



President's Post, from Clive Dyson

Hi Folks,

Senior Hangouts

I have just finished watching one of the Senior hangouts recorded sessions and I'm always impressed with the quality of the presentations. They cover many different topics which we cannot cover.

I would encourage members to take time and log in and join the live sessions as participants. They are on at 10 am every Monday to Friday on Zoom. (Link in our weekly email reminders). I have seen at least two of our members in the live session. This is good.

Maybe 10 am is not a good time for you, but you can see the recorded sessions in the Google classroom (the link is in the weekly reminders) and see for yourselves the presentations that are available.

TOTS

I have been getting some good vibes about the Motueka Learning Centre and this is down to you the members. You provide a very happy, helpful atmosphere in the groups. So thank you and well done!

The next big thing on our agenda is the TOTS (Top Of The South) meeting to be held on April 12th. This is open to ALL members and I am hoping to see many of our members there. If you are intending to come it is **important that you RSVP to Sandra Price by 8th April** so we know the number to arrange a FREE finger Food Lunch. Please let us know that you intend to come.

Please note that TOTS will be replacing our regular first Monday monthly meeting which was to be held on April 5th (Easter Monday).

Well that's all I have for this month. Take care and I'll see you at TOTS if not in Senior hangouts!

Kind regards
Clive

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“SeniorNet is a community training network that supports & motivates people aged 50+ to enjoy & use technology in their everyday lives.”

Dates for your Diary for April

Mon April 5th :
EASTER MONDAY—no Members' Meeting

Fri April 9th :
Genealogy Interest Group 2:30—4:30

Thurs April 8th & 15th :
No CCIG meetings

Mon April 12th :
Top of the South Meeting—Guest speaker Heather Newell, CEO SeniorNet Federation 10-2.30

Fri April 16th :
iPPiG— iPad & iPhone Interest Group 2:30—4:30

END OF TERM 1

Mon April 19th :
Help and Support/all devices 9:30—11:30

Thurs April 22nd :
ADUG—Android Devices User Group 2:30—4:30

Fri April 23rd :
MIG—MAC Interest Group 2:30—4:30

Tues April 27th :
Committee Meeting 10-12

Wed April 28th :
GPS— Group Problem Solving 2—3:30

Mon May 3rd :
START OF TERM 2

Although our ability to easily pick up a new skill declines with age, harnessing a specific type of mindset can help you learn effectively as an adult.

Adapted from an article on bbc.com 24th February 2021 about a new book called Beginners: The Joy and Transformative Power of Lifelong Learning, by Tom Vanderbilt.

Tom Vanderbilt's fascination with the process of life-long learning began with observing his daughter learning hobbies: piano, soccer, Tae Kwon Do. He decided to spend a year pursuing a range of new skills himself. He learnt to sing, draw, juggle and surf. "As adults, we instantly put pressure on ourselves with goals," he says. "We feel like we don't have the luxury to engage in learning for learning's sake." Instead, he wanted to revel in the pleasure of the process and the substantial benefits that the "beginner's mindset" can bring to our lives.

How to learn well

Children are especially good at picking up patterns implicitly - understanding that certain actions will lead to certain kinds of events, without any explanation or description of what they are doing. After the age of 12, however, we lose some of that capacity to absorb new information.

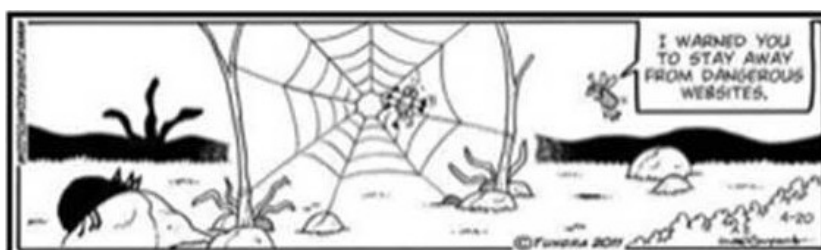
"Young children are wired to learn - but that doesn't mean adults can't"

We shouldn't be too pessimistic about our own abilities. While adults may not absorb new skills as readily as a child, we still have "neuroplasticity" - the ability for the brain to rewire itself in response to new challenges. In his year of learning, Vanderbilt met many people, long past middle age, who were still exercising that "superpower".

What's more, Vanderbilt's research revealed some basic principles of good learning that anyone can use to make our learning more effective. The first may seem obvious: we need to learn from our mistakes. So, rather than repeating the same actions over and over, we need to be more focused and analytical, thinking about what we did right and what we did wrong.

A second principle is more counter-intuitive: we need to make sure that our practice is varied. When juggling, for example, it helped to switch the objects, or to change how high you throw them; he tried it sitting down, and while walking.

[... Cont'd on p 3]





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[... Cont'd from p 2] As one scientist told Vanderbilt, this is "repetition without repetition" and it forces the brain's learned patterns to become more flexible, allowing you to cope with the unpredictable difficulties - such as a mistake in one of your earlier movements that could lead you to lose control.

Vanderbilt discovered that we often learn best when we know that we will have to teach others the same skill. It's not clear why this is, but that expectation seems to increase people's interest and curiosity, which primes the brain's attention and helps ensure that it lays down stronger memory traces.

The why factor

You may still wonder why you should make the effort, when you could be vegging out on your sofa. But Vanderbilt points out that there are many general benefits to embracing any new skill - including some long-term brain changes that could offset some of the mental decline that often comes with ageing. Vanderbilt points to one study of adults - aged 58 to 86 - who pursued a handful of courses in subjects like Spanish, music, composition and painting. After a few months, they had not only made good progress in the individual skills, but also showed a pronounced improvement on more general cognitive tests - matching the performance of adults who were 30 years younger.

Intriguingly, the benefits here seemed to come from trying out multiple skills, rather than focusing exclusively on one particular expertise. Each time you begin to learn that new skill, you're reshaping. You're training your brain again to be more efficient." We tend to see the 'dilettante' as someone who is superficial and lacks dedication. But it seems that the jack of all trades - the perpetual beginner - may have a sharper brain than the master of one single ability.

The capacity to reconsider our preconceptions and open our minds to new ways of thinking may be increasingly important in today's rapidly changing world. Whether we are learning for pleasure or attempting to boost our professional skills, we could all do well to cultivate that "beginners' mindset", where nothing is certain, and there is everything to learn.

For full article by David Robson go to www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20210222-how-a-beginners-mindset-can-help-you-learn-anything



Report of MIG meeting February 26th

February's meeting was very low on numbers. Unfortunately Gail was in the North Island and unable to run the group this month. There were only five of us so it was decided to watch a very impressive Senior hangout session provided by Roger Pittman of Nelson; he is also one of the members of our MIG group.

His session covered the use and workings of Apple TV and the Apps that are available through the App Store. He also showed the App PLEX and all the things you can do with it.

We finished off with a question and answer session and were able to help some members with computer problems.

IDLE THOUGHTS

1. Which letter is silent in the word "Scent," the S or the C
2. Why is the letter W, in English, called double U? Shouldn't it be called double V
3. The word "swims" upside-down is still "swims"
4. At a movie theatre, which arm rest is yours
5. Why is there a 'D' in fridge, but not in refrigerator
6. Who knew what time it was when the first clock was made
7. Passwords stop people accessing your devices. Forgetting your passwords stops you accessing your devices!

iPPIG Meeting March 19th

Our opening video was on how to use a computer. This was an advertisement from Apple showing how easy and free it is to use a modern iPad compared to a PC set up at a desk. And another video of the disadvantages helmet technology can be to motorcyclists.



Then we watched a video from the SeniorNet Hangouts about Improving internet at home. Patchy wifi within homes is one of the biggest source of complaints to internet providers. The video showed how the use of a wifi mesh system can extend the range of your wifi router and overcome the internet dead spots. The example used was a pair of wifi mesh devices available free to Vodafone customers signed up to their Unlimited or Broadband 600GB plans.

Trish introduced us to the app iNaturalist. This is a social network to help people learn about nature in their area. Trish had taken a picture of an insect on her window and posted this in the app. Two days later two emails came from volunteer scientists identifying the insect as "Gisbourne Cockroach". People can post photos of plants, insects and animals on the app for identification.

John showed us how to silence calls from callers not in your contacts list and Colin played a Macmost video showing two ways to take a photograph using your voice. A funny finish to the meeting was Colin's video of himself singing along on the Wombo app.

Peter Beaumont

ADUG Meeting February 25th

The major focus of the session was the topic of smartphone cameras. Everybody first checked what kind of symbols and options their particular camera displayed. We then went into exploring and using various modes like auto photo, panorama, continuous shot, video, slow motion etc.

Next we looked at many of the settings and their options for the cameras. These vary depending on smartphone model. However many commonalities exist, such as options for timer, flash, GIF (creative fun applies), picture sizes, determining storage location with an SD card as a possibility, and the reset option to reset camera settings to default options. We watched a short video with some hints for good smartphone photography.

In the second part of the session two apps were installed by all, **Radio Garden** and **Pressreader**.

Radio Garden allows you to listen to thousands of live radio stations world wide by rotating the globe. You also can use the search key to find radio stations in a particular location. If you are interested in a radio station you can add the station easily to a list of your favourites.

Pressreader lets you read 1000s of actual magazines and newspapers - with editorials, classifieds, crossword puzzle, national (e.g. Otago Daily Times, NZ Herald) and international. Free use of the content provided by the app is enabled by the Tasman District Library. You have to be a member of the Tasman District Library and sign into Pressreader under "Library or Group" choosing Tasman District Library with library card details. Some Android smartphone related problems and questions of members of the group were addressed.

Bernhard Nobis



Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)

A VPN is a piece of software that helps to make you more anonymous online, encrypts your internet use, and lets you effectively trick your laptop or mobile device into thinking it's in another location. It involves technologies that aim to add a layer of security to both private and public networks. These include broadband and internet hotspots. VPNs allows users - whether they are individuals, or part of an organisation, or business - to send and receive data while maintaining the secrecy of a private network.

That means you could use one to create a secure "tunnel" to browse in complete privacy online and access content you might otherwise not be able to get which is restricted by geographic location. All the traffic that passes through your VPN connection is secure and cannot, in theory, be intercepted by anyone else, making it the safest mainstream way to browse the web privately (but not always anonymously). Bear in mind that VPN setups are only as secure as the weakest link in the entire chain. So if your device has already been compromised with malware already, using a VPN won't save you from being spied upon, although a good antivirus could.

Some handy ways you can use your VPN

- **Safer public Wi-Fi:** Don't risk others getting their hands on your data and identity when using hotel, airport or shopping centre public Wi-Fi. Jump on a VPN and be sure that everything you do is encrypted
- **Full internet access in countries with censorship:** China, UAE, Russia, Turkey etc block certain services and sites like WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Google. VPNs can help get access to them if you're there for holiday or business
- **Safe torrenting:** Even if your torrenting habits are purely lawful, its P2P nature means that you still risk being exposed to folk trying to steal your data. Turning on a VPN while you torrent will help keep your data encrypted and identity safe.
- **Stream sport:** Your country not showing that boxing, soccer, basketball or cricket match? Find out what country is and then use a VPN to get on a server there and watch as if you were in that country
- **Working from home:** Covid-19 related lockdown has been a catalyst for more and more people working from home. Individuals and businesses can make sure they stay safer online with a VPN
- **Cheaper holidays:** You've probably heard before that flights and hotels can cost different amounts dependant on your IP address. Luckily, a VPN can help mask or change your IP address...
- **Quicker internet:** If you're somewhere that throttles your internet speeds by dint only of your location, then geo-spoofing to somewhere else entirely could help you avoid the slow down

How to choose a VPN service

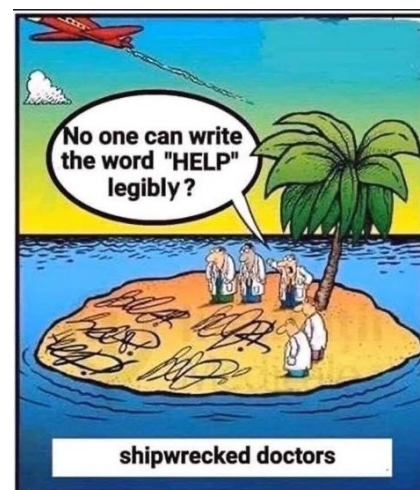
Go to this TechRadar site for more information and links to VPN services which are well reviewed in 2021.

<https://www.techradar.com/nz/vpn/best-vpn?region-switch=1616022790>

In addition, for those of you who use the **MailWasher** service, you may have seen that they provided a link recently to **Hideaway VPN** in order to view movies and TV series in other countries.

<https://www.firetrust.com/products/hideaway-secure-unlimited-vpn>

[Thank you to Annie Coster for her alert to the above information]



Google Photos—Storage Policy



Google have announced a potential major change to Google Photos, and as this forms part of the Google accounts associated with Android phones, Gmail, photos and Drive, the scope of this change could be massive. There is no information on how this might affect Chrome books.

Announcement of this change has been accompanied by the usual company PR, but no doubt it's to do with the cost of the service as it stands today, and the effect on Google's bottom line. Maybe US\$40,270,000,000 (40.27 billion dollars) net revenue for the 2020 year wasn't enough. Starting June 1, 2021, any **new** photos and videos you upload will count toward the free 15 GB of storage that comes with every Google Account or the additional

storage you've purchased as a Google One member. Your Google Account storage is shared across Drive, Gmail and Photos. **Yes, you read that correctly. Gmail is included, and that includes all those big attachments!!!!**

Any photos or videos you've uploaded in high quality before June 1, 2021 will not count toward your 15GB of free storage. This means that photos and videos backed up before June 1, 2021 will still be considered free and exempt from the storage limit. You can verify your backup quality at any time in the Photos app by going to "back up & sync" in Settings.

Once this change does take effect on June 1, 2021, over 80 percent of users should still be able to store roughly three more years worth of memories with their free 15 GB of storage. As your storage nears 15 GB, Google will notify you in the app and follow up by email.

To understand how this affects you, you can see a personalised estimate for how long your storage may last. This estimate takes into account how frequently you back up photos, videos and other content to your Google Account. (The author of this article checked his storage, and Google calculated he has more than 4 years before he ran out of space.)

In June 2021, you'll be able to access a new free tool in the Photos app to easily manage your backed up photos and videos. This tool will help you review the memories you want to keep while also identifying shots you might prefer to delete, like dark or blurry photos or large videos. You will need to keep an eye on this storage if you near the limit.

[Source = SeniorNet Hutt City newsletter]

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