

Radio Days – 2012-09-01

Discussion – Engage Mind Before Engaging Mouse

One of the most difficult tasks that any person can perform is to maintain vigilance for even a short period of time. I was reminded of just how difficult I find this when I remembered what happened both when I was working in tech support at MYOB and when I was teaching at TAFE.

In both jobs, despite being aware that I would have to listen to questions so that I could give both an accurate and usable answer, I often found myself saying *Sorry, I lost concentration for a moment. Please repeat your question.*

This has come to mind quite often during the last few weeks as I struggled with problems which clients thrust upon me in the hope that I could rescue them from their impasse. As this is the part of my job which I enjoy the most I have mixed feelings about the problems which people get themselves into: on the one hand I want the problems to arrive so that I have a challenge while on the other hand I want my clients to have trouble-free computing.

Such is the life of a computer consultant!

Do Not “Click Here”!

This problem occurs so often that, at the risk of repeating myself too often, I repeat what I said last week. If you click on anything on a webpage without knowing what to expect you can almost be guaranteed to have a problem.

Some clients are lucky: their web browser just fills with so many taskbars at the top of the screen that they have no room to see the contents of the page. This is frustrating, especially if you are in a hurry and want to find some information which is easily available on the web!

Some clients are less fortunate. There was a scam going round some months ago whereby a hacker would plant a program on your computer which would protect all your data with a password. They would then ask for money to give you the password to be able to get to all your data. If you had a backup you could just reinstall Windows then reinstall your data.

The only other option was to pay the “protection” ransom to retrieve your data. Even then, many people did not take backups in case it happened again.

There are, of course, other things which can happen if you click without looking. In the past I have watched people click just by accident. They were unaware that their finger had pressed on the mouse button. When I asked them why they had clicked there they stated with real conviction that they had not clicked anywhere. When I asked them why something had happened they denied that it had even happened!

This is all coming back after watching a program on SBS TV which showed just how easy it is to miss what is going on around us. The brain is an amazing device, but it is too easy to fool it. This explains why we are so intrigued by magicians!

Watch That Date!

This is a standard issue with accounting programs. There, everything that you do is governed by the date. This is the only way that your accounting program knows which financial period it should apply to each transaction. This was brought home to me recently when a client rang because he was having difficulty doing his bank reconciliation.

The program he was using was MYOB. This particular problem is not an issue in QuickBooks because of the different way that QuickBooks handles dates, and how QuickBooks allows you to change everything about a transaction.

There was one payment which was dated some two years in the past. I am still not quite sure how a recently-entered transaction could have been entered so far in the past. Because of the date, and the fact that it was in a previous financial year, it could not be deleted. It also could

not be reversed using the same date because that fell in a previous financial year which had been closed. This meant that this transaction was now wrong and there was no way of making a correction.

If only she had QuickBooks! In QuickBooks you just change the date of the transaction and there are no problems. Every time I hear of this sort of problem with MYOB I wish that I could convert my client's data file to QuickBooks with the wave of my magic wand.

Again, I repeat:

- MYOB is designed by accountants for accountants
- QuickBooks is designed by users for users.

If you are looking for an accounting package which works the way that you need it to work my advice is that you get QuickBooks, not MYOB. There are so many problems which are major deal-breakers in MYOB that are non-issues in QuickBooks. This is but one example.

Itchy Trigger Finger

Another client could not help himself. I watched as he moved his mouse around the screen and clicked with gay abandon on anything that looked like a button. This was an invitation to the black hats to send him an email with any number of *Click here!* messages or buttons. His addiction to the left click button would be enough to make him a prime candidate for the latest and greatest viruses!

It may be fun if you can move your mouse so accurately that you can click on a single pixel but it is an invitation to disaster to do so without looking, or without comprehending what it is that you see.

Your Murphy Field

Some people have a *Murphy Field*. This is an aura which interacts with all electronic devices around them to cause them to produce harm in these electronic devices.

A case in point: a client had changed the cartridge in her printer and then the computer did not work. In desperation she rang and I flew to her rescue (I do so love a damsel in distress!). When I got there she showed me that her computer was, indeed not working. I turned it off, then turned it back on and, lo and behold, it worked.

She was gobsmacked.

The next problem was that she could not watch catch-up TV on her computer. Her normal browser was Firefox and the show often stuttered when displayed in Firefox. Worse, the image would stop while the sound played. I could find no problem, her internet connection was fast enough and it all worked in Opera. I could find nothing wrong, but still it did not work in Firefox after uninstalling, using Revo Uninstaller, then re-installing.

I was gobsmacked.

Just to be sure to be sure (yes, I do have Irish ancestry) I viewed all the catch-up channels in Firefox on my computer. It worked beautifully. The picture was clear and the sound was easy listening. We both have Windows 8 so our two computers should work identically with the same program.

Further Information

Revo Uninstaller www.revouninstaller.com