

Radio Days – 2013-02-16

Tip of the Week – Email Problems

This week I had two calls on the same day from people who were not able to use the internet as they would have liked. The first caller could get onto the internet but could not access their emails after changing from one ISP (Internet Service Provider) to another. The second caller was not even able to get onto the internet.

No Emails ...

Being able to get onto the internet was easy. Everything just worked as it should, but getting emails was another matter indeed. I could get emails using the ISP's website and going into the webmail section of that website. This meant that we had all the correct details which were needed to setup their email program, but still this did not work.

At this stage I did the obvious thing and went to their ISP's website to check the settings. There, in plain sight, were the settings that I had expected and they agreed with those that I had set in my client's email program. This did not improve the response. I could send emails so at least one part of the setup was correct.

There still remained the problem of not being able to receive emails. I went to the webmail site and found the emails waiting to be collected but they stubbornly refused to download to my client's computer.

The only solution was to ring the ISP's technical support department. This was made more difficult because they had a problem with *their* computer system. Once we had made contact with a tech support person they could not diagnose the problem over the phone so I allowed them access to the computer. After a while they changed a setting and, lo and behold, emails flooded down the wires into my client's Inbox.

Problem solved! It was a pity, though, that the email settings on the website were inaccurate.

No Internet ...

This problem was more serious than the previous one because there was no obvious way to get things going without help from the ISP's support desk. So, again, a phone call was made. This time they took a long time to provide a person to answer the phone because they were experiencing an unusually high level of calls.

Once through I was informed that the problem was with my client's modem. This was an old modem which had, at last, succumbed to old age. A trip to my favourite hardware support shop confirmed this diagnosis, so I bought a new modem for my client.

Once the new modem was installed and setup it was tested, and the internet connection was still not working so another call to the support desk was made. This time there was a fault at the exchange, and this was corrected while we waited.

I suspect that a power surge may have hit the exchange and done damage there then come through the phone line to my client's modem and done more damage there. This is all just conjecture but I like to try to work out why things happen so that I can see if I can stop them from happening again.

Now everything worked and emails could come through!

My New Phone ...

Last year I was asked by a listener which was the best mobile phone network. I could not answer his question on the spot so asked him to listen to my show on the following Saturday. During that week I did some research to find the answer and the results are available from my earlier cheat sheets. Their addresses are given in the *Further Information* section at the end of this document.

Choice: The Network

I chose Telstra as my mobile phone network. While I did not take my own advice and buy a SIM for each of the mobile networks that I was considering, I do have access to the experience of users of other networks.

One client could not use his wireless internet in Bendigo for much longer than a minute or two without being thrown off the network and having to log on again. This frustrated him, to say the least, so I did some checking. The internet reported that there seemed to be a problem like this with his version of Windows, Vista (which was then brand-new) but, after trying the suggested fixes without success, I resorted to ringing the network's support desk. A very helpful woman told me that the whole Bendigo area was covered by only one stick and that this stick was overloaded to such an extent that it could not cope very well. The problem would only go away when a new stick, or sticks, were opened to take the load off their current single stick.

This was not the network for me!

I spoke to another client who told me about a friend who had a phone with another mobile network. This friend had excellent coverage within the Bendigo CBD but, once more than about five kilometres from the fountain in High Street, his coverage faded to barely usable. This, for me, was a killer.

Telstra does not have good coverage in the areas where I travel, but its coverage is better than all the other networks so it will have to do. As an aside, if only the best of something was good enough to excite me!

Choice: The Phone

As mentioned in one of my earlier articles, I chose the Samsung Galaxy S III. This phone was, according to all my research, the best for my purposes. I would have preferred the better reception of either the iPhone or the HTC One XL. Both of these, according to Telstra, have better coverage in rural areas but both were rejected.

I rejected the iPhone because it is not able to be setup the way that I like my phone to work. Henry Ford is famous for his quote when talking about the then-new Model T: "*You can have it in any colour you like as long as it is black.*" Steve Jobs might as well have said that the iPhone can be setup in any way that you want it as long as it is the Apple way. I do not want the Apple way of doing things.

I was also informed that the iPhone was better because it had more apps in its store than any Android phone, but seriously: who needs 250,000 apps bogging their phone down?

The HTC One XL was another good phone but it did not have any way to store anything on an SD card. This is a standard way of storing things like photos and music, and complements the internal storage in your phone. Because I have so many phone numbers I needed a way to copy these numbers from my old phone to my new. This was available in the Samsung phone but not in the HTC. Otherwise the HTC would possibly have been the phone of choice.

Choice: The Plan

The next, and final, step was to select the pre-paid plan which best suited my needs. I bought a Telstra Simplicity recharge pack because it seemed to be the best. I calculated, incorrectly as it turned out, that this would cost me about \$200 per year. After two months I realised that my calculations were way out and that the cost would be closer to \$500 per year: not the \$200 that I had expected.

I next bought a recharge for a Cap Encore for \$30. This allows me all the phone and data usage that I need, and gives me free phone calls and text between 6 pm and 6 am. This is fine provided I do not run my battery down during a call! The total cost for a year's network access is now \$360: this is more expensive than I had expected at first but much lower than my later costing of \$500 per year.

Buying the Phone

The next step was to buy the phone. I could have bought it from Telstra but their price is far too high. There are cheaper places to buy my chosen phone but most of them only provided phones which were locked to a particular network. I am not prepared to buy a locked phone for two reasons:

- I cannot change from one network to another without paying to unlock the phone.
- I cannot use my phone overseas without paying to have it unlocked. This means that I cannot buy a travel SIM to use in all the countries which I want to visit before the world explodes.

I used a price comparison website to find a cheap phone. I knew the model that I wanted to buy and the only question now was where to buy it. I chose Kogan because they had an excellent price, the phone was both unlocked and in stock, and delivery was quick.

What more could I ask for?

The Results

The nett result of all this fun (yes, I did enjoy the searching and researching to achieve this result!) is that I have a phone which does all that I want and need. Faster data speeds (to match the speeds that I get at home on my WiFi network) would be a blessing but this will not happen until Telstra updates the network around Maryborough to achieve 4G (LTE: Long-Term Evolution) speeds. At the moment the 4G network is only available in areas close to the CBD areas of capital cities and the centres of large regional centres like Ballarat and Bendigo.

If I had bought a Cap Encore recharge from the beginning I would have saved \$37 per month and so paid off the phone from savings in just 14 months. This means that I have achieved all my aims:

- A network which meets most of my needs.
- A phone which meets most of my needs.
- A pre-paid plan which meets most of my needs.

If only perfection were easy to find!

I wish you all the best in your search for your next phone.

Further Information

Which mobile phone network	www.tobybainbridge.com/rd-2012-08-11.pdf
Which mobile phone handset	www.tobybainbridge.com/rd-2012-08-18.pdf
Which mobile phone plan	www.tobybainbridge.com/rd-2012-10-13.pdf
Price comparison website	www.staticice.com.au
Kogan	www.kogan.com.au