

Radio Days – 2010-06-05

Tip of the Week – Mobile Phone Charges (Correction)

Last week I announced that I had bought a new phone on a plan which limited my exposure to excess data download charges. I have since checked this with Telstra and found that I was wrong: instead my call charges are limited to a maximum excess charge of \$100. The data charges are unlimited, so the sky is the limit!

This is potentially a very expensive option: I received a text message from Telstra after only two days of having my new phone stating that I had used over 80% of my limit! At that rate I would have had to pay something like \$2,500 if I had not turned the data access off and just used my wireless access at home and when out and about. WiFi access does not use Telstra's network to access the internet so has no Telstra charges; WiFi, however, may incur charges from the provider of the service. There are many hotspots around, if you look, so use these rather than incur excess data charges from your mobile phone provider.

Myths and Myth Confusion

There are many ways to spread confusion on the internet, and I suspect that most of us are guilty of helping to spread myths and myth confusion at one time or another. Perhaps one of the best myth confusions is the rogue email which states something like *both Microsoft and Norton have warned us that there is a new and very dangerous virus coming your way in an email with the subject **Postcard for you!*** You are told that you **MUST** pass this very important warning on to all your friends and enemies so that they can be protected.

This is an obvious hoax, if you stop and think for a moment. The following tells you this:

- The warning is for a future virus (viruses do not pre-announce their arrival)
- You are given the names of two well-known companies (false authority)
- You are told that you *must* pass this warning on (orders from a higher authority)

This is an excellent example of *social engineering*: the process of appealing to a person's best nature so that they will do what you want them to do. Please stop, at this point, for just one moment and think. If you do take the time to stop and think, your next step will be to check your favourite search engine to see if this warning has appeared before. It almost always has so your next step is to click on *Reply to All* and let both the sender of the email and all the other people who have received this hoax know that this is a hoax and ask them not to pass the details on. I have seen many people reduced to such abject terror by this sort of false warning that they dare not use their computer for fear of being infected by the latest and greatest virus, only to lose everything stored on their computer.

Please think of the people who are less computer savvy than you before you pass on such an obviously false warning. These hoaxes have been around almost as long as the internet (and longer, if you include the spoken warnings that you hear around the water cooler or bar).

Such hoaxes, which often pass for fact, are called *Furphies*: this is a reference to the water barrels on wheels which were used to supply First World War Australian soldiers with fresh drinking water during the heat of battle. Then, as now, the tired and thirsty soldiers would share all their rumours with anyone who would listen. The water barrels were manufactured by an Australian company called Furphy Brothers in Shepparton, and that name provided the source of this term.

Websites

None this week