

Radio Days – 2013-03-09

Apology

Last year I spoke of the dangers of using refilled or remanufactured ink or toner cartridges. Yesterday I spoke with Peter, the owner of the Cartridge World shops in both Golden Square in Bendigo and in Echuca. He graciously showed me his shop in Golden Square yesterday, and I was impressed both with the people who work there and the equipment and procedures used to fill and remanufacture the ink and toner cartridges which he receives for refilling.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the quality of the company's work was the stream of repeat customers who came in to have ink cartridges refilled while I was there.

This operation is a far cry from the people who I have seen buying cheap inks and then using dirty refilling techniques and wondering why their printer failed to work.

Quality like that from Cartridge World is definitely worth having.

Tip of the Week – Free Software

For so many people the lure of free software is unbeatable. I have been advising people to get free programs for over a decade now because so much free software is not only excellent but also among the best available.

Ashampoo

For some time now I have recommended Ashampoo's excellent free CD burning program. This program does everything that the vast majority of people want, and is a free download from the Ashampoo website. It is easy to use and the best burning program that I have found. It is so good that I bought the full version: the price is ridiculously low and I like to support companies like this.

Adobe

I have just discovered that Adobe has released an outdated version of the full suite of its programs. The current version of its suite is CS6 and the now-freely-available version is CS2. This means that any budding graphic artist or photographer (still or video) who wants part or all of the CS2 Suite can download either the full suite or any of the programs.

This suite contains:

- **Acrobat** – for creating and changing .pdf files
- **After Effects** – for creating unreal effects in movie footage
- **Audition** – for recording sound
- **Go Live** – a now-discontinued WYSIWYG HTML editor
- **Illustrator** – graphic design and vector drawing editor
- **InCopy** – a writing and editing program for creating books and newspapers
- **InDesign** – a desktop publishing program for books and newspapers
- **Photoshop** – a photo manipulation program
- **Premier Pro** – a movie manipulation program

Unsupported

There is one thing which you need to notice: all these programs, from both manufacturers, are no longer supported so do not come with any sort of warranty.

There may well be other programs or suites which have been released as outdated products: if you come across any please let me know so that I can pass them on to all my listeners.

Sliding Gracefully Into The 21ST Century

I have been doing this job for over fifteen years now so I had thought that I was immune from surprises. This is not so!

Existing Computer

During the week I met a new client who had a computer whose parts needed to be connected and then it needed to be made to work. I was surprised when I saw the parts. The screen was the oldest one which I have seen for over a decade: it extended so far back that I could not see all of it until my eyes had become accustomed to the gloom. There were two speakers, one on each side of the screen, and each one was the size of a normal speaker which you currently buy in a shop. This means that they were really large!

The system unit (which some people call the hard drive to the confusion of any repair person to whom they are trying to explain the problem) was also the largest that I have seen for many years.

After plugging the mouse (with a very old connector!), the keyboard and the screen into the system unit I crossed my fingers and switched everything on. The screen came to life and displayed a ridiculously low amount of RAM before stating *Press F2 to enter Setup*. I did as the screen commanded and pressed F2. I then waited while the screen displayed *Entering Setup* for so long that I was expecting the world to end.

It was obvious that this computer was only fit for the recycle bin! It was now time for a computer shop to be consulted for a new computer!

This old computer had a companion laptop computer which had obviously not been used for at least four years. I can state that with confidence because the printer which was attached to it had unprinted documents from December 2008! This computer was very slow. It had Windows XP installed, and this copy had only been updated to SP2 (Service Pack 2). SP3 has been available for more years than I can remember.

I noticed an indicator flag near the clock and saw that an update had been downloaded and was waiting to be installed. This update was the missing SP3 so I started the installation. The installation was still going 24 hours later so it was obvious that this computer, like its desktop cousin, was destined for the recycle bin.

Old computers are rarely worth keeping!

New Computer

I have also had a call from another client with a similar problem a year or two ago. He did not have a computer which was well past its use-by date; he had a need for a new computer for his business. He also had the expectation that any computer that he bought now would last for at least ten years.

I had the greatest difficulty in explaining to him that a computer had a life span of three to five years. He explained that his friend had a ten-year-old computer which still worked. I had great difficulty explaining that his friend's ten-year-old computer would not run the latest version of Microsoft Office or QuickBooks, and that, as a businessman, he would need both.

I also tried to explain to him that his friend's ten-year-old computer would have difficulty in accessing the internet at ADSL speeds because it had such a slow processor.

To break the deadlock I suggested that we go to his friend's place and try these programs on the ten-year-old computer. This suggestion went down well so we traipsed off to make the acquaintance of this not-mythical computer. I was really horrified to see that computer.

The first thing to check was that there was enough space on this old computer's hard disc. This was easy to do, and the results were bad. The operating system was Windows XP (much better than Windows 98) and the hard disc had a capacity of 16 GB with 10 GB used. This meant that there was about 3 GB available while leaving enough working space for Windows.

Did you know that Windows needs a minimum of 15% of the hard disc to be free? This is so that there is enough working space; unfortunately I do not know enough about the internal workings of Windows to know why it needs all that free space or what it does with it.

This meant that we had enough free space to install both QuickBooks and Microsoft Office. I had a copy of the trial version of QuickBooks so installed it. The program installed well but would not start because there just was not enough RAM for it to run. I explained to both my client and his friend that a ten-year-old computer just did not cut it in the modern business world.

The nett result of this operation was that I had two new and committed clients. The person who first rang me bought the computer which I recommended and was completely happy with the result. He now has the expectation that he would have to replace his computer every three or four years to maintain a good working system for his business.

His friend with the ten-year-old computer also bought a new computer. We transferred all his programs and data to the new computer and he started using QuickBooks for his accounting. This was a vast improvement on his previous manual system which had too many holes for debtors to leak through.

Summary

The summary of all this is that most businesses need a current computer, with up-to-date programs, to help them. This computer, together with an internet connection, will mean that the business has the capacity to march confidently forwards in tune with the 21st Century and its expectations of those who wish to prosper in business.

If you or your business have an old computer and you need some encouragement, or help, to buy a new computer to suit your needs then please ring me on 0419-131-459.

Further Information

Ashampoo www.ashampoo.com
Adobe CS2 Suite www.adobe.com/downloads/cs2_downloads