Radio Days – 2010-06-12

Tip of the Week – Backup (Again)

I had a phone call during the week from a client who had lost an important file (and please remember that *all* your files are important). On the phone I talked him through finding the file using the search built into Windows. After sorting all the found documents in date order (using the *Detail* view and clicking on the *Date* column) he was able to see his document and open it. At this stage that he realised just how bad things were: his document was empty!

This document was needed for a major event and he had, somehow, managed to delete the entire text. It was a Word document, and the easiest way to delete the contents of a Word document is to mistype a capital A. If you do this by pressing <Ctrl>-A instead of <Shift>-A you will see a blue screen. The next letter typed will delete the whole document! I have seen this happen far too often, and each time the person who did it said they had not done that!

He also had no backup so that he could not recover from this problem!

Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is an excellent way for people to come to terms with how to use a computer without having to buy the programs which are needed to run a computer. It is not the panacea that many people think.

What is cloud computing?

Perhaps the easiest way to describe *cloud computing* is to give an example. The easiest one for many people to understand is *webmail*. Webmail is email using a browser rather than an email program like Outlook Express or Windows Live Mail. These programs bring all your emails from the internet on to your computer. Webmail, on the other hand, leaves all your emails sitting on a server somewhere in the cloud (as computer people call a network). Many children have webmail email accounts: you can tell that it is webmail because their email address ends with *@hotmail, @gmail* or something similar. These services make your emails always available from any internet computer.

Where to now?

The next step in cloud computing is to do all your work in the cloud. This has advantages:

- No upfront software costs
- No worries about data loss as it should always be available from anywhere
- Cheaper computers
- You are always using the latest version of your programs

Cloud computing also has disadvantages:

- You have no control over where your data is stored, or if you can read it
- You can receive large internet fees because of all your traffic
- Accessing your data is slower than doing tasks locally
- Sometimes the latest version does not work properly

Will I ever use cloud computing?

No way! The disadvantages are just too great for me to go to cloud nine (or zero).

Websites

None this week