

# Radio Days – 2013-04-27

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## Tip of the Week – Viber

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I have just come across a program called Viber. This program is to mobile phones what Skype is to computers. It uses your data to make free calls to any other mobile phone which has Viber installed. The other phone can be anywhere in the world: the call is still free.

“Free” does have a qualification: it uses the data portion of your mobile plan. If, like me, you use the most or all of the phone portion of your monthly plan while still having plenty of data left then you should try Viber. It is free to download and use, and it automatically searches your phone’s address book to find all your contacts who are on Viber.

If you have a friend who is in your address book but who is not on Viber it is easy to send them a text (using your phone’s normal text messaging) which will invite them to download and install Viber on their phone. This is the easiest app to install that I have ever found!

I found the call quality variable at times. This, of course, could have been the data connection or it could be the app itself. I will need more time to use the app before I can come to a firm conclusion. According to the comments on the Viber website this could be a problem with the Android version, but time will tell.

A friend has just returned to Vietnam and I have texted him to try Viber: if he responds then we can have free international phone calls.

One thing that I like about it is that you can make these calls from anywhere that has an internet connection. This, of course, includes all the places which have a free WiFi connection for people to use. As these free WiFi connections are sprouting up everywhere (even a small place like Newstead has a free WiFi network) you may even find that your Viber calls don’t even touch your data plan!

## What Do You Really Want?

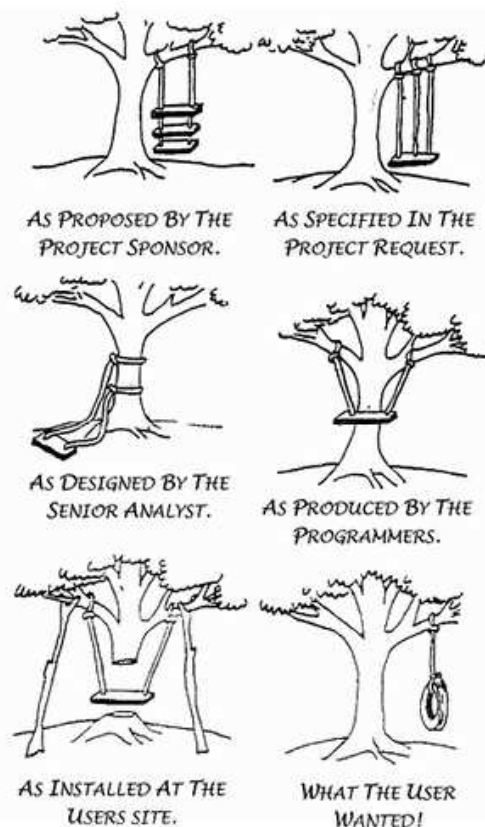
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Over the last few weeks I have had a number of calls from a client who has had a number of problems with his internet connection. The first of these problems arose when he bought a new tablet computer and wanted a WiFi connection so that he could access the internet on this new computer.

### The WiFi Connection

He went to the retail shop of a well-known and much-hated telco and asked for a WiFi modem. They sold him a WiFi modem with a 24-month internet access plan, obviously without having any real idea of his needs. Perhaps, because my client is an older man, they thought that they could take advantage of the fact that management pushes them to sell something, anything, to anybody, to everybody, regardless of what the customer’s actual needs are.

A short conversation would have revealed that the customer had an internet connection and that all he needed was a WiFi modem. This would have meant that, to provide good service, he should have been referred to a shop which



sold WiFi modems. Unfortunately for my client, but fortunately from the telco's point of view, my client had two phone lines. One of these lines already had an internet connection: this was the line used for phone calls. His other line, his fax line, was a sitting duck for any unscrupulous telco to use to install an unwanted internet connection.

This meant that my client now had a WiFi internet connection for his new tablet computer. It also meant that he now had two internet connections, and both of them had a monthly cost. In normal terms this would be a disaster but, apparently, not for the well-known and much-hated telco.

I attempted to persuade my client to take his complaint to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) to recover the cost of his second, unwanted and unneeded, internet connection. He, being a gentleman of the old school, thought that this was not a good idea.

### ***Main Computer Internet***

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The next problem was that he could not send or receive emails from his main computer. This was an interesting problem because he could not get internet access either. There were three obvious places where the problem could occur:

- The modem
- The connecting cord
- The computer

The computer was the obvious culprit: there was no flashing light at the ethernet connection. This suggested that the motherboard was beginning to fail (the computer was some six or seven years old) but otherwise everything was going well. To make sure that this was the only problem I took his modem and the connecting wire home to see if my computer could connect to the modem. This was easily done, so the obvious problem was the correct one.

The next step was to replace the direct ethernet connection with a WiFi one given that WiFi was already present in his house. This meant buying a dongle which receives WiFi: this device is readily available so it was just a matter of going to the shop and then installing it. Because it plugs into a USB port it is easy to install and always works when the computer is turned on.

This fixed the problem with the main computer not being able to access the internet.

### ***Emails***

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We now had a new problem: my client could receive emails but not send them. This had to be a problem caused by the new way of getting internet access so a quick change to one of the settings in his email program fixed that problem.

Everything was now working correctly:

- The tablet computer could access the internet and send and receive emails
- The desktop computer could access the internet and send and receive emails

### ***Tidying Up***

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The next step: tidy up the whole network and remove the unnecessary internet connection. There are two parts to this.

#### ***Removing One Connection***

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The first part, as so often happens, is more a people problem than a technical one. I tried to persuade my client to contact the TIO (Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman). Their phone number is 1800 062 058 and they are open from 9 am to 5:30 pm Monday to Friday.

Unfortunately my client was not prepared to contact the TIO so the next step was to find out how much it would cost to cancel the second, unwanted, contract with the well-known and much-hated telco. This was cheaper than I had expected: less than six of his normal monthly payments.

After cancelling the unwanted, and unneeded, internet connection, my client will be left with one internet connect which will supply all his needs. He will have:

- WiFi access for his tablet computer to give him email and internet access at home and at any public WiFi hotspot
- WiFi access for his desktop computer to give him email and internet access at home
- His well-known and much loved email address

The nett result of all these shenanigans is that he will be back where he should have been some six months ago, if the well-known and much-hated telco had listened to his needs and not to its managers' demands.

### *Wireless Everywhere*

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The other part of the resolution of this problem was to install a WiFi modem to the first, and wanted, internet connection. This is just too easy: he now has an unused WiFi modem after cancelling the connection with the second telco. It was just a simple matter of moving the modem from the fax line then changing its settings to those needed by the first ISP.

For this to work it was necessary to call my client's ISP to get some settings which are needed for his internet connection to work. I was told that it would be necessary to have a wired connection to my client's computer (the desktop computer because it was the one with a DVD drive) so that the wireless modem would work. I could not do this because, as mentioned earlier, the ethernet connection at the back of the computer was not working!

Fortunately the tech support guy, who was very helpful, was wrong in this instance. The wireless modem connected beautifully.

### *Connections*

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All that remained was to reset the email settings in his email program so that it was back to the old settings. Then a quick check of everything:

- The desktop computer could access the internet and both send and receive emails
- The table computer could access the internet

My client was rapt! Everything now worked: God was in His heaven and all was right with the world.

### ***Further Information***

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Viber [www.viber.com](http://www.viber.com)

TIO [www.tio.com.au](http://www.tio.com.au)