

# Radio Days – 2010-01-30

## ***Tip of the Week – New Computers, Old Problems***

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A client rang me to check his new computer. The person who sold it had installed Windows and a few free programs, but left it at that. There was an anti-virus program (AVG Free, my favourite) and the free OpenOffice for writing letters and creating spreadsheets. The rest of the computer was just a mess.

The internet had not been setup correctly. This was shown because it was slow: there was too much space for temporary files (some 5 GB) so I set this to a faster 32 MB. It used American settings (location, spellings and date format) and thought that it was in the American Pacific time zone. I changed all these settings and installed my favourite programs like CCleaner and Defraggler, then created a backup routine. This all took about an hour, and his computer is now working like greased lightning.

## ***Online Safety 3 - Safe Downloading***

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There are some people who would die a fermented death if they could not download illegal music and other items from the internet. I love these people because they provide me with plenty of work cleaning up the viruses which appear, as if by magic, after a downloading session. The two most popular programs for doing this are Limewire (mainly for music) and  $\mu$ Torrent (which is pronounced you-torrent): both can be used safely but both are more commonly used without any thought of safety. These programs are both examples of torrents.

*Torrents* are programs which use a special way of downloading data from the internet. They do not download directly from a source like Tucows. Rather, they work by downloading a file in many parts from many sources: the more sources the better. This makes running a torrent network much cheaper (you do not have to maintain a large server farm). The disadvantage of using a torrent program like Limewire or  $\mu$ Torrent is that you cannot download a file if there is nobody with that file online when you want to download it.

It also means that you have no control over the quality of the files that you download. They can, and often do, have viruses which can wreak havoc with your computer. For this reason you should take these precautions when downloading using either of these programs:

- Check any comments about the file which may be posted. These comments can often contain warnings about the safety of each file: ignore them at your peril.
- If you are downloading music please ensure that you get a file with a high bit rate: at least 128 kbps for mp3 files. If the bit rate is too low it is often a warning that the file does not contain music.
- Download to an external drive (USB stick or external hard disc). After the files have been on your external disc for a week or so then you can use your favourite anti-virus program *and* your favourite anti-malware program to ensure that you have not downloaded something nasty. My favourite anti-malware programs are A Squared and MalWareBytes. Of course, if you need instant gratification then this will just not work.

There are, of course, websites which claim to have free and legal music. Just use Google!

## ***Websites***

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Limewire	<a href="http://www.limewire.com">www.limewire.com</a>
$\mu$ Torrent	<a href="http://www.utorrent.com">www.utorrent.com</a>
A Squared	<a href="http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/free">www.emsisoft.com/en/software/free</a>
MalWareBytes	<a href="http://www.malwarebytes.org">www.malwarebytes.org</a>