

Computer Owners' Group

Newsletter

April 2015

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See the SeniorNet Web Site here:

<http://www.seniornetwgtn.blogspot.co.nz/>

Next meeting Wednesday 6 May 2015

As I was unable to attend the April meeting and as no notes of the meeting were forthcoming, there can be no review of the meeting discussion.

David Boyes

COG Notes for April 2015

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

TECHLife Australia (March)

The theme of this issue is back up – “how to easily ensure your critical files are protected – on PC, Mac, Android and iOS”. Well, we all nod sagely, this couldn't be a more important subject. But how good are these articles? The answer is that they're pretty good. The writing is clear and succinct. And if you're wanting to get your feet wet in this area, they provide a very good and only slightly submerged platform. In a word, these articles are worth rather more than a glance.

Now if you are serious about backup (and you'll become very serious immediately after you've lost all your data), you'll need a good sized external hard drive. As you know there are plenty on the market. As always the question is: what to get, and which accompanying software? Many of these machines and their related software are very competently reviewed here.

Windows 10 is given a good workout. If, against the odds, you don't know anything about it, there's a perfectly useful overview here. But it's not the best I've seen. Earlier magazines reviewed in this column have provided more comprehensive analyses.

For forthcoming travellers, it's worth beating the drum again for Google Translate. The killer feature, as they say, is “Word Lens”. We've mentioned this before but it allows you to take a snapshot of any piece of text you come across in a number of foreign countries – and to get a translation in real time. Now you can go dining with confidence in Beijing! The only cautionary note I'd offer is that you'd want to have free Wi-Fi available. If that's not to hand you'd have to have your data turned on, and, as we all know, that can be expensive. The same point would apply to another Google app which is favourably reviewed here. It's called Google Field Trip. In essence, when you're travelling, the app provides a series of little cards, which, as it were, flash up on your Android screen when you're near a place of potential interest. Could be fun but watch the data budget.

Something that I didn't expect to find in a computer magazine was a review of a car – or more precisely a review of a car's electronic fittings. The car in question is a Hyundai (described as being long “Australia's budget car manufacturer of choice”). Whatever, it appears that Hyundai is wanting to access the luxury level and hence is installing a lot of advanced technology in its latest cars. The review tells you about this technology which, it must be said, is pretty impressive - and much of which, it also has to be said, seems elegant overkill.

PC&Tech Authority (April 2015)

At last the secret is out. When an editor is deeply worried that his lead writer has little new to say, the editor will spatter exclamation marks around the title. Evidence? Well, one of the lead articles in this issue is entitled “Win-

dows Annoyances Solved!”. And then the subtitle is “Infuriating quirks be gone!” Enough said. Now, always open to good advice, I turned with mixed feelings to this article but, dear reader, there is little that would repay your reading it - and you’d get much better value from bringing those annoyances to the Clinic.

The No-Surprises Department: there’s an article here on Windows 10. It’s a perfectly good article but if you’ve read other articles on the subject, you’re not going to need this one.

Every now and again it’s useful to get somebody to sit back, survey the scene, and to make wise pronouncements. But they have to be wise. There’s an article here entitled “The truth behind app development: from idea to chart topper”. Advice therein is that “successful apps are about satisfying needs, not inventing them”. And again “as long as the app does something users want, and does it well, it is a chance of succeeding”. No surprises here. Even so, if you have a budding app developer in the family, then I think he/she would get some benefit from reading it.

In an ideal world I suppose all of us would have USB 3.1 connectors on our laptops. Well, actually no: it seems there are some problems to be ironed out. This issue says that “after our initial testing of the supposedly revolutionary new connectivity standard, performances are a startling 40% lower than what was promised.” However, hope is offered with the assurance that “this story is far from over”. For our part, we’ll keep watching the topic - and plugging on.

Michael Munro

**Remember the next meeting,
10.00am on Wednesday 6 May 2015**
