Sixteen Bits

Newsletter

PC Users Group: ABN 94 130 344 129
SIXTEEN BITS is published by the PC Users Group (ACT) Inc.

February Monthly Meeting

"What you Need to Know about Printers"

Speakers - Gordon Urquhart and Des Pfeiffer.

All Welcome.

Gordon and Des will tell us about the issues that one should consider when buying a printer, how printers work and the traps to be aware of. They will talk about the costs of operating and maintaining printers, cartridges and the options to get the best value from your printer. Des will tell us about recycled printer cartridges.

Following the talks by Gordon and Des there will be a general Questions and Answers period during which we will invite members to ask questions of both speakers.

Des Pfeiffer is the principle of Printer Cartridge Recharge in Canberra. Before acquiring the Printer Cartridge Recharge business 12 years ago, he worked as a typesetter at The Canberra Times for 3 years and then at the Government Printing Office for 18 years. He joined ACRA [Australasian Cartridge Remanufacturers Association] in its infancy, mainly to learn & set standards for laser cartridge remanufacture. There are now 208 members across Australia & New Zealand. The Association organises a yearly EXPO where worldwide suppliers attend to promote new products and discuss refilling techniques. He has also completed courses in basic printer repairs and maintenance, mainly with the HPIII laser printers.

Gordon Urquhart has been a PCUG member for 10 years with a general interest in hardware. He assists members with hardware and software problems.

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.

Members Information Session

The first Members Information Session in 2004 will be held at the PCUG Centre starting at 2 pm on Saturday 6 March 2004.

Committee Meetings -Time 7pm

Monday	8 March
Monday	12 April
Monday	10 May
Monday	14 June
Monday	12 July
Monday	9 August
Monday	13 September
Monday	11 October
Monday	8 November
Monday	13 December

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

All members welcome

**TIP dial-up
6162 6500**

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

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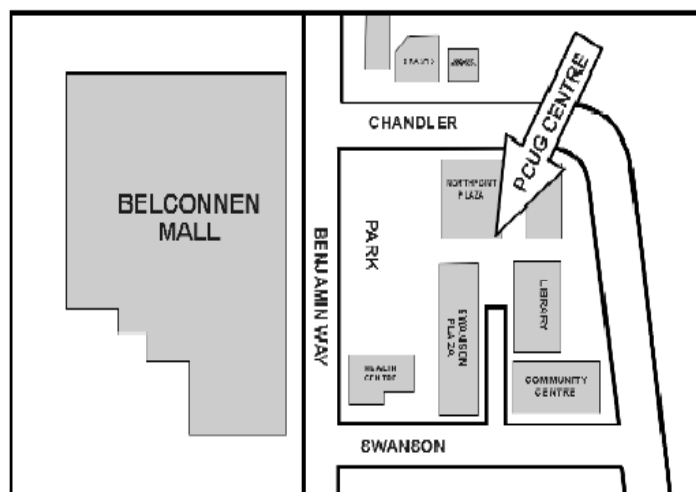
**Main phone number: (02) 6253 4911 (answering machine when Centre unattended)
Fax number: (02) 6253 4922
Email: pcug@pcug.org.au**

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

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**Executive Secretary: Madeline Mould
Email: pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au**

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

**Opening Hours:
Weekdays (Monday to Friday) 10 am-2 pm
Saturdays and Sundays 10 am-4 pm (closed long weekends)**

BELCONNEN MALL
CHANDLER
NORTHPOINT PLAZA
PCUG CENTRE
BENJAMIN WAY
PARK
LIBRARY
EMERSON PLAZA
HEALTH CENTRE
COMMUNITY CENTRE
SWANSON

For Your Fridge Door
EVENTS 2003
PCUG Centre: 6353 4911

PROGRAM Monthly Meetings: Time: 7.30 pm			
Monday	23 February 2004	What you need to know about printers	Manning Clarke Theatre 3 at the ANU
Monday	29 March 2004		
Monday	19 April 2004		
Monday	31 May 2004		
Monday	28 June 2004		
Monday	26 July 2004		
Monday	30 August 2004		
Monday	27 September 2004		(Annual Meeting)
Monday	25 October 2004		

SIGS- Special Interest Groups			
Coffee & Chat (North)	Western District Rugby Union Club	10:00am 11:30am Alternate Tuesdays	Jim Dick mobyj@pcug.org.au
Bytes	6pm Asian Bistro ANU Union	PCUG Meeting nights	Andrew Freeman 6258 7411 afreeman@pcug.org.au
Computers & Vegetarianism	Meets with Bytes SIG	PCUG Meeting nights	Andrew Freeman 6258 7411 afreeman@pcug.org.au
Investment	PCUG Centre Belconnen	7:30pm 4th Thursday	Roger Penhale 6290 0807 rpenhale@pcug.org.au
Networking	PCUG Centre Belconnen	7:30pm 1st Wednesday	Allan Hepworth allanh@pcug.org.au 0418 445 006
Internet Daytime Demo & Discussion	PCUG Centre Belconnen	10:00 am- Noon Every second Thursday	Allan Mikkelsen Amikkels@pcug.org.au
Linux User Group	Room N101 Computer Science Dept. ANU	7:00pm 4th Thursday	StephenRothwell sfr@canb.auug.org.au
Linux Learners	PCUG Centre Belconnen	10 until 12 Every second Thursday	Rodney Peters rpeters@pcug.org.au
Evening Internet	PCUG Centre Belconnen	7:00 pm Last Tuesday	Marion van Wely 6258 8750
Coffee & Chat (Southside)	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.   Telephone: 02- 6253 4911
 Email: pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au   http://www.pcug.org.au/pcug/

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

2004 COMMITTEE		
To reach all Committee members via email: pcug.committee@pcug,org.au		
President David Lewis	pcug.president@pcug.org.au	Tel: 6226 8811 Mob: 0417 708811
Treasurer & Public Officer Noel Matthews	nomatthe@pcug.org.au	Tel: 02 6257 1962
Secretary Tom Hayes	pcug.secretary@pcug.org.au	Tel: 6254 2596
Vice President Vacant		
	General Committee	
Graeme Evans	evans_digdiv@yahoo.com.au	Tel: 6251 6849
Paul Free	paul.free@pcug.org.au	Tel: 6251 1030
Allan Hepworth	allanh@pcug.org.au	Tel: 0418 445 006
Keith Sayers	kmsayers@pcug.org.au	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> of all changes of address, telephone or email address."

TRAINING 2004

Date	Code	Time	Course	Comments
March				
Sunday 7	10	9:00 to 15:30	Introductory digital photography and using Adobe Photoshop	If you have just bought a digital camera and want to manipulate photos with Photoshop this is the course for you. You'll need to know Windows 98+
April				
Sunday 4	11	9:00 to 15:30	Intermediate digital photography and using Adobe Photoshop	A follow on from the previous course, at a more advanced level, if you have used Photoshop and want to learn the finer points you can just enrol for this course.MaySunday12Introduction to desktop publishing using either MS Publisher or Adobe Pagemaker9:00 to 15:30Knowledge of Windows 98+

All full day courses cost $44.00 for PCUG members.

TRAINING COORDINATOR: Terry Giesecke

Email: 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

Do You Know a Little About Graphics?

PCUG wishes to offer classes in graphic manipulation to members. We need some members who have even basic knowledge of how to use graphics programs such as Corel Draw, Paint Shop and Photoshop to make or improve graphics and pictures. Remember the best teacher is often the person who knows just a little more than the students.

If you have more than a smattering of knowledge about any graphics program and are prepared to spend a weekend day teaching other members what you know, then we need you. PCUG pays trainers an honorarium to cover their expenses of $25 per session.

Please contact the Training Co-ordinator, Terry Gieseke at email <pcug.training@pcug.org.au>. He will be delighted to hear from you.

Centre Manager's Report (Allan Hepworth)

New dates have just been announced for training on the new Multi-Media centre at PCUG. Learn how to transfer vinal to CD, backup using DVD and work with music files and much more.
Location: PCUG Centre Belconnen
When: Saturdays 14, 21,28 February 2004.
Time: 1pm to 4pm

EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 04

Mon 2			
Tue 3	Coffee and chat (north)	Wests	9.30 to noon
Wed 4	Networking	Centre	7pm
Thu 5	Linux learners	Centre	10 to noon
Fri 6			
Sat 7	Internet clinic	Centre	11.30 to 2pm
Sun 8			
Mon 9	Committee meeting	Centre	7pm
Tue 10	Coffee and Chat (south)	Irish Club	11.30 to noon
Wed 11			
Thu 12			
Fri 13			
Sat 14			
Sun 15			
Mon 16			
Tue 17	Coffee and Chat (north)	Wests	11.30 to noon
Wed 18			
Thu 19	Linux learners	Centre	10 o noon
Fri 20			
Sat 21			
Sun 22			
Mon 23	Main meeting	"**What you Need to Know about Printers"**	
Tue 24	Coffee and Chat (south)	Irish Club	11.30 to noon
Wed 25	Internet evening	Centre	7pm
Thu 26	Investment	Centre	7.30pm
	Linux	A N U	7pm
Fri 27			
Sat 28			
Sun 29			

EVENTS FOR MARCH 04

Mon 1			
Tue 2	Coffee & chat (north)	Wests s	9.30 to noon
Wed 3	Networking	Centre	7.30pm
Thur 4	Linux learners	Centre	10 to noon
Fri 5			
Sat 6	Internet clinic	Centre	11.30 to 1pm
Sun 7			
Mon 8	Committee	Centre	7pm
Tues 9	Coffee & chat (south)	Irish Club Weston	9.39 to noon
Wed 10			
Thur 11			
Fri 12			
Sat 13			
Sun 14			
Mon 15			
Tue 16	Coffee & chat (north)	Wests	9.30 to noon
Wed 17			
Thu 18	Linux learners	Centre	10 to noon
Fri 19			
Sat 20			

Sun 21			
Mon 22			
Tue 23	Coffee & chat (south)	Irish club Weston	9.30 to noon
Wed 24			
Thu 25	Investment Linux	Centre Room 101 Computer Science ANU	7.30pm
Fri 26			
Sat 27			
Sun 28			
Mon 29			
Tue 30	Coffee & chat (north) Internet night	Wests Centre	9.30 to noon 7.30pm
Wed 31			

APRIL 04 EVENTS

Thu 1	Linux learners	Centre	10 to noon
Fri 2			
Sat 3	Internet clinic	Centre	11.30 to 1pm

**PLEASE NOTE THE CENTRE IS OPEN EVERY DAY
FROM 10 TO 2PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 10 TO 4 WEEKENDS**

President's Report

One interesting aspect about involvement in a voluntary organisation is the effect positive thinking, or its reverse, negative thinking, has on the future of the organisation. Some three or four years ago a committee member of considerable experience, and with heavy involvement in TIP, stated that we would close down within twelve months. Hello, we are still here.

Financially we are not as well off but our financial structure is very much sounder even with reduced member numbers. The financial situation is partially my fault (I hasten to add in a very small way). I was the only non admin member of our Internet Project Management Committee (IPMC) at a time when the Executive was also dominated by TIP admins. The decision was made (I think unanimously but I can't recall) to run down reserves from previous TIP income by undercharging for internet services. Since then there has been much criticism of PCUG's annual losses. Few have made the logical connection that this was mainly caused (there are other reasons also) by the losses from TIP as TIP had become part of the PCUG and its profit and losses were incorporated into the overall PCUG accounts. (No - don't join in that old chestnut that TIP has always run at a profit. There are issues about how to measure which expenses and income should be charged against the TIP component of PCUG but it is incontrovertible that that decision resulted in us running at a loss even if TIP's component of the shared costs were not charged back against TIP.)

Thinking positively - was that decision right? I believe it may have been but for the wrong reasons. The lowering of charges for internet services from other providers has lead to us losing members who have found some schemes better suited to their needs. If we had charged for internet services at the then true rate we would have lost more members. We were also inefficient in seeking out the cheapest provider of internet content and even when we started to do so we signed for two years in a market where charges for these services were reducing rapidly. Last year (thanks Michael Lightfoot) we went through a strongly competitive tender process and the reduced rates made us more viable. This year (against some internal resistance) we are doing so once again and, even before we have an outcome, our contract for the coming year will be less than last year's. But

we still have problems. A major one is trying to create new options for members in a volunteer organisation where we are reliant on those volunteers who do a magnificent job in those areas they are interested in but who don't recognise that TIP and PCUG's futures require that their efforts be directed to those areas which will most benefit the future of the organisation. We need to work together to understand the importance of planning and the importance of getting some core processes in place, so that we can offer members more options and make our services attractive to new members.

Thinking positively - again - we have had to address our other areas of major expenditure and this has also made us sounder in terms of financial viability. At cost, however, as I deeply miss the printed version of the magazine and I am still hoping that there is someone out there who will come in and help us develop an on-line magazine in addition to the newsletter.

Thinking positively - again - don't overemphasise the threats, address them and overcome them but also work on the opportunities. Late last year I thought negatively when speaking to the Coffee and Chat Group when I said that I thought PCUG might not be here in ten years (I might have said five, I can't remember). In retrospect, like the member I referred to above, I think that I may have been too negative. We are currently defined as 'Users Helping Users'. The need to do that hasn't changed, merely the way we do it and recognition that those needs are changing. We may or may not have a TIP service in due course but the core requirement - helping users through the use of volunteers (and limited paid employment) - still exists. Opportunities exist in many areas - supporting internet games, training, looking after new retirees, providing shared facilities, and identifying real needs that aren't met by other community services or commercial providers.

I want to emphasise that we have a potential for a great future and that some of those expressing negative thinking (as opposed to constructive criticism) should, let's put it crudely, butt out. And here's a whinge. All too often (and we have another example in recent newsgroup comments) something happens and someone assumes the worst and then makes unjustifiable criticism without ascertaining facts or identifying the real problem needing resolving. Too often we find ourselves having to respond to an unjustified criticism supported by asserted facts where the accuser has been too lazy to do their homework but wants to add force to the criticism. We do respond to queries (mostly, but remember that we are volunteers too with limited time) and we would prefer to respond to genuine concerns rather than have to react to published criticisms which seem to be aimed more at damaging the organisation than resolving problems.

Another whinge (and I am sorry to bore those of you who don't read the newsgroups). Over many months much has been made of a perceived poor relationship between the TIP admins and the Committee. I have deliberately not responded to many comments, some of which come from TIP admins and some from other sources. First of all, we frequently communicate between each other in reasonable form on day to day matters and we do achieve things which benefit our members as a result. We find that we communicate face to face politely and without rudeness (but there has been some suspicion). I must add, however, that this does not always occur to the same degree in email transmissions. The problem is that email communication is often instant and reactive and without depth of thought as to how the respondent will receive the message in the form given. Some would say that computer experts are typically disadvantaged in their ability to communicate with other humans. Ho, ho, ho - no, that's not a Christmas call. It's laughter at my heartfelt support of those with that opinion. Secondly, the impression has been given that 'going public' in the newsgroup is out of frustration with not getting a response from the Committee - not so. However, I have not responded to the newsgroup items deliberately. (Those members who read the newsgroups have found this unusual, as I have usually responded rapidly to issues of concern raised by members). I do not wish, as a volunteer with limited time, to waste time in lengthy responses where genuine concerns and some very positive suggestions (a number of which have been looked at) have been mixed with innuendo, rudeness, false claims and abuse. Let us get the message across clearly. If you can't communicate clearly and politely then you usually don't get a response from me. I make the normal allowances for people who have problems communicating because of background and personal problems but I genuinely believe that people trained to high levels in computer skills are capable of communicating effectively and politely but they may need to make a little more effort than some.

One simple request - if you see something in the way PCUG operates that you don't like, talk to the Committee,

or if it is at the Centre, the Centre Manager. All members of the Committee are busy people - we cannot expect them to know everything that goes on unless they are told. A polite note or phone call about something you think needs to be fixed will always be welcomed.

Let me finish on a more positive note. We are deeply grateful to all our volunteers and that particularly includes the TIP admins, many of whom spend very large amounts of unrecognised time keeping the service running. Often this is done late at night and with significant loss of sleep. My gratitude also includes many unthanked others and I hope to give proper recognition to particular individuals as time goes on (if you have any suggestions as to who to thank email me as I am not always aware of how much a particular individual has contributed). This month I would like to thank in particular Allan Hepworth whose huge efforts in upgrading the Centre and supporting training facilities have made a very significant difference to the PCUG and have helped us to identify some of our future directions.

Thank you one and all.

David Lewis
pcug.president@pcug.org.au

PCUG Audited Financial Reports for 2002 - 2003

Copies of the PCUG Audited Financial Reports for 2002 - 2003 are available at the Centre for any member who did not receive one at the Annual Meeting. If you want a copy, just ask at the Centre.

A Thank You Note

Your latest advice on the TIP and additional benefits accruing to users prompts me to engage my two typing fingers.

As one of the many 'time poor' and 'technically challenged' members of the PCUG I have, for the years I have been a member of the group, got far more out of my membership than I can ever put back in. On behalf of myself, and I suspect many like me, can I simply say thank you; not only to yourself and the other members engaged in keeping us connected to the outside world but to the many members who contribute to the newsletters with articles and advice that 'lifts the veil' on the mysteries and peculiarities of what has become an essential part of our daily life.

Signed by the member.

The Belconnen Community Web Page Group is looking for volunteers to assist in developing their Belconnen Web site. We need people with expertise in Web page design, writing and other creative expertise. The Group is based on a cross section community organisations, including the PCUG. It is currently being coordinated by the Belconnen Community Centre. The contact person is Terry Giesecke: terryg@pcug.org.au

The Web site is now in an embryonic stage and can be accessed through
www.belconnen.org.au
Have a look and find out what it is all about.

Also we are offering to list the personal web pages of all Belconnen residents on the site. It will be one of the first sites to offer such a service. If you want your site listed please contact us. This is not a search engine but a listing of your web site with details of what is on it etc.

PCUG Internet Service

Since the last newsletter we have made some more improvements to the PCUG Internet Service.

Transparent proxying on our internet service has now implemented. This means that you no longer MUST specify a proxy server in your browser configuration. The proxy server will continue to be used for all standard world wide web traffic. Existing configurations will continue to work and there is no need to change them.

If a proxy server is configured, that will be used. If none is specified, the TIP system will automatically forward all standard web traffic to our proxy server.

The TIP servers are now protected by a firewall. The servers are set up so that any connections initiated from them are OK, but inbound connections are only allowed to certain standard ports.

Currently the following ports inbound to all our machines (including members) are blocked:
TCP: 69 sunrpc ldap ldaps 135-139 445
UDP: tftp sunrpc snmp snmp-trap 2049 ldap ldaps 135-139 445
And outbound TCP: 135-139 445
The 135-139 range and 445 are to prevent the spread of the recent MS viruses that seem to be still with us.

Please send any requests for ports to be "opened" and report any problems to <help@tip.net.au>.

Effective in December the quota for hours connected to TIP for dial-in Full Service Users was increased with no increase in charges. The current limit for hours on line and the corresponding charges for dial-in Users are -

3 Months	90 Hours	$ 41.80
6 Months	180 Hours	$ 78.10
12 Months	360 Hours	$145.20

Download limits are now the same for both dial-in and broadband Full Service Users - 6,000 Mb per year.

Broadband (always on) service is available to all members who have access to the TransACT cable or to TransACT ADSL services. The charges are (in addition to TransACT charges) -

2 Months or 1,000MBytes	$ 50.00
3 Months or 1,500MBytes	$ 75.00
4 Months or 2,000MBytes	$100.00
6 Months or 3,000MBytes	$150.00
12 Months or 6,000MBytes	$300.00

Effective the beginning of February we have added six more modems for use by dial-up users, giving our dial-up users access to a total of ninety modems.

To subscribe to the PCUG Internet Service contact the PCUG Centre.

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.

Review of the Internet Services Sub-Committee

In April 2003 the Committee decided to establish a new Sub-Committee which would report directly to the PCUG Committee, to be called the " Internet Services Sub-Committee" (ISSC). The ISSC replaced the Internet Project Management Committee which for various reasons was no longer working effectively.

The Terms of Reference of the ISSC given to the ISSC at its establishment are -
Subject to the overall direction of the PCUG Committee -
the ISSC shall make all decisions relating to the financial, policy and administrative management of TIP;
the ISSC shall oversight the implementation of policies approved by the Committee, including resolution of disputes between users and PCUG, application of PCUG rules and regulations;
the ISSC shall monitor the operations of TIP, plan for future needs and developments, maintenance and replacement of equipment and the provision of finances as necessary to ensure the long term viability of TIP;
the ISSC shall report all significant decisions and any decision involving expenditure exceeding $1,000 to the PCUG Committee, but all decisions involving expenditure over $2,000 shall be subject to approval in advance by the PCUG Committee.

The PCUG Committee appointed two officers of PCUG as the initial members of the ISSC, the PCUG LAN Manager (Allan Hepworth) and the Treasurer (Noel Matthews, who by agreement acts as Chairman of ISSC). Officer positions were nominated so that there would be a minimum of two people in the ISSC, irrespective of the personnel in the PCUG Committee. The two core members were under instructions to increase the membership of the ISSC by inviting, say, two members of the PCUG to join it as soon as possible.

At the time of its establishment the Committee agreed that the operation and effectiveness of the ISSC should be reviewed later in the year. On 16 November 2003 the Committee wrote to all members inviting them to submit comments and suggestions in relation to the operations of the ISSC or the operation of the PCUG Internet Service. Twenty two members responded to the invitation. All responses were scheduled and provided to all members of the Committee

Current Position

The Committee members have been considering apprpriate responses to the comments received. The Committee will decide on the action it will take at its next meeting, to be held on 9 February 2004. However it has already responded to some of the comments by appointing Harry Souter, a long-time member of PCUG who is not a member of the Committee, as the third member of ISSC.

Members will be advised of the Committee's decisions in the March newsletter.

Problems Logging into the Internet Service?

If you ever find yourself failing to log in to TIP, STOP and don't waste any more money trying to dial in again. The two major reasons for failing to login are firstly, you have run out of TIP or PCUG membership, or secondly, your Username and or your Password have become corrupt. Paying more money fixes the first problem, re-typing your Username and Password into the Log In dialogue fixes the second problem 99% of the time. If neither of those fixes works for you then telephone the PCUG Centre and ask for help (unless you can access someone elses email, in which case send an email to <help@tip.net.au>.

Firewalls - by Terry Bibo <bib063@tpg.com.au>

I was asked to discuss the setting up of XP's Internet Connection Firewall and the free ZoneAlarm, for a reading audience that didn't want to be burdened by complexities and hopefully would be able to just copy recommended settings. A big ask.

All installed programs have default settings, but these may not necessarily have any relationship to a particular user's wants. Take Microsoft Word. How many users accept the default template, normal.dot, without some modification of font, margins, layout, page size, etc.? Firewalls may have more-generic settings, and be able to determine others by interpretation of an individual user's settings for specific programs, such as browsers, mail clients, etc. But every firewall has to mould itself to the particular demands of every user's computer environment, and that inevitably requires user input - hence user decisions. And this is where the problem lies. Probably most of us do not have the expertise to answer all firewall queries confidently, but we all must be prepared to put some effort into resolving issues raised and learn from our experiences.

Firewalls are devices to enforce security between networks by guarding the ports through which network traffic - in our case only Internet traffic - comes in and goes out, and only let traffic through the ports that you have specified can be used. They prevent unauthorised access to your computer by hackers through an unguarded port, and prevent programs on your computer using unguarded ports to contact the outside world without your permission. Firewalls can be physical components attached to computers, or software programs installed on those computers. We will only consider these software programs that are broadly either application-based or rule-based.

Put very simply, an application-based firewall will permit or deny applications to connect to a network. Your web browser must be permitted to make an outgoing connection or you will never access the Internet. But, because Web servers do not open a connection to the client, we can deny incoming connections or require our firewall to ask for permission for every incoming request. ZoneAlarm is an application-based firewall.

In a rule-based firewall, anytime unknown network traffic is detected, the user will be asked whether the particular traffic can be permitted or denied, either for this single instance or for any further connections. If traffic is permitted or denied permanently, a corresponding rule is created automatically and users will not be asked about the particular traffic anymore. In both application-based and rule-based firewalls permissions can readily be subsequently changed. Kerio Personal Firewall is a highly regarded, free, rule-based firewall. Others are: Sygate Personal Firewall, Tiny Personal Firewall, and Outpost Firewall.

Windows XP's firewall describes itself as being a ' "stateful" (rule-based - Ed.) firewall that monitors all aspects of the communications that cross its path and inspects the source and destination address of each message that it handles. To prevent unsolicited traffic from the public side of the connection from entering the private side, (it) keeps a table of all communications that have originated from the computer. All inbound traffic from the Internet is compared against the entries in the table. Inbound Internet traffic is only allowed to reach the computers in your network when there is a matching entry in the table that shows that the communication exchange began from within your computer or private network.' I recommend you read the help file, starting with Internet Connection Firewall overview in Windows Help and Support. For the casual user without Internet Connection Sharing or a Home or Office Network, XP's firewall is a set-and-forget procedure. There will be major modifications to the firewall in XP Service Pack 2 due out in early 2004 that will probably not require your intervention.

For an overview of the performance of various firewalls as measured against Steve Gibson's Leaktest, go to http://grc.com/lt/scoreboard.htm. This report is based on user feedback. Note that Outpost Firewall is not listed, but I have been using it for at least two years and have checked it satisfactorily against Leaktest. If you need an

analogy to begin to understand firewalls go to http://www.wilders.org/firewalls_m.htm, where a comprehensive table uses a major hotel telephone system to explain the concepts and protocols.

I have neither the capacity nor the interest to reinvent the wheel, and I realised soon after commencing this article that all the material for understanding setup problems is readily available. ZoneAlarm has an short Tutorial that provides an easy introduction to firewalls for even a novice. Its Help File expands on this up to a stage of considerable understanding, especially if all of its internal links are followed to gain an overall understanding. Let's have a quick look at ZoneAlarm anyway. Two issues are raised in the tutorial that warrant consideration. Knowing when to allow a program to make an outgoing connection to the Internet when a Program alert is raised is not always easy. Program alerts occur when a program on your computer tries to initiate a connection with a computer on the Internet and you have not already given it permission. The example given, Microsoft Outlook, is obvious because it needs access to the Internet to collect email. But what happens when the program wanting outgoing connection is Internet Explorer or Microsoft Word? And I have been presented with both of these and more-esoteric programs than these. Has Explorer or Word been hijacked by a Trojan and is it being used to create mischief? If in doubt say NO. But do not tick the Remember this answer the next time . . . box yet, in case the request is genuine and needed later on. The Internet itself is very useful here when the More Info box is ticked. Very often the resulting explanation is sufficiently encouraging to permit an easy decision. The Firewall alert referred to is easier to deal with. A Firewall alert means that ZoneAlarm has protected you by blocking traffic not allowed by your Firewall settings. Certainly the overwhelming majority of these attempts at incoming connection are harmful, and most firewalls prefer not to show them to you but keep a log that can be inspected later.

On installation ZoneAlarm provides default settings, and it will serve you well to inspect these soon after ZoneAlarm has learned about a few of your programs. Double-click the ZA icon in the system tray, click the Preferences tab, and then select Program Control. You will see something resembling this image:

You will get some idea of priorities by comparing those programs allowed only to access the Internet and use its resources, with those allowed also to act as a server making your computer's resources accessible to other computers on the Internet. Access permission allows a program on your computer to initiate communications with another computer. Server permission allows a program to monitor for connection requests from other computers and thereby initiate communications with yours. No program here is allowed to act as a server until given permission by the user. Several common types of applications, such as chat programs, and e-mail clients may need server permission to operate properly. But chat programs are notorious for using their file transfer to distribute worms, viruses, and Trojan horses. You can use this initial table as a guide for establishing permissions when subsequent Program alerts require your decision. Reading the Help file is an invaluable aid to understanding the problem.

Rule-based firewalls are far more configurable and therefore more demanding than application-based firewalls. They require a greater dedication to learning more about your computer system and dealing with firewall rules, ports, and protocols. Outpost uses plug-ins to also enable control of Cookies, Advertisements, ActiveX, JavaScript, VB Script, Pop-up windows, Browser content filtering, Email control, and Attachment filtering. Addressing rule-based firewalls is a subject unto itself. And, since I feel sure that the majority of readers will settle for the lesser burden of a competent ZoneAlarm, I will go no further. Interested readers should go to the home site of one or more of the rule-based firewalls listed or referred to in this article and its links.

NOTE: Firewalls are not necessarily compatible creatures, and running two firewalls simultaneously can have unpleasant results. In testing a few of these I disabled the running program and removed the Start-up items, but found that this does not remove active elements within the registry. It took a lot of effort with jv16 PowerTools to clean my registry after I had reduced XP to starting only in Safe Mode. For safety sake, ALWAYS uninstall a firewall before installing a different brand.

Enjoy your computing.

To see other articles written by Terry Bibo go to his home page at <http://www.users.tpg.com.au/bib063>.

Members Information Session

PCUG will hold a Members Information Session at the PCUG Centre at 2 pm on Saturday 6 March.

All Members who have joined PCUG within the last year are particularly invited to attend, but all members will be most welcome.

The Session will include the opportunity to inspect the PCUG Centre and to see all the facilities that are available to members in the Centre. There will also be the opportunity to discuss the other services the members provided by PCUG, and to meet with the members of the Committee.

There will be food and drink and plenty of time to socialise with other members.

PCUG Needs Volunteers

PCUG relies on the work of a team of volunteers to continue providing its many programs for members. We have a small but dedicated team of volunteers, but many have been working hard for PCUG for years. We need more people urgently.

Co-ordinator of Monthly Meetings

An immediate need is for someone to accept responsibility as the Co-ordinator of Monthly Meetings. The PCUG Monthly Meetings are held on the last Monday of the month, February to October, in the Manning Clarke Theatre 3 at the ANU. The dates for meetings for the rest of 2004 are (the February meeting is already organised) -
Monday 29 March
Monday 19 April
Monday 31 May
Monday 28 June
Monday 26 July
Monday 30 August
Monday 27 September (Annual Meeting)
Monday 25 October.

The role of the Co-ordinator is to arrange the hire of the venue with the ANU (done for 2004), find speakers and arange their attendance, publicise each meeting and meet the speakers before each meeting.
This very important post is currently vacant. If you are able to devote a couple of hours a month to PCUG we need you now. Please contact the President at email <pcug.president@pcug.org.au>.

PCUG Centre Staffers
We now staff the Centre seven days a week (except on long weekends). The small group who currently do this work are overloaded. If you can give us four hours once or twice a month you will make a real contribution to the health of the Group. Please contact the President at email <pcug.president@pcug.org.au>.

Clean-up of the PCUG Centre

A small group of volunteers spend Sunday afternoon of 8 February cleaning up the PCUG Centre. A large amount of out of date paper work was sent to the recycle depot and much rubbish sent to the tip. A large amount of computer equipment now surplus to requirements was identified, sorted and stored. We will hold a "Bring and Buy" Session at the Centre in May. All the surplus equipment will be catalogued and priced before the "Bring and Buy" Session and will be on sale then.

Want to Monitor Your Internet Usage?

Owen Cook advises users of the PCUG Internet Service -

As you may be aware, TIP counts every byte you send, and every byte you receive.

The logfile is somewhat large, but Allan Mikkelsen has been making daily extracts for the last year to show essential data.

TIP users (ie you log into TIP via dial-up or broadband) can now access this data yourself by providing your user name in the form at

http://www.pcug.org.au/datalog.cgi

where you can select what period you are interested in and have an e-mail sent with the csv (or zip if you wish) file attached

The files for any month are quite small, so the csv option the way to go.

The csv file is made up like User,Type,IP,Seconds,Bytes_up,Bytes_down,Time_off,Date

1. username will be your username
2. xDSL or (Asynch) means a Broadband or (Dial-up connection)
3. 203.10.76.82 is the IP address you used during the session
4. The duration of your connection or session in seconds
5. The bytes uploaded
6. The bytes downloaded
7. Session end time
8. Date of session in YYYYMMDD format

Just drop the data into your favorite Excel program.

Interested in Getting a Broadband Service but not in the TransACT Area Yet?

All PCUG members, irrespective of where they are, who think they may be interested in upgrading their internet connection to Broadband ADSL please drop an email to the Executive Secretary at email <pcug.execsec@pcug.org.au>, giving her your membership number and street address. At this stage such expressions of interest will not be taken as firm commitments but will help us make a decision on the possible extension of the PCUG Internet Service to include an ADSL service. We will need a minimum of 200 subscribers to ADSL to make this service economically viable, so even if you are not ready yet, give us your details so we can determine the likely market.

Internet Service Sub-Committee

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.

What to do with your old computer

Recently a member approached Madelaine and asked for advice on the disposal of her old computer: she had heard that there is an organisation which is keen to re-use such machines. This is no doubt a problem which many of us face when we upgrade or our old machine fails. Madelaine referred the member to me. I had to admit that there was such a group but I had lost the newspaper clipping which contained the details. I could only recall that it was located in the old Charnwood High School but I had neither address not phone number. She seemed satisfied with that and went off to make further inquiries.

I had read some articles about recycling in the ACT and in particular its move towards zero waste. Some pamphlets in my letter box said that certain items would be no longer accepted at the land fill sites or by the recycling agencies. These included equipment containing dangerous chemicals such as batteries , fire alarms, monitors etc. Hence I decided to make further inquiries.

Google quickly lead me to the ACT "no waste" web page which is at
www.nowaste.act.gov.au.
This has a number of useful and informative pages but the page most relevant to the question ends with
 /new/guideo-z.html   There, under the heading "Computer recycling", are listed 4 organisations as follows

Renew Computers	6-10 Pirie St Fyshwick	6239 3444
All Recycling	19 Endurance Ave Queanbeyan	6299 7031
Charity Computers	46 Lhotsky St Charnwood	6259 8559
Dell (will collect)	no address given	1800 465 890

The Charity Computers site was, of course, the one which I could not remember. There are also some possibilities in the yellow pages. Perhaps other members have other suggestions.

Paul Free   paulfree@pcug.org.au

INTRODUCTION TO BOOK INDEXING COURSE

Introduction
The Australian Society of Indexers (Victorian Branch) is offering a course on back-of-book indexing. Introduction to Book Indexing is being offered to those in the information profession and/or publishing industries who have limited knowledge of the art of indexing. The course is designed to have a large practical component, but will also give a strong basis in the theory of indexing.

Venue
The course will be held at Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 19 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell.

Time
9:00 am to 4:45 pm, 24 February, 2004

Course Fees
Fees (including GST) are $220 per participant ($180 for AusSI, Society of Editors, and Australian Society of Technical Communicators members), and will include all instruction, course notes, morning and afternoon teas.

Those who will benefit from this course include those who are or who are planning to become:
- Freelance indexers
- Indexers in publishing houses
- Editors responsible for indexing
- Editors responsible for assessing indexes compiled by authors or professional indexers
- Librarians responsible for compiling indexes
- Librarians looking at alternative careers
- Authors responsible for their own indexing
- Technical writers

The short course will cover the following topics:

* Introduction to indexing
* Selection of terms
* Headings and subheadings
* Cross references
* Alphabetical arrangement
* Style
* Editing for publication
* Evaluating indexes
* Indexing as a business

(continued next page)

Practical exercises will be conducted throughout the course.

About the Instructor
Max McMaster BAgrSc, GradDipLib, is currently Training Officer of the Australian Society of Indexers (Victorian Branch) and also past Chairman of the Society's Panel of Assessors. He is a freelance indexer and has had extensive experience in the teaching of back-of-book, database and journal indexing.

For further information contact:

Max McMaster
Tel/fax: (03) 9500 8715
e-mail: mindexer@optusnet.com.au

Review - "Laurie's Picture Book Guide for Computers"

The author, Laurie Fuller, says in his experience many computer books and most Help files leave a lot to be desired. He found that he had to do a lot of reading before he could do anything. This book is designed to eliminate the reading and to simply guide the user as he/she begins to do useful things, and at the same time teach by doing.

The book consists mainly of pictures of what you should see on the screen as you carry out a task, with enough notes and pointers to guide the new user along the right path. The book is not intended to be read from start to finish but to be picked up when a user begins a new task and to be put aside once the task is understood, until another new task is needed.

The pictures are clear and the notes very much to the point, so a new user is guided from beginning a task until its completion. After doing a task a couple of times with the help of this book, not only will the user be comfortable in doing it again, but also be on the way to understanding how computers work, and comfortable in trying other new tasks.

The book covers basics such as starting Windows, starting Word, making a letter head, writing a letter, then moves on to inserting clip art, inserting tables, preparing a spreadsheet, making greeting cards or fliers.

Altogether an excellent guide for beginners and well worth the price. In fact I was so impressed I bought two additional copies for my grandchildren.

"Laurie's Picture Book Guide for Computers" published by and available from - Laurie Fuller, PO Box J174, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450. Original price $25 incl GST, now available to members of PCUG for $18.00 incl GST. Send a cheque or money order with your order and identify yourself as a member of PCUG.

Reviewed by Noel Matthews.

Newsletter Feedback

Comments, suggestions, feedback or articles for the newsletter can be directed to 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 -

(X)	Annual Fees Applicable (incl GST)	Fees / year
☐	General Member[1]	$65.00
☐	Pensioner Concession Member[2]	$50.00
☐	Corporate Member[3, 4]	$170.00

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

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

Internet Service - (X one or more)   ☐ New / Start date ☐ Renew / Upgrade

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

- ☐ 2 Months or 1,000Mbytes (minimum) $ 50.00
- ☐ 3 Months or 1,500MBytes $ 75.00
- ☐ 4 Months or 2,000MBytes $100.00
- ☐ 6 Months or 3,000MBytes $150.00
- ☐ 12 Months or 6,000MBytes $300.00

Dialup Service

- ☐ 3 Months   90 Hours $ 41.80
- ☐ 6 Months   180 Hours $ 78.10
- ☐ 12 Months   360 Hours $145.20

I am paying by -

- ☐ 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)

TOTAL PAYMENT   DUE $ _____

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