

Newsletter September, 2011

Compiled by Ken White

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SeniorNet - Where to now?

2011 marks the twenty fifth anniversary of the foundation of SeniorNet. It became apparent to the American founders that seniors were becoming increasingly out-of-touch with technology. A few years afterwards, SeniorNet came to Tauranga to serve the needs of our community.

It was thought back then that the organisation would run itself out of a job sooner rather than later. There are not too many folks today in their early fifties who have not had a close working relationship with computers. It is a fact that fewer people are currently enrolling for our courses. Is that because of the economic climate or because SeniorNet is no longer relevant?

All of our members with some interest in technology will be aware of the many new developments in the IT world. Some of these are discussed in the article on Page 3, '**What's a Computer Anyway**'. With the convergence of computers, telephones and televisions, we all need to reconsider our attitude towards computing.

Where does SeniorNet fit into the equation? To date our focus has been on the solid desktop computer though an increasing number of members bring with them their own laptop. Our solitary divergence into the new technology has been in the direction of digital cameras. There is some pressure to move further, courses in Apple computers, Smartphones and Tablets. Read our Chairman's comments on this.

Why has this not happened? It is a question of resources. To branch out into these new fields would require some considerable, continuing expenditure. New manuals would need to be written (and frequently updated).

Most of all we would need a good number of coaches with the time, interest and enthusiasm to teach these evolving subjects. In the words of the old ad, "It will happen, but it won't happen overnight."

Ken

The Tauranga SeniorNet Club Inc;
Office & Clubrooms; 17th Avenue
Next to Historic Village

Email;

taurangaseniornet@clear.net.nz

Note our new email address!

Web-site;

www.taurangaseniornet.co.nz

Committee;

Chairperson - Brian McWilliam
Secretary - Viv Campbell
Treasurer - Mike Molen

From the Chair

Hi Folks,

I am making an appeal to you that you endeavour to attend our next Club Day, on the afternoon of Friday 30th September 2011. (Details of the meeting are set out separately in this Newsletter.) Grant Sidaway wishes to discuss with us the benefits of our Club moving into tuition with "Apple-Mac" products, as he believes this will expand our customer base, along with some other benefits. Your management committee has previously told him that we are not prepared to go down that path, not only because of the capital outlay which would be involved but also because our coaches did not have and were not conversant with those products and we were not aware that there was a client base which would make it financially viable. The discussion should prove interesting.

Management Committee has decided to replace the chairs in the Centre which are used by the students in the class. These chairs have served us well for more than twelve years, but the time has come for them to be replaced by almost identical chairs. We will have the new replacement chairs installed in the school holidays. The old chairs (8 of them) will be available for sale to members for \$25 each, should you like to buy them.

I should remind members that I am firmly resolved to stand aside from the Chairman's role at the next A.G.M in April 2012. At that time I shall have been in the role for two and a half years and it is time for a change with someone new, bringing

ideas and a fresh approach to the running of the club. I have long held the view that the members carrying out the various roles within the Management Committee should be regularly turned over, not only to bring new ideas and a fresh approach and also to provide a break for the incumbent, who also wants to attend to other aspects of life. Several members have mentioned to me that perhaps John Whalley would take over from me. John has told me that he has served on your management committee for 11 years and he too, is seeking relief from all of the jobs which he has been doing for the club, so magnificently, over all those years. He is NOT prepared to take over as Chairman. So, the search for my successor continues and has to be resolved.

As we approach the final term for the year, I was hoping to be able to tell you whether our club's application to COGS, the Community Organisation's Grants Scheme, has been successful. If it has, we hope that it is sufficient to ease some of our financial woes. We are still waiting to hear.

Brian



Partnering up to improve the safety of senior road users

SeniorNet and the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) have partnered up to improve the safety of senior road users. The NZTA has developed some new online resources and felt that SeniorNets' community learning network would be a great way to raise awareness of them.

For many older people driving is a key to their independence, and many of them rely on their cars to get around – for shopping, appointments or visiting friends and family. While older drivers don't have as many crashes as younger drivers, if they do crash they are more at risk of being seriously injured or killed. This is due to increasing physical fragility.

The NZTA's new education resources for senior road users include the Staying Safe online toolkit at;

www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/senior-road-users.

This website section has been designed for older drivers and provides interactive activities and information to help older drivers improve safety for themselves. They're designed to help people maintain their independence while also staying safe on the road.

The information includes:

- an online self assessment quiz that provides some guidance to senior road users to help them self-examine and compare their own ability with the requirements for safe-driving

- brief video clips of how to keep safe in the following driving situations:
 - Safe driving rules
 - Flush medians
 - Roundabouts
 - Traffic lights
 - Motorways
 - Open road driving
 - information on how to choose a safe vehicle
 - information on safe alternatives to driving including walking and cycling.

The website has simple usability, there are instructions on how to make the font larger online and navigation has been designed to be straightforward.

Staying Safe workshops

The NZTA has also launched some Staying Safe workshop materials available to any organisation that wants to provide a refresher road safety workshop for senior road users. I'll be talking to Learning Centres more about this through the year at our Regional Meetings.

The Staying Safe course content and supporting material are designed to help organisations provide classroom-based road safety refresher workshops for senior road users.

More information for organisations interested in running workshops is available at www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/senior-road-users/staying-safe.html.

There is no direct funding from NZTA to run these courses but the resources can be used free of charge if charges for Staying Safe workshops are for your time, the venue, refreshments, photocopying etc, and not for profit.



SeniorNet Notice

The club has a surplus of it's SeniorNet pens which are being made available to Members for the price of \$3. Speak to your coach about these attractive pens.

What's a Computer Anyway?

I could make a long list of everyday items that contain computer components, or that act in some way like a computer. How about this for a start;

- *Traffic Lights*
- *Wrist Watches*
- *Washing Machines*
- *Telephones*

They all contain computer chips that have been programmed to perform specific tasks. They are not really computers, as is a desktop as used in offices, banks or in the home, or perhaps a laptop (hugely popular for its lack of tangled cables and its compactness). The lines have become quite blurred though and I think that the next list contains even more computer-like features.

What about

- *Modern Televisions*
- *Cameras?*

Televisions are now sold with internet connectivity. You can use them to access many of the social network sites – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube – and you can even talk to your friends overseas on Skype. Similarly, cameras sold today contain simple photo editing tools such as cropping and colour enhancement. These have become 'almost', not quite, computers.

Further confusing the issue are what may be referred to as 'non mainstream' computers which are incompatible with the ones used by SeniorNet. Foremost are those produced by 'Apple', long favoured by the academic and desktop publishing community. Despite holding only 5% of the market, Apple computers are considered the benchmark against which other PCs are measured.

The other 'rogue' operating system, and a thorn in the side of Microsoft, is Linux (this is pronounced Linnicks). This OS and many of the programs that are available for it are completely free. The disadvantage is that is rather 'nerdy' and unintuitive, but it is getting better. It is though used extensively in servers and other commercial situations, which poses a threat to commercial Operating Systems.

Smartphones

The very first smartphone was produced in 1990, but in 1999 came the 'Blackberry'. The BlackBerry phones function as a personal digital assistant and portable media player. They are primarily known for their ability to send and receive

email via mobile networks and through Wi-Fi connectivity. They support a large array of instant messaging features.

Eight years later the bar was raised when Apple introduced the iPhone. With it were made available thousands of free or very cheap programs (apps). It was now possible to do on this smartphone virtually anything that could be done on a computer, or on a camera or on a phone. The principal disadvantage to computing is the small screen size, 10cm or even less. As well, smart phones have only a miniscule keyboard or a virtual (touchscreen) keyboard.

In the four years since then there has been an explosion of new products. All the major players, Microsoft, Google, Nokia, Ericson, HTC etc are involved. The Blackberry operating system has fallen to fourth place behind Google's Android, iPhone and Symbian. Worldwide, sales of phones using the Android OS have surged to the top.

Tablets

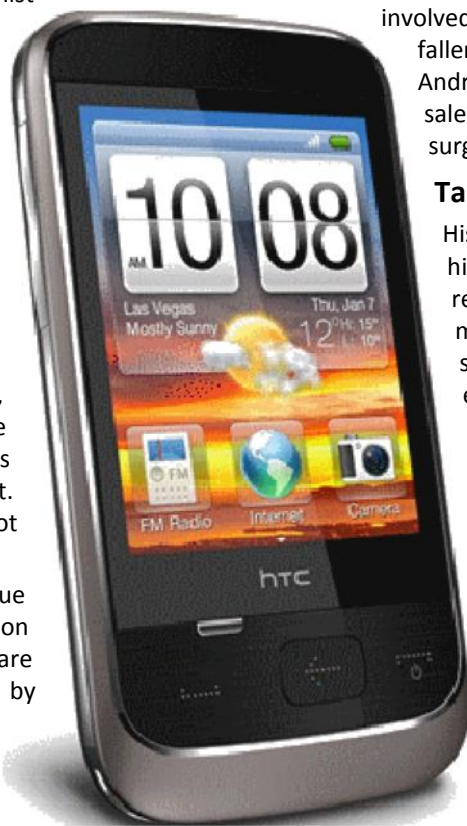
Historically, tablets have quite an ancient history. More recently Microsoft tried to revive the form but failed to interest the market. e-Readers, tablets designed specifically to read electronic books, enjoyed a measure of success but the big breakthrough, again attributable to Apple, came with the development of the iPad. A tablet is similar to a smartphone, without phone capabilities but with a bigger screen size. These range from about 18 to 25cm.

Its ability to connect to the internet via either a wi-fi or a mobile (3G) connection makes the tablet ideal for web browsing. With its larger 'touchscreen' keyboard, many basic computing tasks can be

completed that would be impracticable on a phone. Other personal uses include;

- Downloading and reading e-books
- Downloading and playing music
- Sending and receiving emails
- Communicating by way of instant messaging (IM)
- Audio and Video calls using Skype or similar services, both to telephones and other computers

Depending on your particular requirements, either a smartphone or a tablet may prove to be a viable alternative to a computer. Regardless, these tools are here to stay and will likely develop even greater capabilities in the future. No doubt too, the next few years will see the introduction of other appliances not yet dreamed of.



Friday Workshops - every week at 1.00 pm.



Term 3 has been a very successful one, our Friday Workshops were carried on through the school holidays. We introduced for the very first time 'animations' which are more correctly 'animated GIFS', these are used mainly on websites and are very useful for greetings cards etc. The only programme at the club that we can use for animations is GIMP, however the workshop was successful and many members had a go with some very interesting and satisfying results. We also held a one off special by John Whalley recording from the radio, tapes and vinyl records using the free programme **Audacity**.

Unfortunately I was laid low and could not attend so the meeting was a bit short of equipment. I have heard that it was a great success with demonstrations of importing music with Audacity, cropping off unwanted bits and saving as a WAV file. Later we will hold another session and catch up on the bits missed first time. John always turns on a good show.

Another exercise was removing unwanted individuals from a photo, where several different avenues were explored. This is shown in full on our web site. Diana Lusty introduced us all to the world of **e-books** and **i-pads**. These workshops are open to all members and we try to meet the needs of beginners and the more advanced, all questions are answered if at all possible.

If you have enjoyed the meeting notices that we send to all members each Monday and would like to create some of your own to surprise friends and relatives, then the Picture and Image Editing courses are for you. On these courses you will learn all this and much, much, much more.

Bob

PS. I would really like to show you our animations in action here. Sadly they do not animate in a newsletter!

Some comments from SeniorNet, Hutt City:

"Kids may claim to be the experts and appear to be the techno masters; but it is an illusion. They have little fear of making a mistake so kids are happy to experiment with technology and try new things. More than likely they didn't pay for what they are experimenting with, so if it breaks it doesn't matter! But the truth is that unless you attack a computer in frustration with a hammer it's not likely to break.

So - experiment like a kid. Learn something new every day.

The Tauranga SeniorNet Club Inc;

Club Day

At the Learning Centre, 17th Avenue

Next to Historic Village

1.30 pm. - Friday 30th September

Speaker;

Grant Sidaway - SeniorNet Federation

"The Future of SeniorNetg"

Gold Coin Donation – Refreshments Included

All Members are Welcome

More humour from SeniorNet, Hutt City:

- My first job was working in an orange juice factory, but I got canned because I couldn't concentrate.
- Then I worked in the woods as a lumberjack, but I just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the axe.
- I attempted to be a deli worker. But any way I sliced it, I couldn't cut the mustard.
- My best job was being a musician, but eventually I found I wasn't note worthy.
- I had a job in a shoe factory; I tried, but I just didn't fit in.
- I became a professional fisherman but discovered that I couldn't live on my net income.
- I managed to get a good job working for a pool maintenance company, but the work was just too draining.
- I got a job as a historian, until I realised there was no future in it.
- My latest job is working at a coffee shop. It's kind of boring; every day is the same old grind.

That's all folks

Ken

Timetable and Course Fees – Term Four – 2011

Special Note: Because of the Rugby World Cup competition, School terms this year are different, with Term Four having only 8 weeks. So two of the Computing Skills courses have commenced in the last week of Term Three, with their remaining 8 weeks being in Term 4

Dates and times will be confirmed following registration. The listed courses will run only where there are sufficient enrolments.

All participants receive an instruction manual which is included in the course fee.

Monday	Time	Period	Duration	Course Fee	Notes
Computing Skills	9.00am to 11.00am	3 Oct - 12 Dec	9 weeks	\$74	A, E
Introduction to Computers	11.30am to 1.30pm	7 Nov - 5 Dec	5 weeks	\$10	A, B
Internet	2.00pm to 4.00 pm	31 Oct - 21 Nov	4 weeks	\$34	
Email	2.00pm to 4.00pm	28 Nov - 19 Dec	4 weeks	\$34	
Tuesday	Time	Period	Duration	Course Fee	Notes
File Management	9.00am to 11.00am	25 Oct - 22 Nov	5 weeks	\$40	
Burning CD's	9.00am to 11.00am	29 Nov - 6 Dec	2 weeks	\$22	
Introduction to Computers	11.30am to 1.30pm	8 Nov - 6 Dec	5 weeks	\$10	A, B
Computing Skills	2.00pm to 4.00pm	4 Oct 13 Dec	9 weeks	\$74	A, E
Wednesday	Time	Period	Duration	Course Fee	Notes
Computing Skills (Cnt from T3)	9.00am to 11.00am	26 Oct - 16 Nov	9 weeks	\$74	A D
Picture Editing Level 1	11.30am to 1.30pm	26 Oct - 23 Nov	5 weeks	\$40	
Digital Photography	2.00pm to 4.00pm	26 Oct - 23 Nov	5 weeks	\$40	
Thursday	Time	Period	Duration	Course Fee	Notes
PowerPoint 2007 & 2010	9.00am to 11.00am	27 Oct - 24 Nov	5 weeks	\$40	
Introduction to Computers	11.30am to 1.30pm	27 Oct - 24 Nov	5 weeks	\$10	A
Computing Skills (Cnt from T3)	2.00pm to 4.00pm	8 Sep - 17 Nov	9 weeks	\$74	A D
Friday	Time	Period	Duration	Course Fee	Notes
Special Interest Group	1.00 pm to 3.00 pm	Most Fridays during terms		\$2	C
Club Day	1.30pm	25 Nov		\$2	

Note A: The Introduction to Computers and Computing Skills Courses are for Microsoft WORD 2007 onwards.

Note B: The \$10 charge is for Manuals only. There is no charge for tuition for new members doing the Introductory Course

Note C: Weekly emails advise the key topic for the session. No enrolment required. All Members welcome.

Note D: This Skills Course has five weeks in Term Three and four weeks in Term Four

Note E: This Skills Course has one week in Term Three and eight weeks in Term Four