

Radio Days – 2012-04-28

Tip of the Week – Out of the Frying Pan

A client recently switched to a new ISP. Their reason was simple: they were really upset with trying to resolve issues their current telecommunications provider. All their efforts had been met with a marked lack of success and they had got to the stage where the next step was to contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO). This organisation is the only one which really threatens the large telephone and internet companies. Its powers are such that a telecoms company can be fined tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of dollars a day if it does not obey the commands of the TIO.

Have you got a problem with a telecom company? If so, you might suggest that they sort it out before you ask the TIO to step in.

My client had switched to a new organisation which states that it is there to help people living in rural Australia. Their tech support person whom I spoke to was excellent and was able to sort out my problem in no time at all.

So far, so good.

The next time I spoke to my client she was in the supermarket and she stated that they were having troubles sending emails to certain people. The response she got from her new telco seemed to her, at best, a brush-off. I saw this problem when I tried to forward an email to myself. The email had an attachment which showed a really drunk man trying to drink from the breathalyser that the police officer was holding. I nearly wet myself watching it.

I do not know if it was the forwarding that was the problem or whether it was that fact that there was an attachment. Either way their new ISP refused to send the email though I have had two from them: one with a change of address and the other with an attachment. Perhaps it was the way I held my nose as I sent the previous one. Who knows!

.PDF Files

.pdf files are one of the best ways of sending information across the internet. It is a standard file format so there are many programs which can display a .pdf file when you receive it. The most common program, and also the worst, is Adobe Acrobat Reader. Adobe has had many complaints about its .pdf reader so the programs which I recommend are *Foxit Reader* and *Nitro Reader*. These programs, like all .pdf readers, are free: just download and install them.

Because the .pdf format is a standard (created by Adobe and placed in the public domain) there are many things that you can do with .pdf files. You can create them using a number of free programs, and you can also extract the words and images contained in a .pdf document and use them to create your own documents. Of course, please observe any copyright restrictions on reproduction. This is a common courtesy from one author to another which, unfortunately, is often neglected.

Creating .pdf Files

Creating a .pdf file is easy: it is really just printing to a .pdf file rather than to paper. As with all printers, you have to install the printer before you can use it. There are two .pdf printers which I have used: *Bullzip* and *PDFCreator*. Both of these programs are free and they are very similar in use.

Because you are just printing a document (albeit to a file not to paper) you can create a .pdf file from any program (I created this .pdf from Microsoft Word) which can print to paper. When you start printing you must select your .pdf printer: if you do not your document will be printed to paper.

I find that printing documents that I need to keep for reference (such as internet payments to my suppliers) but do not want to print physically is best done by printing to .pdf. This way I

have a copy of the document in case I need it. I have on at least two occasions needed to email my suppliers with proof of payment because their bank was having computer problems with its system. This way I could get my supplier off my back and get them to annoy their bank. This has a certain unwarranted joy to it!

Reading .pdf Files

There are two programs which I recommend for those people who are ready to upgrade from the Adobe .pdf Reader. These two programs are *Foxit Reader* and *Nitro Reader*. Both programs are free (like the Adobe Reader) and easy to download from the internet. Please pick one of them and download it: I tend to recommend the Foxit reader because it was available before the Nitro reader but it really is six of one and a half-dozen of the other.

Please chose one of these programs over the Adobe reader because they work better.

Converting .pdf Files

As well as being able to print to .pdf files, you can also select the text and images in a .pdf document. Both Foxit Reader and Nitro Reader allow you, at no charge, to extract the text and images from .pdf files. That means, for example, that you could select some or all of the text from this document and use it in another document.

Before you do this please respect my copyright on all the documents on my website. If you are selecting text from somebody else's .pdf file then please also respect their copyright (if any).

There are a number of programs which allow you to copy a .pdf file straight into Word so that you can edit it. Some programs will also allow you to merge two or more .pdf files, and others will allow you to fill in a form in a .pdf document.

Some people will tell you that a .pdf file cannot be altered or copied. This is not true. At the most laborious you will have to retype everything written: this, however, will not get any of the images into your new document. A much easier way is to use the functions built in to both of the programs mentioned below.

If you wish to do a lot of modification of .pdf files then Nitro Reader seems to be the better way to go. Why not download, install and try both of these programs and see which one suits your needs best?

Further Information

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| TIO | www.tio.com.au |
| Bullzip | www.bullzip.com |
| PDFCreator | www.pdfforge.com |
| Foxit Reader | www.foxitsoftware.com |
| Nitro Reader | www.nitropdf.com |