

Radio Days – 2011-05-21

Tip of the Week – Keeping Up-To-Date

This week I discovered a new way of keeping your programs up-to-date. It is a web-based tool where you select programs to keep up-to-date and then, at say monthly intervals, you run the tool. Running this tool downloads and installs the latest version of each of these programs where a new version has become available during the month. This is the most painless way that I have found to keep your computer as up-to-date as possible.

The tools name, and website, is **Ninite**. A weird name but a very useful tool. If you discover some programs which you would like to keep up-to-date, but are not on the list, you can suggest them. If enough people suggest the same program it will be added to the list.

I have stopped suggesting AVG as an anti-virus program because too many people are not able to update it when new versions arrive. Ninite is a boon to those using AVG. If you use AVG then please use Ninite to keep it up-to-date and your computer protected.

Email Attachments

A client rang this week in great distress: he could not open an email attachment and again thought that his computer was the problem. I checked his email and found that the file type was one which I did not recognise so I googled the extension to find that it was a database from the 2007 version of Microsoft Access. The problem with this file type is that most people do not have a copy of Access on their computer. This was the case with my client.

The best solution was to ring the sender and ask them to print the report from the database then fax the report. This report was two pages wide so not easy to read: it would have been better to print it in landscape format so that each page sat neatly on a single piece of paper. This is a cumbersome way around what is, really, a very simple problem.

A far better solution would be to create the information in a spreadsheet program like Excel. This is a program which many people have, and Microsoft has a free Excel viewer program. If the sender had sent the original data in Excel format with a link to the free viewer then most people would have had no problem reading the file. Another solution would have been to send the report as a pdf (in landscape format) because this is format which you can safely assume that all computers can read.

An even better solution would have been to send the report both as a pdf report and as an Excel spreadsheet with a link to Microsoft's free viewer. This would have allowed those with the skills to sort the spreadsheet as they wanted while the pdf report would have been enough for everybody else.

Please think before sending an email attachment: some people may not be able to handle your offering.

Further Information

Ninite www.ninite.com

Microsoft Excel & Word viewers www.microsoft.com/downloads