

Radio Days – 2010-05-22

Tip of the Week – Easter Eggs

This topic was prompted by the appearance of the PacMan game when I opened a Google search page. This old game is one which appeared for the earliest handheld games consoles (long before Wii and its competitors) and gave many hours of entertainment. There are now so many Easter Eggs in computer programs that it is impossible to name them all. A website which will give you lots of information is the Software Tips and Trick site at the bottom of the page: check it out to see if there are any there to interest you. There is even a cheat which shows the final stages of Solitaire.

And you thought that computer people had no sense of humour!

Which Processor: AMD v Intel

This is one of the most hotly-debated topics at any gathering of computer enthusiasts. The debate can be as heated as that between Ford and Holden drivers, and just as unsatisfactory if you want some solid information about which is best. In truth, there is not much difference in performance between the two processor families: you can spend lots of money and get a fast processor from both companies, and you can spend less and get, from both companies, a processor which will do everything that most computer users need. The more important task is to ensure that you have a balanced system.

What is a balanced system?

I remember talking with a system builder about one of his clients. The client had ordered a computer with a medium speed processor and insisted on getting lots of the fastest memory (RAM) available, despite the extra cost, and no amount of persuasion would change his mind. The problem with his choice of RAM is that the processor would not be able to keep up with the RAM so its speed would not be used. I suspected that he wanted bragging rights and that money was no object.

A better way to build a computer is to balance all the components for the task at hand. When buying a car you take into consideration the number of people and the amount, and size, of luggage that it will be expected to carry. The same is true when buying a computer: check your needs and buy a computer which is suitable for those needs. There is no point in buying a mini for a maxi job, or vice versa.

The Sweet Spot

Every cricket or tennis player knows about the *sweet spot*: the place on the bat or racquet which produces the most result for the least effort. A similar concept applies when buying computer parts: you get almost all the power for about 60% of the price of the fastest or biggest part. Buying parts in the sweet spot range will give you the fastest computer for a much lower price than if you had bought the top of the range article.

If you apply this formula to your next computer purchase, together with help from a good seller, you will get the best computer for the least amount of money.

Websites

Easter Eggs www.softwaretipsandtricks.com/eastereggs