Radio Days – 2010-08-07

Tip of the Week – Internet not Working

I was recently called to a client to get their internet working again. I am not sure what the problem was because I had no trouble getting onto the internet once I got there. All I really did was turn their modem off, wait one minute then turn it back on again. Apparently the problem started when they tried to update their AVG anti-virus. I am not sure if this was an update from version 8.5 to 9 or whether it was just updating the database of viruses.

If something like this has happened to you then the simple way to solve so many computer problems is to stop Windows (using *Start*, *Turn Off* then *Shut Down*), turn everything off at the wall, wait one minute then turn everything back on again and restart your computer. This solves so many problems that it should be part of every computer users toolkit for when things go wrong.

When I say turn everything off at the wall I mean everything: computer, modem, printer and anything else. If you are using a UPS (Uninterruptable Power Supply) then turn that off as well. For reasons that I do not understand a small power surge can have long-lasting effects. This is often why, when you take a computer to the repair shop, it works for the technician and embarrasses you!

Internet Filter

Senator Richard Alston, the minister in John Howard's Liberal government responsible for computers and communications, tried to implement an internet filter. This internet filter failed. Senator Steven Conroy is now doing the same thing, and this attempt is also doomed to fail. The reason for the failure is that it is trivially easy to defeat the filter. In about ten minutes of searching for ways to beat the filter, using just one search engine, I discovered five easy ways to beat the filter. This makes a mockery of any attempt by the federal government to censor the internet. In an open society censorship will always fail as there are too many ways to circumvent the censorship.

Another problem with the internet filter is that the web sites which are to be filtered will, sooner or later, be published on the internet. This information was released during the trial of the filter which was conducted some time ago, much to the government's embarrassment. If the filter does become mandatory then the same thing will happen again.

When I was younger the Victorian government tried to ban the book *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D H Lawrence. The result of this banning was that those people who had contacts in other states or countries just ordered the book from their friends. The same thing will happen if some sites on the internet are banned: some people will just go to these banned sites because they will know which sites are the *"naughty"* ones. Censorship will only work if you have a network of spies dedicated to suppressing the populace. It will not work in Australia.

If you have difficulty following the instructions in the articles which you find after doing a search then follow the standard instructions for setting the date on your VCR: get a teenager to do it for you! They often know just how to do this sort of thing as if by osmosis.

To quote from one of my favourite books, *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran:

> *You delight in laying down laws, yet you delight more in breaking them.*

Any law which can be so easily circumvented will never win the peoples' respect. The days of American Prohibition should not be forgotten too quickly.

Websites

None this week