

SIXTEEN BITS - ISSN 0817-0991

November 2003

**PC Users Group: ABN 94 130 344 129**

**SIXTEEN BITS is published by the PC Users Group (ACT) Inc.**

### November Monthly Meeting

The normal monthly meeting will be replaced in November 2003 by a special celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the formation of the PCUG.

The celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of PCUG will be held in the PCUG Centre, Belconnen on Sunday 23 November 2003 starting at noon and finishing at 3pm.

During the celebration there will be a short ceremony to thank all our volunteers for the work they have done for us during the past year. Without our volunteers PCUG could not give our members the services they receive.

All members are invited and encouraged to attend the celebration on Sunday 23 November 2003, starting at noon.

**There will be no monthly meeting in December or January.**

**THE CENTRE WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY FROM CLOSE OF BUSINESS FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER UNTIL OPENING OF BUSINESS ON MONDAY 12 JANUARY**



### Register Now for Broadband

"Broadband \$25 (incl GST) for either one month or 500MB download which ever comes first. Minimum payment \$50."

**Thanks to John Saxon, you can view the PCUG connection Procedures:**

<http://www.tip.net.au/connect>

Here are some procedures for setting up various operating systems to connect to the Canberra PC User's Group Internet system. The procedures include both dial-up (Modem) systems or Broadband (Via TransACT). ADSL is not covered. Each procedure is complete for easy printing. Procedure for Modem Installation and other items can be found in the trouble shooting procedures.



**TIP dial-up  
6162 6500**

### Committee Meetings

Monday	8 December
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**Committee meetings are always held at the PC Users Group (ACT) Centre, Northpoint Plaza, Belconnen.**

**All members welcome**

**PC USERS GROUP (ACT) Inc.**  
<http://www.pcug.org.au>

**Main phone number: (02) 6253 4911**  
(answering machine when Centre unattended)

**Fax number: (02) 6253 4922**

**Email: [pcug@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug@pcug.org.au)**

**Postal address**

**P.O. Box 42 Belconnen ACT 2616**

**Executive Secretary: Madeline Mould**

**Email: [pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au)**

### Message for Staffers

Thank you to the Tuesday and Thursday Staffers:  
Peter Watney, Gary Potts and Harry Souter.

Thank you to the October Weekend Staffers  
J. Marques - G. Evans - A. Jazvic  
B. Wilson - A. Byrne - R. Chalker and J. Deakin

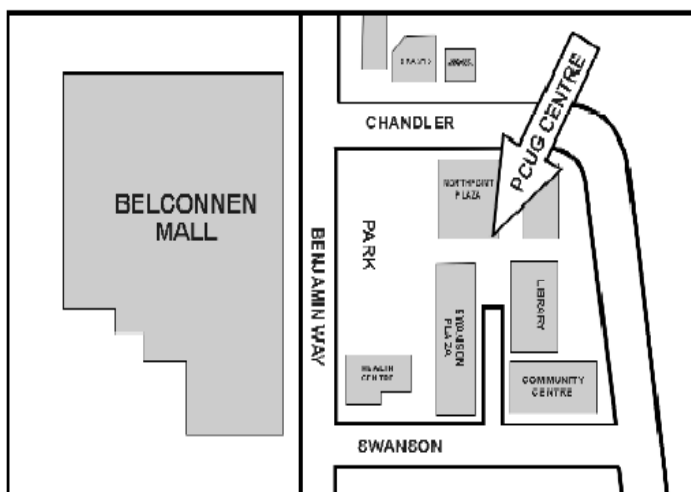
Thank you to the November Weekend Staffers  
L. Walker - E. Edeena - A. Landgren  
A. Jazvic - H. Souter - B. Kemp - B. & D. Bice  
B. Wilson and J. Deakin

To All Volunteers: Weekend Staffers, Weekday Staffers and Computer Fair Attendance!

Thank you for all your help and cooperation in 2003 I am most grateful, because you have made my work and my life very manageable. I hope I can look forward to the same in 2004!

"Have a Very Merry Christmas and I hope that 2004 will be a Happy and Prosperous Year for everyone!"

Thanks Eleanor



**PC Users Group Centre  
Northpoint Plaza, Belconnen**

**Opening Hours:**  
**Weekdays (Monday to Friday) 10 am-2 pm**  
**Saturdays and Sundays 9 am-5 pm (closed long weekends)**

**For Your Fridge Door  
EVENTS 2003  
PCUG Centre: 6353 4911**

PROGRAM Monthly Meetings: Time: 7.30 pm			
Monday	December 2003		No December Meeting
Monday	January 2004		No January Meeting

**Members Information Session**

The first Members Information Session in 2004 will be held at the PCUG Centre starting at 2 pm on Saturday 7 February 2004.

**SIGS- Special Interest Groups**

<b>Coffee &amp; Chat (North)</b>	PCUG Centre Belconnen	10:00am 11:30am Alternate Tuesdays	Jim Dick mobyj@pcug.org.au
<b>Bytes</b>	6pm Asian Bistro ANU Union	PCUG Meeting nights	Andrew Freeman 6258 7411 afreeman@pcug.org.au
<b>Computers &amp; Vegetarianism</b>	Meets with Bytes SIG	PCUG Meeting nights	Andrew Freeman 6258 7411 afreeman@pcug.org.au
<b>Investment</b>	PCUG Centre Belconnen	7:30pm 4th Thursday	Roger Penhale 6290 0807 rpenhale@pcug.org.au
<b>Networking</b>	PCUG Centre Belconnen	7:30pm 1st Wednesday	Allan Hepworth allanh@pcug.org.au 0418 445 006
<b>Internet Daytime Demo &amp; Discussion</b>	PCUG Centre Belconnen	10:00 am- Noon Every second Thursday	Allan Mikkelsen Amikkels@pcug.org.au
<b>Linux User Group</b>	Room N101 Computer Science Dept. ANU	7:00pm 4th Thursday	Stephen Rothwell sfr@canb.auug.org.au
<b>Linux Learners</b>	?	10 until 12 Every second Thursday	Rodney Peters rpeters@pcug.org.au
<b>Evening Internet</b>	PCUG Centre Belconnen	7:00 pm Last Tuesday	Marion van Wely 6258 8750
<b>Coffee &amp; Chat (Southside)</b>	Irish Club Weston	10:00-11:30 Alternate Tuesday	Jim Dick mobyj@pcug.org.au

**FOR ALL ENQUIRIES AND PAYMENTS**

regarding broadband, dial-up and other PC Users Group (ACT) services

Please contact THE PC USERS GROUP (ACT) Inc.  
Email: [pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au)

Telephone: 02- 6253 4911  
<http://www.pcug.org.au/pcug/>

**TransACT Communications does not handle any TIP accounts nor PCUG memberships.**

## 2003/04 COMMITTEE

To reach all Committee members via email: [pcug.committee@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug.committee@pcug.org.au)

<b>President</b> David Lewis	<a href="mailto:pcug.president@pcug.org.au">pcug.president@pcug.org.au</a>	Tel: 6226 8811 Mob: 0417 708811
<b>Treasurer &amp; Public Officer</b> Noel Matthews	<a href="mailto:nomatthe@pcug.org.au">nomatthe@pcug.org.au</a>	Tel: 02 6257 1962
<b>Secretary</b> Tom Hayes	<a href="mailto:pcug.secretary@pcug.org.au">pcug.secretary@pcug.org.au</a>	Tel: 6254 2596
<b>Vice President</b> Vacant		
	<b>General Committee</b>	
Graeme Evans	<a href="mailto:evans_digdiv@yahoo.com.au">evans_digdiv@yahoo.com.au</a>	Tel: 6251 6849
Paul Free	<a href="mailto:paul.free@pcug.org.au">paul.free@pcug.org.au</a>	Tel: 6251 1030
Allan Hepworth	<a href="mailto:allanh@pcug.org.au">allanh@pcug.org.au</a>	Tel: 0418 445 006
Keith Sayers	<a href="mailto:kmsayers@pcug.org.au">kmsayers@pcug.org.au</a>	Tel: 6258 6238

### RENEWING YOUR PCUG MEMBERSHIP TIP OR BROADBAND

Members are reminded that they must provide both their username ( first part of e-mail address) and membership number when they renew membership for TIP or Broadband.

PCUG membership renewal in particular does require your number as there are quite a few people who not only have the same surname but also the same first name.

The preferred means of renewing TIP OR Broadband is through the secure web site at <https://www.tip.net.au/pcug/subs.cgi>. The preferred means of renewing your PCUG membership is through the secure web site at <https://www.tip.net.au/pcug/renew.htm>.

Note that your credit card details are safe when you use these sites.

Please check all details before you submit the payment including the card expiry date.

However if you must renew by mail or telephone please fill in the renewal form at the end of this newsletter, it is essential that you correctly identify yourself with both username and PCUG membership number.

Members who fail to provide correct information may find that their payments have not been credited to them or that their renewal is withheld until details can be checked.

**Help us to keep you up to date.**

**Please ensure that all details regarding your membership is up-to-date.**

"Please advise the Executive Secretary at email [pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au) of all changes of address, telephone or email address."

# TRAINING 2004

Date	Time	Course	Trainer
January 21,22,23 Wednesday to Friday	All Day	MS Office (Word-XL and Access) for young people	Henk ten Brumuller
January 24 Saturday	all day	Web page design 1	Jennifer Phillips
March 20 Saturday	all day	Web design 2	Jennifer Phillips

## TRAINING COORDINATOR: Terry Giesecke

Email: [terryg@pcug.org.au](mailto:terryg@pcug.org.au) Tel: 6254 2896 ( 9 am- 9 pm)  
VENUE: PC Users Group Centre, Northpoint Plaza, Belconnen

BOOKINGS: contact Madeline on 6253 4911 or email at  
[pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au)

## From the PCUG Centre Manager Allan Hepworth regarding the Training Facility

Just a quick reminder to members that if we want to keep our excellent training facility we need to externally hire the room two days a month. Keep your ears to the ground and spread the word about the facility.

## PCUG Now Able to Offer Broadband Service to Suburbs not covered by TransACT Cable

Members are advised that PCUG will provide internet service to new customers served by the TransACT ADSL system which will be extended over the next few months to serve all of Canberra.

Service is available so far only in Fadden, Gowrie and Macarthur but will soon extend to the rest of Tuggeranong followed by the rest of Canberra.

Charges are as follows -

TransACT Pricing Terms (All pricing includes GST)

Contract length 18 months

Installation \$150 installation charge which if requested TransACT can provide interest free finance across the length of the contract of 18 months.

Customer will need an ADSL modem, which TransACT will sell them if requested.

Talk to our staff at the Centre for details.

TransACT Monthly charges

- \$39.95 per month for TalkWeb 256 (Broadband 256KB/64KB and telephone service)

- \$54.95 per month for TalkWeb 512 (Broadband 512KB/64KB and telephone service)

PCUG TIP charges in addition - \$25.00 for each month or 500MB downloads.

For more information go to

<<http://www.transact.com.au/promo/index.asp#residential>

<<http://www.transact.com.au/promo/index.asp>>> or speak to the staff at the PCUG Centre.

We are now accepting applications for this new service. If you are interested please contact the Centre.

## **EVENTS FOR DECEMBER**

Mon 1			
Tue 2	Coffee and Chat (south)	Irish Club Weston Creek	9.30 to noon
Wed 3	Networking SIG	Centre	7.30pm
Thu 4	Internet	Centre	10 to noon
Fri 5			
Sat 6	Internet clinic	Centre	11.30 to 2pm
Sun 7			
Mon 8	Committee	Centre	7pm
Tue 9	Coffee and Chat (North)	Centre	9.30 to noon
Wed 10			
Thu 11	Linux learners	Centre	10 to noon
Fri 12			
Sat 13			
Sun 14			
Mon 15			
Tue 16	Coffee and Chat (South)	Irish Club Weston Creek	9.30 to noon
Wed 17			
Thu 18	Internet	Centre	10 to noon
Fri 19			
Sat 20			
Sun 2			

### ***PLEASE NOTE***

**THE CENTRE IS NOW OPEN EVERY DAY  
FROM 10 TO 2 MONDAY TO FRIDAY  
9 TO 5 SATURDAY, 10 TO 4 SUNDAY**

### ***PLEASE NOTE***

**THE CENTRE WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY FROM CLOSE OF  
BUSINESS FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER UNTIL OPENING OF BUSINESS ON MONDAY 12  
JANUARY**

## President's Report

Welcome to the final edition of the newsletter for this year. It is a pity that it comes so soon after the annual general meeting and the two committee meetings since then. Lots is happening, much of which has been commented upon elsewhere in the newsletter. However, I shall add my own comments to the contributions of others.

**Communications:** There has been a lively debate in our newsgroups about the adequacy of the communication between the committee and the members. The prime communication tool is, of course, the newsletter. Some receive it by email, others are now sent the URL and yet others are reminded of the latest publication through the newsgroups. Unfortunately some who read the newsgroups have forgotten this and not having read a recent newsletter have suggested, nay claimed vigorously, that communication is lacking. One member has made valiant efforts in the newsgroups to inform members of issues raised immediately after the meeting. Unfortunately this has backfired because the accuracy and depth of the reporting has suffered, leading to misinterpretation and misunderstandings. Please remember that the newsgroups, according to our TIP admins, only reach about 10% of our membership (possibly a more active 10%). Similarly our emails are limited to special or urgent messages. Thus the newsletter currently is our best tool for communication, even although slower than the immediacy of on-line newsgroups.

**Newsgroups:** I would encourage those who don't already read the various TIP newsgroups to do so. There are several important reasons for this. First, the tip.admin newsgroup is used to advise of matters affecting our ISP service. If you don't read it you might suddenly be cut off when there are service interruptions or you have exceeded mailbox quotas. Second, some newsgroups like tip.coffee-chat and tip.help can help give you solutions to your own computer problems. Third, tip.general and tip.pcug will keep you informed of things happening in the group with a greater immediacy than the newsletter or official emails. We don't have a huge volume of newsgroup postings but if you find one or another group to have too many postings then you can unsubscribe to that particular one. I have had that experience with one of the outside Canberra newsgroups where I have subscribed several times but found the sheer volume of postings and their irrelevance for my particular purposes to be too much. So, please subscribe and take advantage of the benefits of useful comments on things like virus problems (mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter).

**More financial comment:** The need for increasing membership fees has also been covered elsewhere in this newsletter. However, some members won't be aware that even with a well-planned budget we still need to plan for future needs. This includes making provision for the replacement of equipment, the possible effect on funds if the number of members continues to decline, and to take into account the possible impact of future changes in our ISP plans if we introduce significant variations to our present fees. We are in a much better situation than we have been in recent years but we must make provision for external changes which might affect us, particularly in relation to internet services.

**Still looking:** Yes, we now have a Secretary, but we are still looking for more committee members and a vice-president, so please come forward - we need you. Anybody wishing to be considered please contact me.

**Christmas:** Please, please, please read your admin emails and renew both your PCUG membership and your TIP subscriptions well before the Centre closes on 19 December for Christmas. Every year we get anxious queries from those who have not planned ahead. There's not much I can do from 850 kilometres away, especially this year when I will have extremely limited access to emails (see elsewhere in the newsletter for the emergency contact number).

Finally Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and drive safely.

David Lewis  
President  
[pcug.president@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug.president@pcug.org.au)

## **PCUG Committee Report**

### **PCUG Secretary Appointed**

The Committee is very pleased to announce that Mr Tom Hayes AO, has accepted and been appointed to the position of PCUG Secretary. Tom has been a member of PCUG since the Belconnen High School days.

Tom had a distinguished career in the Australian Public Service, culminating in his holding the position of Departmental Secretary for the Departments of Business and Consumer Affairs and Industry Technology and Commerce. Tom was then appointed Secretary General, World Customs Organisation, located in Brussels. In recent years he has carried out a number of high level assignments advising the Australian Government in such areas as Defence and Therapeutic Goods.

Tom brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Committee and we look forward to him making substantial contributions to our work.

### **Protect Yourself Against Viruses and Worms**

The PCUG Internet Service is continuing to experience problems due to some users who do not maintain a secure environment on their own computers. Infection of your computer by a virus or worm does not only cause you problems, but causes problems to other members and to the internet servers.

We ask all members to install a virus protection program. All of the well known virus protection programs do a good job. But you must update the virus definition files at least once a week, or more often if possible. Most virus protection programs have an option to download updates automatically - we encourage all users to activate that option.

We encourage all users who have broadband connections to install a fire wall as well. A fire wall is an effective way of stopping bad people from taking over your computer and using it to harm others.

We also encourage all PCUG members who use Windows or Microsoft Office to subscribe to the Microsoft Security Notification Service, and to install each patch as Microsoft recommends. To receive automatic e-mail notification whenever Microsoft security bulletins are issued, subscribe to the Microsoft Security Notification Service: <<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/notify.asp>>. That way you will reduce the vulnerability of your computer to worms, trojan horses and other nasties.

If you need help in selecting or installing virus protection or a fire wall contact the help team at email <[help@tip.net.au](mailto:help@tip.net.au)> or telephone the Centre.

### **PCUG Centre Closed over the Christmas - New Year Period**

The Committee has decided that the PCUG Centre will be closed between the normal close of business on Friday 19 December (2pm) and will re-open at 10 am on Monday 12 January. During that period the Centre will not be available for use by members and the PCUG telephone will not be answered.

Members who need urgent assistance during the period the Centre is closed should send an email to the Secretary at <[pcug.secretary@pcug.org.au](mailto:pcug.secretary@pcug.org.au)> or telephone 6257 1962.

### **Celebrate the Twentieth Anniversary of PCUG**

The normal monthly meeting in November 2003



will be replaced by a special celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the formation of the PCUG.

The celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of PCUG will be held in the PCUG Centre, Belconnen on Sunday 23 November 2003 starting at noon and finishing at 3pm.

During the celebration there will be a short ceremony to thank all our volunteers for the work they have done for us during the past year. Without our volunteers PCUG could not give our members the services they receive.

All members are invited and encouraged to attend the celebration on Sunday 23 November 2003, starting at noon.

*There will be no monthly meeting in December or January.*

### **PCUG Centre Sunday Hours**

Effective immediately the Sunday opening times for the Centre will be 10 am to 4 pm.

The shorter hours have been agreed as very few members use the Centre outside the new hours and the Committee does not wish to unduly ask our volunteers to spend unnecessary time at the Centre.

### **Membership Fees Increased**

Effective from 1 November 2003 membership fees have been increased as follows -

General Membership                      \$ 65.00 (increased from \$60.50)  
(General membership covers all members of a household except for Internet access.)

Concessional / Pensioner Membership    \$ 50.00 (increased from \$38.50)  
(Concessions apply to full-time students and Social Security pensioners. Concessional renewals must include proof of entitlement)

Corporate Membership                      \$170.00 (increased from \$159.50)  
(Corporate membership covers up to three nominees.)

The Committee decided that membership fees must be increased following the continued losses incurred by PCUG -

- \$42,000 in 1999 - 2000
- \$56,500 in 2000 - 2001
- \$37,400 in 2001 - 2002
- \$15,700 in 2002 - 2003.

The Committee has taken drastic action to reduce the costs of services to members as far as possible, but even with those reductions, our forecast was that services to members, other than the internet service, will cost the PCUG \$39,800 more than members pay in membership fees.

The last time PCUG increased membership fees was in June 1999, when the fees were increased General from \$50.00 to \$55.00 (10%) and Concessional from \$25.00 to \$35.00 (40%). Those figures are of course pre-GST. The only increase in membership fees since then was the increase forced upon us by the introduction of the GST. Membership fees prior to the recent increase were, ex GST, the same as above. After the increase they are, ex GST, General \$59.10 (an increase of 7.5%) and Concessional \$45.45 (an increase of 30%).

The increase in General Member fees is less than half the inflation rate and Concessional Member fees by about double the inflation rate since the last increase. Why was that necessary? Because over the past few years the proportion of our members who pay the concessional rate has increased considerably, to the point that now only one third of our members pay full rates and almost two thirds pay at concessional rates. There are no longer enough full fee paying members to subsidise the members who pay concessional rates.

So if the organisation is to survive we had to increase the fees paid by concessional members more than General Members.

Even with the increased fees PCUG, will spend \$34,000 more on services to members than members pay in membership fees in the 2003-4 year.

Your Committee will continue to work hard to find ways to reduce our costs while at the same time maintaining services to members. We hope that members understand that some increase in fees is essential if the PCUG is to survive.

### **Members Information Sessions**

The Committee has decided to discontinue New Member Nights, due to lack of interest in the nights. In future we will hold Members Information Sessions to which all members will be invited. The intention is that members will have an opportunity to learn more about PCUG, to discuss issues about the operations of PCUG and to get technical advice and help.

The first Members Information Session in 2004 will be held at the PCUG Centre starting at 2 pm on Saturday 7 February 2004.

Please put that date in your diary now

### **Centre Managers Report (Allan Hepworth)**

#### **Linux install fest.**

Thanks to all members who participated in the Linux install fest earlier this month. A big thanks goes out to Andrew Tridgell for making his time available on the Saturday and from all who attended. It was nice to have a competent users present. I would also like to thank the members from the Linux learners group for the participation and help for other of us who struggle with the basics. The weekend numbers were a little disappointing as we tried to make this a new member recruitment campaign, but it was also nice just to see members enjoying other members company. We will have another one of these weekends somewhere in the first quarter next year, so talk it up with your friends and acquaintances and see if we can get a better show up next time. Finally I would like to thank John Telek for all his help in making this a successful weekend.

#### **Networking SIG**

We had our first meeting of the networking SIG this month and it was a successful venture. Those who attended on the night got to talk about networking basics as well as demonstrate, before the night was over, the connection of two computers and the sharing of files and resources. This SIG will continue to mix more practical hands-on training with minimal discussion on theory. I welcome all members who have an interest in networking to attend this SIG on the first Wednesday of the month. The SIG is on in December so see you there.

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### **Changes to the Centre**

In the past month the group has purchased some new equipment, changed the layout and updated the member machines. The first new purchase is the multimedia station. With this station, members will be able to backup their CD/DVD media, copy their vinal records to CD, modify their current music files and transfer photos to CD. This station will be available to members who have attended the multi media workshop that will be run on a frequent schedule by the LAN Manager or one of his helpers. These workshops will be run and include some nightly and weekends days. Please keep on eye on the newsletter and check the notice board in the centre for more details. We should have our new LAN server and the second media machine prior to the Christmas break. It is expected that the first LAN Game sessions for members will be conducted in February 2004. Membership has its benefits.

### **Report on November Committee Meeting**

Following comments at the Coffee and Chat Meeting on 18 November, the following has been provided as a quick summary of matters considered at the meeting of the Committee on 10 November. It should be remembered that these comments are informal as they are extracted from the draft minutes which are subject to confirmation at the next meeting. For further information on any item contact the Committee member whose email address is shown at the end of that item.

(1) The Committee appointed Mr Tom Hayes, AO, as Secretary of PCUG. [Tom Hayes  
<pcug.secretary@pcug.org.au>]

(2) The Committee considered the Financial Report tabled by the Treasurer, which showed that for the first time for some years PCUG's income exceeded its expenditure in October and that the total income for the first four months of this financial year exceeded expenditure. Whilst the surplus for the first four months was less than had been budgetted for it was a promising turn-around. [Noel Matthews  
<pcug.treasurer@pcug.org.au>]

(3) A motion by Keith Sayers regarding membership fees was discussed, but not adopted. There followed an extensive discussion about the reasons for increasing membership fees (reported elsewhere in this newsletter) and what might be done about the continuing decline in membership. [Tom Hayes  
<pcug.secretary@pcug.org.au>]

(4) The Strategy Policy sub-committee was asked to make a recommendation on which areas of the PCUG operation are to be given priority in future planning. [Paul Free <paulfree@pcug.org.au>]

(5) Means of encouraging more members to volunteer some of their time to the Group were discussed at length. It was agreed that the Committee would identify useful and satisfying tasks which volunteers would be asked to carry out, and then invite suitable people to volunteer their time and energy. [Paul Free  
<paulfree@pcug.org.au>]

(6) The Centre Manager reported that the new membership data base and register had been installed. The membership records of over 6000 people were checked and validated and only those who are currently members are now recorded in the register. The new register includes more information about members and will allow the Committee to make more effective use in planning the future of the Group. [Allan Hepworth  
<allanh@pcug.org.au>]

(7) The Committee was unable to find an organiser for the Monthly Meetings in 2004. In the interim the President and Treasurer would plan for the February meeting. [David Lewis <pcug.president@pcug.org.au>]  
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(8) The Committee agreed that, due to the falling interest in them, New Member Nights would be replaced by a Members Information Session to which all members who wished to learn more about the Group or ask questions would be invited. The first Members Information Session in 2004 would be held in the afternoon of Saturday 7 February 2004 at 3 pm. All new members since September 2003 would receive a personal invitation to attend. [David Lewis <pcug.president@pcug.org.au>]

(9) The Committee agreed on the program for the Twentieth Anniversary Celebrations of PCUG which will be held from noon to 3 pm on Sunday 23 November 2003. [David Lewis <pcug.president@pcug.org.au>]

(10) The ISSC reported on recent developments in the Internet Service. The financial operations were in good shape, however there were insufficient funds to replace the aging equipment. The ISSC will develop an equipment replacement plan and forecast for the funds required to meet the needs for replacement of the equipment. [Noel Matthews <pcug.treasurer@pcug.org.au>]

### **Email Made Simple**

We acknowledge with thanks that the following is copied from "Woody's EMAIL Essentials" of 13 November 2003 - Vol 1 No.9.

#### **@ Webmail basics**

A lot of the email we receive from WEE readers who use Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail, AOL Mail or a number of other Web-based email programs indicates basic misunderstandings about the differences between Web-based mail accounts and traditional email accounts.

In fact, some of the misunderstandings are even more fundamental than that, showing confusion about email accounts in general. That's not surprising, giving the variety of options and the way some service providers blur the lines between Internet access and other services.

So, let's start with some basics about Internet access and email. We'll focus on personal and small business connections here - the story gets more complex if you're in a large enough business to have your own mail servers, dedicated lines and system administrators.

To get on the Internet, you need:

A modem, either high-speed or dial-up.

An Internet Service Provider (ISP). This is a company which provides the link between your computer and modem and the Internet itself. High-speed service providers often provide you with the modem as part of the initial setup.

A browser to visit Web sites.

Note that almost all ISPs provide a mail server, for delivering and sending email, as part of their services (many also provide access to newsgroups, too). That means you do not need to get yourself a separate email service - it's all part of the package.

To use the mail service provided by your ISP, you need:

A username and password. Your ISP will give this to you.

An email client. That's a fancy name for the email program which sits on your computer. You use it to download the mail from the ISP's mail server and for creating and sending your own email. In most cases, the Web browser you use will have its own in-built email client. Internet Explorer, for example, comes bundled with the Outlook Express email client; Netscape includes Netscape Mail; Opera comes with Opera Mail; and so on.

A quick side note: Several WEEers have written to say they use Hotmail because it also lets them talk to

friends using MSN Messenger. You do not need Hotmail to use MSN Messenger. Similarly, you don't have to sign up with AOL to use AIM (AOL Instant Messenger). You can download any of the instant messaging programs --

MSN Messenger <<http://messenger.msn.com/>>,  
AIM <<http://www.aim.com>>,  
Yahoo! Messenger <<http://messenger.yahoo.com/>>,  
ICQ <<http://www.icq.com/download/>>,  
Trillian <<http://www.ceruleanstudios.com/>>,  
and so on -separately and use them regardless of your ISP or email service.

#### @ Webmail from ISPs

Many ISPs give you Web-based access to your email account in addition to the access via your email client. This option lets you access your regular email using a browser - which in turn means you can get to it from any location, on the road, in the office, on holiday.

The important thing to remember is that it's all the same mail with a single email address, just delivered in two different ways. If you read your email using a browser and don't delete it, the next time you access it via your email client that same mail will get downloaded onto your computer. Once you've download it to your computer, though, the mail is deleted from the mail server (although there's usually an option in your email client to leave it intact on the server for a defined period).

If you want to store email, you should always download it using an email client. Any mail left on the mail server counts against your total mail limit (usually around 5-10 megabytes), but once you download it to your computer you can keep it for as long as you like without affecting your mailbox limits (although it will, eventually, lead to message bloat in your email client if you don't clean some of it out).

If you don't know whether your ISP provides Web-based email access, check its support Web site, email them and ask, or simply try out a likely Web address. For example, Cox Communications customers can access their email by going to [webmail.cox.net](http://webmail.cox.net) and Earthlink has its Webmail at [webmail.earthlink.net](http://webmail.earthlink.net). Chances are your ISP has a similar sort of address, with a 'webmail' or 'mail' prefix.

Note that AOL and MSN both offer all-in-one packaged Internet access which includes Internet access, a dumbed down (and commercially cluttered -- don't get me started!) browser, Web-based email, and "premium content" not available to others. Unlike other ISPs, these two build their services around Web-based email, not downloadable email. Although it is possible to access your MSN or AOL email offline, they are first and foremost Web-based services.

#### @ Webmail from others

Don't confuse the Web-based email access provided by your ISP with Webmail services provided online. The former is simply a second method of accessing your regular email, using the same email address; the latter are online mail storage facilities which you access using a browser, not an email client and which give you a separate email address. It can get confusing because some ISPs are also providers of Webmail services.

The best-known Web-based services include Hotmail <<http://www.hotmail.com>> and Yahoo! Mail <<http://mail.yahoo.com>>. The best deals, though, are often to be had from lesser known services; free ones such as Myrealbox <<http://www.myrealbox.com/>> (my favourite), and pay services like Oddpost <<http://www.oddpost.com>> and Runbox <<http://www.runbox.com>> (both well worth checking out). You can track down other similar services at the Free Email Providers Guide <<http://www.fepg.net/>> or the Free Email Address Directory <<http://www.emailaddresses.com>>.

Popular services such as Hotmail have been plagued by spam. Most of the companies are now trying to do something about it, but in most cases you'll find you have to pay to get decent spam and virus protection (yes, you need the latter, too, even for an online mail account); the free versions of these services have only limited

spam and virus protection as well as restricted mail storage.

#### @ The ups and downs of Webmail

Webmail has its good points and its drawbacks. On the plus side, Webmail:

Is accessible from anywhere you can gain access to a computer/handheld/mobile phone with an Internet connection.

Provides a useful backup if your regular email service is ever unavailable.

Lets you have a 'disposable' email address you can use when you sign up for online sites or enter sweepstakes, leaving your regular email address for friends, colleagues and other trusted correspondents.

Provides a free email resource in the unlikely event your ISP doesn't provide mail services.

Uses nothing but a browser, so there's no software to install on your computer.

Is not susceptible to local computer crashes. If you trash your hard disk, your email will still be safe on the online service.

On the downside, Webmail:

Is slow, especially if you're using it on a dial-up line.

Limits your mail storage. Unlike regular mail where you can store as much mail as you like on your hard drive, Webmail is not a permanent mail store.

Is ephemeral. If your Webmail service goes belly up, bye-bye email and bye-bye email address.

Is not always adept at handling attachments and HTML mail. In particular, there seem to be incompatibilities between certain Webmail services, and some, like AOL's email, are renown for their lack of support for email standards.

Has limited email management features. Things like sorting, searching, arranging conversations in threads, backing up and so on are all entirely absent or severely restricted with most Webmail services. If you're using Webmail, don't expect the flexibility and power you'll get with regular email and a dedicated email client - it's simply not comparable.

Provides little control over the service. Unlike an email client which you can customize and protect with your own choice of add-ons, with a Webmail service you have limited options and little say in such things as spam control.

Is advertising infested - particularly true of free accounts.

#### @ Choosing a Webmail service

Despite any drawbacks, it's well worth having at least one Webmail account as a backup to your regular email. When trying to choose a service, here are some things to look for:

A strong privacy policy. Some companies provide "free" service and you pay by having your personal information broadcast.

Limited personal information required when signing up (see above).

Limited or no advertising. It slows things down and clutters 'em up.

Flexible spam protection.

Virus scanning.

Attachment support.

HTML email support.

Ample storage space.

An easy-to-use interface.

Online address books (preferably with an easy way of importing existing addresses from your email client).

Filters and message rules for sorting incoming mail automatically.

Automatic deletion of old/trashed messages, so your mailbox doesn't overflow.

Fast, easy logon.

Mail forwarding (the ability to redirect mail to another account).

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it's a good starting point.

If you would like to get your own copy of Woody's Email Essentials each week, you can join at :

WEE@woodyswatch.com <mailto:wee@woodyswatch.com>  
Woody's Email Essentials

Editor: Rose Vines Editor-in-Chief: Peter Deegan Publisher: Woody Leonhard  
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## HARVEST DESKTOP 2.2 FOR WINDOWS 98/ME/NT4/2000/XP

In September 2003 Back Office Solutions, Inc. announced the release of Harvest Desktop version 2.2. Back Office claims that the most revolutionary feature of Harvest Desktop is the secure, extensible and virtual file system called the Harvest SiloT. The Harvest Silo seamlessly integrates web pages, documents, Microsoft OutlookT mail, folders and other items and allows the user to use and access the information in a manner which is intuitive to them. Relationships can be created among items without duplication and custom categories and attributes can also be assigned for quick access to any type of information.

Back Office claims that Harvest Desktop makes multitasking easy and that documents and files of different types can be viewed concurrently in Harvest Desktop. Users may view, copy and print more than 250 file types whether the native application is installed or not.

The Price is \$US199. and the software can be obtained from <<http://www.harvest-desktop.com>>.

We downloaded the 53MB installation file and ran it. The installation program places a single icon which looks like two silos on the desktop. Clicking the icon brings up, after a delay of 7 seconds, a start window which asks for a username and password. After a wait of a further 15 seconds the Harvest Desktop opens, showing a window with a file list down one side, a viewing window and a toolbar with the usual options plus some new ones.

The program comes with an excellent introductory help system with movies which explain clearly what you can do and how to do it.

Essentially the program is a sophisticated file manager, which allows the user to link together all sorts of files and to open and read them in the Harvester desktop. However to do any work on any file Harvester must open to appropriate program in a separate window. It does that quickly and efficiently.

Back Office claims that files can be organised in groups and opened at once, but the effort needed to find, select and open files in the Harvest Desktop and then organising them into groups is quite time consuming. They also claim that a user may have up to 150 different files open for viewing simultaneously. That appears to be true, but as the user must open the appropriate program in order to do any useful work with the various files, the savings in time and effort when working with large numbers of files may well be less than the time and effort involved in establishing links in Harvest.

Overall an interesting and well presented package, but it is doubtful that the amount of effort in establishing links and relationships is worth the savings in time when working.

*Editors Note: Thanks to Noel Matthews for this review*

### Newsletter Feedback

Comments, suggestions, feedback or articles for the newsletter can be directed to [editor@pcug.org.au](mailto:editor@pcug.org.au)



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**PC Users Group (ACT) Inc. – Membership / Internet Service Application / Renewal**

Title	Given Name	Surname
PCUG Membership Number (if applicable)		If existing member – log-in (UserID) email address
Email address (2)	(If new application enter three preferred names here)	Email address (3)
Postal Address		Postcode:
Phone (Home)	Phone (Work)	Fax

**Membership -**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Annual Fees Applicable (incl GST)</b>	<b>Fees / year</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>General Member<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$65.00</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Pensioner Concession Member<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Corporate Member<sup>3,4</sup></b>	<b>\$170.00</b>

- I would like to ( X one or more)**
- New member for \_\_\_\_ years (1 to 3)
  - Renew for \_\_\_\_ years) (1 to 3)
  - Change my address details

**Notes**

- General membership covers all members of a household except for Internet access.
- Concessions apply to full-time students and Social Security pensioners ONLY. CONCESSIONAL RENEWALS MUST INCLUDE PROOF OF ENTITLEMENT
- Corporate membership covers up to three nominees.
- Additional corporate nominees may be added at \$65.00 each

Age Group (cross out not applicable)	
Under 18	19 – 25
26 – 50	Over 50

**Internet Service -**

New / Start date  Renew / Upgrade

**Broadband / ADSL** Available to those with TransACT connections (in addition to TransACT charges)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>2 Months or 1,000MBytes</b>	<b>\$ 50.00</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>3 Months or 1,500MBytes</b>	<b>\$ 75.00</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>4 Months or 2,000MBytes</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>6 Months or 3,000MBytes</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>12 Months or 6,000MBytes</b>	<b>\$300.00</b>

<b>Dialup Service</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>3 Months</b>	<b>75 Hours \$ 41.80</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>6 Months</b>	<b>150 Hours \$ 78.10</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>12 Months</b>	<b>300 Hours \$145.20</b>

I am paying by (X one)

**TOTAL PAYMENT DUE \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

- Cash (only if paying in person at the Centre)
- Cheque made out to PC Users Group (ACT) Inc.
- Credit Card (Bankcard, Mastercard or Visa only)

Name on Card

Paying by (cross out not applicable)		
Bankcard	Mastercard	Visa
Card Number		
_____		
Expiry Date ____ / ____		
Signature		

Security Question Answer

Date DB Updated

EFTPOS Transaction No