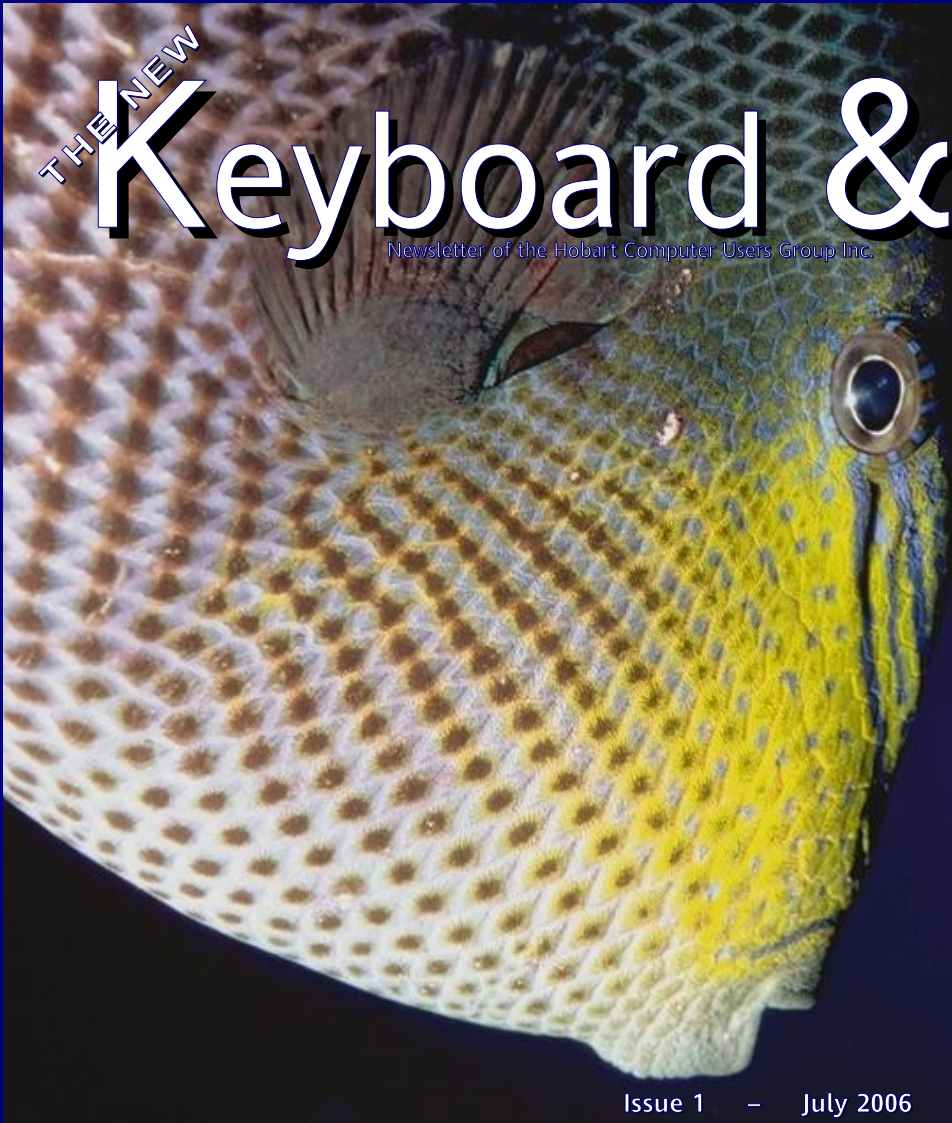


THE NEW

# Keyboard & Mouse

Newsletter of the Hobart Computer Users Group Inc.



Don't get caught! Phishers and scammers abound!

New Linux release: Xandros 4 – the Digital Desktop

Windows Vista Beta 2

Issue 1 – July 2006

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**Editor:** Peter Campbell,  
C/-Hobart Computer Users Group Inc.,  
PO Box 3179, West Hobart Tas 7000, Australia  
**Phone:** 0414 402 092  
**Email:** [editor@hobartpcgroup.org.au](mailto:editor@hobartpcgroup.org.au)

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## Don't get caught

**Do not click on any link in this item! Read on to find out why!**

*TITLE>postcards.org*

*You have just received a virtual postcard from a friend !*

*You can pick up your postcard at the following web address:*

<http://www2.postcards.org/?d21-sea-sunset>

*If you can't click on the web address above, you can also*

*visit 1001 Postcards at*

<http://www.postcards.org/postcards/>

*and enter your pickup code, which is: d21-sea-sunset*

*(Your postcard will be available for 60 days.)*

Looks innocent enough, doesn't it? After all, postcards.org is a genuine provider of virtual postcards that you can send to friends (see next column for an example of the type of illustrations they provide).

However, if you point Thunderbird at the link in the opened message, you'll find it actually reads, "<http://beach.sprender.com/postcard.gif.exe>." That should give you two warnings!

Firstly, the link does not point to the postcards.org site. Why not? That's where the virtual card supposedly is.

Secondly, the link is actually to an executable file. Notice the .exe on the end. Obviously you should not click on the link because that would cause this file, which you were not expecting to receive, to execute.

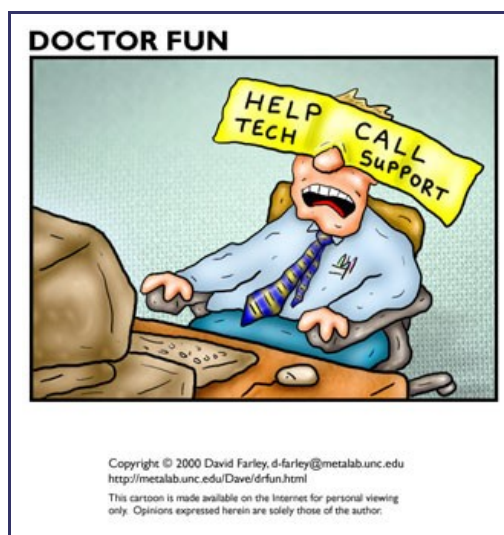


Another thing that is suspicious is that the card does not name the "friend". All reputable electronic postcard companies allow senders to include their name and message so that the recipient knows it is a genuine electronic card.

Is it a link to a virus or spyware? I don't know and I don't intend to find out. Neither should you!

What if you received an email from your bank/credit union/eBay/PayPal (or similar), asking you to confirm your (confidential) details or telling you your account has been suspended? Invariably the link provided in such messages will lead you to a site that looks genuine, but isn't.

This method of trying to trick you into providing access to your account is known as "phishing". In order to hide their activities further, many phishers offer "employment" transferring funds. Avoid those



job offers, or **you** may be charged with fraud, rather than the phisher who has hidden behind your identity.

Then there is the email that tells a long-winded story about millions of unclaimed dollars in an account and, with your help, the writer is going to claim them and let you keep 30% (or whatever) just for allowing the transfer to be made via your account. If you go along with this, you will find that instead of receiving money, your account will be cleaned out, or you will be asked to provide funds to facilitate the transfer in some way. Either way, the scammer wins and you lose.

Another way that scammers will try to rob you of your hard-earned cash is by telling you that you have won a lottery prize. All you have to do is pay a processing fee.

Use common sense and analyse the email as I did in the postcard example.

- Reputable institutions don't ask you to confirm confidential details by following a link in an email. So never follow such links.
- The long-winded story is designed to appeal to your greed. Common sense should tell you that no-one is going to pay you millions for the use of your account. If you fall for that one (and many have), you deserve to be ripped off.
- And how can you win a lottery if you didn't buy a ticket?

Keep your antivirus and anti-spam software up-to-date and in use, but don't forget to use your brain as well. Most viruses, spyware and scams can be avoided if you think before you click. Their spread is as much about tricking people into letting them loose as it is about their inbuilt mechanisms.

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## Xandros 4

PRESS RELEASE FROM XANDROS INC.:

### **New Xandros Linux Desktop Home Edition (v4.0) Targets Home and Multimedia Users With Support for iPods, Cameras, Email, Web Browsing, Internet Calling and More on Secure, Stable Linux Platform**

**NEW YORK, NY 21 June 2006** – Xandros, the leading provider of easy-to-use Linux alternatives to Windows desktop and server products, today announced a new line of consumer desktop products targeting home and multimedia users: Xandros Desktop Home Edition and Xandros Desktop Home Edition - Premium. The new Windows and Mac alternatives, tailored to fit today's digital lifestyle, are available now, at the suggested retail price of USD 39.99 and USD 79.99 respectively.

Xandros Desktop Home Edition and Xandros Desktop Home Edition - Premium provide a complete media experience on the secure, stable Xandros Linux operating system (OS). The new products cover the digital home lifestyle spectrum with music management, wireless networking, photo management, Internet calling, DVD burning, iPod support, and more.

Users can install Xandros Desktop Home Edition on existing hardware and enjoy transparent Windows compatibility, including the ability to work on the same files from Linux and Windows, as well as use popular Windows software products, such as Microsoft Office, or popular Linux software products, such OpenOffice.

"Xandros Desktop Home Edition fits the lifestyle of today's media-savvy consumers, without the need for a costly hardware upgrade or worry about security," said Andreas Typaldos, Xandros CEO. "Xandros users can now connect to wireless networks, sync their iPod and MP3 players, create audio CDs, surf the Web, make free Internet calls from their PCs, and protect their machine from outside intruders and viruses, with built-in anti-virus detection and firewall, for the price of what a Windows user would spend to purchase anti-virus protection alone. We offer consumers a fun and secure environment for their digital lifestyle without the frustration or damage caused by intrusion, viruses and malware, without loss of Windows compatibility and functionality -- and all at a fraction of the cost."

"While my wife uses our PC mainly for email and household bookkeeping and organization, my son's digital lifestyle is much more involved. Between blogging and chatting with his friends, researching information for school and playing music and videos, the PC is really his digital home," explained Ming Poon, Xandros VP of Product Development. "With my family using Xandros Desktop they can continue

using the PC the way they want and I don't have to worry about the security of our personal data, system crashes, or any of the other issues that Windows users encounter daily. For my family Xandros Desktop offers us exactly what we need as individuals and most importantly, peace of mind."

### **A Complete Home Computing Experience**

The new Xandros Desktop Home Editions combine the security and stability of Linux with the user-friendliness of Windows and Mac OS X. Outstanding features for the Digital Lifestyle include:

- **Web:** Wireless network profiles quickly connect to favorite wireless networks and hot-spots anywhere. Easily switch between wired and wireless networks, and connect to school and corporate VPNs (Virtual Private Networks).
- **Music:** Music Manager with iPod support to sync iPod and MP3 players. Import and organize music, podcasts and audiobooks. Listen to playlists and collections. Create MP3s and audio CDs.
- **Photos:** Xandros Photo Manager to import photos from your digital camera. View, edit and organize your albums. Post images online or print them at home.
- **Video:** Realplayer support of popular media types, plus the Xine open source video player to support most video formats and DVDs.
- **Telephone:** Skype Internet calling, including bonus 30-minute SkypeOut voucher to call regular phones.
- **Browser:** Firefox tabbed web browsing with automatic blocking of pop-up ads.
- **Email:** Thunderbird email with intelligent spam filtering.
- **Ease of use:** Xandros File Manager for access to local and remote resources, drag-and-drop DVD burning, and more.
- **Updates:** Xandros Networks for automatic updates plus single-click access to free and commercial software.

### **Unrivaled Windows Compatibility and Migration Support**

Xandros Desktop Home Editions provide unrivaled Windows compatibility, including enhanced Windows-to-Linux migration support:

- The first distribution to enable writing to NTFS partitions (the native file system on Windows computers) from Linux, which allows users to work with the same files from Linux and Windows.

- Share printers and files on Windows networks.
- Complete MS Office compatibility including the ability to create, read, and write MS Office documents, spreadsheets, and presentations with OpenOffice.org.
- Run MS Office, Adobe Photoshop, Quicken, and other popular Windows programs using Codeweaver's CrossOver Office.
- Automatically transfer Windows "personalities" to Xandros, including email, address books, music, photos, and settings.

### Standards-based Stability with Added Security

Xandros Desktop Home Editions are based on Debian GNU/Linux for the ultimate in stability, and are fully compliant with the latest LSB (Linux Standards Based) 3.1 desktop specification for universal third-party support. The secure Linux system is given an extra measure of protection with a built-in Xandros Security Suite, including Xandros Anti-Virus, Firewall Control, and System File Protector.

### Pricing and Availability

The Xandros Desktop Home Edition and Xandros Desktop Home Edition - Premium are available for purchase and download from [www.xandros.com](http://www.xandros.com) and resellers worldwide at a suggested retail price of USD 39.99 and MSRP USD 79.99 respectively. Some of the features described are found only in Xandros Home Edition - Premium. Localized versions in Spanish, Portuguese, German and French will be available in Q4 of 2006. For complete product and purchase details, please visit [www.xandros.com](http://www.xandros.com).

### About Xandros

Founded in 2001 with headquarters in New York, offices in Frankfurt and Mumbai, and research and development facilities in Ottawa, Xandros, Inc. is the leading provider of easy-to-use Linux alternatives to Windows. Its Debian-based products range from standalone consumer desktops to end-to-end enterprise desktop, server, and management solutions featuring workflow automation and centralized, remote administration.

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Contact: Xenia von Wedel, [xenia@terpin.com](mailto:xenia@terpin.com)

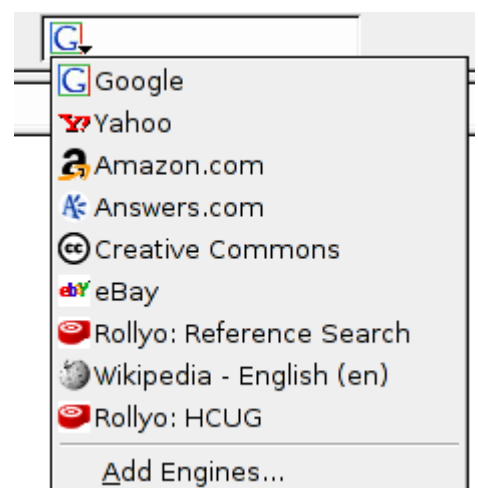
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## Search our website with Firefox

A recent addition to the hundreds of search engines you can add to Firefox is Rollyo ("Roll Your Own"). With it you can search any website or group of websites of your choice.

To add your own Rollyo search engine to the search bar, go to <http://www.rollyo.com/firefoxsearch.html>. Follow the directions given on the site. It's as simple as that!

To add other search engines, drop down Firefox's search bar and click on Add Engines. You will be taken to the Search Engines section of the Firefox Add-Ons site and can then select from popular choices or go to the full list of available search engine additions.



The ability to use your favourite and/or custom search engines is one of Firefox strengths. Try it. You'll like it.

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## Windows Vista beta 2

The long awaited Vista Beta has been made available to selected developers, magazine writers and a limited number of other users. Members of the general public who registered by 30 June 2006 and download the beta 2 version by 14 July have an opportunity to try the product. The rest of us will have to content ourselves with visiting <http://www.microsoft.com/Windowsvista> and have a look at what Microsoft has revealed about its long-awaited replacement for the now venerable Windows XP.

Bear in mind that what you will see there is only a beta. While it does show what the new version may include, changes can, and will, be made before the final product is released. Feedback from this beta will shape the final release, which, subject to any last minute changes, will come in five versions.

The five different editions of Windows Vista seem to be finalised as: Windows Vista Business, Windows Vista Enterprise, Windows Vista Home Premium, Windows Vista Home Basic and Windows Vista Ultimate. This obviously will leave most home users with a choice of two versions: Home Premium and Home Basic.

Although you can no longer download a copy of the beta, you can check whether your PC is compatible with Vista right now, using the Windows Vista Upgrade Advisor beta. This is available for download at:



Fig 2: The sideshow

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/upgradeadvisor/default.mspx>

Microsoft assert that the Upgrade Advisor does not collect or send any personal, identifiable data during this process.

One element of Vista that has attracted attention is the new SideShow technology. This allows laptop

manufacturers to fit a small display (on the outside of the case, for example) which can access data on the



Fig 1: 3D display allows you to choose from your open apps

hard drive, whether the laptop is on or off. You will be able to quickly check meeting schedules, contacts and emails, without having to power-up your laptop. There is even a suggestion that mobile devices running SideShow will be able to wirelessly access your resting laptop.

On the other hand, some who have used beta 2 suggest that there are still quite a few things that you are not going to like. Scot Finnie of *Scot's Newsletter* and *Computerworld* fame says:

*It boils down to this: The software giant is favoring security and IT controls over end-user productivity. Don't get me wrong, security and IT manageability are very good things. But some of the people actually using the Beta 2 Vista software describe their experience as akin to that of a rat caught in a maze.*

*Business and home users will be nonplussed by the blizzard of protect-you-from-yourself password-entry and "Continue" boxes required by the User Account Controls feature, for example. Networking functions and settings are scattered all over the place. The same is true of what Windows XP calls Display Properties. By default, the main menus (you know, File, Edit, View, etc.) are turned off on Windows Vista folders, Internet Explorer 7 and several other programs and utilities that come with Vista. Listing 20 things you won't like about Windows Vista was unfortunately all too easy.*

To read all of Scot's 20 negatives, go to:

<http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9000829>

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## Remove WGA notification

Don Trotman recently drew my attention to the Windows XP validation process and to an aspect of it that is of some concern.

Windows XP's validation process has two parts. The first checks that you have a legal copy of XP. Passing this check gives you access to updates that would otherwise be unavailable and is Microsoft's latest effort to stem piracy. That should only cause concern among those who haven't bought a legitimate copy for each computer they wish to use it on, as required by Microsoft EULA (End User Licence Agreement).

The second part notifies Microsoft by contacting their servers daily, although this is to be amended to fortnightly in the next version of this software. This is similar behaviour to that exhibited by spyware.

A French developer, Guillaume Kaddouch, has responded by releasing a tool called "RemoveWGA", which removes this "phone home" behaviour.

Microsoft maintains that users only install the programs by choice, but once installed, neither is designed to be removable. Kaddouch, however, calls the method by which users are persuaded to install Notification "deceptive" because, he says, Microsoft classified it as a "high priority update" causing many users to install it without knowing what it was.

As Microsoft admitted recently, Notification also checks back with Microsoft once a day even if the licensing check is successful, something the company hadn't previously made public. Microsoft said the procedure is necessary in case something goes wrong with the program and it needs to be disabled, but has said it will modify Notification to check back only once every two weeks. It said the failure to make public the phone-home behavior was an "oversight."

"Once the WGA Notification tool has checked your OS and has confirmed you had a legit copy, there is no decent point or reason to check it again and again every boot," Kaddouch wrote in a note accompanying his removal tool. To guard against Notification being reinstalled, RemoveWGA can also be set to run a periodic check in the background.

RemoveWGA can be obtained from its author's website: <http://www.firewallleaktester.com/remove-wga.htm> or several other software sites.

WGA will be embedded within Windows Vista, Microsoft has said.

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## Coming meetings

**Tuesday, 11 July 2006:**

### **Basic computer maintenance.**

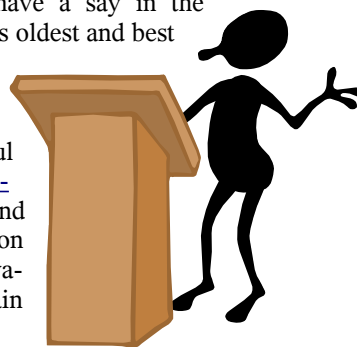
Just like your car, your computer requires regular maintenance. Come and find out what you have to do to keep it running at its peak.

**Tuesday, 8 August 2006:**

### **Annual General Meeting.**

Your chance to have a say in the running of Hobart's oldest and best Personal

Computer users' group. Contact President Paul ([president@hobart-pcgroup.org.au](mailto:president@hobart-pcgroup.org.au)) and he'll fill you in on what Committee vacancies still remain to be filled.



One of the duties of the incoming Committee will be to plan what topics will be tackled at meetings over the next year. Please forward your suggestions to the Secretary ([secretary@hobartpcgroup.org.au](mailto:secretary@hobartpcgroup.org.au)).

The notice below is just a reminder. The formal notice will be placed in the Mercury at the appropriate time.

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## Renewal notice

For almost all members, 30 June 2006 marks the end of their membership year. Thus, unless there are special circumstances, such as having paid a full year's subscription a few months ago, your membership fee is now due.

The current membership fee is \$30, \$5 of which is being put into a fund to finance new equipment and repairs to existing equipment. This will ensure that we are able to upgrade or repair our computer, monitor, projector and other equipment as needed. You can download a Renewal/Application form from our website:

[hobartpcgroup.org.au/files/about%20us/join%20us/join\\_us.htm](http://hobartpcgroup.org.au/files/about%20us/join%20us/join_us.htm)

## Windows XP security hint

### Deactivating Password Storage

Windows XP, by default, will remember website passwords and fill them in when you revisit the page. If you are the only person using the computer this can be very convenient. However, if you are not the only user and you want to be more secure, disable password storage. Here's how, thanks to an item sent to me by Paul Turvey:

First, back up your XP registry by setting a Manual System Restore Point:

- Click Start/All Programs/Accessories/System Tools/System Restore.
- Select Create a Restore Point and click Next.
- Type a name for your restore point.
- Click Create.
- Click Close.

Then ...

- Click Start/Run.
- Type: *regedit* and press ENTER.
- Go to the registry subkey:  
HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\InternetSettings
- Right-click somewhere empty in the right-hand pane of the Registry Editor.
- Click New/DWORD Value.
- Type *DisablePasswordCaching* as the value name and press ENTER.
- Double-click on the new value *DisablePasswordCaching* and type *1* in the Value Data field.
- Click OK.
- Exit the Registry Editor.

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## Two versions of this newsletter

*Keyboard & Mouse* is produced in two versions: A5 Landscape and A4 Portrait. The A5 version is shaped the same as your screen. Once you have downloaded it, you should be able to get it to occupy the screen exactly by using the "Fit to Page" and "Full Screen" options in your PDF Reader.

If you prefer to print your newsletters out and put them in a folder for future reference, download the A4 version. This has exactly the same content, but has been reformatted so that it prints the equivalent of two A5 pages on one A4. The resultant pages and index have been renumbered accordingly.

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## PCs not the home media centre

Looking to boost PC sales, manufacturers created the Media Center PC, running a special version of Windows. The idea was to bridge the PC-TV gap and bring the PC into our living rooms as a home entertainment device.



Fig 3: Typical Media Center PC

Despite the idea's promise a recent report from the UK claims, in sales terms, they have failed to take-off.

In the past 12 months, according to a survey by Gfk, only 150,000 Media Center PCs were sold – representing just four per cent of all PCs shipped. This compares with 2,000,000 DVD recorders shipped in the same period. Despite the number of different models available doubling to 150 this year, there was only a modest increase in sales, GfK found.

However, while Media Centre sales are rising, those of desktop personal computers are falling. With further customer education, the Media Centre PC may eventually find its niche and we may all end up with laptops and Media Centers.

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## Using OpenOffice.org styles

When I want to put a heading on an item in this newsletter, I drop down the Styles menu and choose Heading 1. Instantly the font colour changes to blue with a "Sun 4" background and borders above and below the heading. Once I have typed the heading in, I press the ENTER key and the style immediately changes to Text Body Indent and I can start typing the item. Sub-headings have their own style as do the captions under the illustrations. This gives a consistent look and saves considerable time.

OpenOffice.org and StarOffice Writer come with a full complement of predefined styles. To modify a predefined style is very easy. Just click on a text sample in that style. Next, open the Stylist – in the most recent version of Writer the button for this is alongside the Styles menu. If the Text Style you wish to amend isn't shown, scroll up to All Styles, click, and it will be. Right click and choose Modify.

You can apply every facet of paragraph formatting to a style, including font, typeface, font size, font effects, border, background, alignment, text flow, indents, spacing, tabs, position, drop caps and numbering!

If you prefer to create a new style instead of

modifying an existing one, it is just as easy. Format a paragraph using the usual formatting tools. Open the Stylist. Highlight a portion of the paragraph and drag it into the Stylist. Give the new Style a name, click OK and you're done.

Writer has paragraph styles for text, chapters, lists, indices, HTML and even, conditional styles. Conditional styles are paragraph styles that have different properties depending on the context.

There are also character, frame and page styles for use in Writer, while there are cell and page styles for use in Calc spreadsheet. Graphics and presentation styles are provided for drawing and creating presentations. Open the Stylist and the relevant styles are there waiting to help you with your task.

For some simple tutorials on OpenOffice.org, which are equally applicable to StarOffice go to:

<http://www.tutorialsforopenoffice.org>

There you will find tutorials for installing the application suite, as well as individual tutorials for Writer, Calc, Impress and Draw.

If you would like to work through some of their tutorials and give the authors feedback, it would be greatly appreciated.

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## An OpenOffice.org quirk?

If you look at the index to this newsletter, you will see that every second line of the table contains a tab, complete with dotted fill. But pressing TAB in a table takes you to the next cell. How then can you put a tab in a table?

In the case of OpenOffice.org and StarOffice Writer, the answer is quite simple. Create the tabbed line outside the table and copy it into place. The tab is

### Jargon key

**This newsletter uses a shorthand method of telling you which menu options to click on. It works like this:**

**By *Click Start/Run* we mean *Click on the Start button, then click on the option Run*, which appears on the Start Menu. By ENTER we mean the Enter key on your keyboard.**

**When we tell you to type something in, we may use quotation marks. Unless we tell you to include them, omit the "" marks and only type in what appears between them.**

copied along with the text. By copying the tabbed lines into every cell I created a template, the wording of which could then be amended.

This may well work with other word processors, but I have not had the opportunity to test it.

The mechanism for inserting tabs in tables in Writer exists as you can format a paragraph within a table and the formatting can include tabs. However, there does not appear to be any way to use the resultant tabs because of the over-riding use of TAB to move between cells.



Fig 4: A5 Landscape fits the full screen for ease of reading

In Word you can put a tab into a table by pressing CTRL and TAB at the same time. This did not work in StarOffice 8.0 running under Linux, because it is the key combination for switching between virtual desktops.

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## Late News

### Class action over Microsoft's WGA

An IDG report just to hand states that Microsoft Corp. is facing a class-action lawsuit over a tool that gathers data on a user's computer in an effort to detect bootlegged copies of its Windows operating system.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court in Seattle on 26 June 2006 concerns Microsoft's Windows Genuine Advantage (WGA), an antipiracy tool the company introduced in July 2005. The WGA program collects hardware and software data, delivering it to Microsoft servers. The stored information is then used to warn of possible piracy violations.

The lawsuit alleges that the program violates consumer protection laws in California and Washington state and laws against spyware – invasive programs that surreptitiously collect data. The suit further contends that the company misled users in delivering WGA to computers, masking it under batches of monthly updates that often include critical security patches. It asks Microsoft to delete all data collected by WGA and provide users with the ability to remove the software from their computers, in addition to damages.

Meantime you can use RemoveWGA to remove it.

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