

Radio Days – 2014-05-10

Last Week

Last week we talked about a massive security flaw in Microsoft's Internet Explorer. This week we are talking about what to do when your ISP goes into receivership.

Tip of the Week –QuickBooks and Backups

During the week I had a call from a client who told me that QuickBooks' payroll had stopped working. This was an interesting diagnosis so I was wondering just what I would find when I arrived at his work. I was also told that his backup program was no longer working.

Two excellent problems to be solved so I was in my element!

QuickBooks Payroll

The first, and most important, problem was with the QuickBooks payroll because this was payday and employees must be paid on payday.

I asked my client what the problem was and he told me that he could not enter pays. This seemed serious so I asked his to show me what had happened to stop pays being entered. He showed me.

When entering a pay in QuickBooks the first step is to enter the pay period dates. This needs three dates:

- The date of the start of the pay period: in this case the Thursday of the previous week
- The date of the end of the pay period: in this case the Wednesday (yesterday)
- The date that employees were to be paid (today, which was the Thursday)

Then the hours for each employee for the week had to be entered. When he had completed entering the hours for the first employee he clicked *Next* and a small message came up on the screen. This message stated that this employee had already been paid for a later date so this pay would not go through.

He stated that this meant that the payroll system was not working. I pointed out that it merely meant that you had to enter pays in date order: unlike invoices (which you could enter in any order) pays needed to be entered in date order so that the Superannuation Guarantee Charge for each employee could be calculated correctly.

I checked the pays for each of his employees and found that one complete pay week had been entered for June rather than May so this meant that no more pays could have been entered in May. This problem was easy to solve: just change the dates for the last pay for each employee so that the correct three dates were entered. This took about ten minutes and he was then able to pay each employee on the spot.

Every member of his staff was delighted that they could live for another day!

Backup

Again, I asked my client to show me the problem with his backup. He showed me how he did his backup and, as he had stated, the backup reported that it had not worked. I pointed out that a backup is supposed to copy the wanted files from one location to another so that you now have two copies of the latest version of each file.

For this to work there must be a destination available for the backup. I had setup the backup so the all data would be backed up to a USB stick, but there wasn't a USB stick in the slot. I mentioned this to my client and he produced two USB sticks.

After placing one in one of the slots at the front of the computer the backup worked perfectly. The next step was to inform my client that he should insert a USB stick into the slot before running the backup. He promised to do this in future.

All this was done using my favourite backup program: SyncBack from 2BrightSparks.

When Your ISP Dies

Late last week, before I had a chance to even think about it, my ISP went into receivership.

I discovered this early on Saturday morning when I tried to upload last week's Cheat Sheet to my website. I then discovered that both my landline telephone and my internet connection did not work. This makes life very interesting for a person who has a serious addiction to the internet!

If you are a senior (ie over 55) and you have just found that your internet or email does not work please do not feel that you have done something wrong.

What Happened?

As far as I can work out from the scanty information available, there was some sort of barney between the owners (or ex-owners) of the holding company of both ONESeniors and TADAust. It is possible that there are some other internet service providers involved, but this is hard to determine due to the lack of available information.

What I can say for sure is that the holding company was placed into voluntary administration by its directors late on Friday 2 May and that, at that time, everybody's internet (and possibly phones) were cut off. I could not take my usual morning call from EasyMix radio because of this and this has been the start of a most frustrating week.

And, if this has been frustrating for me, I expect that there are many people out there who have no idea what has happened and no idea about how to fix it.

If you are one of those people then please take note of the rest of this article.

What Is Next?

A company called Vonce Communications has bought the list of customers from all affected ISPs. This was, I thought at first, a *Good Thing* but no! Vonce Communications has recently announced that it cannot reconnect any of the existing customers of any of the failed ISPs and recommends that all customers sign up with another ISP.

In their communications they have recommended that you go with their preferred partner but you can easily find better deals with just a little bit of checking. The easiest way of doing this check is to go to a website called Whirlpool and check the details there.

Obviously, because your ISP has gone into receivership, you will not be able to connect to Whirlpool using your telephone's internet connection but, as I found during the week, you can create a WiFi hotspot using your smart mobile phone or, as I found to be easier, tether your phone to your computer using a USB connection. This also charges your phone at the same time.

This charging I found to be most useful because, like using my phone as a GPS device, using my phone's internet connection drains its battery as though there is no tomorrow!

How Else Can I Access The Internet?

The easiest way to access the internet for most people who do not have their own internet connection is to go to one of the internet cafes in the area. There are internet cafes in various places around Maryborough:

-
- Maryborough – the online centre at the corner of Nolan and Napier Streets
 - Talbot – the online centre (possibly at the post office: any local will know)
 - Carisbrook – the Town Hall in Bucknall Street
 - Dunolly – the online centre at the RTC at the top end of Broadway
 - Avoca – the online centre at the RTC in High Street

What Options Do I Have?

You only have two options:

- Go without the internet (and possibly your phone)
- Sign up with a new ISP

This choice has been forced upon you by circumstances and these are, unfortunately, your only two options. If you do sign up with a new ISP please check the plans which are available to you from all the ISPs who service Australian customers.

The website Whirlpool has a list of ISPs which service Australia. To the best of my knowledge this list is complete: it certainly includes some ISPs which I have not come across before so I will not be signing up with one of these unfamiliar names. I had thought, when I made my change to the recently-folded supplier, that our relationship was going to last until death did us part.

This, obviously, was not to be.

Further Information

SyncBack www.2brightsparks.com

Whirlpool www.whirlpool.net.au