

# Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association **ASCCA**

ABN 47 097 847 642

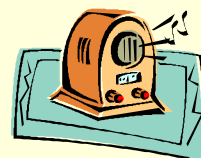
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## Confused about Communications?



Remember the "Good Old Days" when your only choice was a telephone from the PMG and several radio stations? Long distance calls were booked through an operator and could cost a day's wages or more. Overseas calls were just for the very rich or dire emergencies.



Now we have an enormous choice: Fixed phone lines, mobile phones, broadband Internet, Dial Up Internet, Free to air TV, Subscriber TV, AM and FM radio, Voip (Voice over Internet Protocol = phoning over the Internet), satellites and more. You have probably heard of Skype, which is one 'almost free' Internet phone contact via your computer world wide. Well worth considering if you often phone long distance or overseas.

When choosing communication services you face a bewildering array of choices. These can be 'Bundled', that is 2 or more services offered at a discount. One of the most common 'bundles' is broadband and home phone, but 'bundles' can also include mobile phone and paid TV. Then you have many suppliers to choose from. In any area of Australia there will be a frightening number of Internet Service Provides (ISPs), available to choose from and each of these will have many 'plans', generally from 15 to 40 or more so you could possibly have more than 1000 choices!!! Fortunately you can reduce this amount considerably by eliminating the higher usage plans which the average retiree would not need to consider.

While you probably know of the common ISPs such as Telstra, TPG, TAD, Optus, Dodo, Ozemail etc, have you heard of Green Tree Frog, Koala, Matilda, Water Sprite, Exetel, Yourhub, and LetsGo? These are just a few of your available ISPs in one local area of Sydney.



Why would you consider one like Green Tree Frog? Well, some of these smaller ones offer very competitive plans. Unfortunately many ISPs promote their services in ways which can be very misleading. It is always essential to read the fine print before choosing. Some of the factors to consider are, monthly rate, maximum speed, download limits, shaping or cost of excess downloads, penalty if you decide to swap ISPs, cost of hardware needed, support available and more. Yes all this can be very confusing; however thoughtful and careful research can help you to make informed decisions.

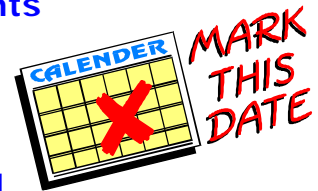
## 2008 Fraud Fortnight Awareness Campaign

ASCCA has accepted an invitation from the Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce to become involved in the 2008 Fraud Fortnight Awareness Campaign, which will run from 24<sup>th</sup> February – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce is a group of 19 government departments whose aim is to work together to reduce the incidence and impact of frauds and scams. As community partners we will have the opportunity to use our knowledge, and the resources available through the Taskforce, to increase awareness and help to protect our club members, and even our own families from scams and fraud.

Unscrupulous individuals and groups target people from all backgrounds, ages and income levels. The never ending fake lotteries, advance-fee frauds, get-rich-quick schemes and miracle health cures are all designed to separate the unwary from their money; either directly, or by stealthily harvesting personal information. The best defences are education and awareness, and this is where we, who are a little experienced, can help spread the message. The Australian Federal Police Website is a useful source of information: [http://www.afp.gov.au/national/e-crime/internet\\_scams.html](http://www.afp.gov.au/national/e-crime/internet_scams.html)

## Proposed dates for ASCCA 2008 events

- March 18 Members Meeting; level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney
- April 6-13 50 Years of NSW Seniors Week  
<http://www.nswseniorsweek.com.au/>
- April 8 Public Trustee TechnoSeniors Computer Expo, Morisset
- April 8 Public Trustee TechnoSeniors Computer Expo, Mt. Pritchard
- April 10 People & Places - Family History Festival, Narrabeen
- May 12-18 National Volunteer Week - Theme "Volunteers Change Our World"  
[http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s01\\_home/home.asp](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/html/s01_home/home.asp)
- June Members Meeting; level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney
- Aug. 27 & 28 10th Australian Computer Conference for Seniors
- November 20 ASCCA AGM; level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney



*All Clubs that are financial members of ASCCA should have recently received a CD with a free up to date copy of all the current ASCCA Training Manuals and other useful programs. If yours did not arrive in the mail please contact the ASCCA Office to enquire. We understand the difficulties that result from periodic changes in Committee members - it could be that your Club's details have not been updated.*

### 1800 888 888 Hotline Established

Prior to the shutting down of the CDMA Mobile Phone Network on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008, a new 1800 hotline **1800 888 888**, was established for customers to call if they are having genuine issues with handsets and equipment when making the move from CDMA to the Next G™ mobile network. The Next G™ network is a national network, providing coverage and 3G mobile services not only in the city but to rural and regional Australia for the first time.

### Low Vision Technology Information

During February, Quantum Technology will be hosting a series of Low Vision Information Days to bring the latest information and products directly to your local area. Go to the Miranda, Bondi, Penrith or Hornsby event. The Macular Degeneration Foundation, Glaucoma Australia, Vision Australia, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, AiDapt Independence Products and Quantum will be participating. Phone 02 8844 9888 or go to <http://www.quantumtechnology.com.au/>

## What A First Year - Congratulations to Parramatta Computer Pals for Seniors

On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2008 Nan Bosler, our ASCCA President, was the Guest Speaker at the First Birthday Celebration for the Parramatta Club. It was only on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007, that Nan was speaker and supporter to the always enthusiastic Margaret Tucker, John Moxon and others at a public meeting, which was called to launch the new club. Over the 12 month period 156 people have joined the club; with the financial membership currently at 119.

There has been great progress during the first year, with the original one day per week operation extending by mid year to three days per week. In the new term this year they are offering a variety of courses of varying lengths - 10 weeks, five weeks, and two hour stand alone sessions, with a maximum of six in each class. One of the new courses being offered is Genealogy. Congratulations on a very good result for the first year of a new club.

*Why not take a moment to let ASCCA know how your club is coming along. It is very encouraging for all our clubs to share in their successes; and even if you have a problem, it could well have been faced and solved by another ASCCA member club. Facilitating interaction and support between clubs, as well as offering direct help, are part of the great strength of the ASCCA body.*



*Parramatta Club President John Moxon blows out the lone candle on the Birthday cake, with "help" from ASCCA President Nan Bosler.*

## A Modern Christmas "Miracle"

*The true story of a very special Christmas celebration, thanks to the miracle of modern technology.*

Grandma and Grandpa were living and working in Bedford, England, and with their family back home in Winnipeg, Canada - it was looking like a rather peaceful, but boring Christmas with just the two of them. Their treasured grandson was just a small baby last Christmas; however, this year he would be old enough to take a real interest in everything; specially tearing open those mysterious brightly wrapped parcels that had magically appeared beneath the Christmas tree in Winnipeg.



*This modern "miracle" family photo taken in Canada even includes the dog sitting on the laps of Grandma and Grandpa at home in England*

The two family groups came up with a great plan for each to set up a webcam in their living room; and to save the gifts they had sent each other, to be opened together. With a time difference of about six hours this meant Grandma and Grandpa, who had enjoyed a leisurely morning at home in Bedford, were able to connect via webcam at about 2.00 pm - in time to share the early morning excitement in Winnipeg as their dear little grandson and his family sat around the tree and opened all their Christmas presents.

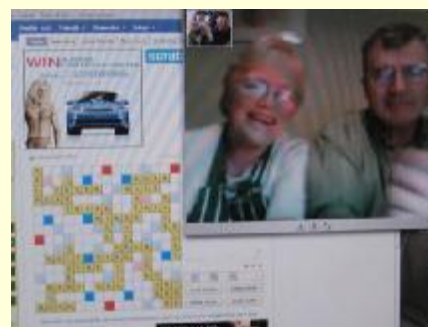
They thoroughly enjoyed watching his delight as he opened and played with all his gifts; and had the pleasure of seeing his reaction to their own lovingly selected presents. The adults also exchanged their carefully chosen gifts, and there was much laughter and fun. With the cameras strategically set up with the Christmas trees as a background, the sense of family and

sharing was so wonderful they decided to leave the cameras turned on for the day, and agreed to feel free to "flit" in and out of the living rooms and chat periodically and watch baby play.

The turkey dinner in Bedford was ready when it was time for the little boy to have his lunch; so Grandma and Grandpa were able to share his meal in a very special way – almost like being at the same table.

Then it was time for baby's afternoon sleep, so the adults enjoyed a few games of online scrabble. This tightly contested international tournament was great fun, and was won by the "junior" team based in Winnipeg.

Through the blessing of technology these grandparents had previously watched their grandson learn to walk; and through weekly webcam "visits" where they tell stories, sing songs and play games, he has come to know them in a wonderful way.



*The great International Christmas Scrabble tournament in progress.*

One can't help wondering what this little boy's GGGG grandfather who migrated to Canada somewhere in the 1840s would think about all this. How could he comprehend the miracle of his GG granddaughter "meeting" his own grandfather's Australian descendents from the line of his Aunt Mary who stayed back in England?

We, who have lived through the invention of the transistor - that led to the amazing unfolding of all this technology - can hardly grasp the reality of it all. Our Canadian Grandma put it very succinctly when she wrote, "I think that only people, like us, who learned to write with straight pens and inkwells can understand what an amazing miracle computer technology is - at one time I thought ball point pens were cutting edge!"

*This story was conveyed by email to one of the Grandma's Australian Internet Genealogy research partners. They share a common Welsh born English Ancestor who was born in 1755 and died in England in 1826. He was the GGG Grandfather of the Australian researcher, and the GGGG Grandfather of the Canadian lady living in England.*

*If your Computer Club runs Genealogy Courses and you have not yet joined in; this story should help to demonstrate the positive and delightful side of "chasing after dead ancestors". If you love Genealogy and your club does not run a course, why not contact ASCCA for advice and lesson notes to help you start one up. The rewards of helping your peers to the joy of discovering their ancestors and passing on the continuing story of their family are well worthwhile.*

# Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association **ASCCA**

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## Time to go Surfing (The Net)

If you are tired of playing "Spider" or "Free Cell" - and you are reluctant to join an online Scrabble or Chess Club, or you don't like jigsaw puzzles; but sometimes just like to "play around" on your computer here's a suggestion. Have you ever experimented by trying the same search request in a number of different search engines? This can be fun, and it can also be a good learning experience.



An easy way to start the experiment is to try <http://www.search-22.com/> which is a directory of search engines. Here are some you will know about, and probably many you have not heard of before: Google Search, Yahoo!, MSN, Gigablast, Exalead, A9, szukacz.pl, Ask, WiseNut, Wotbox, Tygo, SearchHippo, ScrubTheWeb, Entireweb, Open Directory, Yahoo!Directory, LookSmart, About, Galaxy, JoeAnt, AltaVista, hereUare.

It will be helpful if you look for a tab that will tell you about the site when you have clicked onto it. It might be "Home" or "About Us", or something similar. Eg. Galaxy calls itself Galaxy Classifieds.

You can find links to family-safe sites, and reference and educational search engines. For younger people and children try <http://www.search-22.com/kids/> for an array of sites: KidsClick!, Yahoo!igans!, Lycos Zone, Kdmoz, AJKids.com, Ed.gov, Mamma, Kids.Net.Au, Dib Dab Doo, KinderStart, kidsites, Kidsolr, Atomic Teen, Spike2000, Links4Kids, ipl KidSpace, Factmonster, DiscoverySchool, HowStuffWorks, WannaLearn, Education Planet, FamilyFun. These sites seem to cover a wide age range with some obviously targeted at very young children. However, HowStuffWorks could keep any adult fascinated for hours! Remember to surf safely and visit [www.netalert.gov.au](http://www.netalert.gov.au) first for a free filter if you do not already have one.

*It is not intended you should take any mention of any of these websites or search engines as an endorsement or recommendation. You should take due caution and follow safe internet practices, especially before passing on any of these sites to children or young people.*

## Pass on this Newsletter

Pass on this issue of the ASCCA newsletter by printing copies for distribution, or make a list of all your club members with email addresses and forward it to them.

The newsletter can also be read and/or downloaded from our website: - [www.ascca.org.au](http://www.ascca.org.au)

You are welcome to copy items from this newsletter but acknowledgment of ASCCA is required

Membership of ASCCA is open to all Seniors Computer Clubs, Organisations with a membership including Seniors, and Organisations that recognise the value of computer technology for Seniors. Cost of membership is \$100 per year. Corporate Membership is also welcome.

If you fit one of those categories and are interested in joining ASCCA please go to our website [www.ascca.org.au](http://www.ascca.org.au) or email [office@seniorcomputing.org](mailto:office@seniorcomputing.org) to find out how to start a club or read some of the advantages of joining ASCCA if you are an existing club. You can download an Application Form.

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Newsletter Editor: Joan Craymer, Email: [thewhistlers@optusnet.com.au](mailto:thewhistlers@optusnet.com.au) Contributions are welcome.

Remember this is **YOUR NEWSLETTER**. Please take special note clubs outside Sydney and NSW.

Please forward contributions by email to Joan Craymer, [thewhistlers@optusnet.com.au](mailto:thewhistlers@optusnet.com.au)