

Radio Days – 2013-04-06

Tip of the Week – Keep Your Passwords

I had a call to a new client during the week. He could not access his emails and was sure that it was an easy problem to fix. Unfortunately this was not the case.

The problem was that he had forgotten the password to his email account. Many people do this, and for most of them it is easy to recover the password from their ISP. My client was not one of these people.

Website Email Addresses

He had a website for his business, and the email address that he used was attached to his website. As an example, my website is www.tobybainbridge.com and my email address is toby@tobybainbridge.com: this is the normal way for a business to operate. I have seen too many businesses with a website and a *hotmail.com* email address. These people have often told me that this is their email address and that they do not want to change it.

That is, of course, their choice but is not, in my opinion, a professional one. It is so easy to set up email forwarding from the website's email address to a *hotmail.com* email address. This is a more professional address. The problem for so many people is that they are not open to a simple change like this.

Checking Emails

When you want to check your emails you will often use an email program like Outlook or Outlook Express. All of these programs need to know your password before your ISP's email server will allow you to download your emails. This is a normal security procedure, and you should welcome it because it ensures that only you (and, of course, anybody else who knows your password) can access your emails.

It is important to remember your password, especially if your computer person doesn't write down your password so cannot tell you what it is when you forget it.

In my client's case his computer consultant could not remember his password and could not find any means of getting it. The only hope in this situation was for the consultant to contact the company which hosts my client's website and ask the either what the password is or ask them to reset the password.

I hope that when that happens that my client will write his password down, preferably on his computer rather than a piece of paper which will inevitably be lost. With all computers it is possible to protect files like this with a password, a password which should not be lost!

Saving Passwords

There is an excellent program which will help you keep track of all your passwords: KeePass. This program is free and allows you to keep all your passwords safely in one place. You will still need either to remember the master password to your KeePass password safe or to keep a file which contains that password readily available: perhaps on a USB thumb drive which is held on your keyring.

If you are the person who has only one password, or the person who always forgets his or her password then this is a program which you need to have so that you will never again forget your password.

Windows 8 – Six Months On

Windows 8 was launched in October 2012. This month marks the six month anniversary of that launch, and I felt that it was time to look at Windows 8 in the context of both the success of Windows 7 (its immediate predecessor) and the failure of Windows Vista (the version of Windows between the very popular Windows XP and the equally popular Windows 7).

There are a number of things which jump to mind.

Comparison with Apple

Windows 8 is an operating system designed for touch screens. Apple has an operating system designed for touch screens: it appears on small devices like the iPhone and the iPad. These devices are designed to be held in one hand while operated by your other hand. For this sort of device a touch screen is the obvious choice given today's technology.

Small Touch Screens

When Apple introduced the Newton in the early 1990s it was heralded as the start of a new way of using computers. I remember the jokes about the Newton: how it would take dictation and create notes which were completely unreadable. This unpopular device was to become the precursor of extremely popular devices like the iPhone and iPad.

The technological changes which have happened over the last twenty years or so have made these modern devices far easier to use and far more reliable in their use. Yes, there have been some fluffs, especially in voice recognition (Siri was the main butt of jokes) but, overall, these Apple devices have become a part of everyday life.

Larger Non-Touch Screens

Apple has another range of products: the iMac and the MacBook. These products use both a mouse and keyboard rather than a touch screen to control them. This difference in the means of control has meant that the larger-screened Apple products have a different operating system: one which emphasises the use of mouse and keyboard.

Microsoft, in contrast, has only one operating system for all screen sizes and types. This has been one of the major problems with the new Windows operating system.

Sales

Windows 8 is an interesting product. It was launched with much hype by Microsoft last year and touted as the Next Big Thing! The reality has been so different that it almost beggars belief that a company like Microsoft could make such a massive mistake. Over the last four releases of Windows Microsoft has had two massive successes (Windows XP and Windows 7) and one massive failure (Windows Vista).

Windows 8 is on target to make a smaller splash even than Windows Vista. For the first five months of this half-year Windows 8's sales have been about 60% of the abysmal sales of Windows Vista. These Windows 8 sales have been at an all-time low for Microsoft. They have been so low that Windows is now thinking of releasing a fix to improve Windows 8, but I suspect that any move they make will be too late.

There are, of course, the standard marketing moves which Microsoft can make, and they are trying one of the oldest ones.

Discounting

The price of Windows 8, when bundled with Office 2013, is expected to fall in some markets. Australia, as usual, will probably not be one of those markets. In America the price of this

bundle to the OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) market is expected to fall from USD120 to USD30. This is a massive drop (a 75% discount!) which the large manufacturers are expected to pass onto their customers.

This is a last-ditch effort by Microsoft and may or may not have the desired effect.

A Better Experience

There is another way that Windows 8 can be improved, and it does not need you to wait for any action by Microsoft. This way is simple: just download and install one of the add-ons for Windows 8 which provide a more Windows 7-like experience.

There are three which I have discovered in a short check on the internet. I have tried none of them but all of them have excellent reviews. You can check their websites (given at the bottom of this page) and see which one is most suited to your needs. Stardock's *Start8* is free to try and costs USD5 if you decide to keep it. The other two products are free, and both would like a donation to keep the bonfires burning.

This request for donations is normal for many programs. The people who create these programs often do so for love but even love can cost a little at times. There are a number of costs to be considered:

- Cost of hosting and downloading the program
- Cost of developing the program (even if volunteers do all the work!)

Further Information

KeePass	www.keeppass.info
Classic Shell	www.classicshell.net
Start 8	www.stardock.com
Start W8	www.areaguard.com/StartW8