

Radio Days – 2012-06-16

Tip of the Week – Storing Images

I had a client this week who had an image which he wanted to insert into a signature for his emails. The image was stored in a Word document which made inserting it into his signature much more difficult. The answer was to store it as an image: this is the natural form for images so makes life much easier for everybody.

To make this task easier in future, because the image was one which would be used again and again in the future, I copied the image in the Word document then pasted it as a Paint image. This made the image far too large as it was the size of an A4 page and my client only wanted a small image at the foot of his emails. There is, as usual if you know how, an easy way to do this at I found this way as I was performing the task.

In Paint (a program which is part of Windows: it is found in the *Accessories* menu group) you can save images in a number of formats. My first step was to copy the image from the Word document then paste it into a new Paint image. The next step was to save the image so that it could be used in my client's signature. I chose to use GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) because it is small and thus a good choice for emails as it takes up very little room.

Next step: check that all is well and that the image is usable. For this I used a favourite image program: Irfanview. This showed me that the image had a lot of white space around it. This meant that it had to be cropped. As I was looking for the crop tool I came across a new tool which I had not seen before: in the menu select *Edit » Auto Crop Borders*. This tool takes an image and removes all the white space around the outside of the image so was just what the doctor ordered.

Save the newly-cropped image and then complete the signature. Job Done!

What is a Signature?

A *signature* is standard text and images which is added to the end of an email message. In most email programs a signature is added automatically when you create the new email message. A signature is commonly used to promote a business, add details about services or addresses and, in many cases, add information prohibiting you from using any information if you are not the addressee. I have often wondered if, when somebody has sent you an email with confidential information in it, you are then really able to be sued if you disclose that information to somebody else.

Perhaps a lawyer could let us all know the ramifications of this sort of disclaimer at the foot of an email message.

Being Locked-In

During the week I received a call from a client who wanted to get a larger download limit on their internet access. I went round to find that their need stemmed because the business had grown to the point to where they were often exceeding their current limit.

The best place to start for a quest like this is, obviously, the internet itself. My client had a modest monthly limit and their ISP had plans which went from less than their current limit to a monthly limit far more than they would need for a long time. All of these plans with larger download limits were, of course, more expensive.

There were also other ISPs which had both lower prices for the same download limits and excellent records for service so it was an easy choice to start by looking at their websites. The first one which I checked had recently advertised that they could change you over to their service in just a few hours. My client was delighted with one of the new plans so we rang the provider to change over. This was when we discovered *Lock-In*.

What is Lock-In?

Old people (like myself) or those with longer memories, will remember that, in the good old days, if you changed from one mobile phone provider to another you had to get a new phone number to go with the new provider. This meant that you could tell, from the first few digits of a mobile phone number, which provider they used.

This procedure caused a lot of frustration to many people and, eventually, the government made the mobile phone companies create a system so that any subscriber to one company could change to another company and keep their hard-earned mobile phone number. Can you imagine what would happen to my business if I could not maintain my mobile number?

A similar system can, in some cases, make changing from one ISP to another a nightmare.

This is called *Lock-In*.

Changing ISP

Some ISPs are part of a network which supports *Rapid Transfer*. Rapid transfer is what I thought all ISPs could do, but I was wrong! I am with an ISP which does not support rapid transfer so, if I want to change, I will have to call my old provider and get them to disconnect me. Then, when I have been disconnected, I will have to contact my new provider and get them to connect me to their new service, and this will take about seven to ten days. During this time I would not have internet access. I would also lose the email address which comes automatically with an ISP.

My client used another ISP which did not support rapid transfer. Because he could not have a time without internet access he decided to stay with his current ISP and increase his monthly data allowance.

During the next few days I envied my sister who lives in Hong Kong. There is no such thing as a data allowance there: you have an all-you-can-eat connection. It really is enough to make me spit chips. When people suggest that we in Australia should also have an all-you-can-eat connection they worry that some people will abuse it!

There is another solution: during the outage period just get a wireless connection and use it while your new connection will be created. You only have to worry about losing your email address.

Which ISP?

If you are thinking of moving from your current ISP to another then you will need to know where you are going. To get a useful list of all the ISPs who service your telephone exchange the best website that I know is Whirlpool. It purports to list all the ISPs in Australia with their plans. Check it out if you are thinking of moving to another ISP.

If this is your first time getting a broadband internet connection then you might like to get a prepaid wireless modem (if you live in an area with mobile telephone coverage) and use this for a few months to see just how much you use the internet and just how big a data allowance you need. This will then give you much more idea of how much data you and your family will need each month. Please allow for the fact that school-age children are used to the internet at school so will expect unlimited access at home as well.

Welcome to the modern world!

Further Information

Irfanview www.irfanview.com

Whirlpool www.whirlpool.net.au