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## Next Meeting

Wednesday 4th June 2008

Judy Hall will present a workshop on

Windows Vista

8 PM

Next Month

David Stallard

“Digital Camera

August Noel French

“How we see Colours”

### Newstream Articles

Deadline : 10 Days before Meeting

Editors Contacts:

Address: 8 Cadorna Street Mowbray Heights 7248 Phone 6326 5824

email address editor@lcg.org.au

### Correspondence

Address all Correspondence to:  
Launceston 7250

Launceston Computer Group Inc

PO Box 548

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## General Information

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	Harvey Taverner. Judy Hall. Janet Headlam
Victor Coordinator	Robert Tierney

## Ron's Ramblings

Windows XP Sp3 is now available on the U drive as an iso file. That is it will produce a CD when accessed with a programme such as Nero or other CD Writing Programme.

I have been getting Ezines which say that SP3 does not match very well with some Norton or Symantec Virus files.

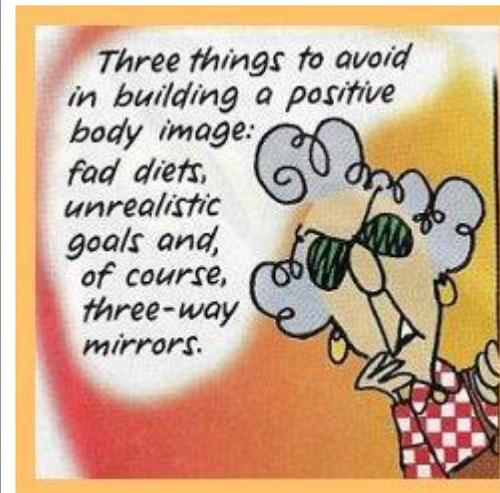
I have not had any trouble with AVG8 in that regard.

If you are wary of the "False positives" that are also being reported, again with Norton & Symantec programmes, then hold off for a while.

Another recommendation that is coming from "Windows Secrets" is to continue using XP until Windows 7 comes out in 2010 (See page 10)

The way things are going it looks like Vista may be the 21st Century's version of Windows Millennium". If so I personally am going to stick to XP

As usual I have included several Tutorials From the Newbie Club I recommend that those on the web have a look at their site at <http://newbieclub.com>.



Ron Baker

## OPEN NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2008

### FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR

To start this month's newsletter I would recommend that members turn straight to page 4 and read "The Blue Screen of Death" a report written by one of our tutors, Barry Rouse, about his personal experience with the type of computer nasties that we warn you about on a regular basis.

On a more positive note we have added a variety of new facilities at the club-rooms ...

As you walk in the door you should see that we have finally obtained a table provided for the use of members who bring their laptop computers to class. Thanks to Margaret and Jenny for all the 'leg-work' that went into finding a suitable table.

A little further back into the room Macintosh enthusiasts now have access to a brand new computer which employs a space-saving design of having all the components built into the rear of the flat-screen monitor.

The other 'new' facilities aren't as obvious unless you happen to turn on OPEN7 or OPEN9. Both are now 'dual-boot' computers which means that you can select which operating system you wish to use— either Windows 98SE or Windows XP. This gives us added flexibility in having an additional two computers for XP users while retaining Windows 98 facilities for some of the older programs that members use, including Family History.

The implementation of dual-booting facilities has been made possible primarily by donations of computers and components by 'friends of OPEN' and we thank those people and organisations for their kind assistance.

*Dennis Murray*

PS Club will be open on Monday June 9 (Pub Hol)

### ROB'S BITS AND BOBS

Hello everyone,

There is a lot to get through this month so please bear with me. First of all thank you to tutors and students and their spouses for making "Australia's Biggest Morning Tea" such a success. The total raised was \$252.65. Thank you everyone.

Back by popular demand on the 27<sup>th</sup> June we will be having a mobile phone class from 1.00 pm-3.00 pm at the centre. Near the entrance to the kitchen is an enrolment form. You will be able to choose a 30 minute block to have one-on-one help with making the most of your mobile. Any enquiries come see me at the centre the next time you are in.

Also there is a new "PICK YOUR PASSION" expression of interest form on the back wall near the kitchen. For those who do not yet know there is a list of classes that will be offered on Friday afternoons— the one that has the most requests will be run. So if you miss out on your 'passion' the first time new request lists will be posted on a semi regular basis.

Also there is a list for people to make suggestions of what they would like as OPEN'S next function. That list will be there till the 30<sup>th</sup> June and after that the

suggestions will be put up and the one that has the most votes will be the next function that we will

organize. It's your club and we really want you to be a major part of what goes on.

To all AVG 7.5 users ... as of the end of May version 7.5 is no longer available. There is a new version 8 which is free and is now available. Unfortunately AVG8 will not work on Windows 98 or Windows 2000. If anyone knows of any decent reliable free anti-virus that could help these people please come and see me at the centre.  
*(More on Page 4)*



### OPEN MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING

at 1 pm on Wednesday, June 4, 2008.

All members, both old and new, are welcome to attend our monthly meetings. Please take this opportunity to have an input into the way the club operates into the future.

### LAUNCESTON COMPUTER GROUP MEETING & MONTHLY WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY JUNE 4th 7:30 to 9:00 PM

### WINDOWS VISTA and MS OFFICE 2007 WORKSHOP

Do you want to learn more about the major changes included in Microsoft's latest operating system and office software?

Then join us for the LCG workshop on June 4.

Please note that a session fee of \$5.00 applies

### EMBROIDERY GROUP

#### The Friday afternoon Embroidery Group

will meet on a MONTHLY basis this year. The next meeting will be on June 6 2008 at 1 pm.

Contact Eleanor Horder via the club for details.

VICTOR PHONE NUMBER 0408 174 235

Contact the Coordinator Rob Tierney for assistance with computer problems at home

## OPEN NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2008

### Launceston Computer Group SOFTWARE LIBRARY



Dated 1st June 2008

#### DISK 2000 - Your Library on Disk

Disk 2000 is now available. The change from a floppy disk to a CD has enabled us to include much more in the way of games, information and utilities. Existing members can upgrade to the new CD version for just \$1.50. Ask at the club or contact Judy via the e-mail address shown below. This disk is free of charge to all new members.

#### AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY

**At present the Shareware Library is only available during the club's opening hours.**

Speak to one of the tutors at the venue -  
Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Road, South L'ton.

Email: [opencomputing@bigpond.com](mailto:opencomputing@bigpond.com)

#### OTHER CLUB RESOURCES

In addition to the 'physical' library OPEN and VICTOR may be able to provide members with a variety of free-ware programs as an alternative to downloading from the Internet. Free antivirus programs such as AVG can now be as large as 45 Megabytes and would take hours to download for someone who only had a dial-up Internet connection.

There are also quite a few video tutorials and ASCCA teaching material on our server and these can be quite helpful in explaining how certain programs and utilities work.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN 2008 ALL OF JUDY'S MORNING CLASSES WILL **START AT 10 AM** AND NOT 9 AM AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS

#### FAMILY HISTORY ON-LINE

June 11— 1 pm to 3.30 pm

June 25 — 10 am to 12 noon

Join Judy, Robin and the Family History group to help trace your ancestors.

New information is being added to our resources on an on-going basis to help you trace your family's origins. Contact the club for more information

Classes are limited to 8 people.

#### SPECIAL WEDNESDAY CLASS

June 18—10 am to 12 noon

"WINDOWS VISTA"

With more members purchasing computers with Windows Vista installed we will continue to offer classes designed to provide instruction and assistance to those people coming to grips with the new operating system.

We are hoping to have a representative from Carbil Computers as guest presenter for this session.

#### VENUE TELEPHONE NUMBER

Don't forget that the club telephone is available during class hours.

\*\*\*\*\* 6343 4928 \*\*\*\*\*

Members and tutors can be contacted at the clubrooms **during class hours** by telephoning the number shown above.

Monday to Friday 10am – 3pm

Tuesday evenings 7pm—9 pm

#### GRAPHICS

Please check the registration sheets at the club to find out if there are places available.

The dates for the next classes are :

Extra Class June 4 - 10 am to 12 noon

Basic Graphics June 11 - 10 am to 12 noon

During the year additional 'catch-up' and practice classes will be held so please keep in touch with your tutor and check notices for details.

#### LEVEL 2 & 3 GRAPHICS

With Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8

Wednesday June 18 1 pm to 3.30 pm

This class is designed for people who have completed the Basic Graphics classes, and involves more advanced features of the Paint Shop Pro graphics programs.

Numbers are limited to 8 people. Please check the notice-board or contact the club for details.

## OPEN NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2008

**OPEN Session Times**  
 At Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Rd, L'ton  
**Standard Sessions \$5.00**  
**[Some special tutorial materials may incur additional charges]**

Monday	10 am –12	E-Learn & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	Basics and Beyond
Tuesday	10 am –12	E-Learn & Beginners [all day]
	1 pm – 3 pm	Mac [all day]
	7 pm—9 pm	Basics (Night Class)
Wednesday		Special sessions or Meetings
		As for mornings (see rosters)
Thursday	10 am –12	E-Learn & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	E-Learn & Beginners
Friday	10 am –12	E-Learn & Beginners
1st Friday of each month	1 pm – 3 pm	Embroidery Group

### SPECIAL WEDNESDAY SESSIONS

Please register on the sheets – numbers may be limited

Date	Time	Topic	Details
June 4	10 am—12 noon	Graphics Workshop	An additional class to utilise the skills learned earlier in the Basic Graphics course.
	1 pm onwards	OPEN's Monthly meeting	Come along and contribute your views. All members are invited to participate.
	7.30 to 9.00 pm	LCG Monthly Workshop \$5.00 session fee applies	Windows Vista and MS Office 2007 will be the subjects of this month's Workshop
June 11	10 am—12 noon	Basic Graphics	Judy Hall and the Graphics team continue the course on all aspects of graphics manipulation.
	1 pm—3.30 pm	Family History	Judy Hall and the Family History tutors will assist you in tracing your Ancestry.
June 18	10am—12 noon	Windows Vista Operating System	We are hoping to have a guest presenter to explain the intricacies of the new operating system.
	1 pm—3.30 pm	Level 2 and 3 Graphics	Advanced graphics techniques using the Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8 programs.
June 25	10 am—12 noon	Family History	Trace your Family History using the various resources available at the club.
	1 pm—3.30 pm	Paint Shop Pro 11	Graphics Class using the most recent version of the popular Paint Shop Pro program.
"Pick Your Passion"	A sheet has been placed on the notice – board near the kitchen which gives members the opportunity to select which aspects of modern technology they would like to learn about. The first session will be held on Friday June 27 at 1.00 pm with the subject being "How to Get The Most Out of Your Mobile Phone".		

## OPEN NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2008

### ROB'S BITS AND BOBS (Cont'd)

I would like to go back to an article that I wrote in Tales From The VICTOR Vault in March of 2007.

"One of our students was 'conned' recently by "Drive Cleaner", which if you hadn't heard of it before says that you have problems on your computer that need fixing and if you download the free version it can tell you what the problems are.

Here is the 'con' ... it then tells you that to fix the problems you have to buy the paid version.

Then it says that Microsoft recommends it. As we know there are scams out there which claim, for example, to be the Commonwealth Bank or other such places e-mailing you asking for your details. Just because it sounds legitimate it isn't necessarily so.

The client who thought it was a legitimate program paid out the money and thought the problem was solved but that was just the beginning. The client was beginning to get nervous by this stage when she realised it wasn't as genuine as what she thought. AVG anti-virus showed that "Drive Cleaner" was a potential threat. And there was no way to cancel the purchase at this stage.

After a lot of research and frustration it was found that there was no way to easily cancel the purchase of the program. The bank considered the transaction legal at that point.

Although there was an offer of a 30-day money back refund, unfortunately there was nowhere on the web-site or in the program to even apply for refund. The fine print actually said if a request was made it was up to the discretion of the company whether they would refund the \$54.00 purchase price or not.

The only solution was for the client to cut her losses remove the program and cancel her credit card so the company could no longer access her account.

This can happen to anyone at anytime no matter how little or vast their Internet experience. The lesson from this is even if it looks like a duck, and quacks like a duck (shoot it!) it may not be necessarily so."

**DO NOT DOWNLOAD ANYTHING WHICH YOU KNOW LITTLE ABOUT. IN THESE CASES PLEASE ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS MORE EXPERIENCE AND HAVE THEM HELP WITH YOU SOME RESEARCH.**

Now back to the present. Unfortunately this program (Drive Cleaner) now has a relative and it's even nastier. One of our students who is now a tutor, Barry Rouse, has kindly written down his experience to share.

#### "THE BLUE SCREEN OF DEATH"

It is said a good title helps to sell a work of fiction. The following is no work of fiction. It was mid evening and I was engrossed on the Internet at what was thought to be a reasonably reputable site. Everything had been normal, with perhaps some slowing and confusion just prior to the event.

Then on the screen was listed several viruses including a Trojan Horse and a notice saying INSTALL anti spy ware –NOW - to clean out your computer - "Advanced XP Defender" is recommended, install and pay \$59-95 by Credit Card.

Defender AXP's Icon appeared on Desktop [XP shield colours were reversed ]. Desk top turned blue! I scanned my system with CA [Vet] Anti Virus but nothing was detected -- the reason for this became evident. Vet's expiry date had been changed from 15<sup>th</sup> October 08 to the later date of 15<sup>th</sup> of May 09.

Advanced XP Defender appeared on screen and scanned system – 150 threats were located. Bugs and creepy crawlies were depicted eating the desk top and the contamination notice that was on the screen.

HELP !!!– Disconnect from the Internet turn off computer and go to bed.

Saturday morning I contacted the IT Show on the ABC and it was the switchboard operator who called the problem "The Blue Screen of Death". The IT man referred to it as a minor Trojan horse problem, he did not see it as a real threat. His instructions were, unplug from the internet, scan the whole thing with Vet and Ad Aware, paying particular attention to Temporary Internet Files and temporary files and "Bob's your uncle" - all would be fixed. This was perhaps an over simplification remembering I had already scanned the system and found nothing.

The above events were faithfully recorded as they occurred.

*Barry Rouse*

### ENTER, THE CAPED CRUSADER! (Rob)

I wouldn't go as far as saying I was a Caped Crusader— I would probably get my cape caught in the wheels of my walker ... (Laugh :O)

It took a couple of hours to work out how to remove Barry's problem as it was in three parts. First of all there were the cockroaches that had made their home in the screen-saver, secondly the blue screen which had installed itself as the desktop, and thirdly the fake program.

After doing some Google-ing an anti malware program was found called: <http://www.malwarebytes.org/>

It went through and found the problem and removed it, I also ran Spybot Search and Destroy which got rid of the desktop problem and uninstalling the actual program that caused the problem in the first place.

Don't be fooled by these few of lines explanation. This problem took a few hours to fix it.

Till next month ... Happy Computing ... Rob :O)

## "About Video Cards"

Bear with me while I outline some basics first ....

In order to use your computer effectively you need both an input device and an output device. You enter information with an input device such as a keyboard, mouse, or microphone, and your trusty computer outputs sound and/or visual images.

And the visual output that your computer provides is handled by your video card.

This is a dedicated circuitry that interprets information from the CPU (Central Processing Unit) and sends it to the computer monitor. Modern computer systems with Graphical User Interfaces (GUI) such as Microsoft Windows rely on fairly sophisticated video output to provide information to the user.

Because they are a vital part of the computer, many motherboards have built in video processors. These are suitable for everyday computing tasks such as word processing and e-mail. Other applications such as video editing, graphical design work, and high end games require highly specialized video cards capable of 3-D rendering.

### ----- Types of Cards

Integrated video processors are part of your motherboard. They are connected directly to your monitor and require no extra cards. This is the least expensive type of video adapter, and requires no special consideration for installation. Simply plug your monitor in and go!

The drawback of integrated video is the relatively limited performance it offers, especially for applications requiring 3-D rendering such as games and graphic design. In addition, not every motherboard has integrated video.

The techies certainly know how to complicate things for us mere mortals. So if you need to buy a video card, you must know which type of card your motherboard accepts.

AGP (Advanced Graphics Port) has been the standard for several years now, but is gradually being replaced by PCI-Express. Almost all the high-end video cards use PCI-Express, so if you have special graphics needs make sure your motherboard has this kind of slot. You may have to take your PC to your local PC store to find out.

AGP is still popular for low and midrange video cards, and will probably remain available for a few years to come.

### ----- Specifications

What makes a video card high-end?

Two things. The quality of the video processor and the amount of memory. Just when you thought you had your computer's memory requirements down pat, along comes another type of memory -

### ----- Video Memory.

You see, video cards have their own integrated memory chips. A certain amount of memory is needed just to get an image onto your monitor. Eight megabytes, for example, is required to display a high end screen resolution of 1600 x 1200.

Most video cards have a minimum of 32 MB or 64 MB, and the extra memory is used for 3-D imaging and enhancing the refresh rate.

The higher the refresh rate, the more stable (less wobbly) the display. The maximum amount of memory on current video cards is

640 MB but obviously this is on a card designed for professional graphic design.

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As a general rule of thumb, 64 MB is suitable for everyday computing like word processing and Internet browsing. Computer games and video editing applications need cards with 128 MB to 256 MB.

Besides memory, the second factor that determines the quality of the video card is the processor - sometimes called the ...

---- GPU (Graphics Processing Unit).

Modern GPUs are extremely efficient in 3-D video rendering and, like CPUs, require their own dedicated cooling fan.

----- Prices

The type of video card most suitable for your computer depends on what kind of applications you use. Unless you will be playing the latest computer games, you can get by with a 64 MB PCI or AGP card for less than \$50.

Serious gamers should look at cards in the 256 MB range. These will set you back about \$100-\$200 for an AGP 8X or PCI-Express card.

People who are doing video editing need graphics cards which have Video In/Video Out (VIVO) capabilities, and these specialized cards can cost between \$200 and \$500.

Thankfully, not many of us need such a high end and expensive card!

## Make your PC difficult to steal, easy to recover

By Scott Dunn

For little or no money, you can lower the chances that your computer will be targeted by thieves.

Take a few simple steps now to make your notebook and desktop PCs easier to recover should they ever be lost.

### Secure your computers from real-world threats

A common saying in the computer world is that if an intruder has physical access to your computer, it's not your computer anymore. I've written recently about ways to protect your system from malware embedded in Flash animations and harmful Web sites But what about securing the computer itself?

The Seattle Times [reported](#) recently that Microsoft has given law-enforcement agencies a tool for decrypting passwords and analyzing computer activity and data. According to reports in [Wired](#) and elsewhere, Microsoft's Computer Online Forensic Evidence Extractor (COFEE) is a USB thumb drive that houses a collection of 150 off-the-shelf utilities. None of the programs were developed by Microsoft, and all of them are available to the public separately.

The programs, which include [Windows Forensic Toolchest](#) and [RootkitRevealer](#) run from a script, so police officers don't have to start each utility individually. By running the script from a USB drive, law-enforcement officials can collect information located in the PC's RAM or available via a network connection. This data might be lost if the computer were unplugged and taken back to a lab.

If law-enforcement agencies and the public at large can get these tools, you have to wonder how the snoop apps might be used by co-workers who don't have your best interests or privacy in mind.

Whether you're concerned with others prying into your data or stealing your valuable hardware, protecting physical access to your computer is one of the wisest security moves you can make. Think of the things you take care not to lose, such as your house keys and your wallet. You keep these things safe by always knowing where they are or by storing them in secure locations. If you value your electronics, you should treat them the same way.

A number of vendors offer tools for securing your laptop, monitor, or CPU to a desk or other immovable object. Other PC security products put your system in a locked box or block access to drive ports and other controls. A variety of cables and other locks for laptops, desktops, and other equipment are available online. One popular site for such hardware is

## [Secure-It](#)

However, there's plenty you can do to lock down your PC without spending much — or anything at all.

### Enhance recoverability by leaving your mark

If your system (or your cell phone, PDA, or other portable electronic device) is found by an honest person, your chances of reclaiming it are better if it has been permanently labelled with your contact information.

The best labelling approach is to use an engraving tool to etch your contact information into the case of your PC or other equipment.

If you think putting your name and phone number on your devices gives up too much privacy, label the equipment with the e-mail address of an account whose name displays little or no identifying information. Most ISPs let you create multiple e-mail accounts, or you can sign up for a free account at [Yahoo Mail](#) or another Web service.

You're more likely to get a response from the person who finds your lost laptop by attaching your phone number to the device. And you'll increase your chances of recovering a lost or stolen PC even more by including an incentive such as "\$300 reward" on your label.

Only a few of the many services designed to help recover missing products are free. For a limited time, Windows XP users who sign up early for the Laptop Superhero [beta program](#) YouGetItBack.com can get in free. Download and install the software, and then register your information in the service's "secure vault." If someone reports finding your laptop, the company helps you get it back, just like the name says.

A related program that's also free for the time being is [LaptopLock](#). Install the software, set your preferences, and register with the service. The next time a computer you've reported as missing connects to the Internet, LaptopLock will detect it and perform whichever actions you've set up beforehand: delete or encrypt specified files, run a program or batch file of your choice, or display a message.

LaptopLock will also attempt to send identifying info about the notebook's current IP address, although it's questionable whether knowing the crook's IP address would actually help police recover your computer.

**The for-pay recovery option.** Computer Security Products sells a hard-to-remove aluminum [label](#) that lists the company's phone number and a serial number. A single label costs \$25, and a package of 10 is priced at \$150.

Should anyone contact the service about finding a system you've registered with the company, you'll be notified and can make arrangements for retrieving the item. The label

etches the contact information into the device's case to protect you — even if someone removes the label itself.

Less-expensive (and less secure) labels for keys, luggage, and electronics are available for \$10 to \$15 from [YouGetItBack.com](#)

In addition to LaptopLock's free (for now) service, a number of for-pay services help you track stolen computers over the Internet. One of the leading PC-recovery services is [ComputraceComplete](#) from Absolute Software. The service costs \$50 per year. If it doesn't recover your laptop within 60 days of its loss, you may be eligible for the company's \$1,000 Theft Recovery Guarantee.

### Sound the alarm to prevent tampering

As I mentioned above, the best way to prevent your PC and other hardware from being stolen or accessed is to lock it away. Your lockdown strategy depends on your location:

- **Hotel:** Don't assume that items are safe just because they are locked in your hotel room. Get a room with a safe for storing laptops and other valuables, or take such items with you when you leave the room.
- **Office:** Notebook computers, removable hard drives, laptop memory cards, USB thumb drives, PDAs, and any other equipment in your office that is easily removed should be put in a locked cabinet overnight and on weekends. If your company doesn't provide such a cabinet, suggest that it get one.
- **Traveling:** Airports and other travel scenes present so many possible distractions that it takes only a moment for someone to snatch an unattended item or for you to leave something behind. Never leave a laptop visible in your car; if you must, stow it in the car's trunk, but try to avoid being seen locking such items there. If you need to put your computer down for a moment while you're in any public setting, keep the case between your feet.

The free [Laptop Alarm](#) alerts you when your computer is touched by someone. After you install the program and activate the lock function, you can set the laptop alarm to play a loud warning sound when the machine loses AC power, when its mouse moves or is unplugged, or when the system shuts down or logs off.

Even if the notebook's sound is muted or turned down, Laptop Alarm turns the sound back on and plays the alarm at full blast. You can set a password to unlock your system or turn off the alarm.

Naturally, this software won't guard your computer in a coffee shop while

*(Continued from page 9)*

you use the restroom. But if you need to pay attention to other things for a while, the program can help alert you if someone is tampering with your system.

Laptop Alarm is currently listed as a beta product, so some of its advertised features may not yet work. Still, the alarm worked quite well when I tested the program.

## Keep XP fresh until Windows 7 arrives

By Scott Dunn

When Windows XP was released, wireless routers were rare, few cell phones supported e-mail, and **YouTube was just a gleam in some PayPal employees' eyes.**

But like a fabled perpetual motion machine, XP keeps on going and going — and if you follow some simple guidelines, the OS will keep running in top condition until Vista's successor is ready in 2010.

**XP is an operating system with serious legs Microsoft may not have planned it this way, but XP could end up rivalling NT and 2000 as the version of Windows with the longest lifespan. According to recent news reports** Dell, Lenovo, and other computer manufacturers will continue to sell new PCs running Windows XP well past Microsoft's June 30 cut-off date.

PC vendors will do so by invoking a downgrade plan that lets them ship a system with Windows XP installed as long as the customer is also paying for an upgrade to Vista Business or Ultimate editions, either of which is included in each box.

Of course, computer manufacturers aren't the only ones looking for ways to extend XP's usefulness. One pundit has predicted that Microsoft itself is going to fast-track Windows 7 to get customers to leapfrog over the unpopular Vista and go directly from XP to the next version. In fact, according to the technology site *Ars Technica still-uses-xp-and-is-considering-bypassing-vista*, one major American corporation, General Motors, is considering doing just that.

### Eight simple rules for keeping XP rejuvenated

If you're one of the many people who plan to stick with XP as long as possible, you need to take a few relatively painless steps to keep that aging OS perky. Here are my eight rules for extending XP's usefulness to 2010 and beyond.

**Rule 1: The latest ain't always the greatest.** As a rule, older operating systems were designed to work with older software. Unless you need some utterly indispensable feature found only in the latest Adobe Creative Suite or Microsoft Office 2007, stick to the preceding releases. Not only will the senior apps run faster, most of the kinks and bugs have already been worked out of them.

If your hardware and software work fine as is, don't bother upgrading any drivers, either. At the same time, driver upgrades often smooth out minor problems that you've just grown used to.

One way to check for out-of-date device drivers is to use the online scanner from Driver Updates (Note that using this service requires running an ActiveX component in Internet Explorer.)

Should you discover that one of your drivers is out of date, go to the manufacturer's site to find and download the latest version available (but skip any beta releases). Remember to back up your system before installing the new driver in case it causes problems.

**Rule 2: Make an exception for security. Set Rule 1 aside when it comes to your security software and services. Update your virus and spyware definitions frequently. Get the latest security updates for your browser and for QuickTime, Flash, and other media players as well. Some of the dangers of unpatched software are explained in the April 17 Top Story.**

**Rule 3: Stay young and beautiful. The last exception to Rule 1 is to make a cautious investment in a handful of utilities that improve and modernize XP. You'll find a number of free and low-cost programs that approximate or even duplicate Vista's best new features without having to invest in a whole new operating system.**

For a guide to applications that give XP handy features of Vista's Business edition, see my July 12, 2007 [-Add-business-features-to-XP-or-Vista>](#), column. To read about ways to add features from Vista Enterprise or Ultimate editions to XP, check out my July 19, 2007 [-Add-Premium-Enterprise-features-to-XP-or-Vista>](#), column.

**Rule 4: Shop carefully for new hardware. If your XP system needs a processor, memory, or other hardware upgrade to keep it from bogging down on your applications, there is no reason why you can't swap out an aging component or add some RAM.**

However, since some new components are designed with Vista in mind, make sure the

*(Continued on page 11)*

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products you buy work as advertised under XP. Check the manufacturers' site for XP driver downloads before you make your purchase, and look for online reviews that mention the products' XP compatibility.

**Rule 5: Don't let startup stuff slow you down.** It seems like every program you install these days wants to start along with Windows. These auto-start apps are usually represented by an icon in your system tray (the area near your clock). Even if your system has oodles of memory, these little doodads can slow you down without offering any real value.

An excellent tool for finding what gizmos are starting up each time you log into Windows is Autoruns available from Microsoft (originally from Sysinternals). Simply uncheck the item to disable it from starting, or select an entry and delete it to effect a more permanent removal.

If you can't figure out what a particular startup app does, right-click its entry in the Autoruns window and choose Search Online. This performs a Google search (rather than a Live search, which you might expect). Scour the results to find out whether the program has a legitimate reason for needing to run all the time.

If the Web search isn't helpful in rooting out a program's purpose, check the list of common startup applications maintained by Paul Collins to figure out what's getting started with Windows.

Finally, the free version of WinPatrol can warn you whenever a program attempts to add an item to your startup list.

- **Clear the clutter from XP's many cubbyholes** **Rule 6: Save on disk space.** A problem that plagues nearly all aging systems is the pack-rat syndrome. Just using a PC day to day causes an ever-increasing amount of data to be stored in ever-shrinking disk space. These tips will help you recover some of that precious drive capacity. **Eliminate hibernation files.** XP's hibernation feature stores everything currently in RAM onto your hard disk, which allows you to return to your session more quickly after a period of inactivity. Unfortunately, hibernation needs about the same amount of disk space as your current amount of RAM (for example, 1GB of disk space if you have 1GB of RAM).
- If you don't use XP's hibernate feature very often, you can save the space occupied by the hiberfil.sys file: choose Start, Run; type powercfg.cpl; click the Hibernate tab; uncheck Enable hibernation; and click OK.
- **Don't let iTunes make you hear double.** If you use Windows Media

**Player to rip CDs to your computer in the Windows Media Audio (.wma) format and then decide to give iTunes a try, beware!** iTunes will convert those songs into its Advanced Audio Coding (AAC) format, resulting in duplicate files for every song iTunes manages. To avoid that, use a single music format (such as .mp3) that all media players can handle.

- **Store stuff online.** Another way to save on disk space is to transfer files to an online storage service. You may already store your e-mail and photos online. Yahoo's Flickr service lets you store as many photos as you like, but unless you upgrade to a paid account, you'll never be able to see more than the last 100.
- **Google's Picasa Web albums** provide 1GB of free storage. And if you're willing to pay, you can get a whole lot more storage space than that.
- Of course, you don't need to limit yourself to mail and photos. A number of sites offer free or low-cost online storage. For example, Mozy gives you 2GB of free storage through its MozyHome service. MozyPro accounts start at U.S. \$4.50 per gigabyte per month.
- Many sites, including ElephantDrive, provide only 1GB of free storage. Each service offers larger storage options at varying prices.
- Finally, iBackup has economy plans that charge only \$1 per gigabyte per month (and less for annual rates). By comparison, the popular Data Deposit Box charges \$2 monthly for each gigabyte you use.

**Offload files to a new drive.** Even if you've purchased a new hard drive to expand your storage space, you may still be running out of room on your Windows drive. Fortunately, you can move your virtual memory paging file, Internet Explorer cache files, My Documents, and other system files to another drive or partition. For step-by-step information, see my column from the Feb. 28 -Save-space-when-using-two-drives-or-dual-booting> issue.

**Rule 7: Keep it clean.** It makes no sense to hang onto useless junk files that Windows uses for its own purposes. Fortunately, Windows' own Disk Cleanup tool can clear out this system clutter. For details on how to customize Disk Cleanup for maximum efficiency, see Fred Langa's Mar. 13 column in the paid portion of the newsletter.

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Disk Cleanup also removes the outdated restore points created by System Restore that you no longer need. In the Disk Cleanup window, click the More Options tab. Under System Restore, click Clean up and confirm that you want to delete all but the current restore point.

Unfortunately, Disk Cleanup misses certain temp files. To make a little batch file that clears these folders, open Notepad and type the following:

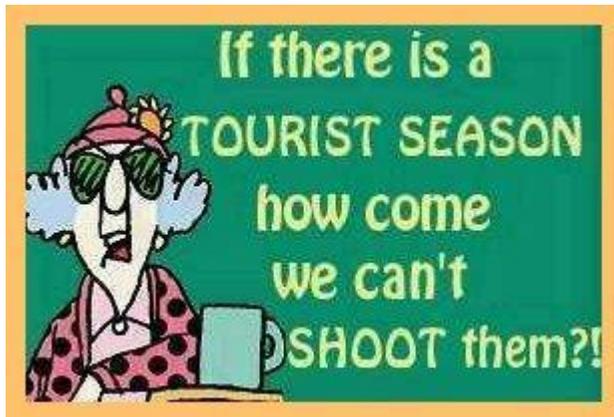
```
del /s /q "C:\Documents and Settings\yourname\Local Settings\Temp\*.*"
```

Replace yourname with the name of the account you've logged into and adjust the drive letter or path as needed. Save the file with a .cmd or .bat extension (for example, killtemp.bat) and put the file or a shortcut to it in your Startup group (Start, All Programs, Startup). This way, it will run each time you log in to your Windows account.

**Rule 8. Do your chores. Joan Rivers described my attitude to PC maintenance when she said, "I hate housework! You make the beds, you do the dishes, and six months later you have to start all over again."**

Odious as PC housekeeping can be, get into the disk-maintenance habit: make backups, defrag your hard disks, and check them for errors. Fortunately, you can use XP's Scheduled Tasks utility (Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Scheduled Tasks) to automate or partially automate these chores by setting the program to give you a gentle reminder.

*Editor's Note: References to the various editions refer to "Windows Secrets" from whence the above articles were taken RPB*



## How To Save Time Filling in Information"

Internet Explorer includes a feature called AutoComplete that keeps track of information that you've recently typed, such as Web site addresses, information in forms, and search queries.

As you type new information, AutoComplete tries to anticipate what you're typing and offers possible matches. You save time because you don't have to type in the full information just select AutoComplete's match and go!

### ----- How AutoComplete Works

Say you've recently visited the Web site <http://www.newbieclub.com> and you want to go back. You can type "<http://www.ne>" or even just "ne" and AutoComplete will fill in the rest of the Web address for you. If you've visited more than one place on a Web site, AutoComplete will present you with a list of places you've been on that site.

Tip: It's not necessary to type the complete Web address including "<http://www>." and ".com" in the address bar. For example, say you want to go to the Newbie Club site at <http://www.newbieclub.com>. Instead of typing the complete Web address, you can just type "ne" in the address bar and then press Ctrl+ENTER to automatically add "<http://www>." and ".com" in the Web address.

### ----- How To Adjust AutoComplete Settings

Perhaps AutoComplete is not activated in your browser and you want to turn it on. Or maybe you'd rather not have AutoComplete remember user names and passwords that might let others access sensitive information. You can change these settings in Internet Explorer by following these steps:

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1. On the Internet Explorer Tools menu, click Internet Options.
2. In the Internet Options box, click the Content tab, and click the Auto-Complete button. The AutoComplete Settings box will appear.
3. To turn AutoComplete on, click the boxes next to the types of information you want AutoComplete to remember.

For example, you can click the "Web addresses" box if you want Auto-Complete to find quick matches for the Web sites that you type into the Internet Explorer Address Bar.

When you click an empty box, a check mark will appear to let you know that you have chosen to have AutoComplete remember that type of information.

4. If you don't want AutoComplete to remember user names and passwords, you can uncheck the box for User names and passwords on forms. Clicking a box that already has a check mark in it will clear the box.

Tip: You can erase any user names, passwords or email addresses that Internet Explorer has already remembered by clicking the Clear Passwords button.

5. When you're done choosing your AutoComplete settings, click OK twice.

## "About Context Menus"

Context menus help you do more in less time. Anything that works like that for me is readily put to work.

When a right click yields a context menu, you're presented with options. These options will always be in the context of the object you clicked, and will relate to it. So, when you right click the Recycle Bin icon, you see a list of things that pertain to the bin. Nearly all of the objects in Windows

have their own context menus, accessible with a right click.

This is powerful information, since there are oftentimes many options available from a context menu that you won't find elsewhere in Windows. This applies to the programs you use as well. Try it. Start right clicking on everything!

Display context menus with the keyboard combo Shift-F10.

Regardless of where you are, if there's a context menu that's applicable, you'll see it. Try it now!

You may wonder if context menus can be customized. Well, yes they can. You'll have to get under the hood by going in through the Registry, so maybe we'll save that for another time. There are lots of resources available on the Registry. I recommend our own book, Registry for Newbies, available at <http://newbieclub.com/rfncopy> The most frequently accessed item on any context menu is the Properties option. Once an object is the focus of your next move, you can press Alt-Enter to jump immediately to the Properties Dialog for that object. Try it. Click once on the My Computer icon so it's highlighted. Then hold down the Alt key while pressing Enter (Alt-Enter). You'll see the System Properties dialog box spring to life, with info about your computer. It's great, isn't it?

Well isn't it?

## How To Avoid Losing Stuff"

One of the biggest problems facing new computer users is losing stuff. The computer is like a bottomless pit -- you can just keep adding info to it, and if you aren't careful, you'll never find anything!

The whole concept of "My Computer", "My Folders", "My Stuff", and "My Music" is pretty easy to understand, right? We can all relate to it. It's mine!

*(Continued on page 14)*

**Use this to your advantage.**

Create new folders in the My Documents folder. Name them whatever turns you on. "My Recipes". Or how about "My Downloads" or "My Newbie Club Newsletters". (You may want to save your newsletters in a file in your email client, of course.)

Want to access something at any time? Just open My Documents, and there are all of your folders, smiling up at you, labelled and ready for service.

If you download music, there's already a folder named "My Music". Create new folders inside, to organize yourself.

The computer is the ultimate organizer. And it's the ultimate servant.

Now, how do you create new folders? Open My Documents and look at the Menu line... you should see the word "File". Click File, point to New with our cursor, and click Folder. It'll be right at the top.

You'll see a new folder appear, with its name area all blank and blinking, ready for you to start typing. Type a name...spaces are fine, and the name can real long if you want. The limit is right at 254 characters... maybe 255. The precise number escapes me.

Once done, click off the folder, and the name is set. And you're done. Now you can store your stuff there whenever you're ready.

*From Newbie Club Insider*

## Whatchamacallits Sharon Zardetto and Andy Baird There's a disturbing trend in Apple documentation.

Not the fact that there isn't much—that is pretty disturbing, but that's not what I'm talking about. I'm referring to the fact that Apple seems to avoid naming things, using just verbs in its online (and other) help documents: 'Click Now.' And what is that 'Now' object: it's a sort of chopped-edge buttony thing in a row of other similar objects, formerly called a tab but no longer looking like one... and it takes you to a... subset of preference pane options that's called a... ? Things need names! Especially interface elements! This month's excerpts are about things whose names you might not know.

**favicon** **FAYV·ih·con** · favorites + icon · The

16x16-pixel icon that usually appears next to a Web page's address in a browser's URL box, and in a bookmark or 'favorites' list.

(Sharon much prefers the lesser-used, sillysounding, alternative name for this: **urlicon**, but only if you pronounce it 'earl-a-con.')



**handles** Small squares displayed at the corners of an onscreen object, used for resizing or otherwise **manipulating**



it

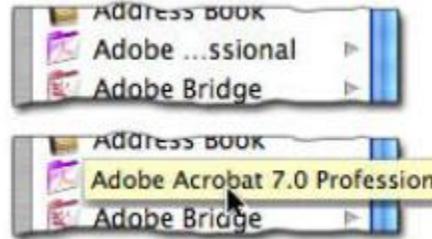
**help tag** A pop-up box of information, also sometimes called

a

(Continued from page 14)

tip or hint, or even tool tip because its first use was for identifying the functions of buttons on Microsoft tool palettes. For most help tags, all you have to do is hover over something for about two seconds.

The Finder has handy help tags for icon names whose middles drop out when they're too long. (Is two seconds too long to wait? Press Option for instant pop-up help tags!



sheet Occasionally used to refer to a dialog that slides down from under a window's title bar. As Apple tweaks Mac OS X, features come and go, get names briefly, or just go nameless. This name didn't catch on, but it still pops up (well, it doesn't pop up, or slide down, or anything like that: it's just there)

in some Apple documentation.



scroller The scrollbox of yesteryear's Mac interface that transmuted into the blue 'lozenge' in Mac OS X's scrollbars also received this new name, although most users didn't get the memo.

proxy icon The tiny icon in front of a Finder window's name. You can drag the icon (by clicking on it and hesitating for a fraction of a second before dragging it) instead of going back to the enclosing folder if you want to manipulate the current window: drag it to the Trash, for instance.

Most document windows have proxy icons, too. You can do nifty things with them, like drag them to a Finder window or onto the Desktop to save a copy of the document there, or into another document: we dragged a lot of Word proxy icons into Mail message windows when exchanging documents while working on this book. The proxy icon is dimmed if the document has unsaved changes, and it can't be manipulated; this prevents you from mistakenly copying a

document with unsaved changes.

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Take Control: The Mac OS X Lexicon is an ebook available at <[www.takecontrolbooks.com/mac-lexicon.html](http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/mac-lexicon.html)>. Usergroup member discount, 10% on all Take Control titles: coupon code CPN31208MUG.

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Email Sharon ([sharonLex@33thingsbooks.com](mailto:sharonLex@33thingsbooks.com)) or Andy ([Andy@33thingsbooks.com](mailto:Andy@33thingsbooks.com)) about the Lexicon.

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Crabby Road  
Greatest Hits

6-23-07 Apple

I believe that everything happens for a reason. Usually, the reason is that somebody screwed up.



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**Hacker** Interviewee for the Interview column in the 12 April issue of *New Scientist* was Richard Stallman, one of the driving figures in the open-source software movement, and promoter of freedoms in general.

*New Scientist* asked ‘What does “hacker” mean to you?’ Stallman replied:

‘A hacker is someone who enjoys playful cleverness. I know many people think it means security breaker, but since “hacker” is what we call ourselves in my community, I won’t accept a derogatory meaning. If you want to refer to security breakers you should call them “crackers”.

You can be a hacker in a lot of different media, it doesn’t have to be with computers.

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology there’s an old tradition in which people “hack” buildings and public spaces, by putting up the famous “Nerd Crossing” road sign, for example.

It didn’t involve any security and it was playful and clever.’ The New Hacker’s Dictionary (<[www.catb.org/~esr/jargon/html/go01.html](http://www.catb.org/~esr/jargon/html/go01.html)>)

org/~esr/jargon/html/go01.html>)

defines hacker thusly:

‘**hacker: n.** [originally, someone who makes furniture with an axe] ‘1 A person who enjoys exploring the details of programmable systems and how to stretch their capabilities, as opposed to most users, who prefer to learn only the minimum necessary.

RFC1392, the Internet Users’ Glossary (<[www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc1392.html](http://www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc1392.html)>), usefully amplifies this as: A person who delights in having an intimate understanding of the internal workings of a system, computers and computer networks in particular.

‘2 One who programs enthusiastically (even obsessively) or who enjoys programming rather than just theorizing about programming.

‘3 A person capable of appreciating hack value.

‘4 A person who is good at programming quickly.

‘5 An expert at a particular program, or one who frequently does work using it or on it; as in ‘a Unix hacker’. (Definitions 1 through 5 are correlated, and people who fit them congregate.)

‘6 An expert or enthusiast of any kind. One might be an astronomy hacker, for example.

‘7 One who enjoys the intellectual challenge of creatively overcoming or circumventing limitations.

‘8 [deprecated] A malicious meddler who tries to discover sensitive information by poking around. Hence password hacker, network hacker. The correct term for this sense is ‘cracker’.

‘The term ‘hacker’ also tends to connote membership in the global community defined by the net (For discussion of some of the basics of this culture, see the How To Become A Hacker FAQ: <[www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/hacker-howto.html](http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/hacker-howto.html)>. It also implies that the person described is seen to subscribe to some version of the hacker ethic.

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'It is better to be described as a hacker by others than to describe oneself that way.

Hackers consider themselves something of an elite (a meritocracy based on ability), though one to which new members are gladly welcome. There is thus a certain ego satisfaction to be had in identifying yourself as a hacker (but if you claim to be one and are not, you'll quickly be labelled bogus).

'This term seems to have been first adopted as a badge in the 1960s by the hacker culture surrounding the Tech Model Railroad Club (<tmrc.mit.edu/>) and the MIT AI Lab. We have a report that it was used in a sense close to this entry's by teenage radio hams and electronics tinkerers in the mid-1950s.' In contrast, Joseph Weizenbaum was less than impressed by the hacker culture. He wrote:

'The compulsive programmer spends all the time he can working on one of his big projects. "Working" is not the word he uses; he calls what he does "hacking." To hack is, according to the dictionary, "to cut irregularly, without skill or definite purpose; to mangle by or as if by repeated strokes of a cutting instrument." I have already said that the compulsive programmer, or hacker as he calls himself, is usually a superb technician. It seems therefore that he is not "without skill" as the definition would have it. But the definition fits in the deeper sense that the hacker is "without definite purpose": he cannot set before himself a clearly defined long-term goal and plan for achieving it, for he has only technique, not knowledge.

He has nothing he can analyse or synthesize; in short, he has nothing to form theories about. His skill is therefore aimless, even disembodied. It is simply not connected with anything other than the instrument on which it may be exercised.

His skill is like that of a monastic copyist who, though illiterate, is a first-rate calligrapher.

His grandiose projects must therefore necessarily have the quality of

illusions, indeed, of illusions of grandeur.

He will construct the one grand system in which all other experts will soon write their systems.

'(It has to be said that not all hackers are pathologically compulsive programmers.

Indeed, were it not for the often, in its own terms, highly creative labour of people who proudly claim the title "hacker," few of today's sophisticated computer timesharing systems, computer language translators, graphics systems, etc., would exist.)' Computer Power and Human Reason, p 118

*From Apple Sauce May 2008*



***Be Careful Out There***

***IDIOT SIGHTING:***

We had to have the garage door repaired. The Sears repairman told us that one of our problems was that we did not have a 'large' enough motor on the opener. I thought for a minute, and said that we had the largest one Sears made at that time, a 1/2 horsepower. He shook his head and said, 'Lady, you need a 1/4 horsepower.' I responded that 1/2 was larger than 1/4. He said, 'NO, it's not. Four is larger than two.' We haven't used Sears repair since.

**IDIOT SIGHTING**

\_My daughter and I went through the McDonald's take-out window and I gave the clerk a \$5 bill. Our total was \$4.25, so I also handed her a quarter. She said, 'you gave me too mu ch money.' I said, 'Yes I know, but this way you can just give me a dollar bill back.' She sighed and went to get the manager who asked me to repeat my request. I did so, and he handed me back the quarter, and said "We're sorry but they could not do that kind of thing.' The clerk then proceeded to give me back \$1 and 75 cents in change. Do not confuse the clerks at McD's.

**IDIOT SIGHTING:**

I live in a semi-rural area. We recently had a new neighbour call the local township administrative

office to request the removal of the DEER CROSSING sign on our road. The reason: 'Too many deer are being hit by cars out here! I don't think this is a good place for them to be crossing anymore.' From Kingman, KS

**IDIOT SIGHTING IN FOOD SERVICE:**

My daughter went to a local Taco Bell and ordered a taco. She asked the person behind the counter for 'minimal lettuce.' He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg lettuce. From Kansas City

**IDIOT SIGHTING:**

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked, 'Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?' To which I replied, 'If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?' He smiled knowingly and nodded, 'That's why we ask.' Happened in Birmingham , Ala.

**IDIOT SIGHTING:**

The stoplight on the corner buzzes when it's safe to cross the street. I was crossing with an intellectually challenged coworker of mine. She asked if I knew what the buzzer was for. I explained that it signals blind people when the light is red. Appalled, she responded, 'What on earth are blind people doing driving?!' She was a probation officer in Wichita , KS

**IDIOT SIGHTING:**

*(Continued from page 18)*

I work with an individual who plugged her power strip back into itself and for the sake of her life, couldn't understand why her system would not turn on.

A deputy with the Dallas County Sheriffs office, no less.

### IDIOT SIGHTING:

When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car, we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. 'Hey,' I announced to the technician, 'its open!' His reply, 'I know. I already got that side.' This was at the Ford dealership in Canton, Mississippi

### STAY ALERT.

They walk among us... and the scary part is that they VOTE and they REPRODUCE

## School 1960 vs. School 2007

**Scenario: Johnny and Mark get into a fistfight after school.**

1960 - Crowd gathers. Mark wins. Johnny and Mark shake hands and end up mates.

2007 - Police are called, SWAT team arrives and arrests Johnny and Mark. Mobiles with video of fight confiscated as evidence. They are charged with assault, AVOs are taken out and both are suspended even though Johnny started it. Diversionary conferences and parent meetings conducted. Video shown on 6 internet sites.

**Scenario: Jeffrey won't sit still in class, disrupts other students.**

1960 - Jeffrey is sent to the principal's office and given a good paddling. Returns to class, sits still and does not disrupt class again.

2007 - Jeffrey is given huge doses of Ritalin. Counselling to death. Becomes a zombie. Tested for ADD. School gets extra funding because Jeffrey has a disability. Drops out of school.

**Scenario: Billy breaks a window in his neighbor's car and his Dad gives him a whipping with his belt.**

1960 - Billy is more careful next time, grows up normal,

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goes to college, and becomes a successful businessman.

2007 - Billy's dad is arrested for child abuse. Billy is removed to foster care and joins a gang. Psychologist tells Billy's sister that she remembers being abused herself and their dad goes to prison. Billy's mum has an affair with the psychologist. Psychologist gets a promotion.

**Scenario: Mark, a college student, brings cigarettes to school.**

1960 - Mark shares a smoke with the school principal out on the smoking area.

2007 - Police are called and Mark is expelled from School for drug possession. His car is searched for drugs and weapons.

**Scenario: Vinh fails high school English.**

1960 - Vinh goes to Remedial English, passes and goes to college.

2007 - Vinh's cause is taken up by local human rights group. Newspaper articles appear nationally explaining that making English a requirement for graduation is racist. Civil Liberties Association files class action lawsuit against state school system and his English teacher. English is banned from core curriculum.

Vinh is given his Y10 anyway but ends up mowing lawns for a living because he cannot speak English.

**Scenario: Johnny takes apart leftover firecrackers, puts them in a model plane paint bottle and blows up an anthill.**

1960 - Ants die.

2007 - Security and ASIO are called and Johnny is charged with domestic terrorism.

Teams investigate parents, siblings are removed from the home, computers are confiscated, and Johnny's dad goes on a terror watch list and is never allowed to fly again.

**Scenario: Johnny falls during recess and scrapes his knee. His teacher, Mary, finds him crying, and gives him a hug to comfort him.**

1960 - Johnny soon feels better and goes back to playing.

2007 - Mary is accused of being a sexual predator and loses her job. She faces three years in prison. Johnny undergoes five years of therapy. Becomes gay.