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MAY MEETINGS

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LCG Committee 2013/14

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OPEN Committee 2013/14

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Webmaster/Content: Tom Olsen.

OPEN Committee: June Hazzlewood, Judy Hall, Janet Headlam, Sandra Viney, Kay Dawson, Karia Wicks.

OPEN NEWSLETTER – May 2013

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone,

Where has the year gone? I do not know about you but I am so glad that the weather has cooled down ... next we will be complaining it's too cold….LOL !

Well enough of my waffle … let me bring you up to speed on what is happening at OPEN. A little while ago I received a letter from the Association of Independent Retirees (AIR) offering OPEN a complimentary space as an exhibitor at their Retirement and Lifestyle Expo which is being held at the Tailrace Centre on Thursday 16th May 4pm-7pm .

OPEN is only one of three voluntary organizations which have been offered a place … to have a table at this expo normally is about $300. I feel very humbled that we are being given this opportunity to be able to attend this Expo. So if you decide to go and have a look at the Expo, come over and say Hi.

Due to the uncertainty and unsatisfactory service at Sunnyhill where we had our Christmas lunch last year, I have organised a replacement venue for our Christmas lunch. This year it will be held at the Commercial Hotel on Friday 20th December at 12 noon. So put that date in your diary now.

V.I.C.T.O.R (Volunteer Information and Communications Technology Outreach)

For those members that do not know what this service is it's a home-based program to help our members who either need some minor extra help outside of regular classes or who, for various reasons, are no longer able to make it to classes.

IT IS NOT a cheap alternative to professional help. I have

COORDINATOR'S CORNER (cont)

As a member you have to meet certain criteria to qualify for the service.

(For more information call the V.I.C.T.O.R number 0408 174 235)

V.I.C.T.O.R passed a small milestone last month we helped our 200th client since its inception in 2005. Thank you to the volunteers that have helped over the years and to the students that have accessed this service I hope we have been able to make your computing experience enjoyable and a bit less stressful.

Until next month

VICTOR PHONE NUMBER 0408 174 235

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

(Bookings are subject to availability of tutors.)

WINDOWS 8 SUPPORT FOR BEGINNERS

A class is being held each Thursday from 3:30 to 5:30 pm to assist owners of Windows 8 computers to find their way around the new operating system and its features.

Tutors who can lend a hand to assist the new users with the basic computer skills needed e.g. word processing, internet access, file management are invited to attend.

MAY MEETINGS

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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

SPECIAL NBN FORUM

Wednesday May 15
10 am to 12 noon

With the roll-out of cables well under way in Launceston it probably won't be too long before the National Broadband Network is available in your area.

If you'd like to know how the NBN will affect you e.g. what will it cost? What equipment will you need?

For a 'gobbledy-gook free' presentation come along to the information session to be conducted by Bruce Dineen. Get answers to all those questions you have.

KNOW YOUR PORTS

Using any old port may be OK in a storm but for our computers and tech gear we must be more precise.

One of our members who has one of those newfangled television sets that can play a multitude of different types of media was mystified when she couldn't get a USB flash-drive to fit into the connection on the TV.

She tried so hard in fact that she bent the metal 'plug' on the flash-drive and then it wouldn't fit into her computer.

The pictures below show why!

The connection on the left is an **HDMI port** NOT a USB port. The USB port is on the right.

HDMI stands for **High Definition Media Interface** and it allows the video signal from a computer fitted with an HDMI port to be sent to a TV via an HDMI cable.

DO YOU NEED ALL THOSE SOFTWARE CDs

Have you ever 'explored' the contents of your software CDs? It is amazing how often that only a small fraction of the 700 Megabytes is used by the programs and data.

As an example consider my recent discovery that the installation files for a USB wireless 'dongle' took up only 41MB … and 22 MB of that was for the Adobe Reader program that was needed to read the manual. So the software for the device itself occupied just 19MB, an amount that could easily be stored with other files on a flash-drive.

It's a similar story for many other programs and utilities that we use at OPEN—remember the days when we used a whole CD to make the Picasa program available to members?

OPEN NEWSLETTER – May 2013

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN 2013 ALL OF JUDY'S MORNING CLASSES WILL

START AT 10 AM

unless an earlier starting time is advised

FAMILY HISTORY ON-LINE

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 limited to 8 people.

Wednesday May 8, 2013

1 pm to 3:00 pm

Wednesday May 22 , 2013

10 am to noon

Join Judy, Margaret G and the tutors for these informative sessions.

FREE-RIP WORKSHOP

FreeRip is a free program that can extract (or rip) music files from a CD.

The music files can then be saved on to your hard-drive or transferred on to a portable device such as an MP3 player, iPod, iPad or Android tablet so that you have your favourite music with you when you are on the move.

Wednesday May 29 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

BASIC GRAPHICS

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

The dates for the next classes are :

Next Month : Graphics Workshop May 1

10 am to 12 noon

Basic Graphics May 8

10 am to 12 noon

and an extra class on May 29

From 10 am to 12 noon

The aim of the Basic Graphics course is to equip participants with the skills required to enhance photos and includes transferring the images to a computer through scanning and from portable media devices.

LEVEL 2 & 3 GRAPHICS

With Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8
Wednesday May 15 1:00 to 3.00 pm

Paint Shop Pro XI Advanced Class
Wednesday May 29 1:00 to 3.00 pm

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

NEWSTREAM

OPEN Session Times

At Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Rd, L'ton

Standard Sessions $6.00

[Some special tutorial materials may incur additional charges]

Monday	10 am –12	General & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	**Basics and Beyond**
	3:30 pm — 5:30 pm	**Beginners Class**
Tuesday	10 am –12	O-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	General & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	General & Beginners
Friday	10 am –12	General & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	Beginners Class

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SPECIAL WEDNESDAY SESSIONS

Please register on the sheets – numbers may be limited

Date	Time	Topic	Details
May 1	10 am—12 noon	Basic Graphics	Additional Workshop Session
	1 pm onwards	**OPEN monthly meeting**	**Current Financial Report and General Business. New members are welcome to attend.**
	LCG Meeting	**iPad and Tablet Workshop**	**Bruce, Ron, Ivan and Glenn will demonstrate their Android and iPad tablet devices**
May 8	10 am—12 noon	Basic Graphics	A class for members learning Basic Graphics techniques to enhance photos.
	10 am—12 noon	**Family History**	**Use our the considerable range of resources to trace your ancestors.**
May 15	10 am—12 noon	National Broadband Network Forum	Bruce Dineen will explain what the imminent arrival of the NBN will mean for you and take your questions on how to deal with this new technology.
	1 pm—3.00 pm	**Level 2 and 3 Graphics Class**	**Advanced graphics using Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8**
May 22	10 am—12 noon	Family History	Use Ancestry.com to aid your research for a small additional fee.
	1 pm—3.00 pm	**Advanced Graphics Class**	**Advanced topics using Paint Shop Pro XI**
May 29	10 am—12 noon	Basic Graphics	A class for members learning Basic Graphics techniques to enhance photos.
	1 pm - 3.00 pm	**FreeRip Workshop**	**Use the 'free' program FreeRip to extract music files from your CDs. Then copy to an MP3 player or other portable device.**

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DAMAGED USB PORTS

Recently I have encountered a few members whose laptop computers' USB ports have been physically damaged to such an extent that they can no longer attach USB devices such as flash-drives or external hard-disks.

How then can they copy software to their laptops without burning every small utility program to a CD?

If your laptop is fitted with a digital card reader slot then you can use an **SD digital card** that would normally 'live' inside a digital camera. These cards store data in much the same way as a flash-drive.

To enable data to be transferred from another computer to the SD card you may need to buy an adapter that enables the digital SD card to be attached to a USB port on the other computer. (*see picture at right*)

For laptops that are fitted with a **PCMCIA or Express Card** slot you may be able to buy an 'expansion card' that plugs into your laptop. Expansion cards come in many forms including some that have USB ports on the end. These ports can then substitute for the damaged original ports on your laptop. (*at right the USB ports on the Express Card are located on the bottom left of the picture*)

When you are at OPEN you can overcome the problem of damaged USB ports by **copying data via our network**. I have often mentioned that our B_Server has an extensive range of software that can be used to avoid time-consuming Internet downloads. That software can also be transferred to any laptop that is able to connect to our network.

BACK UP YOUR FLASH-DRIVES!!!

Flash-drives are not totally 'bullet-proof'. From time to time they have been known to stop working and if you have lots of data stored exclusively on your flash-drive it could be rather inconvenient if you were to lose all that data.

It is good practice to create a back-up folder on your computer's hard-drive and to regularly copy the contents of your flash-drive (or drives) to that folder. *Dennis*

CREATE SIMPLE PLAYLISTS WITH VLC

VLC Media Player is a free program that can often overcome the short-comings of other well-known media player programs.

A few months ago I cited the case of a member who had been given several video files in MKV format that were unable to be played on his computer by the in-built Windows Media Player. We installed VLC and it did the job for him.

For someone like me who has trouble sleeping some soothing music emanating from my little netbook computer often helps me drift off so that I can be bright-tailed and bushy-eyed (???) when I arrive at OPEN.

But I find both iTunes and Windows Media Player unnecessarily complex when trying to create playlists. VLC though is much more straight-forward as adding songs to playlist is similar to adding files to a CD burning list—you browse through your music folders adding songs from various folders and then Save the playlist file in an appropriate location.

Then you double-click the Playlist file, lay back and enjoy the music ... zzz zzz zzz.

You can even create **video playlists** in VLC— but I think I'd be using it for short YouTube video clips rather than 9 or 10 one-hour episodes of a TV series. *Dennis*

LIFE WASN'T MEANT TO BE EASY???

That certainly seems to be the policy adopted by many of the big names in the computer world lately.

In recent issues of this newsletter we have mentioned that Hotmail has now transformed into Outlook.com—for some users this actually happened **while** they were viewing an e-mail.

Some of the changes enforced by the arrival of Outlook.com have been quite confusing, even infuriating to users. "I have lost all the Contacts in my Address Book" lamented one user, until it was pointed out that Contacts is now called People. *Give me strength!*

And "Where have my Reply and Forward tools gone?" asked the same user. To have access to those you now need to click the Actions link or a drop-down menu!

Who dreams up this stuff?

If you think you can escape these difficulties by changing your e-mail provider, think again.

I've had a secondary Google Gmail account for some time and until recently it's been fairly simple to use. But the constant badgering about my 'unsupported browser' and unwanted invitations to join social networking sites created by Mr G are testing my patience.

And now Gmail has decided that when I 'compose' a new e-mail I only need a message box that is a quarter of the size of the old one. Unless of course I increase the size of the message box by clicking an arrow that displays the word **pop-out!** I can then reduce the size when the arrow says **pop-in** but again I ask the question—*who dreams up this stuff?*

Even 'our' own Bigpond seems to have decided to implement a **'customer alienation policy'** for people using its Webmail facility. You enter your e-mail address and password and head for the Login button, BUT ... If you miss the target by a gnat's nostril you are re-directed to an advertising pop-up menu and then you have to start the login process all over again.

When will they begin to consider older customers???

HOW TO CAPTURE MUSIC FROM YOUTUBE

A very good source of music is from YouTube. Although YouTube has only video clips, the music can be captured very easily.

Step 1. Find your Music Video on YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/

Step 2. Copy the URL

In the above, the URL is - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zgja26eNeY

Step 3. Go to one of the Internet sites listed below

http://www.flv2mp3.com/

http://www.video2mp3.de/

http://www.flvto.com/

Step 4. Paste the URL into the space provided.
And select **Convert to Mp3.**

Step 5. When completed, save the MP3 file to your computer.

CONVERT VHS TAPES TO DVD

Since the beginning of this year quite a few of our members have become involved with 'capturing' music from their old cassette tapes on to their computers in order to transfer the digital music to CDs or some other music-playing device such as an MP3 player or an iPod.

Similar principles can be applied to capturing video footage from your old VHS tapes so that the resulting digital files can be burned to DVDs.

So what do you need in order to undertake this process?

1. A Video Cassette Recorder to play your tape/tapes.
2. A **capture device** that provides the interface between the VCR and your computer.
3. The correct **video and audio cables** to connect the two together.
4. **Software** that enables the video files to be recorded on to your computer.
5. **TIME!** In most cases VHS Tapes can only be played and recorded in **real time** i.e. a 2-hour tape will take 2 hours to play and record.
6. **Plenty of space** on your computer's hard-drive— **every second** of video you record will occupy **1 Megabyte** on your computer.
7. A suitable **DVD-burning program** to transfer the footage to DVDs
8. In the case of long-running VHS tapes you may need **double-density blank DVDs** to burn the video files. These have a capacity of 8.5 GB
9. **MORE TIME!** The DVD-burning process can be quite time-consuming but the end product is something that easily duplicated for your family and friends.

Thanks to a kind donation from Bruce Dineen OPEN now has a VCR at the club-room and demonstrations of how to go about this process can be arranged subject to sufficient notice being given and a 'qualified tutor' being present.

Dennis Murray

OPEN NEWSLETTER – May 2013

OPEN Computing will have a display set up at this Expo.

If you are attending please feel free to say "Hello" to our volunteers who will be looking after our stall.

BEWARE OF HITCH-HIKERS
Re-printed from April 2012

It's an old, old story but I live in the hope that some day someone might get the message. It seems that hardly a day goes by that I don't find myself removing an unwanted program from a computer at OPEN.

When the Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox icons on most of our club computers are clicked the majority of members would expect to see the 'blue links page' appear on the screen. That page provides links to Google, Hotmail and many specialty web-site listings that members of special classes (e.g. Family History) may wish to access.

I certainly don't expect the home-page to be a download site for smart-phone applications or some half-baked search engine that doesn't provide anywhere near the level of results that we have come to expect from Google.

So how do these things get on our computers? In a small number of cases it may be a case of people thinking that their personal convenience outweighs the inconvenience caused to the majority of users.

But in most cases unwanted toolbars, hijacked home pages, and automatic 'downloaders' that invade the privacy of others are caused by installing unauthorised software that often includes so-called features that hitch-hike their way on to the computer on the back of the main program.

I'll be the first to admit that I am always on the lookout for free software that may be of benefit to our members (*and myself*) but I am very selective as to where I source that material.

Just because a friend or a family member thinks that they have discovered the greatest program since sliced bread it may not necessarily be the case. ***Dennis***

DO YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IS ON YOUR COMPUTER'S HARD DRIVE?

If that sounds like a curious question then I can assure you that I have good reasons for asking it—not the least being a chance to 'plug' another favourite free program.

Case 1 — I noticed that a member had used quite a lot of hard disk space (*around 140 Gigabytes*) on what was a relatively Windows 7 new laptop. I posed the question of whether the member had downloaded space-consuming movie files or something of similar volume.

With the answer being a firm "NO" I sought permission to examine the contents of the computer using the free file management program **ExplorerXP**.

To my amazement there was **a single file** 'pagefile.sys' that was occupying more than 90 Gigabytes. The file-name **pagefile.sys** won't mean much to most of you but the page-file is the area of your hard disk drive set aside as virtual memory—temporary memory that is able to assist the physical memory (RAM) in performing its tasks.

Virtual memory was a useful facility in years gone by when computers were not equipped with the amount of RAM that is now common e.g. between 2GB and 4 GB.

In any case you would usually only set your virtual memory to around the same size as your physical memory, and definitely not in the order of 90 GB!

Case 2 — Another member was concerned that her hard drive appeared almost full (*just 4GB free on a 160GB hard drive*) despite having deleted many files and backed up others to an external hard drive.

Investigating with ExplorerXP I found that again a massive amount of the disk space had been allocated to the page-file (*i.e. virtual memory*) - almost 90 GB which represented about 60% of the hard disk's capacity.

So if you're wondering where all the space is being used on your hard disk it may be worth giving ExplorerXP a whirl. **And please consider that although the additional memory provided by the page-file may be <u>virtual</u> the space it occupies is <u>very real</u>.**

Dennis Murray

Going Google (apps), Part 1: **Move your mail**

By Woody Leonhard

Are you getting tired of struggling with Microsoft's increasingly complex, sometimes arcane, and always expensive versions of Office?

This article, the first in a series, will show you how easy it is to move from bloated and pricey desktop programs to fast, free — though somewhat less capable — Google apps.

Small-biz/family computing is changing — rapidly My decision to take a detailed look at Google apps was prompted by purely practical needs: finding a simpler and less costly computing system for a family business.

My wife runs a fairly typical small business — a bakery with four locations and 40 or so employees. The bakery's data needs aren't particularly demanding: daily sales reports, petty cash, inventory reports, etc. from the shops. It also needs relatively simple accounting: accounts payable, receivables, bank reconciliations, and payroll. Then there's the usual business email and letters. The bakery's accountant does all the heavy lifting — taxes, government reporting, and the like.

In many respects, the business is no different from millions of small businesses and innumerable small organizations such as charities, social groups, and clubs. For that matter, individuals (like me!) handle comparable tasks every day: keeping track of investments, budgeting, writing and filing letters — all the stuff Word, Excel, and Outlook have helped us get done for decades.

Unfortunately, Microsoft Office has become too bloated and expensive for the bakery — and many other small businesses —

and that's making alternatives more attractive.

In the March 14 Top Story <https://windowssecrets.com/top-story/two-free-full-blown-alternatives-to-ms-office/>, Fred Langa talked about two free Office replacements — LibreOffice and Open Office — that provide many of the same features as Microsoft Office. Although they lack some of Office's capabilities, they're fabulously priced: they're free!

I've tried LibreOffice. In my estimation, it can be a fine replacement for Microsoft Office, if your needs aren't extensive or complicated. LibreOffice is, however, PC-bound. It doesn't fit well into the new world of Internet and mobile computing. Mobile devices — iPads, iPhones, Galaxies, Nexuseseses, etc. — are ubiquitous, and businesses are keenly interested in exploiting their capabilities. And they can so do at virtually no cost beyond hardware.

Whether for a business, organization, or even a family, effective computing no longer requires a full computer to do tasks that are relatively simple. A bakery employee, for example, no longer needs to boot her laptop just to update a simple sales report. She can now do it from her phone. When she needs to check her son's homework assignment, she does so on an iPad or similar tablet.

Much of mobile computing requires storing your data in the cloud — and feeling confident it's sufficiently secure. My take on online data storage? If you're holding state secrets or you're worried about an intelligence agency such as the NSA snooping in your files, don't store your data online unless it's highly

encrypted — which brings up other issues. In the real world of small businesses (and families), effectively sharing some data is more important than keeping it all under strict, local lock and key.

All of which brings us back to Google Apps, which are free for personal use but fee-based for business uses. Google Apps for Business (site <http://googleenterprise.blogspot.com/2012/12/changes-to-google-apps-for-businesses.html>) costs just U.S. $50 per person per year. It offers all sorts of online tools — centralized email, basic accounting, etc. — that organizations need in order to keep running.

Putting your email back into the cloud As I stated at the top, this series is about moving from Office to Google apps. I'll start with email, because it's the application most of us use every day, yet it's also the app that's easiest to switch — more so than word processing, spreadsheets, and, most certainly, accounting.

I've been using Outlook since its inception in Office 97. The times I've sworn at it are too numerous to recount. Because I don't want the overhead or expense of running Exchange Server, all my mail is stored in a collection of huge .pst files.

Except — well, some of those files don't work anymore. For whatever reason, the .psts get gummed up, and running all the diagnostic software in the world won't bring them back. I've found myself diving for backup copies of Outlook files on a monotonously regular basis — and sometimes the backups won't work.

Outlook itself can be a snarly program. It freezes on me from time to time — and I'm talking about Outlook 2013, not one of the older versions that are even more prone to freezes. Sometimes it crashes and swallows whatever I've been typing. But I've continued to use Outlook, convinced it was the only email program capable of handling the huge volume of mail I manage every day.

It turns out I was wrong. The only insurmountable obstacles keeping me strapped to Outlook were fear and inertia.

Many PC users — especially business users — worry about getting work done with a Web-based email app. What if the Internet connection goes down? That was a completely valid concern a few years ago. Internet connections were often undependable. Today, however, most business-grade Web connections are quite reliable, and there are often backup connections (such as our smartphones) available.

For the rare times you're without an Internet connection, a Google Chrome add-in — Gmail Offline (site <https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/gmail-offline/ejidjjhkpiempkbhmpbfngldlkglhimk/reviews?hl=en>) — lets you read and respond to mail. (For me, responding to messages without a connection to the Web is like tying one hand behind my back.)

So I made the switch to Gmail and have no regrets. Why not Hotmail/Outlook.com? Microsoft's Web-based product is similar to Gmail in many ways. But there are also some key differences.

In particular, consider how Gmail automatically groups incoming mail into two bunches — one high-priority, the other

(Continued from page 10)

low-priority — based on the way you've treated similar mail in the past. Gmail is also more adept at synching calendars and contact lists across Apple and Android devices. (And, yes, I've seen the Scroogled ads: pot calling the kettle black, IMHO.) Feel free to try both mail services and use the one you prefer.

Move an existing email account to Gmail It's surprising how few people know they can use Gmail (or Hotmail) with an existing email address. You don't have to convert your current address to @gmail.com <http://gmail.com> or @hotmail.com <http://hotmail.com>. In my case, I moved woody (at) askwoody (dot com) from my own email servers to Gmail — and nobody knew, not a soul.

Now that my mail is on Gmail, I can easily check for new messages on my Galaxy Note or iPad. The Gmail apps (calendaring and contacts came along with mail) for Apple and Android work quite well. Moreover, I no longer have to worry about backing up .pst files or putting up with Outlook's weird ways of handling IMAP. Nor do I have to fret over program hangs. Instead of storing every bloody bit of incoming mail in .pst files, I archive selectively.

And searches? Oh my! Where Outlook might take about three minutes to search its Sent Files folder, Gmail takes seconds.

If your current email provider supports POP3 (and it probably does), all you need is your email user name, password, and POP server address (your mail provider should have it). Here are the details for moving all your mail to Gmail:

Step 1. If you don't have a Gmail account already, go to the Gmail site <http://www.gmail.com>, click the big red Create an Account box (upper-right corner), and follow the instructions.

Step 2. Sign in to Gmail <http://www.gmail.com>. Now click the Gear icon (right side, above your messages) and choose Settings. Select the Accounts and Import tab. Next to Check Mail from Other Accounts (Using POP3), click the Add a POP3 mail account you own link.

Step 3. In the dialog box that pops up, type the email address you want to use with Gmail and click Next Step. Enter your username and password plus the details for your mail provider's server. I typically check the Leave a copy of retrieved message on the server box; it gives me an emergency out, should something go bump in the night. I also check the Always use a secure connection (SSL) when retrieving mail box.

For Label incoming messages, pick an address from the drop-down list or create a new one. I don't automatically Archive incoming messages. When you're done, click Add Account; Gmail then starts sucking up all the mail it can find. If you've set up Outlook to leave copies of mail on the server, importing can take hours.

Step 4. While Gmail copies your mail over to its servers, you get a dialog box that asks whether you want to be able to send mail using your original email address (e.g. woody [at] askwoody [dot com]). Click Yes, then Next Step. You'll see another dialog box that confirms details about your previous user name. Click Next Step again.

Gmail will ask whether you want to send outbound mail through

(Continued from page 11)

Gmail or through your original email provider. Having been bitten by ISPs that block port 25 (for more, see my Aug. 27, 2009, Woody's Windows column <https://windowssecrets.com/woodys-windows/isps-block-some-outgoing-e-mail-unexpectedly/>), I always opt to send via Google; as long as I have an Internet connection, my mail always goes out. Click Next Step.

Step 5. Gmail next asks you to verify the email address you'll be using from now on (either your old address or a new address). Click Send Verification and then check your old (Outlook) inbox. You'll get an email with a verification code. Type the code into the next Gmail dialog box and click Verify. And you're done!

Step 6. Consider carefully whether you want to automatically export all your contacts from Outlook into the Google Contacts list. If you do, follow the steps on the Export Outlook Contacts to Google Gmail page <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook-help/export-outlook-contacts-to-google-gmail-HA001148902.aspx> for creating a CSV file and importing it into Google Contacts.

If you're feeling particularly brave, you can set up Outlook and Google Contacts to sync automatically (more info < But if you're giving up on Outlook, why bother? A slipstick.com page gives detailed instructions for synching Outlook and Gmail via IMAP.

Step 7. If you want to copy your Sent Mail from Outlook to Gmail, it can be done by jumping through a few IMAP hoops. A How-To Geek story

<http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/microsoft-office/use-gmail-imap-in-microsoft-outlook-2007/> has a step-by-step explanation for setting up IMAP synching between Gmail and Outlook 2007. The steps also work for Outlook 2010 and 2013.

Once you have the two mail systems communicating via IMAP, copy the messages in your Outlook Sent Items folder into the new IMAP Save folder. Next, copy any messages in your Outlook inbox to the new IMAP Inbox folder. Wait a few minutes — or an hour or more — and they'll appear inside Gmail. From there, you can move them all to your Gmail Archive — or anywhere else you like. Don't be too surprised if some of your messages disappear; Gmail's junk filter works much better than Outlook's.

I still find myself going back to Outlook from time to time, typically to retrieve a deleted message that's available only on the Outlook side of the fence. But overall, my trips to Outlook are blissfully rare.

Once your email is in Gmail, take a minute to download the Gmail apps for your iPhone, iPad, Android phone, or Android tablet. You don't need to do a thing: mail you send on your phone appears on your PCl; mail you receive on your iPad is on your Galaxy or your Mac; and so on. For someone accustomed to lugging around a big laptop with a huge .pst file just to run Outlook, it's like a breath of fresh air. Welcome to the 21st century — no Exchange Server required