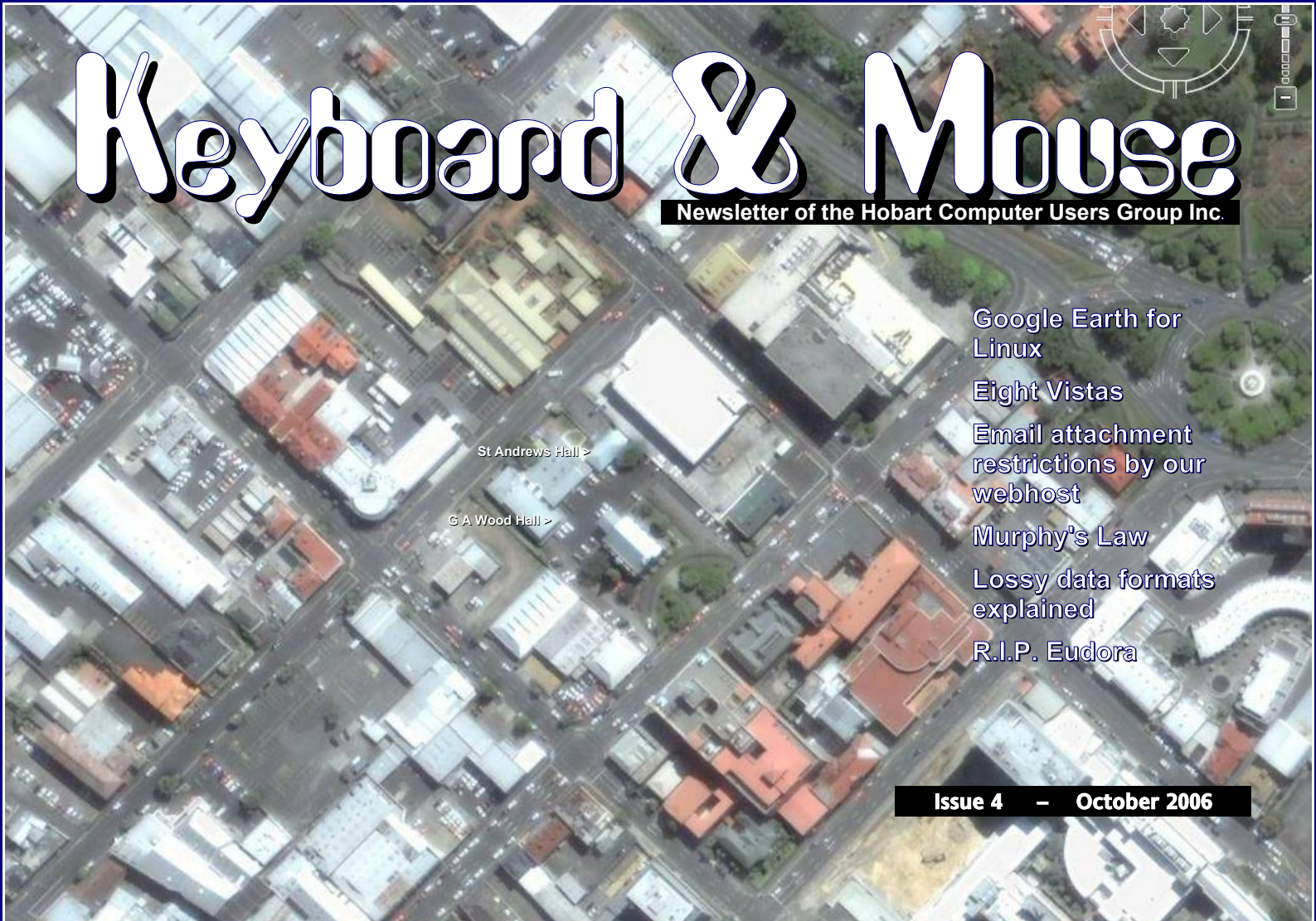


# Keyboard & Mouse

Newsletter of the Hobart Computer Users Group Inc.



Google Earth for Linux

Eight Vistas

Email attachment restrictions by our webhost

Murphy's Law

Lossy data formats explained

R.I.P. Eudora

Issue 4 – October 2006

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**Our cover:** Aerial view of our meeting hall, Courtesy of Google Earth

## Google Earth for Linux

Following their Picasa 2 for Linux release, Google has now released a Linux binary (.bin) of their famous Earth application. While they give instructions on their website for installing the binary into various distros of Linux, following their Console instructions for Debian-based distributions doesn't work with Xandros 4. The easiest way to install the binary into Xandros 4 is as follows:

1. Download the file *GoogleEarthLinux.bin*. This is a self-installing binary, but, as downloaded, it is **not** executable.
2. Use the **Administrator's File Manager** for the installation. (*Launch / Applications / System / Administrator Tools / Xandros File Manager (Administrator)*)
3. Browse to where you downloaded the file.
4. Right-click on it and select **Properties**. Select the **Permissions** tab
5. Click the **Exec** permission and click **OK**. The file can now execute.
6. Right click on *GoogleEarthLinux.bin* again and choose **Open**. **N.B.: DO NOT DOUBLE CLICK TO OPEN IT - IT WON'T WORK!**
7. The program will now install.

To add an icon to the desktop, use this procedure:

1. Right click on **desktop**
2. Choose **Create New/Shortcut**
3. Choose **Program** and click **Next**
4. Browse to the **opt** folder (click the up arrow to **My Linux**, then go down through **All File Systems, /, opt / google-earth**)
5. Choose *googleeearth* and complete the shortcut process. This will give you a default desktop icon.
6. Right click on this and choose **Properties**
7. In the window that opens click on the icon at the top left and a window will open showing icons you can choose.
8. Click on **Other Icons**
9. Click on the **Browse** button and go to the **opt / google-earth** folder. There you will find two *Google Earth* icons.
10. Choose either one and click **OK**
11. To add the desktop icon to the quick start part of the taskbar, just drag it into position and release the mouse.

Finally, add *Google Earth* to the **Launch** menu using the **Menu Editor** (on the System section of the Launch menu):

1. Right click on the category in which you wish to place *Google Earth* (e.g. *Internet*) or create a new submenu
2. Complete the details including adding an icon in a similar manner to that described earlier
3. **File/Save** completes the process

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## Attachment and spam policy

### Email addresses and aliases:

Those of you who have a Hobart Computer Users Group Inc. email address or alias should please note the following with regard to acceptable attachments. The restrictions placed on attachments are designed to prevent viruses from being sent via executable files attached to emails.

*"Emails with attachments with the following extensions are banned from the mail server and are rejected. bat com cmd exe hta pif reg scr vbs wsh. The virus scanner may also reject other attachment types as they become used in virus or worm emails. If you need to receive an attachment with a banned file type, please have the sender compress the file into a zip file."*

Emails sent to addresses issued by the Group are subjected to scanning to reduce spam. The process is described by our webhosts in the following terms:

*"Level 3: Blacklist and Greylist Spam protection. Rejects all email that originates from any email server listed in the spamhaus.org, dsbl.org, or njabl.org black list of open relays and known Spam operations. While blacklist Spam protection can reduce incoming Spam by 80%, more and more Spam is being sent by more and more spyware and virus infected computers. Greylist Spam protection is very effective at stopping Spam from spyware and virus infected computers. Greylisting works by temporarily rejecting an email the first time that it is received from an unknown mail server. A legitimate mail server will try to send the email again after 5 to 30 minutes, while a spyware or virus infected computer will not."*

As a result, all emails sent via our host's servers take up to half-an-hour to come through. This should be borne in mind when signing up with websites which require confirmation.

### Mailing list

Subscribers to our mailing list, who are not members of the Group when they subscribe, are required to complete an opt-in process to ensure that they have personally requested the subscription.

All messages sent to the mailing list address [hcug-mailing-list@hobartpcgroup.org.au](mailto:hcug-mailing-list@hobartpcgroup.org.au) are intercepted by the Moderator after being scanned, as described above. Should any unacceptable message make it as far as the Moderator, they are not rejected. Where the sender is known, he/she/they will be notified of the reasons for the rejection of the message. This guarantees that spam and viruses cannot be sent to subscribers.

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## Murphy's Law

### Whoops!

At the September meeting, Don Trotman and I set out to show you how easy it is to install Xandros 4 on a Windows computer.



Fig. 1: Xandros desktop is very flexible

Unfortunately, as Robbie Burns said "*The best laid schemes o' mice an' men [g]ang aft a-gley...*" Or, if you prefer, Murphy's Law intervened and several problems were experienced.

Naturally, when I went home, wiped the laptop's hard drive and did the whole Windows followed by Xandros 4 Home Premium installations again, everything worked perfectly.

Now, I don't know whether the laptop got car-sick, or, as our President suggested, the projector somehow blew problems into the machine, but I do apologise for the rather confused presentation that resulted.

### What was supposed to happen

What I had intended to show was that the Express installation will, if there is sufficient room, repartition the Windows drive and install the basic operating system, an Internet browser and Xandros Networks (application downloader and installer) in around 20 minutes. You follow this by installing additional applications from a CD or via Xandros Networks. That process takes from 20 minutes to a few hours depending on whether you need to download software and updates from the Internet and, if so, whether you have a broadband connection.

### Software sources

Applications on the Xandros Networks server have been tested and are certified to work with Xandros 4. However, you are not limited to those applications; you can add any of the thousands of Debian packaged

applications available from the Xandros Debian site. You can also use Debian packages (.deb) from any other source and can try installing RedHat Package Manager packages (.rpm). Xandros Networks converts these to Debian and then installs them. Sometimes, however, they do not work, as the package is not designed for a Debian system and may not include all the necessary components (or dependencies, as they are known).

A third source of packages is binary files, such as the Google Earth one mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. Those can be installed using the Xandros File Manager. A fourth method exists for the more adventurous user and that is compiling applications from the source code. While this does require some additional knowledge, the end product is optimised to suit your equipment – something that is simply not permitted with most Windows applications.

### Some suggested additional applications

#### Internet:

Xandros 4 uses Firefox and Thunderbird as its default Internet applications, but you can change to Opera, Mozilla or SeaMonkey with ease.

#### Office:

OpenOffice.org 2.0 is its default office applications suite, but you can get StarOffice 8.0 at a discounted price from Xandros Networks. If your needs are not too demanding, you might prefer KOffice, which can be downloaded and installed from Xandros Networks with just a few mouse clicks. There are also a number of other office suites available for Linux.

#### Graphics:

Picasa 2 is now available for Linux, as is Google Earth. XnView is available in a Linux version, or you can run the Windows version using Crossover Office.

#### Windows applications:

Word, Excel, Outlook, Powerpoint, and Access from Office 97 to Office 2003 have been tested and mostly work well with Crossover (Access 2003 excepted). Many other Windows applications will run as Linux applications using Crossover or Wine. However, many others don't.

For further information, go to:

<http://www.codeweavers.com/compatibility>

### File management

Most Linux distributions use Nautilus or Konqueror for file management. Xandros took Konqueror and combined it with a DVD burning application, an archiver (for zip files etc.), a Postscript viewer, a graphics viewer and a text viewer. They then modified the Konqueror interface to make a complete file manager. Similarly in devising an interface for the

useful apt-get method of downloading and installing packages, they included Alien to convert RPM packages and added access to their shop so that you can purchase various non-free software all from the one easy-to-follow Window.

### Look more closely

People who only take a superficial look at the Xandros 4 distribution sometimes conclude that Xandros have simply rebranded other applications. However, a closer look shows that a lot of careful work has gone into redesigning and combining those applications.

The main target of all this work is now the corporate environment, where Xandros is designed to run on some computers while others are using Windows.

It connects easily with Windows networks, can read and write NTFS drives, and run the main Windows applications that would be used in such an environment. Despite this focus, it still has much to offer the new Linux user.

### Very flexible

Compare the illustration in Fig. 1 with the layout Don demonstrated at the meeting and you can see that the Xandros 4 interface is very flexible and can be customised to your taste in a wide variety of ways. As with Windows, you can move the taskbar to the sides or top of the screen and increase its width. You can choose to display icons, or work entirely from the Launch menu. You can change the themes, colours, backgrounds, fonts, and icons.

Xandros Inc. have put a lot of work into making Linux easier to work with, especially for (former) Windows users, but the unique features of Linux are still there and you can use virtual desktops (up to 20) and have a retracting (as well as hiding) taskbar. You can also have a Mac-like application menu bar at the top of the screen.

### Security

Security is addressed by insisting that at least one user account is created during the install, thereby limiting the unauthorised user to running, rather than installing, applications. There is a security centre that monitors the firewall, antivirus, and operating system updates. It also includes a rootkit checker to prevent spyware implantation.

The antivirus software is ClamAV with a Xandros-designed interface and appears to work well. It is a little hard to judge, however, as I've yet to see a Linux virus. It does find Windows viruses from time to time, which is a little surprising as Internode endeavour to filter them out. Just goes to show that you need to take charge of your own security by running an up-to-date

virus checker in addition to anything offered by your Internet Service Provider.

### Digital world

The initial release of version 4 is intended for the home user, with the business software to follow shortly. The home editions have therefore been loaded with all the digital "goodies" one would expect.

These include the Xandros Photo Manager for importing, editing and organising photos from digital cameras (or the Web). The Music Management Suite includes Music Application to organize music into playlists, and listen to music from CDs, MP3s and the Web. It can also sync music to iPods and other MP3 players; iPod Compatibility so that you can sync music between your Xandros Desktop and iPod; and MP3 Encoding so that users can convert wav files (CD format) to MP3 by just dragging and dropping them onto their desktops.

To compare the Premium edition with the Standard edition:

[http://home.xandros.com/products/home/home\\_edition.html](http://home.xandros.com/products/home/home_edition.html)

You can also download a free 30-day trial from there.

### Free (of charge) Linux

Xandros offer an Open Circulation Edition (OCE) based on Xandros 3.0. This can be downloaded without charge if you use BitTorrent. Others you might consider are Kubuntu, PCLinuxOS, SimplyMEPIS, Mandriva One, Freespire, and OpenSUSE. These are all reasonably easy to install, but watch Freespire; it is inclined to take over the drive, rather than repartition it.

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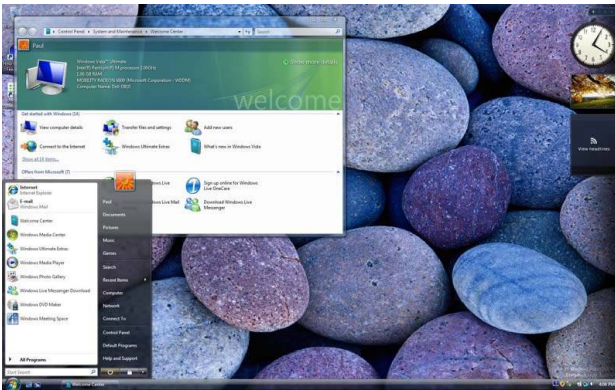
## Two volunteers needed

At this month's meeting we discussed making an HTML version of the newsletter. This could be done from my StarOffice file saved as HTML, but would need some reworking. It could also be saved in .doc or .rtf and converted using an HTML editor. Under the current arrangements an A5 Landscape version is done and this is cut and pasted into A4 Portrait form. Both are then exported as PDF.

To allow the Editor more time to concentrate on content, two volunteers are needed to undertake the HTML and A4 conversions. If you can help, please contact the Editor or the President.

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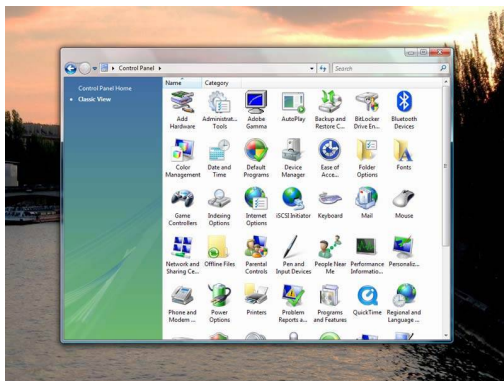
## Eight Vistas



Windows next release comes in eight different versions. Before you panic, let's have a look at how many actually will be available to the average home user in Australia.

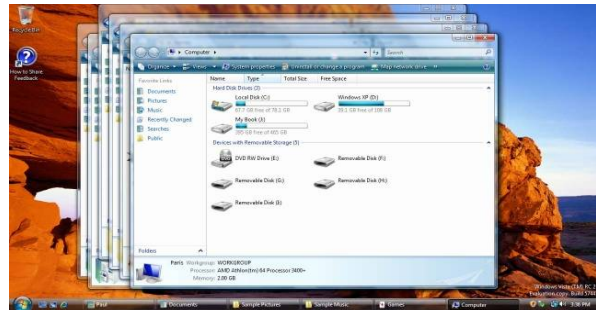
The eight versions are:

- **Starter Edition** – This is a cut-down edition designed to compete with Linux in “developing countries”. It doesn't support home networking and only allows for three applications or windows to be open at one time. Unless Microsoft decides to increase its capabilities, Starter Edition may well find it hard to compete with Linux distributions, which do offer networking, true multi-tasking, and even tailor-made (or compiled) editions for older hardware.
- **Home Basic** – This is the equivalent of XP Home and is expected to be the most common entry point for Australian home users. However, it does not include DVD burning, the DVD movie maker application, and the “Aero Glass” graphical interface. The first two omissions can easily be remedied with the software that accompanies the modern DVD burner. Leaving the hardware-demanding Aero Glass interface out makes Home Basic more suitable for older computers.
- **Home Basic N** – Intended for the European



market where Microsoft is required to provide a version that does not include Windows Media Player, as a result of a court ruling in the on-going action over Microsoft's alleged anti-competitive behaviour.

- **Home Premium** – This is the “home” version for those with better hardware. Not only does it include the Aero Glass interface, but it offers strong support for tablet and media centre computers. It also offers ad hoc wireless networking through Windows Meeting Space.
- **Business** – The basic business version offers remote desktop, faxing and offline files. It also includes Windows Web Server, but not support for Media Centre hardware.
- **Business N** – Also for the European market only and is offered for the same reasons as Home Basic N.



- **Enterprise** – As its name suggests, this is intended for organisations where Windows needs to be installed on large networks. It includes BitLocker drive encryption, a single-session version of VirtualPC and support for Microsoft's multilingual user interface.
- **Ultimate** – This is Windows Vista with the lot! It includes all the features of Home Premium and Enterprise.

As you can see, Starter Edition, Home Basic N, and Business N will not be offered in Australia, and you can leave Enterprise out of your calculations, if you are a home user, as most of our subscribers and Group members are. Then the choice is between Home Basic, Home Premium and Ultimate. Pricing will be around the same as for XP.

Examine the specifications of each version carefully and choose the one that is appropriate for your computer. Run the Upgrade Advisor on Microsoft's website to ensure that your computer can run Vista. For reviews and screenshots of the latest release candidate see November APC magazine and:

<http://www.winsupersite.com/vista>

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## Lossy data formats

JPEG is described as a 'lossy' format. What does that mean? According to Wikipedia, "A *lossy data compression method is one where compressing data and then decompressing it retrieves data that may well be different from the original, but is 'close enough' to be useful in some way. Lossy data compression is used frequently on the Internet and especially in streaming media and telephony applications. These methods are typically referred to as codecs in this context. Most lossy data compression formats suffer from generation loss: repeatedly compressing and decompressing the file will cause it to progressively lose quality. This is in contrast with lossless data compression.*"

APC this month reported where a salesman thought that repeated viewing would bring about that progressive loss of quality. But does it? What if the file is read-only?

Actually, what it means is that each time you load the JPEG into your photo-enhancing program, make changes and then save it, you lose some quality. It is therefore better to convert the JPEG from your camera into a non-lossy format, such as PNG.

Because of the way in which lossless compression works, it can sometimes produce files that are actually larger, not smaller. However, the quality is retained through generations of retouching. Once you have completed your retouching, you may care to save the picture in JPEG format to minimise size.

Conversion of batches of photos in JPEG format can be done quite easily using XnView, or a similar graphics application.

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## A suggestion

Kill two birds with one stone. When you download photos from your camera, do two things immediately.

1. Convert the photos to PNG format with XnView or a similar graphics application.
2. Burn the PNG formatted photos to a CD or DVD. If you use Nero, make sure the Multisession option is ticked so that you can add more photos later.

By doing these two things, you will ensure that you have lossless photos to retouch and that your precious originals are preserved against the evil day when your hard drive fails, your three-year old grandchild discovers the DELETE key, and your efforts at 'improving' the photos have the opposite effect.

## BitTorrent

If you want to get Xandros Open Circulation Edition without paying anything, Xandros ask you to download via BitTorrent. Why and just what is BitTorrent?

BitTorrent is a popular file sharing service developed by Bram Cohen that prevents people from downloading unless they are willing to share in the overall transmission load on the network. Released in the summer of 2001, BitTorrent is similar to KaZaA and other distributed swapping services where users download from other users and do not use a central directory as in the original Napster service. However, BitTorrent is also different because it makes every downloading user an uploading user.

Instead of downloading an entire file, BitTorrent breaks a file into chunks and distributes them among several participating users. When you download a 'torrent,' each completed chunk becomes available to other users seeking to download the same file. BitTorrent balances the load because broadband download and upload speeds are not the same. BitTorrent ensures every user participates in uploading and, when used to distribute commercial files, such as Xandros OCE, lessens the load on the originator's server.

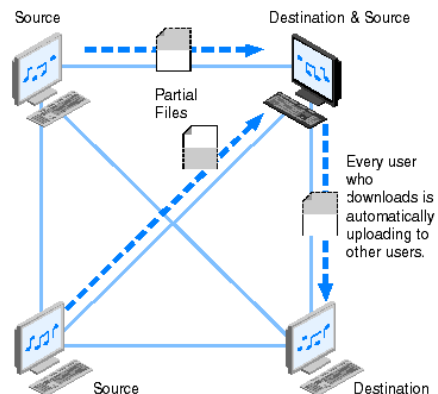
BitTorrent has become widely used for transferring huge pro-

gram files as well as pirated movies. In 2004, one estimate placed BitTorrent files as a third of all Internet traffic. Although the specific amount for BitTorrent may vary, the combination of all file sharing applications in use account for a huge chunk of traffic. For more information, visit

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### BITTORRENT

This system makes everyone participate in the overall file sharing load on the network and takes some of the bandwidth burden away from the providers.



<http://www.bittorrent.com>.

BitTorrent works best when there are several people

trying to download the same file. Because much of the world's downloading occurs in USA, you may find that BitTorrent is slower than normal downloading, simply because there is no-one else downloading the file at the same time as you are. However, it is still a useful way of downloading large files, as it can work quite happily in the background, downloading and checking the chunks of file until it has completely downloaded the entire file.

If you use BitTorrent, you should be aware that much of the material distributed via BitTorrent-compatible websites is copyright and its distribution to other users may be a breach of that copyright. Use common sense and check if you have reason to believe that downloading a particular program may constitute a copyright offense.

Subject to that warning, go for it. You'll find there is a wealth of material available and you can leave your computer on overnight to download whatever you want.

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## Multiple updates with one restart

One of the bugbears with the many updates that Microsoft issues for Windows XP is that you may be required to reboot several times. While you are going through the process, all computer use must stop and you must sit there supervising the process.

Actually, that isn't really necessary. According to Microsoft, "*The hotfix installer included with Microsoft Windows XP and Windows 2000 post-Service Pack 3 (SP3) updates includes functionality to support multiple hotfix installations. For earlier versions of Windows 2000 and Windows NT 4.0, command-line tool named QChain.exe is available for download.*"

For more information about how to install multiple updates or multiple hotfixes without restarting the computer between each installation, go to the article 296861 in the Microsoft Knowledge Base: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/296861>. There you will find further information on how to install multiple hotfixes with only one reboot.

While on the subject of updates, read article number 323166 <http://support.microsoft.com/?id=323166> for information on how to download and save the updates for use later.

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## Software for your collection

### PDF Redirect

Microsoft Office users, among others, cannot directly export PDF files of their documents. This shortcoming can be overcome with a variety of programs. However, some of them inflict pop-ups on the user, others bombard him/her with advertising, while still others watermark or brand everything produced by them.

PDF Redirect does none of those things. It quickly and efficiently produces PDF files from whatever is fed to it by the print stream. It features merging, encryption, optimising, previewing, and preference settings.

Free from <http://www.exp-systems.com>.

### 7-Zip

7-Zip is a file archiver with a higher than average compression ratio.

Main features are:

- High compression ratio in new [7z format](#) with LZMA compression
- Supported formats:
  - Packing / unpacking: 7z, ZIP, GZIP, BZIP2 and TAR
  - Unpacking only: RAR, CAB, ISO, ARJ, LZH, CHM, Z, CPIO, RPM, DEB and NSIS
- For ZIP and GZIP formats **7-Zip** provides compression ratio that is 2-10 % better than ratio provided by PKZip and WinZip
- Self-extracting capability for 7z format
- Integration with Windows Shell
- Powerful File Manager
- Powerful command line version
- Plugin for FAR Manager
- Localisation for 63 languages

Free from <http://www.7-zip.org>.

### Belarc Advisor

Everest Home Edition may be defunct, but Belarc Advisor is still around to help you work out what is in your computer. It builds a detailed profile of your installed software and hardware and displays the results in your Web browser.

Free from [http://www.belarc.com/free\\_download.html](http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html).

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## OASIS and open standards

### OASIS

The Organisation for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards was founded in 1993 under the name SGML Open as a consortium of vendors and users devoted to developing guidelines for interoperability among products that support the Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML). OASIS changed its name in 1998 to reflect an expanded scope including Extensible Markup Language (XML) and other related standards.

### ODF

When OpenOffice.org developed the OpenOffice.org office suite, they also developed a new XML-based format for saving the documents produced by the suite. OpenDocument or ODF, short for OASIS Open Document Format for Office Applications was developed by the OASIS consortium from that OpenOffice.org format and approved as an OASIS standard in May, 2005. It was subsequently approved for release as an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) standard in May 2006.

ODF is the first standard for editable office documents that has been vetted by an independent recognised standards body.

### Who wants open document standards?

Governments and large organisations around the world have come to realise that closed document standards tend to lock organisations into one software supplier. Since competition often leads to improvements in software and lower prices, such a lock-in is increasingly seen as undesirable. Enter OASIS.

#### Foundation sponsors of OASIS are:

- BEA Systems – claimed to be a world leader in enterprise infrastructure software
- EDS – which offers a broad portfolio of business and technology solutions
- IBM – a company you may have heard of, as it is the world's largest IT company
- Innodata Isogen – a company which helps organisation create, manage and distribute data
- SAP – a business solutions company
- Sun Microsystems - “The network is the computer” in more than 170 countries. Sun is the company behind StarOffice and OpenOffice.org, among many other products.

#### Other sponsors include:

Adobe, Alcatel, AMD, AOL, Boeing, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dell, Fujitsu, General Motors, Hewlett-Packard, Hitachi, Intel, Macrovision, NEC, Nokia, Nortel, Novell, Oracle, Software AG (StarOffice database provider), Symantec, Thomson, US Department of Defence, Verisign, Visa International, and Microsoft.

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For details of more sponsors and contributors see:

<http://www.oasis-open.org>

With that kind of clout driving the movement towards open document standards, it is obvious that the end is nigh for closed documents. As Alan Yates, general manager of Microsoft's information worker strategy, says: "Moving to [Open XML] ... as an open standard will place a level of trust on the technology that will give people the confidence to get behind it. We look forward to the day when people look at this as a milestone, as the beginning of the end for closed documents."

Microsoft has chosen to promote its own XML-based format, rather than ODF. Expanding on its customer-focused commitment to interoperability, Microsoft Corp. announced in July the creation of the Open XML Translator project. The project, developed with partners, will create tools to build a technical bridge between the Microsoft Office Open XML Formats and the OpenDocument Format (ODF). This work is in response to government requests for interoperability with ODF because they work with constituent groups that use that format. In addition to being made

available as free, downloadable add-ins for several older versions of the Microsoft Office system, the translation tools will be developed and licensed as open source software. The translation tools will be broadly available to the industry for use with other individual or commercial projects to accelerate document interoperability and expand customer choice between Open XML and other technologies.

The company believes that is Open Office XML document format is more suitable given the vast number of binary .doc, .xls etc. documents in existence. It is architecturally very different from ODF but will have similar advantages, such as more compact size, robustness, easier damaged document recovery, safer documents and easier integration with back-end systems. Other companies will be encouraged to use it under royalty free licences.

To me the argument whether ODF or Open Office XML is the better open document format sounds very much like the arguments of VHS and Beta and we all know who won that one – the one which was marketed better. With that in mind, I think Microsoft will win this one. However, that won't matter is other companies take up the royalty-free licences and add Open Office XML to their products.

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## Why PDF?

PDF is used for magazines, manuals, e-books, information papers, archiving, even intranet websites (internal use on networks). Some examples are Tux magazine (for beginning Linux users), Home Computer Magazine (now apparently defunct), Free Access (also available in print), e-books (usually classics which are no longer copyright), and printer and software manuals (on CD with the necessary drivers).

According to Adobe, PDF has the following advantages:

- **Open format** — De facto standard for more secure, dependable electronic information exchange — recognized by industries and governments around the world. Compliant with industry standards including PDF/A, PDF/X, and PDF/E.
- **Multiplatform** — Viewable and printable on any platform — Macintosh, Microsoft® Windows®, UNIX®, and many mobile platforms.
- **Extensible** — More than 1,800 vendors worldwide offer PDF-based solutions including creation, plug-in, consulting, training, and support tools.
- **Trusted and reliable** — More than 200 million PDF documents on the web today serve as evidence of the number of organizations that rely on Adobe PDF to capture information.
- **Maintain information integrity** — Adobe PDF

files look exactly like original documents and preserve source file information — text, drawings, 3D, full-colour graphics, photos, and even business logic — regardless of the application used to create them.

- **Keep information secure** — Digitally sign or password-protect Adobe PDF documents created with Adobe Acrobat® 8 or Adobe LiveCycle™ software.
- **Searchable** — Leverage full-text search features to locate words, bookmarks, and data fields in documents.
- **Accessible** — Adobe PDF documents work with assistive technology to help make information accessible to people with disabilities.

While Microsoft has, in the past, left it to third parties to provide PDF capabilities for MS Office, Office 2007 will include a widget for producing PDF documents from Word and Excel.

Why do I use PDF? StarOffice's .odt files can, at present, only be read with Star- and Open- Office and a handful of little-known programs, whereas PDF can be read on virtually any computer system with any operating system. And I can do the export to PDF in ten seconds flat!

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## R.I.P. Eudora, go Penelope!

Eudora, the original graphical email client and once one of the most popular, is finally being retired. Instead of simply abandoning Eudora's customers, however, its current owner, Qualcomm, is working with Mozilla Corp. to create "Penelope," a customised version of Mozilla's Thunderbird email client, optimised for Eudora customers.

Penelope is being developed by half-a-dozen of Eudora's most experienced programmers. Their goal is to create a Eudora-user friendly version of Thunderbird that will import their stored mail and contact lists, and all of their Eudora settings.

Specifically, by version 1.0, the following Eudora features will be ported to the new open-source email client:

- Importers for mail and contacts
- Remapping of accelerator keys
- Basic settings and personalities
- Filter importing
- Major UI elements
- Unique Eudora message handling operations
- Stationery
- Importer for all settings
- Minor UI elements

The roadmap is still subject to change, depending on what Eudora users want from the new email program, according to Qualcomm.

Qualcomm has announced that this new open-source version of Eudora is targeted for release during the first half of next year. However, the developers in the Penelope wiki aren't quite so optimistic: "The Penelope project is in its infancy, so please be patient while we get our act together."

In the meantime, Qualcomm has released the last proprietary version of Eudora for Mac and Windows. It will sell for a new, reduced price of \$USD19.95, with a six-month period of technical support. Existing technical support commitments will be honoured in their entirety. Once the open-source version of Eudora is released, Qualcomm will cease to sell Eudora.

Steve Dorner, VP of technology for Qualcomm's Eudora Group, stated, "Using the Mozilla Thunderbird technology platform as a basis for future versions of Eudora will provide some key infrastructure that the existing versions lacked, such as a cross-platform code base and a world-class display engine. Making it open source will bring more developers to bear on Eudora than ever before."

Richi Jennings, an analysis for email research house Ferris Research, said, "This is good news for Eudora users. Eudora hasn't had a bright future for some considerable time -- it's hardly been a shining star on Qualcomm's balance sheet. This will move Eudora users onto a more stable code platform -- one that's being actively developed.

"This is also good news for Thunderbird users, as it adds new ideas to the development team -- a team that at times can feel like the ugly sister compared to the Firefox browser team," added Jennings.

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## Healthy computer use

The first signs of danger when using computers are aches and pains. These musculoskeletal problems can happen in anyone who uses a computer for long hours: computer programmers, engineers, data entry workers, telephone operators, customer service workers, and even home users engrossed with surfing the Web. you should also take care to avoid eyestrain.

The musculoskeletal problems can range from minor muscle aches that last less than a few hours to persistent tendon problems that can last for years. The more severe problems can lead people to leave a job they like or stop doing sports activities they enjoy, like tennis or bicycle riding. You need to aim at preventing minor aches developing into long term disabilities.

You also need to pay particular attention to children so that they do not get into bad habits that will cause them a good deal of suffering later in life.

The most common body areas to watch are the hands,

wrists, elbows, shoulders and neck. The problems may vary from aches to pain, burning, numbness or tingling. These symptoms may be felt during typing or mouse use, or at other times when no work is being done, including during the night when the symptoms might wake you up.

If you experience these symptoms, or other persistent or recurring pain that you think may be related to using a computer, you should see a qualified physician or physiotherapist without delay. The earlier a problem is properly diagnosed and treated, the less chance there is that it will progress to a disabling condition.

Here are some easy measures you can take to avoid eyestrain and musculoskeletal problems resulting from poor posture and an unsuitable workstation.

### Avoid eyestrain

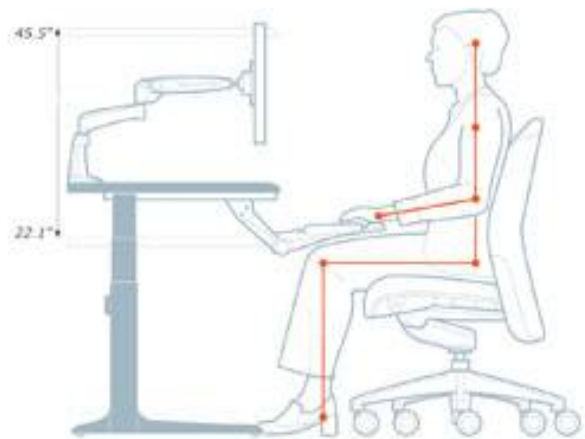
- Use desk lights instead of ceiling lights.
- Place the computer at a right angle to windows and install curtains or blinds if glare persists.
- Be alert for "flicker" from any source: it may cause headaches, eyestrain, and even epileptic seizures in people who are susceptible.
- CRT monitors should be set to a refresh rate of at least 70Hz. This is done from your video card settings in your operating system.
- LCD monitors don't flicker, so consider replacing your CRT monitor.
- Take frequent "eye breaks" -- totalling about 15 minutes off for every hour of computer use. In addition, take a 10-second break every 10 minutes. Rest your eyes by walking around or shifting your gaze to look at far distances.
- Staring can strain the eyes. Blink frequently. When we stare at a computer screen for too long, our eyes lose lubrication and may become irritated.
- If you use a computer frequently, have a vision checkup every year.

### Watch the posture

- Use good posture when working at the computer, sitting straight on a well-fitted chair, and resting wrists on a desk.
- Workstations should be adjustable for different-sized users, if more than one person uses the computer. Look for chairs with adjustable seats, adjustable-height work surfaces or separate keyboard trays, keyboards at elbow-height, and possibly adjustable footrests.
- If a user's feet don't reach the floor, provide a suitable footrest. Improvise one out of

telephone books or other stable materials.

- Change positions frequently to avoid fatigue. Simply walking around the room rests both eyes and body.
- When working on the computer for long hours, pay attention to tension, discomfort or pain you feel and take immediate action to relieve it.
- Adjust your chair so your feet and back are firmly supported by the floor and seat back. You should lean back in your chair a little.
- Arm rests can be a nuisance; they can press on the elbow or prevent you from pulling your chair forward. When purchasing a chair either avoid arm rests, or check that they don't press on the elbow by sitting in the chair in a working position. If you do choose arm rests, make sure that they slope down at the front and don't jut out in a way that could prevent you from taking up a proper keyboard position.
- Position the monitor so the top is about at the level of your eyes and it is straight in front of you. It should be about an arm length away. If it is difficult to see the small characters check the glare, monitor resolution, or your eyes. You may need glasses (bifocals can be a problem). You should not have to lean forward to see your work. If you are frequently reading from books or papers when using the computer, use a sturdy document holder set next to the monitor.
- Learn to touch-type so that you aren't leaning over to see the keys.
- The keyboard should usually be at a low height, near the height of your elbows and the mouse or trackball should be right next to the keyboard. They can be higher if you have a



padded surface to rest your forearms on.

- Some ergonomic experts advise against wrist rests, arguing that the wrist is a sensitive part of the body and it should not be constantly resting on something.
- Having to continuously reach for the keyboard or mouse may lead to shoulder pain. If you have to reach for the keyboard or mouse (for example with a high desk surface), rest your arms in the middle area of the forearms. Generally the keyboard should be flat so that the wrists are relatively straight.
- Try a different keyboard, mice and trackball – there are many alternative designs on the market and it is up to you to find the one that works best for you. Some people find using the mouse uncomfortable. They can try using the mouse with their other hand or try switching to a trackball. People with hand and wrist pain may want to try one of the “ergonomic” designs, such as those by Microsoft and Logitech.
- Unfortunately, you can't buy a Geek-A-Cycle™ (Fig. 2) in Australia, so you'll have to take exercise away from your desk.

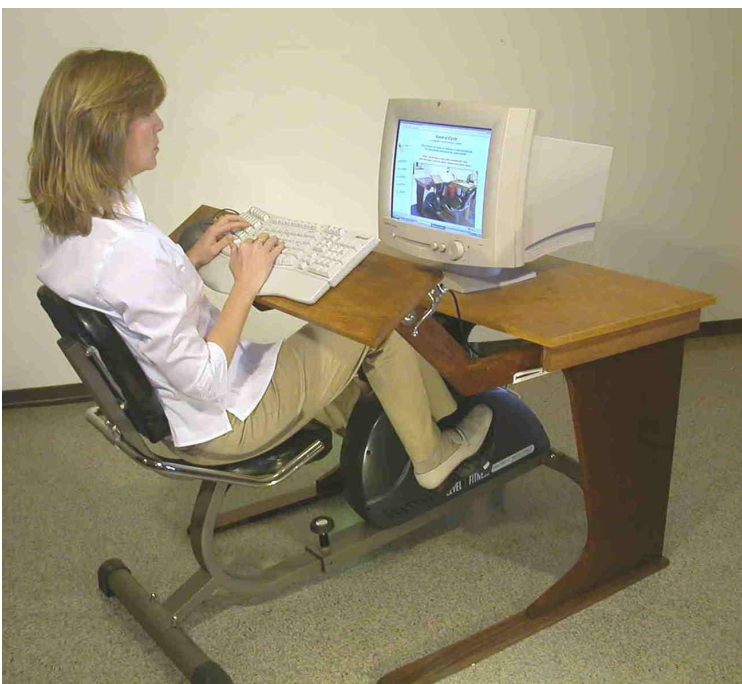


Fig. 2: The Geek-A-Cycle(TM) - model and computer not included!

### Use your mouse correctly

- Use a light touch when holding and depressing the mouse button(s).
- Do not bend your hands up at the wrists.
- Vary the way you grasp the mouse.
- Do not stretch to use the mouse – use the mouse as close to you as possible.
- Use keyboard shortcuts instead of the mouse.

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