Computer Owners' Group

Newsletter	**March 2015**

Magazine Notes follow at the end of the Discussion section.

This Month's discussion

A member with XP has reduced **width on his monitor**. There could be a number of causes as the machine is getting old, e.g. monitor failing, or video card past its best. Try altering the screen resolution; right click on the desktop, click resolution and play with the available settings.

What is **airplane mode**? It is a setting on many laptops, tablets and smart phones which stops the machine from transmitting and receiving, effectively cutting it off from the internet. Aircraft require this. A peculiarity of the control is that when it is on, or enabled, the internet and Bluetooth are cut off. When is off, or disabled, normal communications exist (this is the usual position).

How do you control **screen brightness**? On a monitor you should find brightness controls on the monitor itself. On laptops there may be a key with a sun on it or you might have to change the power settings remembering that bright screens use more power. Smart phones usually have a control centre with a slide for brightness [maybe say something here that bright screens on cellphones is one of the main causes of draining a cellphone battery?].

Are monitors still liable to **screen burn**? This used to be a factor in monochromatic CRT tubes and resulted in a permanent mark if the screen was left on for too long. It is not a problem with modern colour displays. For more see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screen_burn-in.

A member complained that the **size of the print** on the computer screen was too small to view it comfortably. There are a number of ways to vary the size of print on the screen. In the bottom right hand corner of the Word screen is a slide with a **–** to the left and a **+** to the right with a slider in the middle. Screen size can be varied by either clicking on the + or- or by moving the slider with the mouse. Another way is to hold down Ctrl and move the mouse wheel, note that the slider moves as well. Note that varying the screen size does not affect the print size. If the slot on the ribbon says e.g. Cambria size 11 that is the size that will be printed out regardless of how big or small you make the image on the screen.

The last query gave rise to the question of changing the default font and its size in Word. The method was not clear at the meeting so here it is!

To set default font style and size in Word 2010

1. Close all open documents and close Word.
2. Start Word!
3. Click *File* on the upper left corner.
4. Click *New*, click *Blank Document* and click the *Create* button on the right.
5. Click *Home* button on the toolbar.
6. From the *Font* group click the *Font* flyout (small arrow button).
7. From the Font list, select the font you want.
8. From the Size list, select the font size you want.
9. Click the *Set As Default* button on the bottom left.
10. When prompted select *All documents based on the Normal.dot template.*
11. Close the document and close Word.

The next time you start Word the font style and font size will be automatically set to the style and size of your choice. You can also change the default line spacing and other paragraph settings in a similar way.

A member bought a **NAS (Network Attached Storage)** drive at Xmas. It's like a USB external drive, but plugged into the network. The theory is, that you can load stuff onto it as a local drive at local speeds, yet access it via the network in a remote location. What happened is that the drive worked locally very well, but the remote access did not. The whole point was to access it remotely. The drive was sent back, but the refund has still not arrived! For more see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Network-attached_storage.

A member has found **SlimCleaner** rather intrusive and wants to get rid of it. SlimCleaner is a genuine program similar to CCleaner. TheMakeuseof site http://tinyurl.com/o3cb5zn is interesting as it compares the three main computer cleaners CCleaner, SlimCleaner and Advanced System Care. To uninstall SlimCleaner go to http://slimcleaner.com/uninstall.php and follow the instructions. The point was made at the meeting that it is prudent to go to Safe Mode when uninstalling programs.

A new uninstaller called **Geek Uninstaller** has appeared on the horizon. It seems to be very similar to Revo but with the advantage that it fully supports 64 bit systems. Gizmodo's review of a number of uninstall programs is worth reading and contains a Quick Selection Guide giving the differences in a nutshell: http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-program-un-installer.htm.

One member is unable to get rid of an image on his **iPad screen**. It is likely that the program associated with the image has crashed. This site describes the procedure of reinstalling iTunes which may be relevant:http://tinyurl.com/myg8zz3. The iPad may need to be reset. Refer to the User Manual or Google "Reset iPad" for the method.

What happens when you **close the lid of a laptop**? To find out right click on the battery symbol and select **Power Options.** The main screen allows you to select the most suitable power plan. On the left side of this screen is a menu, one item being **"Choose what closing the lid does"**. Click on this and you will see what closing the lid does. Change it if the setting shown is not suitable and note that you can have different settings for battery or mains operation.

Can you use a **laptop with the battery removed**? Yes. If you always have your machine plugged into the mains it is a good idea to remove the battery; it will last longer! Battery removal is a simple operation but it varies between makes; check your documentation.

David Boyes

COG Notes for March 2015

All the magazines reviewed below are held in the SeniorNet office and are available for borrowing.

TECHLife Australia (February)

The theme for this issue is "Unbeatable tech bargains". If you are fairly new to the computer game, there are plenty of good ideas and advice here. For example, buying gear from the US and elsewhere – what's safe to import, and what to be wary of? There are comments on international warranties, and of course much much more. It was encouraging to me, as a fairly regular attendee of the COG and Q&A, that there is nothing here which has not been mentioned from time to time at our meetings. But, no doubt about it, this is a useful round-up.

Particularly helpful in this issue are the articles on "Affordable portable PCs", and on "Super-affordable smartphones". In both cases there are reviews aplenty (six pages of them for the first article, and five for the second). So, if you're in these markets .... Actually, if you are making any substantial purchase in the computer tech area, you should glance at the Buyers' Guide section of the latest TECHLife Australia magazine. There you'll find five pages of key judgements on relevant tech gear. There are 28 different sorts of equipment examined – including for example laptops, smartphones, cameras, portable hard drives, Wi-Fi routers, and so on. But the focus is not just on best of breed. Each of the 28 categories has entries under the following headings: "Best Budget; Best Value; Best Performance; and New on Shelf". The price of each item is given, as well as an incisive comment.

The search for really useful apps is never-ending. By happy chance, three for the Android are mentioned in this issue. Google Maps is, we know, a treasure. But it performs best when you have access to data. What many of us want are maps on our phone which we can use without mobile data reception. One such app has just been re-

leased. It's "Here beta: Off-Line Maps & Nav ". It has off-line maps for over 100 countries, and the review says they're "accurate and user-friendly".

People are increasingly using their smart phones as their family camera. The problem is how to edit, group and sort all the many photos now on our phones. A review here suggests that an app called "Lumific" will solve many typical problems in this area.

If you know what VLC is, and are interested in using your Android as a media player, then you'll be glad that a VLC app is now available for Android phones at the Google Play store. (All three of these apps are free.)

Have you got junkware on your computer? We're finding this an increasing problem at The Clinic. What can you do about it? There's a short paragraph here (p. 76) telling you how to use a free app called the Junkware Removal Tool http://www.fosshub.com /. The article says that once you've downloaded the app, you should create a system restore point. Then, close all the browsers running on your machine and double-click this app. It could be running for some time but it will remove any junkware it finds.

How can you avoid junkware? These days when you go to download a free programme from the net, you're often tricked into downloading additional programs which you definitely wouldn't want to have on your computer. It's suggested here that to avoid being caught in this way you should use a free app –Unchecky, http://unchecky.en.lo4d.com/ ". It helps you ensure that you download only the programmes you specifically want – and no others.

A number of people are tired of free-to-air TV, don't want Sky, and, looking for alternatives, are wondering how to get the Internet onto their TV screen. If you are clever enough to do that, then you'll be looking, among other things, for good documentaries. Now here's a find. There's a new site being talked about called Top Documentary Films, http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/ . It looks excellent. Its 3000 films have been sorted into 25 categories, and the site prides itself that it fully observes copyright. The most shared documentaries include Alain de Botton's series on philosophy, an examination of the life of Tesla, and Stephen Fry's exploration of manic depression. And there is much more besides.

Mac users could be interested in a detailed two-page article entitled "Power up your Mac keyboard shortcuts"and on how to "Edit photos in iOS 8".

PC and Tech Authority (March)

One of the lead articles is "Are robots really going to take your job?" While many of us are not the target audience for this article, it is, nevertheless an interesting, important topic. The point is made that "low-skilled, highly repetitive jobs are most at risk, such as sales staff, drivers, construction workers and office administration staff". But it also noted that personal services, making tea and giving comfort in rest homes, are not well done by machines. One conclusion is that "a society with cheap robot labour would be incredibly prosperous… [But without] the vast majority of human beings [sharing] in that prosperity ... we risk ... dystopian outcomes".

Another lead article is a group test on"High-Speed Storage". This is looking at server storage equipment and, as such, wouldn't interest most of us.

Speculation about Windows 10 currently helps fill computer magazines, and this issue is no exception. We've all heard rumours that Windows 10 will be free. That would be most welcome, but it's far from guaranteed. A Microsoft spokesman is quoted in this issue as saying that Microsoft would be expecting to "monetise" Windows 10 "differently" [from the past]. Nothing more precise than that, but there is a possibility that that Microsoft might offer a consumer version of Windows 10 for no cost, while charging for professional features. The release is scheduled for the "middle of the year".

There's a three-page review of Google's flagship smart phone – the Nexus 6, and a detailed examination of the SonyXperia Z3 Tablet Compact which, for the record, is described as "a fabulous piece of hardware. The battery life is incredible, the display is super-bright and performances excellent". And at $A499 this high-quality tablet's not too expensive.

RMD Munro

That's all for now, see you at the next meeting at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 8 April, 2015 - usual place.