

Radio Days – 2009-04-25

Tip of the Week – Wireless Internet Problems

A client had a wireless internet option because he needed to be able to get fast internet access in a number of places. When it worked it worked well, but it only worked for a few minutes at a time before it dropped out. While it was working the speed varied dramatically, from a few kilobits per second to a few hundred kilobits per second. We rang the carrier's tech support line to discover that they were aware of the problem and would fix it "real soon now". The problem was that the single tower was overloaded and could not cope with the traffic.

It pays to check with tech support: sometimes they do speak English!

Who Dares Wins

In my travels for work I meet many people who find it really hard to start using a computer. After some time it seems as though many of these people expect their computer to be a major problem, and they are not disappointed. Most of these people see a computer as a steep mountain to be climbed with great difficulty. The reality, as so many of them come to realise quite quickly, is that computers are more like a series of molehills.

One of these molehills is called *Folders*. A *Folder* is a place for storing things, just like a sock drawer. You may have too many socks (or photos) in your sock drawer (or *My Pictures* folder), but that does not make the sock drawer (or *My Pictures* folder) difficult to find. There is a simple way to find a photo in *My Pictures*: you can sort by name, by date or by size. These sorts are easy to do once someone has shown you how to do them.

Another pair of molehills is called the *File Save* and *File Open* dialogue boxes. Far too many people look at these dialogue boxes and panic, quite unaware that some patience would allow the dialogue box to show some logic. For example, most photos are stored in *My Pictures*, and the *File Save* dialogue box will try to save all photos into *My Pictures*.

Another molehill is watching what your computer does and learning how to handle its habits. One client was complaining that her computer was too slow. I pointed out that she clicked on each icon a number of times so started the program four or five times. I showed her that if she only clicked once the computer was much faster. She also learnt that computers do not do things instantly!

Noticing patterns like this can also help when you are planning your next computing lesson. Learn to watch for, and learn from, such patterns: it can make your computing much easier!

Websites

None this week