowledge. When you are doing a job, advice and assistance will be available at the end of your phone.

At present we need to ask that all HVA volunteers meet Victoria's definition of fully vaccinated as at the time of the visit. In brief the current requirement is double vaccinated or an acceptable exemption.

Please email me at cwyndham@melbpc.org.au for more information.

How to become a Linux expert by installing Arch

Roger Brown

You too can amaze your friends and colleagues by becoming a LINUX EXPERT who runs the very best rolling distribution – Arch Linux.

For various reasons, people regard Arch Linux as a Linux distribution requiring a true Linux expert to install and run it. And yet YOU can do it, and it's much easier than you think.

But first.....

What is a rolling distribution?

"Ordinary" distributions, such as Ubuntu, Linux Mint and the like release mew versions every six months or so. Some distributions – Debian is a well known example – may be on a two year release cycle or even longer. Slackware, once one of the most important distributions, hasn't released a new version in over 5 years.

During the currency of these releases, programs and system utilities are not upgraded unless urgent security considerations make it absolutely essential to do so. So if some new version of a software program has a feature you **have to** have, you won't get it until a new version of your distribution appears and you go through an (often lengthy) upgrade process.

Rolling distributions like Arch Linux, Debian Testing or Open SUSE Tumbleweed, issue updates constantly – often daily, That means that every program on your system is up to date and running the very latest version. And it also means that you will **never** have to reinstall your chosen rolling distribution ever again.

You'll need a good reliable internet connection, but the payback is that you'll always be running a cutting edge system. And currently the most popular rolling distribution is Arch Linux or is based on Arch Linux.

Why Arch?

1. Sheer kudos. As I will explain below, Arch Linux is considered a difficult distribution in install and set up. Tell your Linux aware friend that you are running Arch and you will immediately gain their respect and awe.

2. Arch provides a wide range of software – almost anything you could possibly want is available, either through its main repository or via a supplementary build script repository known as the AUR.

3. Arch provides you with an almost unique ability to set up your Linux system exactly as YOU would wish – no having to accept choices made by some third party developer. An Arch system can be as lean and fast, or as complex and flashy as you the user wishes. You have a greater ability to control exactly what is

installed that almost any other distribution.

4. (Best of all) Arch provides documentation which far surpasses that available from any other distribution. Almost any software or hardware issue you are likely to encounter will be covered, and covered in simple plain language.
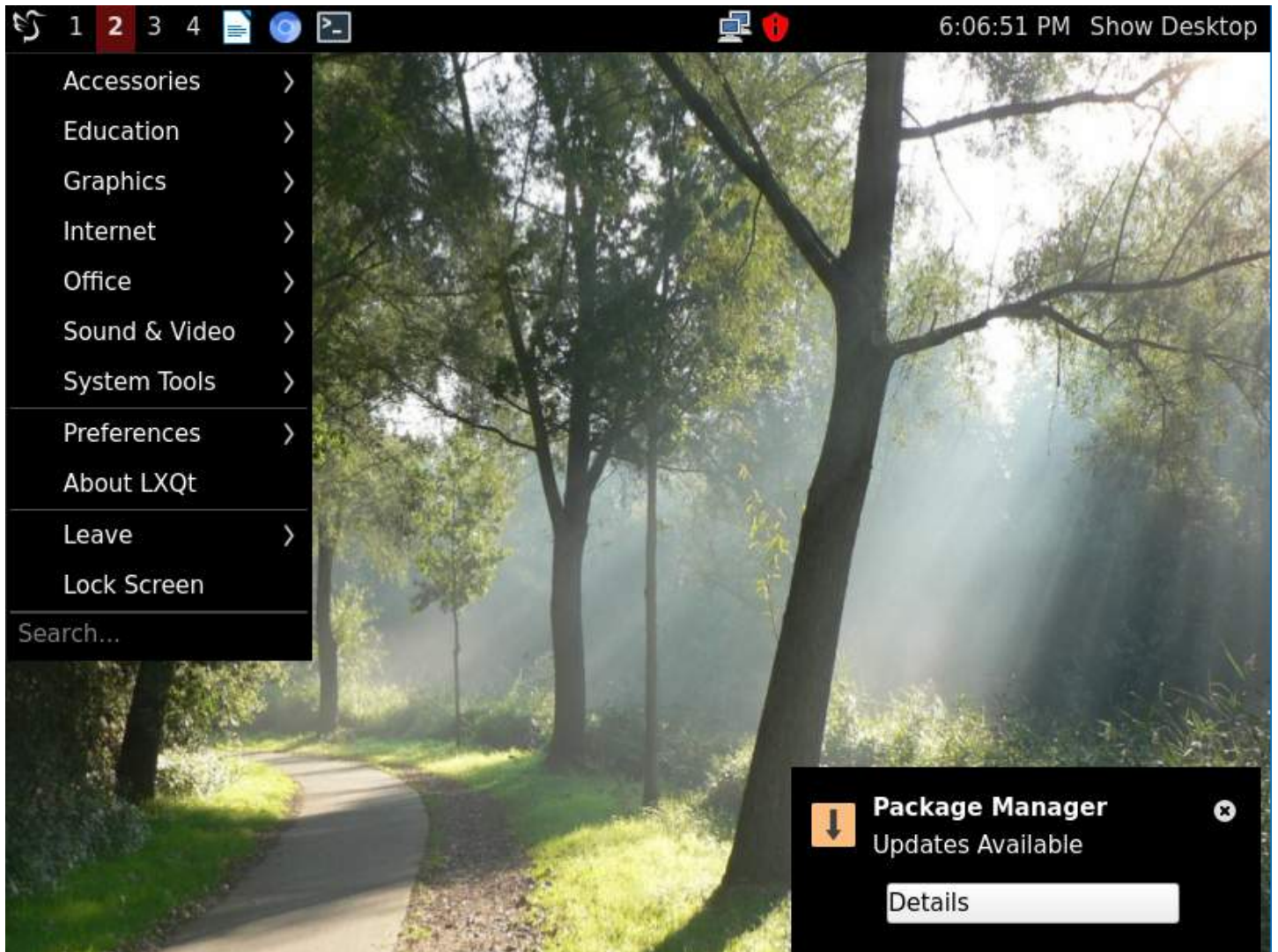
(Arch running LXQT)

So why is Arch Linux supposed to be so hard to install?

Arch Linux is aimed at experienced users. When you download and run an Arch installation .iso you will simply be confronted with a text prompt waiting for your input.

The default installation method is to manually enter a series of commands, which, if correctly completed will result in a text based Arch installation. (see https://wiki.archlinux.org/title/Installation_guide)

Following that, you follow a further set of instructions to set up your chosen graphics environment and install your software – fortunately with the assistance of an excellent package manager. (see https://wiki.archlinux.org/title/General_recommendations)

Manage all that without mistakes, and you can see why you will have earned your reputation as a Linux expert. ***But there are other ways in which you can achieve you chosen goal – and not all of them are quite so difficult.***

So how do I install Arch Linux?

1. Go with the default method as described above.

It works and it will certainly teach you a good deal about the nuts and bolts of an Arch Linux installation. I would recommend that if possible you should install using legacy BIOS mode rather than UEFI as partitioning and set up for the latter is rather more complex.

But the procedure works and I would recommend that every Arch user tries the default installation method at least once – even if is on virtual software such as VirtualBox, rather than on your actual physical hardware installation.

2. Archinstall

Since mid 2021, Arch has included the ability to run an "archinstall" command as an alternative to the default procedure. This command runs a text based script which will walk you through much the same procedure as the default installation and will even give you the opportunity to install one of a range of popular desktop environments.

Consider this as an installation aid rather than a full installer, however using archinstall will in most cases significantly shorten the time and difficult of an Arch Linux installation. This method has some quirks but I've generally found it to work quite well on physical hardware, however it can be somewhat buggy when used on VirtualBox. Your mileage may vary, however.

3. Use a third party installer

A number of third party installers have appeared and disappeared over the years – unfortunately these tend to be poorly maintained and eventually stop working. But at the time of writing this article there were two good third party installers available – both of which appear to be being updated regularly

Calam-Arch

This installer is hosted at Sourceforge – see https://sourceforge.net/projects/blue-arch-installer/ and is presently being updated monthly.

Running the Calam-Arch .iso provides a simple Xfce4 based installation of Arch Linux however this is simply provided to run the Calam-Arch installer and cannot be installed as is.
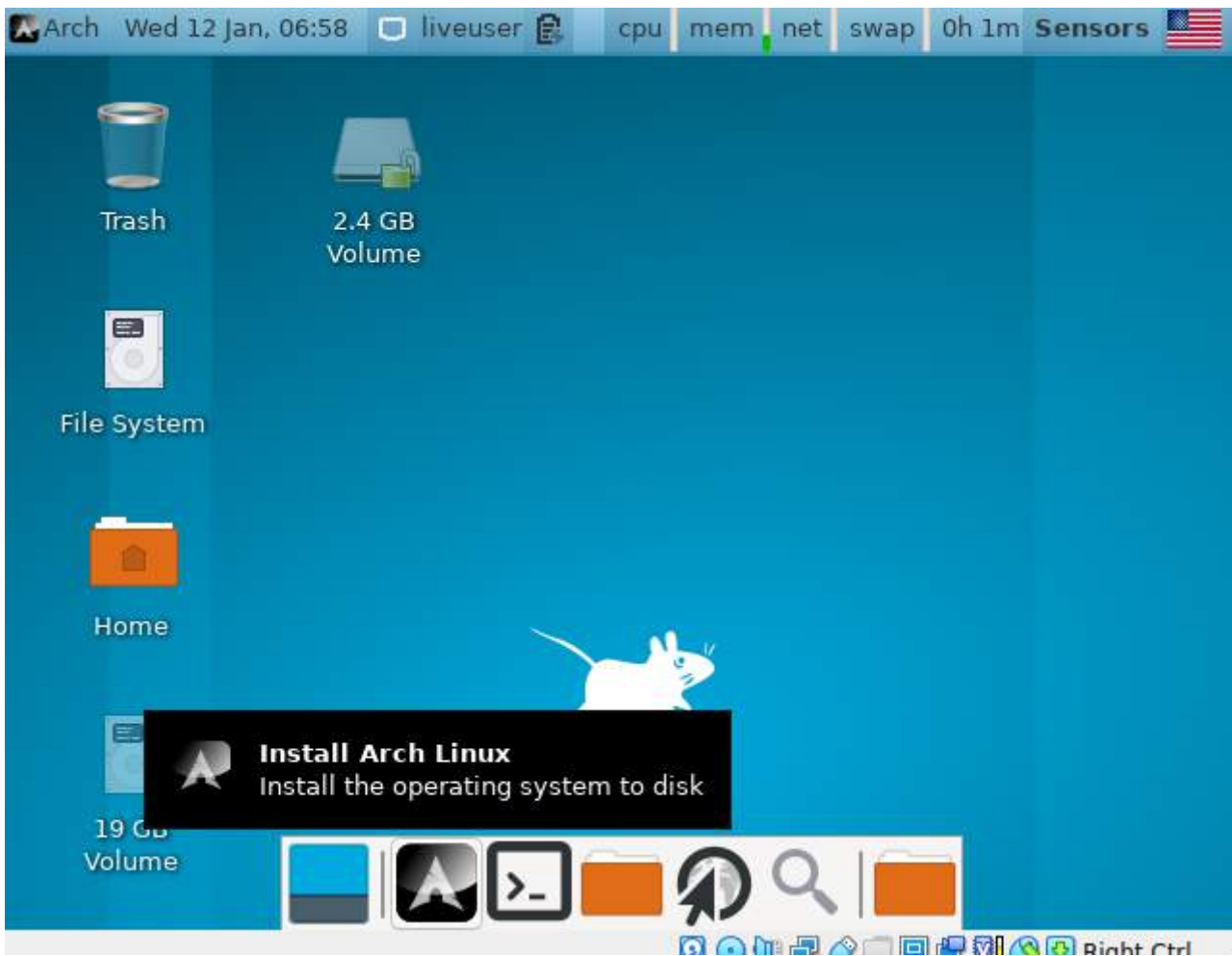
The installer runs a customised version of the open source Calamares installer and works very well at installing a fully up to date version of the distribution plus a small selection of popular desktops, It's a "live installer" – all packages are directly downloaded from the Arch Linux repositories.

Your chosen desktop environment will be installed in more or less its default configuration and with minimal additional software. It's then up to you to set up things as you might wish, and to install whatever additional software is needed – using the excellent pacman software installer. This means that, as with a

conventional Arch Linux installation, your installation can be as simple or as complex as you wish.

You won't learn quite as much about the inner workings of Arch, but you will get the job done easily and quite quickly. And you ARE most definitely running Arch – no need to tell anyone else HOW you installed it!!

EndeavourOS – online version.

EndeavourOS is technically an Arch based distribution rather than a pure installer. However if you select the optional 'online" mode, EndeavourOS acts as a live installer in almost the same manner as Calam-Arch.

The only noticeable difference is that a slightly wider range of desktop environments can be installed directly from the installer
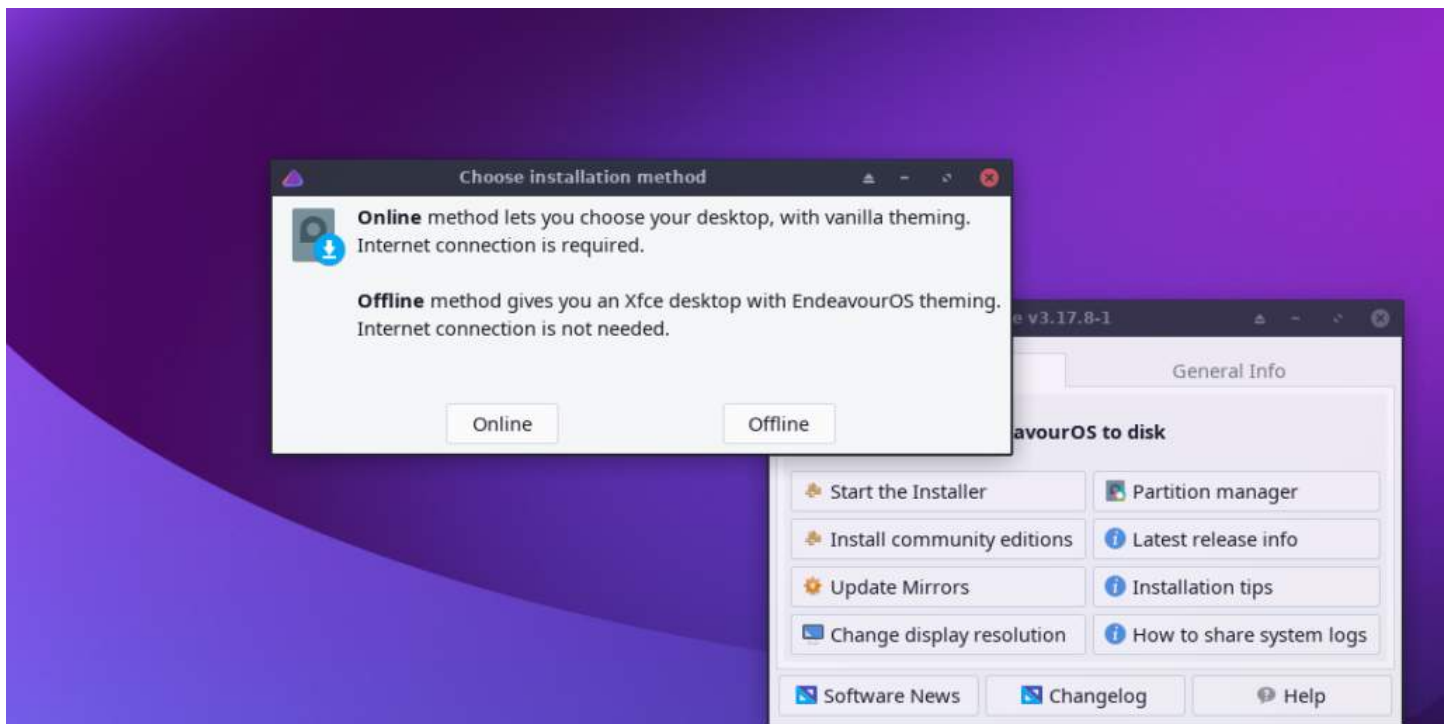

As with Calam-Arch, your chosen desktop environment is set up with minimal additional software although some EndeavourOS formatting is applied to get you started. You are also provided with a useful start-up utility to help you complete common tasks, but other than that you use the standard Arch utilities to install additional software and complete any required set up.

Live installers of this type do need a fair amount of RAM – if you are testing either of these installers in a virtual environment like VirtualBox and the whole system, including the system clock, freezes then you have most likely run out of memory. Increase the memory allocation of your virtual machine and try again.

4. Try a close relative

There are quite a number of distribution based on Arch Linux, many using a user friendly installer (often the open source Calamares installer) and seemingly providing a quick and easy way to install Arch. But as almost all of these are based on snapshots of Arch at the time the distribution was released, **I do not recommend their use.**

You could easily find yourself having to deal with many months of updates – a highly undesirable situation in a distribution designed to be updated no less frequently than weekly. It may well be impossible to complete the update in some instances.

There is however one exception.

Manjaro

This distribution is currently third on the top 100 list provided by https://distrowatch.com/ and has held second or third placing for many months. And in my view there is good reason for that high placing. Manjaro provides a fast and easy method of installing a version of Arch Linux that is known for reliability and most especially, its user friendly approach.

The distribution provides a number of different versions, each featuring a specific window manager though the 'flagship' edition uses the XFCE4 window manager. All are installed using the Calamares open source installer and provide a complete and fully configured installation – as befits its target market of the less experienced user.

While Manjaro is 'snapshot based', its altered update policy (see below) means that you will have no difficulty updating your installation as needed. Regular update versions are issued.

Manjaro is technically a separate distribution to Arch Linux as it uses its own repositories, however these are fully compatible with the Arch repositories, Anything that could be installed in Arch, can be installed in Manjaro. However Manjaro adds additional user friendly touches such as:

- specific utilities for kernel management and other system configuration

- the excellent Pamac package manager (specifically developed for Manjaro)

- an altered update policy where updates are released in fortnightly batches (apart for urgent security fixes) to make the user's task in maintaining the distribution easier

I've found this distribution to be highly reliable over the years – highly recommended for users who as yet lack the confidence or experience to tackle a pure Arch installation. Install this and you will quickly gain experience in managing an Arch based system.

So what should I do if things go wrong?

1. Arch wiki

As mentioned before, Arch Linux provides by far the best documentation of any Linux distribution – almost

any problem can be solved by consulting the Arch Wiki.

I've found that a Google search in the form "Arch [brief description of problem]" or "Arch [error message]" will almost certainly take you straight to the Arch Wiki page dealing with the issue. The Wiki uses clear easy to understand language and should solve any issue you encounter. Almost all of the content is applicable even if you installed a related distribution such as EndeavourOS or Manjaro.
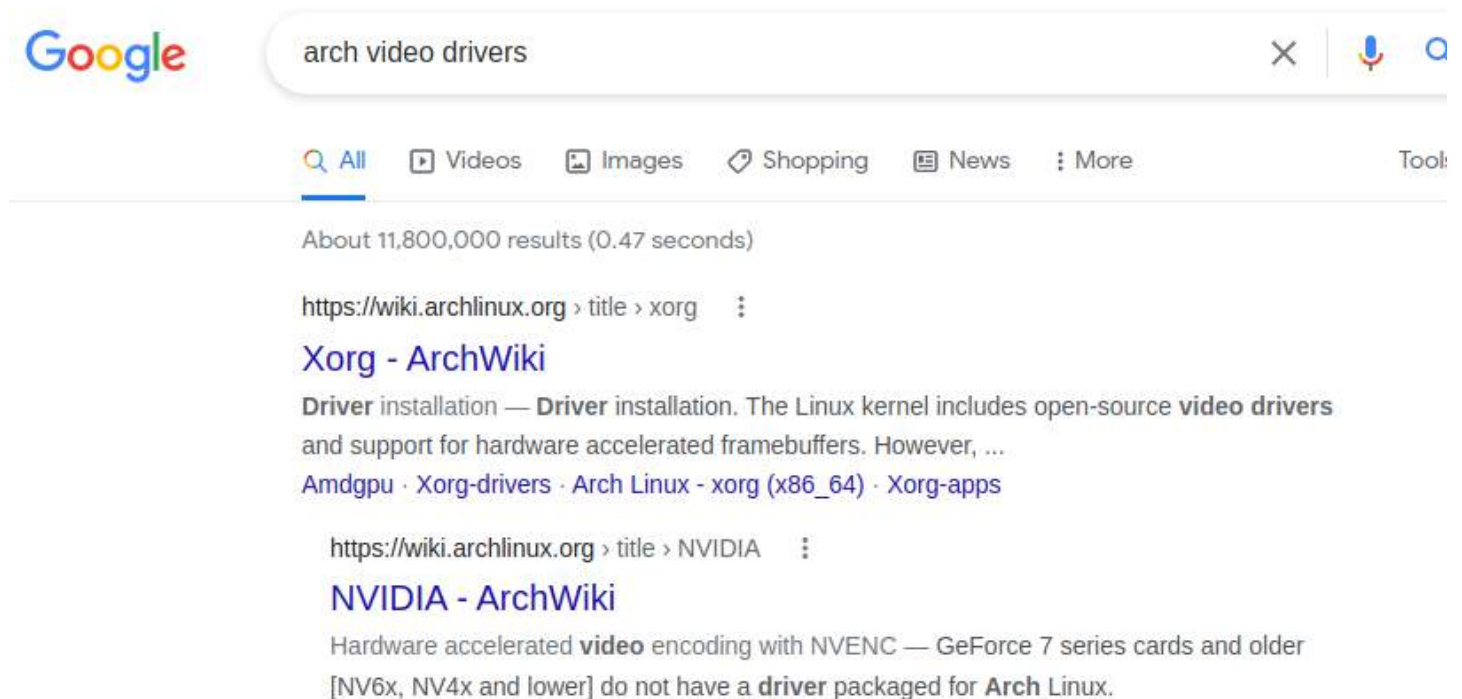
(A Google search immediately pointing to the relevant Arch wiki pages)

2. Arch forums

Arch maintains a number of forums (see https://bbs.archlinux.org/) where questions may be posted. However you should note that these forums have quite strict posting rules (see https://bbs.archlinux.org/viewtopic.php?id=130309) .

You will be expected to have attempted to solve your problem by consulting the Arch Wiki. So if you have done so and failed to find the answer you needed, or if you did not understand the information you found, make sure you say so when posting.

And if you have installed a non Arch alternative (such as Manjaro) or even if you used an alternate installer, **do NOT mention that fact.** If you do, you'll almost certainly have your query closed immediately.

3. Yammer (or its replacement)

You will always find friendly and informed help in the Yammer Linux forum – a HUGE advantage of being a MelbPC member!!

And lastly…**Congratulations you are now a Linux Expert**

It matters not how you did the job, if you installed an Arch or Arch based distribution using one of the methods described in this article, you deserve to bask in the kudos of having installed the very best rolling distribution available.

And if you're yet to take the plunge, make this your 2022 project.

Using Google Workspace

Greg Eden

Part 1 – Document scanning and OCR

Can you use your Android phone as a document scanner? Yes. As a way of copying old photo prints? Yes. Is it as good as a stand alone scanner? Probably not, but it can still be very handy in some situations. You generally do not drag around your flatbed scanner when you are away from home. By the way most of these functions will also work on Apple phones if you install the relevant Google apps. I will cover copying photo prints in a later article.

Firstly Document scanning. This is built into Google drive. Open Google Drive on your phone then tap on the Plus sign at the bottom right of the screen, select scan, Allow Drive to take pictures, tap on Got it, then point the camera at a document. It is much better to use natural light. Overhead globes cause shadows and bright spots, whereas natural light through a window means you can take the scan without your own shadow affecting the grab. The scanner function will automatically crop the shot to just the document, but as you can see at the bottom of the screen shot you can manually override its decision if necessary. Then tap on Save and it is saved to your Google Drive as a PDF document. The document used as an example is just a blank menu planner from the long defunct Aussie Farmers Direct.

Scan to PDF

Tap + to scan more pages or ✔ to upload the
document to Drive.

GOT IT

Weekly Dinner Planner

	sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
week 1	Salmon Pasta Bake	Beef Schnitzel & Salad	Chicken Stir-fry (Honey Soy)	Grilled Barramundi & Salad	Homemade Hamburgers	Roast Vegetable Lasagne	Roast Lamb
week 2	Bangers & Mash	Vegetable Frittata & Salad	Spaghetti Bolognese	Steak & Veggies	Homemade Smoked Salmon Pizza	Lamb Shanks & Mash	Roast Chicken
week 3	Curried Sausages & Rice	Pork Chops & Veggies	Chicken Wraps	Grilled Salmon & Salad	Cheese & Spinach Cannelloni & Salad	Steak & Salad	Roast Beef
week 4	Pumpkin Risotto	Lamb Souvlaki	Spicy mince Chow Mein	Chicken Schnitzel & Veggies	Lasagne	Salmon Patties & Salad	Lamb Ribs & Veggies
week 5	Thai Fish Cakes & Salad	Chorizo Risotto	Chicken Chasseur	Beef Casserole	Lamb Chops & Veggies	Homemade Nachos with Mince	Chicken Wings / Drumettes & Coleslaw
week 6	Chicken Stir-fry Sweet Chilli	Greek Lamb Salad	Homemade Fish & Chips	Veal Tortelini with Napoletana Sauce	Beef Mince Pie & Mashed Potato	Chicken Kiev & Veggies	BBQ

A MENU PLAN WILL:

- **Save you money** – if you shop from a list developed from your menu plan you will be less likely to impulse buy or opt for take-away because you will already have everything you need at home.
- **Save you time** – you will be able to shop less often and you will be less likely to forget anything you need.
- **Reduce stress at dinner time** – you will know what you are having for dinner and will not have the worry of 'what are we having for dinner tonight?'
- **Improve nutrition** – you will be able to clearly see which food groups you are serving and when; menu planning can help to ensure you and your family or housemates enjoy a varied and balanced diet.
- **Reduce food waste** – menu planning means you will only buy the food and quantities you really need.

Todd Green M: 0458 482 429 T: 1300 645 562 E: todd.green@aldfranchisee.com.au
F: www.facebook.com/TheLocalMilkman
www.aussiefarmers.com.au | www.generalstore.com.au

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Save to Drive

Document title

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Account

gregeden1972@gmail.com

Folder

📁 My Drive

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Google Docs   Google Sheets   Google Slides

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Allow **Drive** to take pictures and record video?

ALLOW

ONLY THIS TIME

DON'T ALLOW

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Home   Starred   Shared   Files

Now we get to the tricky bit. Google does not call its OCR OCR. It refers to it as conversion.

So now we open the scanned document PDF to convert it to text. How? Start by opening Google Drive on your computer (via the nine dots menu in GMail) and scroll down until you find the PDF you created with your phone

Then right click on the file name and select Open With and then select Google Docs
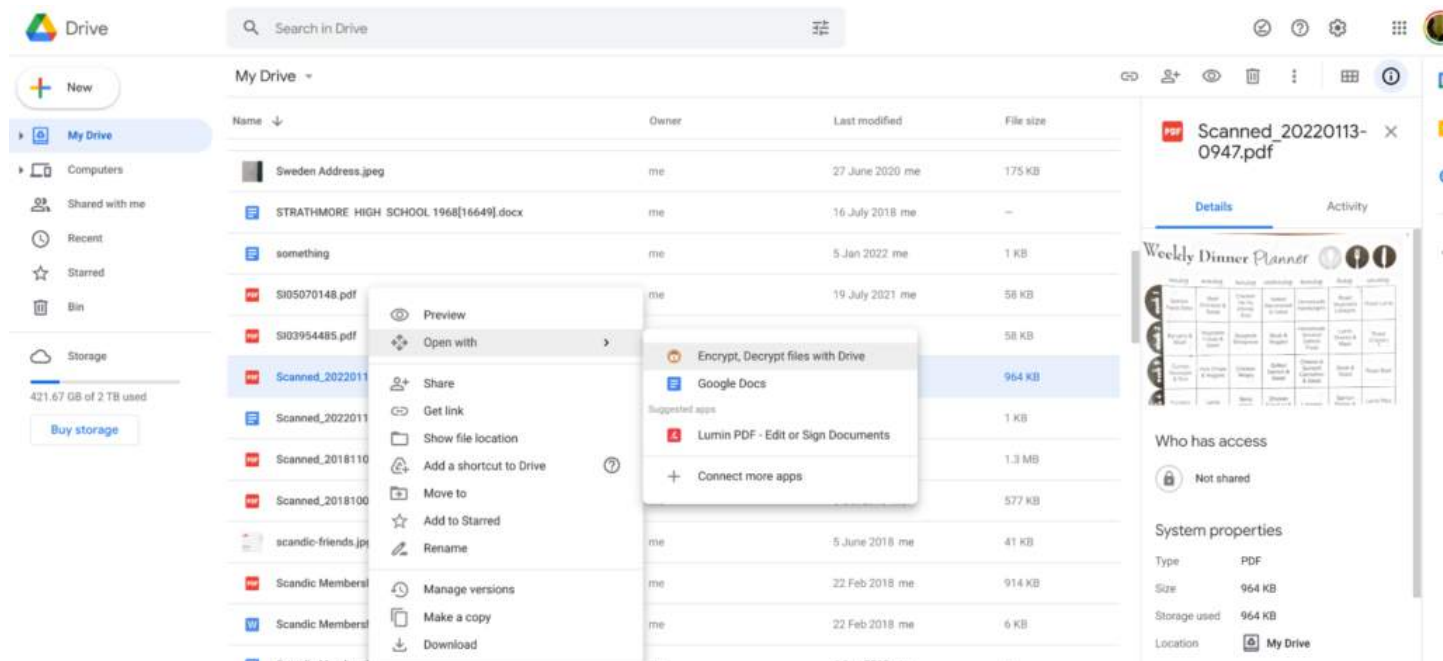
After a very few moments the text of the document is now available as a normal word processing document. Formatting can often be wrecked, as can happen in any OCR process.
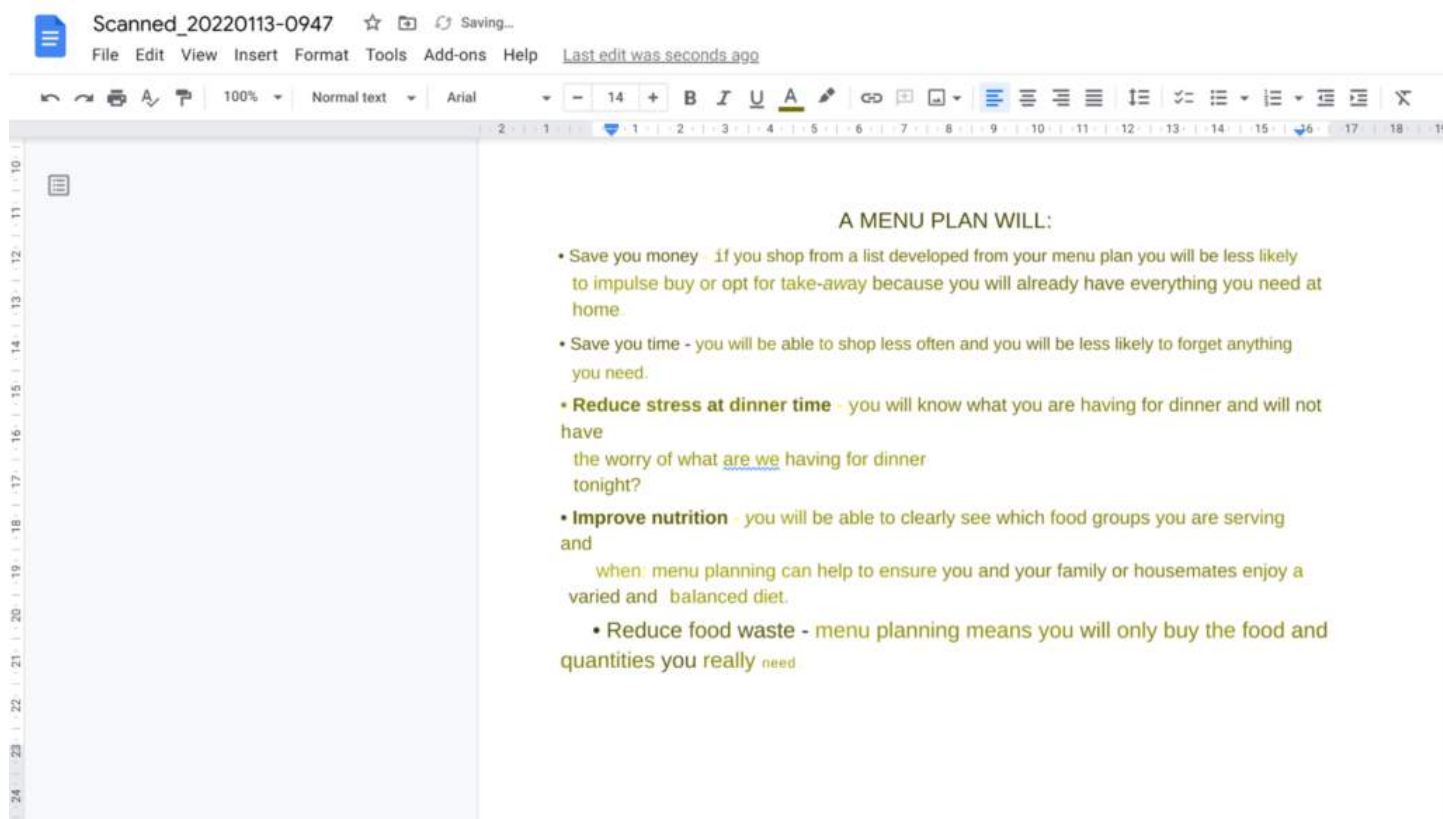
But wait, there is more. Scan a document that is in, for example, French and tell the conversion process you would like it in English please. No problem. This is the Google Help Page for the process.

https://support.google.com/drive/answer/176692?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop

In the next part of this series we will move into the world of Google Account Scripting to learn one way of taming the deluge of email we all receive every day.

Mandatory logins for ABC iview could open an intimate window onto your life

Michael Cowling, *CQUniversity Australia*

Last week, the ABC announced it will begin to track the viewing habits of all users of its iview streaming platform from March 15. This will be done by making users create an account and log in to watch shows and "benefit from the next stage of personalised services" such as "program recommendations [and] watchlists".

The change was initially planned for the middle of last year, but was delayed after heavy criticism from privacy experts and others over the proposed arrangements for sharing and recording data. One point of contention was the ABC's plans to share viewer data with Facebook and Google.

The ABC says "significant work has been undertaken in providing effective privacy controls" during this delay. But nevertheless, critics maintain the new provisions still involve sharing using data without full consent.

So how concerned should we be about our privacy here?

All your data are belong to us

For years we've known organisations such as Google and Facebook are collecting data on every search and social media post we make, and every website we visit.

Often the argument for collecting these data is similar to that used by the ABC: that collecting it provides for more personalised recommendations and a better user experience. However, tech companies also make billions using these data to sell personalised ads (and sometimes by selling the actual data).

They're not the only ones keeping tabs on us. Loyalty cards such as Woolworths Everyday Rewards or Coles Flybuys do the same thing: tracking your purchases, adding them to a database, and mining them for information about your life.

If you buy 10 cans of cat food a fortnight, you probably have two cats. If you suddenly start buying 15, you've probably acquired a third.

Nappies, baby formula and baby food reveal how many kids you have, how old they are, and how they're growing up. The ratio of Tim Tams to bread and milk can give clues as to your level of disposable income.

Despite this, millions of Australians scan these cards every day. It's hard to know if they've fully weighed the pros and cons, or just never really thought about them.

A healthy fear of your shadow (profile)

So how much should we care about this? And how much do we?

When I put these questions to my students in an undergraduate class on Information Technology & Society, they mostly respond that if they're doing nothing wrong then they have no reason to care if major corporations know what they eat for breakfast.

Older "mature age" students tend to feel differently, often raising concerns about what the data are used for, both now and potentially in the future. Older students may have had negative experiences with data,

such as having a home loan disallowed over a credit report, while younger people may not look so far ahead.

Indeed, organisations like Electronic Frontiers Australia have argued this type of data collection can be a slippery slope to profiling and bias, with organisations using this to choose who should receive particular services or assistance.

The ever-growing collection of data comes at the same time as government moves to centralise their databases under the banner of myGov, tying all government services to Medicare or tax file numbers.

We are still a long way from a dystopian situation like China's social credit system, where all our behaviour feeds into a rating system that determines our access to services and housing, but these moves could make one easier to implement in future.

How enjoying Q+A might raise tricky questions

Which brings us back to the ABC and its plan to require every user to create a profile and log into its service. The main question here is the same one to ask when using a Flybuys card or creating a new social media account.

Does the convenience of sharing these data (with the ABC in this case), in terms of personal recommendations and watch lists, and indeed, the ability to access the service at all, balance what we think our data will ultimately be used for?

And when we ask this question, it helps to think in very broad terms. While in this case we're just talking about viewing history and watch time, it's not too dissimilar to cat food and nappies when you think about it.

Significant amounts of information could be inferred from our viewing habits: everything from our political leanings to our attention span. What that can then be used for is anyone's guess.

That's not to say you shouldn't create an account, but rather that you need to go in with your eyes wide open. Think about what iview means to you, what data might be shared, and how it might be used. And then decide if you really love Bluey all that much after all.

Michael Cowling, Associate Professor – Information & Communication Technology (ICT), *CQUniversity Australia*

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How To Delete Your Social Media Accounts

Sharon Horwood, *Deakin University*

For more than a decade we've been deeply immersed in a love affair with social media. And the thought of ending things can be painful. But like any relationship, if social media is no longer making you happy – and if curating your online persona is exhausting instead of fun – it might be time to say goodbye.

Late last year, Meta (previously Facebook) came under intense scrutiny after leaked documents revealed the company was fully aware of the negative impact its products, Instagram in particular, can have on users' mental health.

Meta went straight into damage control. But it seemed no one was particularly surprised by the news – not even teenage girls, who Meta identified as most at risk. Was the leak just confirming what we already suspected: that social media has the potential to be much more harmful than helpful?

How did our once carefree relationship with social media turn sour? And perhaps most importantly, can (or should) it be salvaged?

Spotting the red flags

Relationship counsellors will often ask troubled couples to think about what made them happy in their relationship. Social media, for all it's annoying peccadilloes, does have some redeeming features.

Throughout the pandemic, the ability to stay connected to people we can't see in person has become incredibly valuable. Social media can also help people find their tribe, particularly if the people in their offline world don't share their values and beliefs.

But if you can't go a day without trawling through the sites, feeling compelled to "like" or be "liked", your relationship is in trouble.

Though far from settled, the bulk of screen time research focuses on the detrimental effects of excessive or problematic screen use on well-being and mental health. A 2021 meta-analysis of 55 studies, with a combined sample size of 80,533 people, found a positive (albeit small) association between depressive symptoms and social media use.

An important finding was that negative consequences were more likely to come from how social media use made participants *feel*, rather than how long they used it.

Information overload

In trying to understand why social media can leave us feeling less than content, we can't look past the effect of the 24/7 news (and fake news) stream on our collective psyche.

A 2021 Deloitte survey of Australians found 79% thought fake news was a problem, and only 18% felt information obtained via social media was trustworthy. Having to navigate content that deliberately aims to perpetuate fear and dissent only adds to people's cognitive and emotional burden.

But here's the rub. It seems while we're generally concerned about technology having a negative impact on our well-being, this doesn't translate to behaviour change on an individual level.

My own research published last year found more than two-thirds of survey participants believed excessive smartphone use can negatively impact well-being, yet individual usage was still very high, averaging 184

minutes per day. There was no relationship between the belief and the behaviour.

What leads to this apparent cognitive-behavioural dissonance? The results of a long-term study by University of Amsterdam researchers might provide a clue. They found living in a "permanently online" world leads to decreased self-control over social media use and, subsequently, lower well-being.

In other words, we know what we're doing might be bad for us, but we do it anyway.

Simple steps you can take

How do you know when it's time to reevaluate your relationship with social media? There's one deceptively simple question to ask yourself: how does it make you feel?

Think about how you feel before, during and after you use social media. If you feel like you're wasting large chunks of your day, your week (or, dare I say, your life) on social media – that's a clue. If you feel negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety, guilt or fear, you have your answer.

But if divorcing social media abruptly feels like a step too far, what else can you do to slowly break away, or potentially salvage the relationship?

1. Start with a trial separation

A "soft delete" lets you see how you'll feel without your social media before committing to a hard delete. Let friends and family know you're taking a break, remove the apps from your devices, and set yourself a goal of maybe one or two weeks where you don't access the account/s. If the world is still turning at the end of this trial, keep going! Once you no longer feel the pull of social media, you'll be ready to hit delete.

2. Reduce the number of platforms you engage with

If you have Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Tumblr, Pinterest and Reddit on your phone, tablet and computer, you're probably past saturation point and into drowning territory. Pick one or two apps that genuinely serve a meaningful purpose for you, and ditch the rest. Gen X'ers find it hard to say goodbye to Facebook, but Gen Zers in the US have largely bid it farewell. If they can do it, so can you!

3. If steps 1 and 2 are still too much, try to reduce your time spent on social media

First and foremost, turn off all your notifications (yes, all of them). If you're conditioned to respond to every "bing", you'll find it almost impossible to stop. Set aside some time each day and do all your social media catching up or browsing. Set an alarm for your predetermined time allocation, and when it sounds, put the phone down until the same time tomorrow.

None of this will be easy, and walking away from social media might hurt at first. But if the relationship has become uncomfortable, or even abusive, it's time to take a stand. And who knows what untold happiness you might find, beyond the four walls of your screen?

Failing to disconnect from social media can end up hurting more the alternative.

Sharon Horwood, Senior lecturer in Psychology, *Deakin University*

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Member Fiction: How The World Is Run

George Wright

There was once a leader of a country who wanted to be safe from atomic attack so he asked another friendly country to provide a facility to protect them. Unfortunately the facility could not be constructed in the time-frame anticipated. In fact, the digital research into the latest software needed to drive the advanced equipment had not quite been completed and until this occurred the deterrent could not be provided at the anticipated date. In fact completion got repeatedly deferred.

This delay could be politically accepted for some time, but after some years past the leader was facing domestic criticism and he found an alternative solution through other friendly countries and terminated the original agreement. At a world scale, this was a normal political give-and-take arrangement commonly made in anticipation of technological advances that had not yet been discovered but were accepted as normal scientific breakthrough research behaviour. However, the once-friendly country suddenly showed signs of disquiet. This got so bad that the leader faced the unthinkable. The once friendly country was publicly rude.

Luckily, in the meetings of world-wide leaders there is a game they play called Pass-the-Treaty. This occurs regularly where suggested exchanges of goods and services are issued at a series of meetings that are scheduled to occur over several days in confined location from which the leaders would find it difficult to escape. These meetings occur at increasing frequency so that at the end of the session on the final day the leaders have faced a barrage of offers and counter-offers which will be terminated by the leader of the host country at a predetermined hour. It originated in kinder where we all learnt how to play pass-the-hanky.

Luckily for us all, there is a dedicated team of digital recorders who keep track of things such as agreements or terminated handshakes so that there is a rational context for all the matters resolved at the conclusion of the session. The results are there for all to read. Unfortunately these records often don't make sense as well as those decisions made leading up to such a meeting whether it be about climate or nuclear stoppers or any other irrelevant thing.

Taken in a wider context, what is agreed at the termination is something that is difficult to specify. Announcements are made such as those that leader had made about protecting his country from atomic attack but all leaders understand that this has been made in the context of artificial timelines and social pressures

In the current case, the leader who terminated the agreement would have had the opportunity to deal with any rudeness that had occurred in the context of a wide range of possibilities of things that could be invented at some future times which has the flexibility to introduce many outcomes that are impossible to pin down with any certainty and the issue can eventually be downgraded in importance by mutual agreement between all negotiating participant leaders.

After all, what technology do you need to drive a facility that has been operating successfully for decades and in the context of a game that has been played for centuries?

Interesting Internet Finds

Steve Costello

Nearby Share On Android: All You Need To Know

https://joyofandroid.com/nearby-share-on-android/

If you are an Android user and want to know about *Nearby Share*, check out this post. I don't use it myself, but not because of anything in the post.

How To Find Your Public & Local IP Address (Windows & Mac)

https://techviral.net/find-your-ip-address/

There are times you might need to know your IP address. This post explains the difference between public and local IP addresses. This post will also show you how to find your IP address should you need to. I suggest keeping this available somewhere you can find it if you need to know your IP address for some reason.

Q&A: Can You Use The Same USB Thumb Drive With Both Windows PCs And Macs?

https://www.ricksdailytips.com/use-same-usb-drive-with-windows-pc-and-mac/

If you use a PC and know others that use a Mac, this question and answer post will be useful to you. The short answer is yes, but there are special things you need to know to be able to do so. This post explains all that.

5 Ways To Eject An External Hard Drive Or USB From Windows 10

5 ways to eject an external hard drive or USB from Windows 10

I know some say you don't need to worry about how you unplug an external USB device from Windows PCs. I always like to make sure to unplug them safely, and you should too. This article shows five ways to unplug USB devices safely.

Android Eye Comfort Shield

https://cynmackley.com/2021/06/24/android-eye-comfort-shield/

I just read this post and adjusted my Galaxy S21 according to the instructions. It does make my eyes more comfortable. If you use an Android phone give this a try.

Just What Is A Hack?

https://askleo.com/just-what-is-a-hack/

If you have been around computers for a while, I am sure you have heard about hacking. Do you know just what a hack is? Did you know there are good and bad hacks? Do you want to know more about hacks? Check out this post from Leo Notenboom to learn about hacks.

7 Tips For Keeping Your Digital Photos Secure On Vacation

https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/tips-digital-photos-secure-vacation/

It is vacation time again. If you are like me, you take a lot of digital photos. Check out this post to learn how to keep them secure while you are on vacation.

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East SIG Report November 2021

Neil Miller

Host Paul Woolard opened the November meeting, again from home via Zoom. The first presentation of the night was **George Skarbek** presenting his usual Q&A segment. With most members on their computers during the latest lockdown, many questions followed.

Q. Every time I start up Windows 10, File explorer starts by default. This is more an annoyance, rather than a problem. File Explorer is not shown in the Windows StartUp folder, so I feel the next alternate is to look in the registry, which I'm reluctant to do. Do you have any ideas what may be happening?

A. You've done the first thing I would have done, by looking in the StartUp folder. I know people are often scared to go into the registry, but I say don't be afraid, go for it. The reason people are afraid is they don't understand what the Registry does. The second reason is that there is no Windows "Are you sure?" warning or no Undo when making changes. When you do something in the Registry, Windows doesn't check it won't cripple or destroy your computer.
What you should not do in the registry is to delete a tree. Anything on the right side of the screen (right hand panel) you can delete, modify or edit without any real worries. I can't think of anything you do on the righthand side that will have any serious impact on your computer. If you've found a hack on the internet to stop File Explorer opening, I say go for it.
[Reply] If I make a mess of things, will Windows rectify itself?
[George] No, that is why it's good practice to take a backup of the registry and know how to reinstall it from the backup.

[Stewart Gruneklee] If you have a USB drive attached to your computer, that may be causing File Explorer to open. When you boot your computer next, see which folder on your computer File Explorer is open on. That could assist to identify the cause.

Q. I assume, a system restore won't backup the Registry, but a backup will?

A. Yes, that is correct. When using backup software like Acronis, you can bring back a single file, a folder, a group of files or the whole drive from your backup. Therefore, you don't have to replace the whole drive from the backup to reinstall the registry.

Q. What are the circumstances when you'll need to do something to the registry?

A. When something is not going right is the only time I've had to edit the registry. Like the issue above, when File Explorer is opening and is not in the StartUp folder. Task Manager is one tool I use a lot when looking to solve problems, rather than going into the registry.

Q. The only thing my Acronis backup won't restore would be the BIOS, is that correct?

A. That's correct, the BIOS has nothing to do with the Windows operating system. The BIOS tells the operating system how much memory you have, the addresses for the disk drives, how many ports you have and so on. That information then gets feed to the operating system at the time of start-up. Before that, the computer has no idea what operating system you have. The computer could be running DOS, a version of Linux or iOS.

Q. Do I really need OneDrive?

A. No.
[Reply] Good

Q. Can you give a brief outline on using the Registry?

A. George proceeded to give a **brief** overview of the registry. In the example he used below, it's assumed the user is given a registry hack via a search engine

1. The registry is opened from regedit.exe as follows.
   Press Win Key + R and type "Regedit".

2. Regedit opens and displays the 5 keys shown in Figure 1.

3. Selecting HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE opens a long list similar to a tree in File Explorer. George clicks on DirectX and selects an item from the right panel and right clicks on the entry.

4. A dialogue box opens giving options to Modify, Delete or Rename the item. George selects "Modify" and a dialogue box (Figure 3) opens where the DWORD value can be changed from 1 or 0.
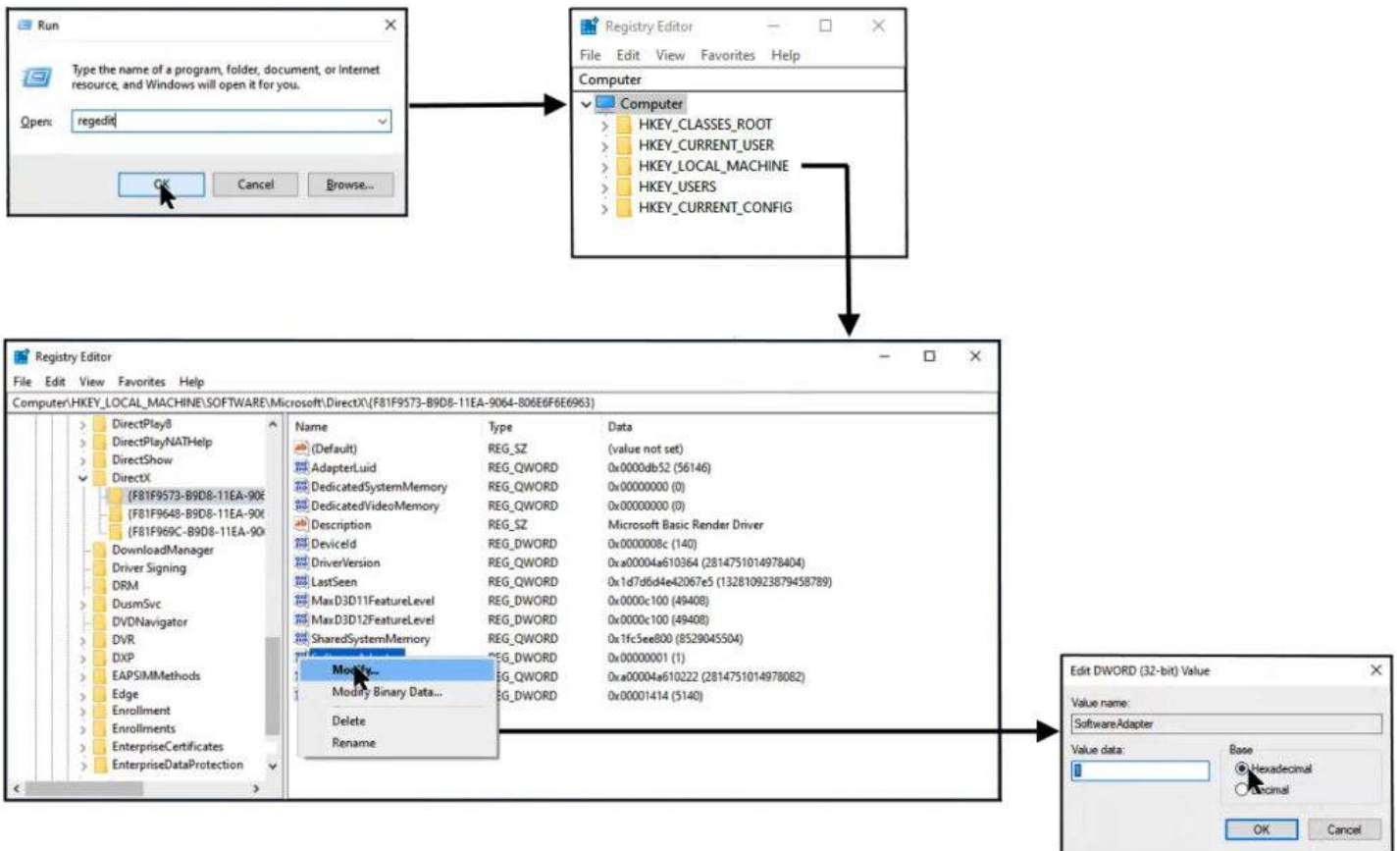

Figure 1 – Steps used to modify entries in the Windows registry.

The registry is a hierarchical database that contains data that is critical for the operation of Windows and the applications and services that run on Windows. The data is structured in a tree format. Each node in the tree is called a key. Each key can contain both subkeys and data entries called values.
The registry contains two basic elements: **keys** and **values**. Registry *keys* are container objects similar to folders. Registry *values* are non-container objects similar to files. Keys may contain values and subkeys. Keys are referenced with a syntax similar to Windows' path names, using backslashes to indicate levels of hierarchy. Keys must have a <u>case insensitive</u> name without backslashes.
The 5 Keys are:
• HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT.
– contains information about registered applications
• HKEY_CURRENT_USER.
– stores settings that are specific to the current logged-in user.
• HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE.
– stores settings for hardware & software that are specific to the local computer
• HKEY_USERS.
– stores settings for each user profile actively loaded on the machine,
• HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG.
– Stores details about the current configuration of hardware attached to the computer.
[Source Wikipedia]

Following Q&A, **Trevor Hudson** played one of his videos titled "Add-ons to make Firefox more Private". (Refer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZGhwAgkE1U).

The video commences showing each step needed to install each of the 4 add-ons Trevor recommends to make browsing more private. The 4 add-ons Trevor installed in the video are, "uBlock Origin", "Self-Destructing Cookies", "Privacy Badger" & "HTTPS Everywhere". Prior to installing each add-on, users can read what each add-on does and then decide if they wish to continue with the install.

Figure 2 – Opening scene from Trevor's video

With the 4 add-ons installed, Trevor gives 4 further privacy tips.

1. Select and use Firefox's New Private Window.
2. Open Firefox's Application menu, select Settings then General. For extra privacy select Firefox as the default browser.
3. Open the Application menu again, select Settings then Search. In the list of browsers in the dropdown list select "DuckDuckGo" as the default search engine. This will improve your privacy and stop advertisements.
4. Open the Application menu once more, select Settings then "Privacy & Security". Here you can decide on your preferred privacy settings.

The next presentation was by **Dave Botherway** with a "Sequel to Internet Shopping",
from last month's presentation titled "The scam aspects of on-line Shopping".

The presentation commenced by summarising **"**Story 2" from last month's East SIG meeting. Story 2 from that meeting is copied below.

> **Story 2** – A legitimate story on Facebook reporting the sale of outdated Dell Inspiron 17" Laptops appeared following Microsoft's announcement it would no longer be supporting Series 7 CPU's. The article stated these laptops were being sold at bargain prices to clear old inventory. As there was possibly some truth to the offer, Dave tried a second attempt knowing PayPal would protect him if this was another scam. Contacting the seller about the progress of the sale again proved fruitless, so another claim was made on PayPal. The claim was readily accepted and the refund was back into his bank account in two days.
> An interesting aspect of this story was after the PayPal claim was accepted and a refund received, an email arrived from the seller with a genuine tracking link. Dave followed the tracking link each day and finally a parcel did arrive. When opened, the parcel revealed a small pillow case or cushion cover, not the laptop he ordered.

Dave's investigations on internet scams sparked his interest in 2 in 1 laptop computers. Eventually Dave spotted what he felt was a genuine bargain and purchased a 2 in 1 from Dell. Details of the purchase are summarised below:

1. One of the 2in1 models that took Dave's interest was a Dell Inspiron 15. [Specifications: 11th Generation Intel Core i7-1165G7 Processor, Windows 11 Home, Intel® Iris® Xe Graphics with shared graphics memory, RAM 16GB. 2x8GB DDR4 @3200MHz, 512GB M.2 PCIe NVMe Solid State Drive with a 15.6" touch display.]

Figure 3 – Dell Inspiron 15 2in1 Laptop

2. On Saturday **23rd October** Dell was selling Inspiron 15 2-in-1 Laptops at $2,949. Dave felt this was too expensive, but kept watching the Dell website.
3. A few days later Intel announce their new Gen-12 CPUs.
4. On Wednesday **27th October** Dell was clearing Gen-11 Devices, selling the Inspiron 15 at $1,621.99, a saving of $1,327 or 45% off.
5. Dave felt this was a bargain and using PayPal, made his purchase on the Wednesday night. The Dell Inspiron 15 arrived on the following Friday.
6. A few days later the price had returned to the pre-sale price of $2,949 and at the time of this meeting (11th November) the price was back to the sales price.

In summary, when making internet purchases, Dave recommends members watch for technology changes, new products and events such as Black Friday and Singles Day sales. Suppliers are often keen to quit old stock hardware, computers that cannot run Windows 11, or old model Gen-11 CPU's, as was the case with Dave's purchase from Dell. Margins are often irrelevant for old stock.

The next presentation was from **Phillip Lynch.** Phillip is a member of the GWS (Google Work Space) Transition Team who are moving all emails from the Microsoft server to the Google Work Space. The club will reach a milestone at the end of the month (November) where all emails previously coming into the melbpc.org.au domain via the Microsoft account, will go directly to the Google Work Space account.

Figure 4 – Google Work Space

After November members will still be able to use their Microsoft account to send emails out, but they won't receive any new emails. Eventually access to the Microsoft account will end completely. Phillip asks members who are still using their Microsoft account if they could move over to GWS now. Instructional videos are on the MelbPC website and team members are available to help members if needed. A selection of questions asked of Phillip are shown below.

Q. Do we need to do anything if I've never used the MelbPC email and now pay Microsoft direct for Microsoft365?

A. If you've never used MelbPC email you don't have to do anything. I assume messages will have been sent to that email address, but they will just sit there.

Q. How would I know if I'm still using my Microsoft account? If I've not heard from the transition team, does that mean everything is okay?

A. There are 2 ways that you would know. Come December, if you are not receiving any emails, then you haven't transitioned.
Phillip then asked the member how he currently accesses his emails, via a web browser or an app on his computer?
(Reply: I use Outlook) Phillip offered to look up his records and advise the member

Q. Can I send an email to myself to see if I've transitioned?

A. No, because it will arrive via the Microsoft account then to GWS.

Q. Will Thunderbird now automatically pick up the Google setting rather than Microsoft, or do we have to enter the settings manually?

A. You will have to change the server settings and it depend whether you get emails by imap or POP. The transition team have helped many members do this. We have built up substantial expertise transiting Thunderbird users.

Q. Does MelbPC have ability to reset the GWS password if any member forgets it?

A. Yes, MelbPC admin can reset your password. However, you can do this yourself and it will be quicker. If you've put in a recovery email address (that is a non MelbPC address) or mobile phone number, you can do it yourself. Go into Google "Forgotten Password" and Google will send you a link to your phone or recovery email address, with a code that will allow you to change your password. That is the best and quickest way.

Q. For those members like me who still using Eudora, an email client which hasn't been supported since 2006, you will find it still works after the transition to GWS and also works on Windows 11.

A. I've heard there are a few members still using Eudora.

With no further questions forthcoming, Phillip proceeded to explain the technique he uses to quickly assess his Google Web Space. This technique is called progressive web apps or PWAs and has been around for a few years. Not all websites are configured for this technique, but the number of sites is growing. It's part of the browser where you turn that particular website into an app.

You can do this with Gmail where you turn the website into an app. This technique makes an entry in your Windows program files and creates an icon for the PWA. You can then drag the icon onto your desktop or onto the taskbar. When you click on the desktop icon, you're automatically logged in.

With progressive web apps there's no address bars and baggage of the browser, but it's still the browser working. The beauty of this with Gmail is you can elect how much of your email you wish to save on your local machine, none of it, some or all of your emails. Gmail as a PWA is quite fast, intuitive and you get access to all the GWS features. If you only have a MelbPC account and running a recent version of Windows, setting up your browser as a progressive web app is a really good way of accessing your GWS account. It's not like webmail, is a really good way of accessing your Gmail and it's very fast.

In Chromium based browsers such as Chrome, when on a website that has PWA functionality, you'll see an

"Install [site name]" when hovering your cursor over the icon at the end of your address bar. This looks like a monitor with a down arrow in front of it. When you click the icon, Chrome will display an "Open with" [site name] pop-up.

If you wanted to install YouTube as a PWA, click "Install YouTube" as shown in Figure 5, to install the website's PWA on your PC. The app will automatically open in a new window and a shortcut will be added to your Start menu and desktop. Double-click on the desktop shortcut to launch the PWA without having to open your browser first. You can also pin the app to the Windows taskbar for easy access.
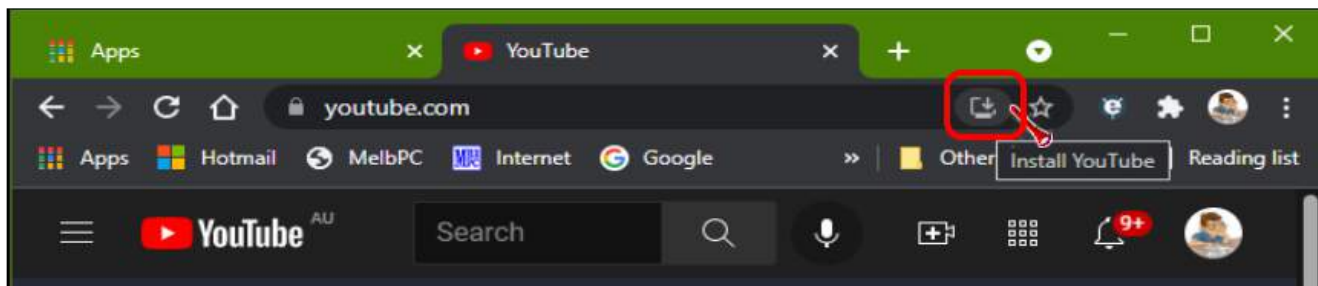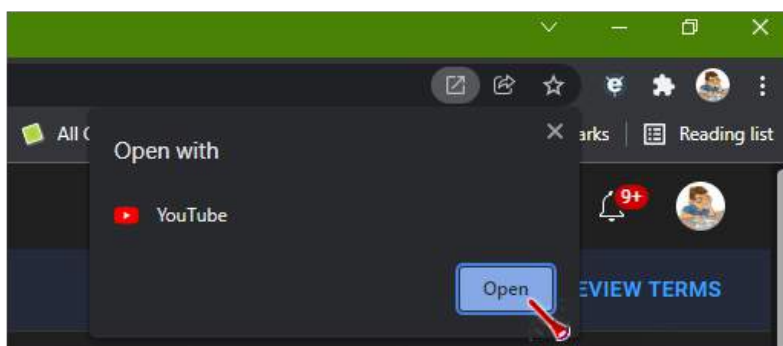
Figure 5 – Installing YouTube as a Progressive Web App.

The final presentation was by **Stewart Bedford** on his new home security camera system.

Some years ago Stewart installed a security camera system on his home. This system was an IP system where cameras could be connected by either by WiFi, Ethernet cable or PoE (Power over Ethernet for power and recording) to a NVR (Network Video Recorder) or computer. Stewart installed his original system himself and adopted the WiFi option to avoid the need for ethernet cabling. This option required the cameras to be powered, which Stewart did by connecting to a power point inside the house. The camera then sent data by WiFi to his computer. The IP cameras needed a fixed IP address, which caused problems when his Internet Service Provider randomly change his IP address. This caused the cameras to go offline. Stewart then needed to go back into the cameras setting and enter the new IP address. As the system was becoming outdated and restricted to where cameras could be located, Stewart started investigating upgrading his system to newer technology.

Figure 6 – Stewart's Original IP Camera

After extensive research, Stewart settled on a Eufy Cam 2C security camera setup. He purchased a 2-camera system for $399 (Figure 7 & 8), plus an additional camera for $183.00. This system uses WiFi, is battery powered, is subscription free and is easy to install oneself. Being battery powered, the cameras do not need mains power from inside his home, as Stewart's previous system did. This allowed installation at more appropriate locations than previously.

Specification of the Eufy Cam 2C

- The standard kit comes with a Homebase to store recorded videos and 2 cameras.
- The capacity of the Homebase is 16GB.
- Camera resolution is 1080P video which is full HD quality recording
- Cameras have a 135° field of view
- Cameras are battery powered
- Cameras connect to the Homebase by WiFi
- All controls are entered via the EufySecurity app.
- Cameras record day and night time infrared vision with motion activation.
- The cameras have built-in microphones so record audio and allow two-way conversation.

Figure 7 – Eufy Cam 2C Security Camera Kit

Setting up the Eufy Cam 2C

Stewart found the Eufy Cam 2C easy to setup. Because the cameras were battery powered, he was not

restricted to where cameras were located, as he was with his previous setup. As the cameras connected to the Homebase by WiFi, mounting locations could be confirmed prior to permanently mounting the cameras. The only proviso was that the cameras' WiFi signal had to reach the Homebase, which was connected to Stewart's router, located at his computer. If this had been a problem, the Homebase could have been moved away from the router. The Homebase would then use its WiFi to connect to the router. In this situation the Homebase acts as a WiFi extender and has a range of 15 metres. When locating the cameras, one disadvantage was that periodically they had to be taken down to be charged. This meant they could not be mounted so high, that they could not be easily reached with a short ladder. Charging of the cameras is done by connecting to the Homebase or via a phone charger. Eufy claim that batteries can be re-charged 300 times and last approximately 5 years, depending on options set via the EufySecurity app.

Figure 8 – Eufy Cam 2C Security Camera Kit

Features and Optional extras

- All controls are via the EufySecurity app.
- The cameras can record sound and when used in live mode the homeowner can conduct two-way conversations.
- Live streaming is available, but results in higher battery use. Stewart adopted motion activated recording instead, as he didn't feel he needed continuous recording.
- The EufySecurity App will send alerts of activity to your phone. Stewart found this annoying and sometimes turned it off while still receiving silent text alerts.
- Recordings are stored on Homebase or at an extra monthly cost of $4 in the cloud.
- According to Eufy the Homebase will overwrite stored video files when capacity is reached. Stewart has manually deleted files a couple of times so has yet to reach capacity.
- A maximum 16 cameras can be added to the system
- Remote viewing and control is via the EufySecurity App.
- Cameras are battery powered with a life of 180 days depending on use. More recent models have 1 year battery life per charge.
- Batteries can be re-charged 300 times which is approximately 5 years.
- The EufySecurity App displays when batteries need charging
- Cameras have a built-in spotlight to record in colour at night.
- A 100dB Siren can be set on the camera, Homebase or both, via the EufySecurity app.
- Optional solar panels are available to re-charge the camera's batteries.

- The motion activation limit is 8 to 10 metres maximum
- Face recognition and human body shape detection can eliminate the camera from activating unnecessarily.
- The field of view of the camera can be narrowed to eliminate activation from trees blowing in the wind.
- Included in the kit is a ball and socket wall mount.
- The camera is light in weight and small in size so can also be mounted using a magnetic base or double-sided tape.

- Cameras are waterproof.
- Data is secured with 128-bit video encryption. Data stored on the homebase is completely private so it can only be accessed by the owner.
- Cameras can be moved inside temporarily if wished to watch misbehaving pets etc.

- There are many other features that Stewart didn't have time to detail.

Figure 9 – Eufy Cam 2C Camera

Advantages of the Eufy Cam 2C

In addition to many of the features mentioned above, Stewart sees the main advantages of the Eufy Cam 2C he installed is its do-it-yourself installation. This is due to the battery powered cameras which avoids the need for professional installation of cables & wiring. Storing data onsite was also an important consideration. Stewart's system of 3 cameras and Homebase was purchased for under $600, compared to many thousand dollars for a professionally installed IP camera installation.

Throughout his presentation Stewart played a number of videos taken with the Eufy during the day and at night. The resolution of the videos was excellent as can be seen in Figure 10 below. The ability to easily relocate cameras to suit certain situations was an added bonus.

Figure 10 – Eufy Cam 2C Capture from Stewart's video

Disadvantages Eufy Cam 2C

The battery powered cameras are the major advantage of the Eufy Cam 2C, but also its major weakness. It will depend on how users prioritise this feature whether the Eufy Cam 2C is appropriate for them. Cameras need to be removed for re-charging and batteries are not replaceable, which means the system will have a finite life. According to Eufy, cameras can be re-charged around 300 re-charges, which is fine for motion activation recording. The Eufy is only suitable for motion activation recording. For continuous recording you will require a different system.

Stewart's Conclusion

Stewart's security camera system has been operating for over a year now and it has performed perfectly over that period. Video quality is good, as the videos he displayed during the presentation showed. The 16GB capacity of the Homebase has been more than adequate for his needs and selecting a battery powered camera system far outweighs any negatives.

Yammer Highlights January 2022

Dennis Parsons

Linux

Frank plugged his Kobo eBook into his Linux computer but couldn't get it to connect properly. The reader was showing as connected on the reader but the computer wasn't seeing the reader at all – it wasn't showing in Calibre, the ebook software Frank was using.

Installing a newer version of Calibre was suggested but as this was going to require a direct download from outside the repository system it wasn't ideal as it would need to be manually updated.

The other suggestion was the USB cable being used was a charging only cable which lacks the wire to carry data. Replacing the cable with a data capable one proved to be the solution. What a pain that the ebook reader didn't indicate a non-data cable was being used.

<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=1580399554560000>

Computer Help

Continuing the cable theme, Michael was having problems with his USB connected printer intermittently showing a "USB device not recognised" error message. Michael thought it might be a software based issue as he'd tried plugging the cable directly into the computer rather than via a hub and unplugging everything else without luck.

Given the intermittent nature of the problem a dodgy cable was suspected as the likely cause and replacement was suggested, which did indeed prove to be the solution.

USB cables seem to be a source of problems for many members so it appears having a spare available is a good move.

This prompted mention of the scourge of proprietary cables for devices such as fax machines that had some "feature" such as a capacitor or linked pins without which the device wouldn't work. Very frustrating if it looks like any other cable.

<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=1587465985236992>

Smart TV and Other Devices

For those with older ears the quality of sound from TV speakers can be inadequate and hearing aids don't necessarily help if the sound is "muddy" and limited in frequency range in the first place. Don was seeking a hopefully cheap and easy solution to improve the audio output from an older TV he and his wife currently use.

Their "hearing guy" suggested a new TV would be better than a sound bar but Don wanted a second opinion so asked what Yammer users thought. The consensus was a sound bar was definitely worth trying as they could be bought for around $100 and should provide much better sound quality than the old TV speakers. He was advised to check which audio connections were available on the TV and make sure any sound bar he chose could cater for the connection types.

Don duly purchased a sound bar for $80, connected it using an RCA to mini-jack cable and was happy with the "fuller, crisper and clearer" sound and said "it'll certainly do for now". Sounds like a win all around.

<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=1557637656625152>

<u>Chit Chat</u>

For those who enjoy puzzles, Wordle, the (currently free) word based puzzle that has recently been bought by the New York Times was discussed. Having recently jumped on the Wordle bandwagon, Jan shared a link that shows how to save the original web based version to your computer so you'll be able to continue using it regardless of what the NYT decides to do.

Other options were mentioned such as an Android app and an online variant that offers word lengths between four and eleven for those that want more of a challenge.

<https://www.yammer.com/melbpc.org.au/#/Threads/show?threadId=1591667691757568>