

SeniorLink Tasmania

Ron Clarke explains

As an initiative to promote companionship among seniors and retirees statewide who have personal computers (or intend to own one), SeniorLink Tasmania is based on similar associations world-wide accessing e-mail facilities and providing assistance to develop skills in computer communications technology. The idea has done much to relieve the isolation of seniors, particularly those who may be housebound or isolated. The SeniorLink scheme is also being trialed as a form of rehabilitation for those suffering from or recovering from a disability.

A 'buddy' system is already in operation in several areas of the State where experienced members are put in touch with new users to provide both initial and long-term help. Guidance is given for retirees intending to purchase a computer. This has done much to give new users confidence in handling this technology and has opened up the world-wide internet and e-mail facilities for ongoing education, entertainment and family contact.



A help desk is also available and can be contacted by 'phone or e-mail and an extensive library of helpful papers is being established on SeniorLink's web site.

Ron Clarke, founder and director of SeniorLink Tasmania.

Members receive a twice-monthly newsletter containing news, tips, user information and introduces members with common interests and hobbies so that they can establish new friendships through e-mail. With membership heading towards 400



Robyne Ridgeway who staffs the help desk for SeniorLink Tasmania.

statewide, its members have indicated over 100 hobbies or interests to share with others. Two large interest groups, gardening and genealogy, now have their own monthly e-mail newsletter. Members also use these newsletters to discuss their own problems and seek advice from other senior users – Seniors helping Seniors.

SeniorLink's latest project is to re-cycle older (486) computers and allocate these on indefinite free loan to appropriate persons house-bound with a disability, and selected residents of nursing homes. Computers have been donated by the Tasmanian Police Department and Fletcher Challenge Paper-Boyer Mill. Although the scheme is still in its infancy it has provided therapy and purpose for multiple sclerosis sufferers in Kingston and Launceston; it has

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NB: This issue has a separate Email supplement. Copies available at meeting on 9 May or from our website.			



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Coming Meetings

May 9

Seniors Night We've arranged with SeniorLink Tasmania to put on a special night for Seniors interested in Email. Email attachments in particular. We're expecting one of our biggest turnouts ever for this one so be early if you want a seat!

May 23

Linux Installation We're arranging with the Tasmanian Linux User Group for some assistants to show you how to get this operating system up and running. However, arrangements still have not been completed. Check with a Committee member, on the website, or the email list before bringing your computer.

June 13

Windows 2000 Revisited Microsoft has given us a copy of Windows 2000 and Maurice Hughes has had a "play" with it. Come and hear what he thinks of the released version.

June 27

Computer Aided Design Guest Speaker: Well-known architect, Bill Howroyd of Lawrence Howroyd and Associates. If you ever wanted to know more about the use of computers in building design, this is your chance! Subject to confirmation.

July

To be announced The Committee is working hard to arrange some visits and further guest speakers. Hopefully, they will finalise something for July shortly. At the time of writing, however, July's meetings were still to be finalised. Check the website or the email list for further information which will be promulgated as soon as it becomes available. Or check this space in the next issue of "Thuggery".

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assisted stroke victims at the Rehabilitation Day Centre in Hobart; stimulation for the residents of the Queen Victoria Nursing Home, Lindisfarne; Bishop Davies Court, Kingston and Sandown Retirement Village, Sandy Bay. There is a waiting list for these units and a Government decision on releasing to SeniorLink more PC's no longer required is expected shortly.

SeniorLink works closely with the various divisions of the Department of Health & Human Services and Adult Education (TAFE). It does not provide training as such but is building a database of training facilities statewide for the benefit of its members.

There is a close working relationship with Seniors Card with joint representation at senior functions and expos – Seniors Card will promote its association with SeniorLink to their 47,000 members Tasmania-wide in the 2000 directory, due for release in August.

SeniorLink's founder and director, Ron Clarke, is frequently called upon to speak to Probus Clubs, Schools for Seniors and service clubs – this has created an awareness and understanding of information technology among the senior population.

SeniorLink is self-supporting with a small annual membership fee of \$10. Membership is offered to persons 55 years of age and over, no longer in full time employment. Its mix of gender, experienced people and new users has contributed greatly to its success – Seniors helping Seniors.

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W e b s i t e :
[http://home.primus.com.au/
senior_link](http://home.primus.com.au/senior_link)

From the President's Desk

With Jenny Clark

In the wake of the damage caused by the "I Love You" virus I am using this space to pass on some information sent via the HCUG-list by Paul Turvey:

VBS/LoveLetter.A Worm

VBS/LoveLetter.A Letter is a Visual Basic Script (VBS) VBS based e-mail worm. It arrives as an attachment of an e-mail with the subject line (all uppercase, no blanks): ILOVEYOU. The e-mail body reads:

"Kindly check the attached LOVELETTER coming from me." And the e-mail has an attachment called LOVE-LETTER-FOR-YOU.TXT.vbs Depending on the system configuration the extension .VBS might be displayed or not displayed.

Editor's note: As this issue goes to press, news reports suggest there are now at least eight variations of this virus. If you receive an email with an attachment you are unsure about, do not open the attachment. Check with the sender or delete the e-mail right away.

The worm spreads itself by generating an e-mail like that described above, attaching itself and sending that e-mail to all recipients in all Outlook address books. In big organizations the volume of e-mail generated has the potential to overload e-mail servers.

The worm will spread targeting Windows 98, Windows 2000 by default and Windows NT 4.0 and Windows 95 if the Windows Scripting Host (WSH) engine is installed. The worm will copy itself to multiple subdirectories using different names:

In the Windows directory the name is Win32DLL.vbs, in the Windows system directory the names are MSKernel32.vbs and LOVE-LETTER-FOR-YOU.TXT.vbs.

The worm modifies the registry information to make itself run during next boot-up:

```
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run\MSKernel32 C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\MSKernel32.vbs
```

```
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunServices\Win32DLL=C:\WINDOWS\Win32DLL.vbs
```

Also it sets the default page of Internet Explorer to download a copy of WIN_BUGFIX.exe, which appears to be a backdoor server. The actual location of the files on the Web are currently shut down. To prevent the download of the executable in case that site comes back up, Computer Associates recommends to block the following URLs in the proxy configuration if possible:

```
http://www.skyinet.net/~young1s  
http://www.skyinet.net/~angelcat  
http://www.skyinet.net/~koichi  
http://www.skyinet.net/~chu
```

The executable will be renamed and installed to run on start-up as well:

```
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run\WinFAT32=C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\WinFAT32
```

It searches through the all subdirectories and overwrites all files with the extensions JPG, VBS, JS, JSE, CSS, WSH, SCT, HTA, MP3, MP2 with its own copy and adding the extension VBS for non-VBS. A file called Satisfaction.MP3 would become Satisfaction.MP3.VBS. Next time the affected file is clicked or activated the worm will start.

If the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) client is present in the system the worm will generate an HTML file to send itself over the IRC channels.

InoculateIT signature update 11.16 detects all components of the VBS/LoveLetter.A worm.

To guarantee protection, that VBS files are included in the list of files to scan. To clean an infected system all detected files have to be deleted and the registry keys mentioned above have to be removed.

To remove the registry keys automatically go to:

```
http://www.cai.com/virusinfo/encyclopedia/descriptions/reg/loveletter.reg
```

Why have a computer?

With Peter Campbell

Why I have one

Way back in 1984, I completed a Bachelor of Business degree after nine years of part time and external study. Towards the end of that ninth year, I told my wife that I wasn't going back to watching television, I was going to buy a computer.

Although I had read of lot of computer magazines and done some computer studies during my degree course, I really didn't have much idea what I was going to do with that computer. Probably I was more interested, at that time, in the technical side of computing rather than the practical applications.

It wasn't long before I was playing games and doing word processing. With the help of friends and lashings of money, I improved the computer's capabilities to match those of later models. It was an Amstrad 464 which we upgraded to 6128 capabilities. However, the computer world took a different path and the IBM PC-compatible became the way to go.

I joined a computer club in 1985 and, for some years, edited their newsletter. Although I did drop out for a time, I remained interested in both the computer club and in computing. Later still I joined the Hobart Computer Users Group Inc. and inquired about being involved with the newsletter. It took a while but eventually I became the Editor.

But not everyone wants to be a newsletter editor so what else can you do with a computer? Hopefully, I can not only give you some ideas, but I can explain

them in terms that beginners will understand.

Here goes anyway...

Word processing

The first word processors were no more than glorified typewriters. Instead of your words of wisdom being instantly transferred to paper, they were stored in the computer's memory and/or on the computer's disk drive.

This enabled you to make changes and corrections before committing your words to paper. Just what the printout looked like depended on the printer you used. To have called the early printer efforts "letter quality" would have been a breach of the Trade Practices' Act. Instead they were known as "near letter quality" (or NLQ).

With the introduction of 24-pin dot matrix printers, the output was sufficiently good to be called "letter quality". Laser and inkjet printers lifted quality to even greater heights and word processing programs soon gained the ability to create and print fancy text effects.

If you wanted to produce more than a simple letter or page of text at first you needed a program that could add graphics, columns and font effects. These became known as "DeskTop Publishing" programs, even though they actually only did part of the publishing process, that part known as "layout". "DeskTop Publishing" was soon shortened to the acronym "DTP".

Many people did not need an expensive DTP program, but did need more than simple text han-

dling. Word processor manufacturers responded by adding such features to their product.

DTP program manufacturers added word processing abilities to their programs so that you did not need to keep switching between two programs and the distinction between the two types of programs became very blurred.

Today most people can do their desktop publishing projects with nothing more than a word processor and desktop publishing programs have specialised in providing the features required by professionals, such as colour matching (to ink colour standards).

One exception is Microsoft's Publisher which offers many specialised features in a program designed for the home and small business user.

If your needs are simple, just correspondence, say, then consider using a simple word processor rather than an "Office" or "Works" type package. I have listed some suggested applications below.

Note that StarOffice is freely available and requires Windows 95 or 98. On the other hand NewDeal Office will run on older machines as it does not require Windows™ at all. However, it can be run in conjunction with Windows and you may need to do that if you have a Windows-only printer.

Yeah Write and Word Express are shareware. That means that you get to try the program first and then, if you continue to use it, you are expected to pay for it. The price is generally considerably less than you will pay

for software sold through shops.

WordPad is included in Windows 95 and 98.

Recommended applications for word processing

- **“Office” and “Works” programs**
 - Microsoft Office 97 or 2000
 - Lotus SmartSuite 97 or later
 - Corel WordPerfect 8 or later
 - Sun StarOffice 5.1a
 - NewDeal Office Release 3 or later
 - Microsoft Works or Works Suite 2000
 - ClarisWorks Office 5.0 or later

Uses:

- Correspondence, newsletters, brochures, greeting cards, the Great Australian novel, your autobiography, a history of your neighbourhood, personalised calendars and more.

Editor's Choice:

For Windows systems I prefer StarOffice to the other office suites because it is free (an important consideration when you are on a limited budget) and is reasonably compatible with Microsoft files (a consideration when exchanging files with other people).

For older computers there is only one choice if you want current software that is actively supported and is being further developed. That choice is NewDeal Office. Now up to

Release 3.2a, it includes word processing, spreadsheet, home accounting, flat file database, web browser, email program, internet chat program, drawing/painting program and more in a Windows 95-like package that runs on old computers with limited memory. It even runs on the latest computers at speeds that have to be seen to be believed!

NewDeal Office has some limitations, but can now export its documents to Microsoft Word 97. However, if you want to receive Word documents, you will have to teach your Microsoft-using friends to save their files in one of the older Word formats., or Rich Text

Format (RTF).

Its Internet browser does not support Javascript or cookies yet and may, as a result, have difficulty with some websites.

However, on the grounds that some capability is better than none, I recommend it for 386 and slow 486 computers that do not run Windows 95 well, if at all.

“Simple” word processors

- Yeah Write!
- Word Express
- WordPad

Uses:

- Correspondence



Basic Product List

We can supply a vast range of supplies for your home and small business computer users.

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Even if you only try us for items that others cannot, or will not, supply, we will use our best endeavours to do so. Combined with friendly and personal service, you will be pleasantly surprised.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
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- Simple documents with limited use of special fonts or graphics.

Editor's Choice

If you have not used a word processor before, try Yeah Write. It takes a different approach from most and is designed for ease of use and learning. Experienced users may find its approach disconcerting at first.

Spreadsheets

A spreadsheet is like a large sheet of paper ruled into columns and rows. This provides a grid of "cells" into which you can put text ("labels" in spreadsheet terminology), numbers ("values"), or formulae ("functions").

It is the use of functions that makes a spreadsheet so useful. For example, if you have a column of figures that you wish to add up (sum), you can either put in a formula that tells the computer to add each of the cells ($=A1+A2+A3+A4$) or use the sum function ($=SUM(A1:A4)$).

Either of these will result in the spreadsheet showing the sum of the values in the cells in the first column of your spreadsheet and the first four rows. If the numbers you wish to add are somewhere else the formula will show different cell names and the SUM formula may include a number of references separated by commas.

Spreadsheets come with functions that can manipulate numbers and even text. Usually there are more than 90 such functions, with the major spreadsheets having many more.

Recommended applications for spreadsheet work

• "Office" programs

- Sun StarOffice 5.1a
- Microsoft Office 97 or 2000
- Lotus SmartSuite 97 or later
- Corel WordPerfect 8 or later
- ClarisWorks Office 5.0 or later

"Simple" spreadsheets

- NewDeal Office Release 3 or later
- Microsoft Works or Works Suite 2000

Uses:

- Cheque book balancing
- Fuel economy calculations
- Tracking investments
- Tracking expenditure and receipts
- "What if" business modelling
- Metric conversion
- Creating calendars
- Tabulating information
- Anything involving calculations

The difference between the advanced and simple spreadsheet applications is not so much one of ease of use as the complexity of the spreadsheet that can be handled. The office type spreadsheets can have several sheets linked together, use more advanced functions and have other additional features not found in simpler ones.

Generally speaking, spreadsheets will require you to learn how to use them, although the "wizards" and "autopilots" supplied with some of them can make the first steps a little easier.

That said, don't be afraid to

tackle them. Consider investing in a "Dummies" or "Idiot's Guide" for your particular spreadsheet.

Editor's Choice

StarOffice's free spreadsheet is very similar to the market leader, which, these days, is Microsoft's Excel, found in their Office suite. If you need perfect compatibility with Excel, you should buy Microsoft Excel, but I find StarOffice is sufficiently compatible for my purposes (mainly price lists sent to me by suppliers).

For "simple" spreadsheets, NewDeal Office's NewCalc not only has a good range of functions, but has excellent formatting abilities. You could almost produce a newsletter like this one with it!

Early versions of MS Works' spreadsheet lacked some functions, particularly text ones, but otherwise MS Works spreadsheets are easy to use.

Databases

The simplest form of database is a box, a supply of blank cards, a set of index cards and a pencil. You write information on the blank cards and file them in the box in alphabetical order using the index cards. Such a database is called a card index or flat file database.

Sometimes the cards may be mounted on a device that allows you to rotate them instead of being placed in a box. Roladex is perhaps the best known name for this type of file.

Computers can emulate card indexes and "Roladexes", but they can also handle much more complex databases where the information is linked in a number of ways. These are called relational databases.

Recommended applications for database work

- **“Office” programs**
 - Lotus SmartSuite 97 or later
 - Microsoft Office 97 or 2000
 - Corel WordPerfect 8 or later
 - ClarisWorks Office 5.0 or later
 - Sun StarOffice 5.1a
- **“Flat file” databases**
 - Microsoft Works or Works Suite 2000
 - NewDeal Office Release 3 or later

Uses:

- Detailing possessions which have to be itemised for insurance purposes (e.g. that prized collection of 2000 vinyl records)
- Christmas card lists
- Address books
- Club membership lists
- Catalogs

Graphics

A picture, it is said, is worth a thousand words and computers can be used in many ways to work with graphics. For example, they can be used to draw, to paint and to retouch photos.

Graphics can be divided into two types. The first are called 'vector' drawings. These consist of a mathematical description of the graphic which is drawn by the computer in the size that you request. Such drawings can be greatly enlarged, or shrunk, without loss of detail.

The second are called

paintings or 'bitmaps'. These consist of dots. These can become very ragged if greatly enlarged and lose detail when greatly reduced. However, they can show subtle gradations and 'photographic' quality. In fact, a scanned photograph, or one produced by a digital camera, is a bitmap.

Most office suites included some form of graphic software, but, for most work, you will need a specialist graphic program, or collection of programs. Some possibilities are listed below.

Scanners and digital cameras come packaged with bitmap software so that you retouch the images that they produce. These are often cut-down or older versions of paint programs. In some cases they may include some specially designed software for handling your photos. The Ixla digital camera, for example, comes with software to prepare your photos for display on the Internet, to retouch and repair them, and to add special effects and distortions.

Another collection of programs you may wish to add to your graphics software collection will catalog your clipart and photos, convert graphics from one storage format to another, and even change drawings to paintings and vice versa. Such work is called managing graphics.

You may also want a program to capture whatever is on your computer screen, especially if you want to illustrate a computer operation.

- **Paint programs**
 - PaintShop Pro
 - Corel Photo Paint
 - Ixla PhotoEasy
- **Screen capture**
 - Corel Capture
 - HiJaak Capture

- **Drawing programs**
 - CorelDraw
- **Graphics managers**
 - HiJaak Pro

Uses:

- Retouching scanned photographs and photos taken with digital cameras to produce better prints
- Illustrating newsletters, brochures etc.
- Producing your own illustrations
- Cataloguing your artwork so that you can find the exact illustration you want.
- Capturing all or part of what is displayed on your monitor screen

Email and Internet

Apart from word processing, the most common use that beginners put their computers to is Email. As GlobalFreeway describes it, *Email - or "electronic mail"- is one of the most popular Internet resources. Email allows Internet users to send messages to one another via their computers at astonishing speeds. It literally takes only a few seconds for a short email message to get from one end of Australia to the other, and less than a minute to reach the other side of the globe.*

It is a great way to keep in touch with friends and relatives, make enquiries about goods you are thinking of purchasing and receive information. People can send you newsletters and you can subscribe to discussion groups called email lists. You can also attach photos and documents to your email messages. However, these should not be too large as some recipients will not be able to handle them due to limitations of their software or on the space provided by their Internet service provider.

- **Email programs**
- Microsoft's Outlook and Outlook Express
- Netscape Communicator
- Eudora and Eudora Light
- NewMail in NewDeal Office
- StarMail in StarOffice
- Telstra EasyMail
- Internet Explorer or other Internet browser

Uses:

- Electronic correspondence
- Forwarding pictures and documents as attachments to an electronic message.

Except for Telstra's EasyMail, you will need an Internet connection to use Email. Ron Clarke of SeniorLink recommends Global-Freeway as it is free and appears to work well. Having tested it briefly, I have found it to work well apart from occasional slowness, a problem which, no doubt, GlobalFreeway will fix in due course.

An Internet Connection?

In order to take advantage of email, Internet Chat, Internet browsing and the many other things that an Internet connection provides, you have to sign up with an Internet Service Provider.

These are companies who have computers connected to the Internet and who will provide you with access to those computers and thence to the Internet. In most cases they will charge you for that access, either on a timed basis, or on an "unlimited" basis. The latter may have some restrictions imposed, but generally allows you to spend as long on line as you wish.

Internet

Some time in the future, Internet technology may merge with television and you will be offered pay television, Internet access and telephone services all in one package. In some areas of Australia this is already happening using either special ca-

bles or satellites to bring the services to your home.

However, for most of us, Internet access is on a dial-up basis using a modem. The connection is relatively slow and not suitable for delivering "real time" video, such as television. Short bursts of video can be transferred to your computer and run from there, but the connection is incapable of downloading sufficient data to maintain the action.

• **Internet Programs**

- Microsoft's Internet Explorer
- AOL's Rainbird (a version of Internet Explorer, designed for use only with AOL)
- Netscape Navigator (now owned by AOL)
- StarOffice's in-built browser

Uses:

- Research (e.g. genealogy)
- Obtaining updates for the drivers which operate the devices on your computer (e.g. sound cards, scanners)
- News, weather, financial and other information
- Obtaining updates and bug fixes for the software on your computer
- Your own webpage, promoting your business, sharing your genealogical research, or just you family photos
- Obtaining music in MP3 format
- Games

Editor's Choice

Microsoft's Internet Explorer has become the most popular. If you have room on your hard drive, use Internet Explorer. It has most features you might want and there are many add-on programs to give it even more.

Games

Even Windows comes with some games, such as Solitaire, Hearts, Minesweeper and FreeCell. These

games demand little in the way of computer resources. Solitaire was probably included originally so that users had a fun way of learning to use a mouse.

Since those early days, games have become much more sophisticated and the latest games require a fast computer and, often, the fitting of a special graphics card. If your computer doesn't measure up and the games will largely be played by the children or grandchildren, consider getting a Sony PlayStation or Nintendo games machine instead of upgrading the computer.

If you are buying games to run on your computer, check the packet it comes in for information about the minimum hardware requirement. It may require more memory, a faster CPU or even a special graphics card. Normally a game will not run on a computer that doesn't meet the listed requirements.

Older games and trial versions of later ones can be found on magazine Cds and on download sites on the Internet. If you wish to buy recent games, try the larger computer stores. Games become dated quickly and small stores with low turnover often refuse to stock them.

Just a start

The above uses for your computer just scratch the surface of what can be done, but, hopefully, will give new users (and those contemplating getting a computer) a starting point.

The Management Committee welcomes the following new member:
Paul Smith