

Membership

Membership has now reached 487 (404 renewals from last year, plus 83 new members). There is still a steady interest from new members wanting to join the club, and although there are a few vacancies appearing in the Rosters we currently have a Waitlist of 6 people (5 XP and 1 Vista) some of whom are currently on holiday.

Fundamentals Training

New Trainers

Congratulations to Ken Britton who was awarded his Trainer's badge during the month.

Trainer Assessment Test

Forty-eight Trainers have now taken (and passed) the new Assessment Test, and there are only 13 people who currently have Trainers badges who haven't yet tried it. Of these, only two currently teach one-on-one. As we have announced previously, anyone who doesn't take (or doesn't pass) the test before we close for Christmas will get an Asst. Trainer's badge, and be able to help in Group Classes (but not one-on-one) in 2009. If you haven't yet taken the test but wish to do so, please come to the club and see Eleanor on a Monday (after midday) or Peter on a Tuesday morning – the test does not take long. If neither of those time slots suit, please email Eleanor to arrange a more suitable time.

Fun Manuals, Floppies, Flash Drives and CDs

A bit of history When PC/XP Fun was first introduced (late 2005) new students were given a PC Fun floppy disc containing the five basic files, and XP Fun CDs were only handed out with the XP Fun manual. As the popularity of floppy drives decreased and we changed from floppies to flash drives, the PC Fun files were added to the XP Fun CDs as an interim measure, and "Fun CDs" were given out with PC Fun.

Changes for 2009 We have now decided to officially abandon floppy disks and not to hand out any CDs when a student starts Fundamentals. This means that all students will need a flash drive with the five basic files on it for their first lesson. This is already the case with Vista Fun, but students do often arrive for their first lesson apparently unaware of the need for a flash drive, and having just paid \$100 in the Office to join up, are not very impressed when their Trainer says they need a flash drive which costs another \$12.

What we plan to do about the requirement for flash drives Having checked that the requirement for a flash drive has been included to all information leaflets, handouts, etc., and is clearly included in the typical start-up cost for Fundamentals, it has been agreed that if a student does still arrive at their first lesson without a flash drive, they will now be able to borrow a club one for the first couple of weeks. After that they will be expected to either purchase one from the club, or procure one from elsewhere. The loaned flash drive can then be returned to the Office to be loaned again when required.

What we plan to do about the Fun manuals and CDs For XP students, the PC and XP Fun manuals will be updated over the break to remove all references to floppies, and the Fun CD will be handed out with the XP Fun manual. Vista students (who have never used floppies) will continue to create their own CDs after completing the CD burning section of the Professor Teaches course. All three manuals will be updated to correct errors – so if you know of anything which is incorrect or misleading, now is the time to let Eleanor or Peter know. (Thanks to those of you who have already contributed in this way.)

Relief Trainers List

Occasionally, due to holidays, sickness, etc., the Fundamentals courses find themselves with more students than trainers. Some of our current Fundamentals Trainers are willing to do extra training sessions occasionally, and have signed up on the Relief Trainers List to be contacted when needed.

There are two scenarios:

- a. Roster Officer knows a week in advance that a trainer will be absent the following week
- b. Senior Trainer knows at short notice that they have more students than trainers for a particular session

In either case, there is a very good chance that by making a couple of phone calls to a trainer on the Relief List, a replacement trainer can be found to cover the gap. Being on the list just means that you might receive a phone call – you still have the opportunity to say "No" if the extra session is not convenient.

Please give serious consideration to adding your name to the list in the corridor or, for more information, talk to your Senior Trainer.

Kaspersky

Following on from last month's Mailout, it appears that Kaspersky is not as "user-adaptable" as we were originally led to believe, and at times just decides "everything is just too hard", and turns internet access off rather than compromising security. Needless to say, this caused lots of problems with the Internet and Email courses, and is just not acceptable, so Kaspersky has been reinstalled on all PCs using the default settings. We now ask that if you do have any odd behaviour from Kaspersky which prevents you from doing something the manual suggests, you skip that bit, **but** please ask your Senior Trainer to write the details down in the appropriate computer Log Book (hard cover books which live in the corners of Room 1 and Room 2 near the printers), so we know what the problems are. Please add name and contact number so that the Maintenance Team can get further information if required. Should you get a Virus Alert, the acceptable responses are **Delete** or **Move to Chest**. Thanks heaps for your patience and cooperation.

Professor Teaches Vista and Office 2007

Anyone wanting Professor Teaches on their own PC can purchase it from Harvey Norman for \$49.95, order it by mail from Individual Software or Amazon in the US for about US\$17.95 plus postage (which works out a bit cheaper, but takes a couple of weeks) or even from eBay. Alternatively, if you have fast internet access, you can download a "trial" version of Professor Teaches Windows Home Premium (just the one program that we use rather than the 3 versions that you buy at Harvey Norman) over the Internet from the **cnet** website www.download.com for US\$9.95 (about \$12 Australian).

How this works in practice Download the program (preferably into a folder). Install Prof Teaches, and the first time you open it you have not paid for a Licence, so just click Next on the first dialog box. This activates the "trial" and you are asked to complete your name, address and email details. The second time you open the program you have the option to pay over a secure link. On completion of the payment process your licence key and order details are sent by email. Professor Teaches Microsoft Office 2007 is also available as a download – again the component programs can be downloaded separately.

Promoting Optional Courses

The promotional PowerPoint advertising all our Optional Courses has now been completed and will be added to all new Fundamentals CDs so that students who can find their way round Files and Folders can play it at leisure at home - instructions and PowerPoint Viewer (for those who do not have PowerPoint at home) are included. This PowerPoint Promo will also be loaded in the Fun Computing folder on all club PCs so that Trainers can make themselves a copy, or show it to students who are nearing the end of their Fundamentals course. An autoplay CD containing the first part of the Promotional PowerPoint (courses on levels 1, 2, & 3, of the Progression Chart) will be available in the Office to show visitors, and will also be given to all new students when they join the club (feel free to demonstrate if time permits).

As announced last month, the Course Progression Chart has been updated to include our new courses. A copy is attached with this Mailout.

Club PCs

Windows Updates

Just a reminder – the Maintenance Team will now do all Updates, so any Updates Available notifications (in the System Tray) should now be ignored.

Students' Files and Folders

The Maintenance Team is keen to clean up the "superfluous" files and folders on student PCs but is unsure what can be deleted on the desktops and in (My) Documents. It has been agreed that course presenters may create folders in (My) Documents named by courses (e.g. "Digital Camera") and any work placed in these folders would be retained. For the Fundamentals courses, desktops should also contain links to (My) Computer, (My) Documents and Recycle Bin, and shortcuts to the programs Blocks and Sticks. These "clean-ups" have started.

USB/Sound panels on the fronts of PC

There are still a few problems with the sound panels on the fronts of the PCs, so Skype has now been installed on all PCs in Room 1 to facilitate the comprehensive testing and retesting of their audio capabilities. The headphone sockets on most of the front panels are now working, but on some PCs the connection remains at the rear of the PC. Stickers will soon be applied to indicate which connections "work".

Changing Settings on Club PCs

Friendly Reminder... Fun manuals currently encourage Trainers to use club PCs to show students how to personalise things like Screen Savers and Desktops. Please remember, this is a privilege and not a right, so always ensure everything is restored to its standard settings before you leave. In the unfortunate event that you are unable to restore the standard settings, please don't just walk away – tell your Senior Trainer so that normal service can be restored. (If all else fails, make a report in the Log Book.)

Internet Access

The distribution of the Internet to all PCs in the Club is dependent on the Ethernet hubs in Room 1 and Room 2 being powered up. The hub in Room 2 is powered when the main power switch on the wall is switched on, however, the hub in Room 1 is only powered when the plugs on the hall side of the room are plugged in and switched on.

New, Updated and Deleted Courses

Advanced Internet

The first presentation of the course ended on Friday 19th September, and was a bit rushed. Future offerings will be over 5 weeks, and the course fee remains at \$20.

e-Bay Workshop

Because of the bad reports eBay is currently getting in the press it has been agreed that we should watch and wait for the time being.

Linux - Ubuntu

Bill Butts and John Greenlees are developing a course using the Open Office program "Writer" (the "open" equivalent of Microsoft Word). Watch this space!

Family Tree Maker Workshop???

As genealogy is such a vast and varied topic, we are investigating Ella Ross's suggestion of a workshop on Family Tree Maker. Again, watch this space!

StoryBook

At the last Training Sub-Committee meeting Senior Trainers were treated to a presentation of the StoryBook electronic scrapbooking software by Theresa Spence, one of our Club members (this was a definite improvement on the events at most committee meetings)! Theresa has agreed to develop a 2-3 session Optional Course based on StoryBook Creator 2 (a free download), in the early part of next year. If this course proves popular, it could be expanded into a 4-session course incorporating the purchased StoryBook Creator Plus software later in the year. Theresa will be giving a short presentation on the software, and the books created using it, at the November monthly meeting. Watch this space for future developments.

New Sign-up Rules for Selected Courses (Pay-in-Advance)

There is obviously still some confusion about Pay-in-Advance courses. The basic idea of *"emailing the Course Coordinator to show interest in a course, the Coordinator checking student eligibility (ie current membership and appropriate pre-requisites completed), scheduling a course, emailing those who have shown interest, and then the emailed recipients going to the Office to pay"*, works really well. However, things fall apart when people who have not been through the email process see a course Enrolment Sheet up on the wall and go to the Office and pay without having their eligibility checked by the Coordinator, or, in a couple of cases recently, go and pay for a course which is not scheduled, and for which there are no course dates or Enrolment Sheets!

What we plan to change for Pay-in-Advance Courses in 2009

Pay-in-Advance course Clipboards in the hall will revert to being expressions of interest in a course (as with all other courses). Prospective students can either email the Course Coordinator or enter their name and contact details on the list and wait for the Coordinator to come to the club and collect the information. Sending an email is preferable because a) the email address is generated by the sending PC, and not deciphered from handwriting on a list and b) you don't have to wait for the Coordinator to go to the Club to get your name on the Interest List.

When there is enough interest a course will be scheduled and emails sent to everyone who has registered. The front page of the Clipboard in the hall will show that a course has been scheduled, but the Enrolment Sheet and a list of email recipients will be kept in the Office. The Office Staff will only accept payment from people on this email list, and places will be filled on a first come first served basis. If anyone who has not previously registered interest wishes to enrol in a scheduled course, they will now have to contact the Coordinator (again, preferably by email) and get their eligibility checked and their name added to the Office list before they can enrol in the course. Yes, this will take a bit longer, but it will a) prevent people who have not registered from queue jumping those who have followed the system, and b) will ensure that only eligible students enrol, preventing the need to chase renewal fees or generate refunds for those who have not completed the appropriate pre-requisites, or who have managed to pay for non-existent courses.

As previously pointed out, our courses are run on a “demand” basis and we only have 2 rooms, so the key to getting a course scheduled is registering your interest. NO interest means NO courses!

Monthly Meeting

Our next Monthly Meeting on 12th November 2008 will include three in-house presentations about our own Optional Courses - **MailMerge, Scanning and Printing, Digital Scrapbooking, Adobe PhotoShop..** The next Trainers’ Meeting will follow this November 2008 Meeting on Wednesday 12th November 2008.

Peter & Eleanor