

SENIORNET COG MEETING, 12th JULY 2017

(NOTES ON SOME TOPICS RAISED AT THIS MEETING - Prepared by Ricky Berg)

These Notes have been prepared and distributed in the hope that they will be useful for all Seniornet members, and are also available for viewing at any time on our website at <http://www.wellingtonsenior.net.co.nz/newsletters.html>

Windows 10 Update: It is recommended that the latest update to Microsoft's Operating System be installed as it contains many improvements and, perhaps more importantly, security patches to protect against outside intrusions and viruses. This includes updates to the Defender anti-virus program in order to combat recent 'ransomware' attacks on computers.

NOTE that the name "Creators" assigned to the update has nothing to do with anything special, and should be regarded as a regular update ... the Version number is 1703, whereas the previous version is 1607, and you can check what you have by clicking *Start/Settings/System/About*.

Reminders to download and install the latest update were sent to every computer a couple of months ago, but some people may have ignored this. Not a problem because it can be done manually, the easiest way being *Settings/Update & Security/Windows Update*. If found, the new update, will automatically start downloading and installing the update for you. The update will be labeled as "*Feature update to Windows 10, version 1703*".

If you have any difficulties, please attend the next Seniornet *Clinic* or *Help Centre* session, and members may be able to assist you.

Ransomware and other viruses: Unfortunately, this will always be a perennial problem for computer users, so forewarned is forearmed.

1: *If you do get the ransomware demand on your screen, immediately turn the computer off from the mains.*

Turn power off from the mains (not by clicking power icons, or using the computer's own power switch), then call a professional computer technician.

2: *DO NOT respond to unsolicited telephone calls offering to help you recover from a virus infection or to repair your computer.*

3: *Ensure your Firewall is turned on.*

Fortunately, this feature is usually enabled by default, but doesn't hurt to satisfy yourself that it is working.

4: *Ensure that you have an antivirus program installed, operating, and most of all kept up-to-date.*

Many anti-virus programs will automatically update themselves, but again it is wise to ensure that this is being done, and if not, ensure that the latest updates are manually downloaded and installed.

5: *Ensure that you are getting Operating System updates.*

Some people have automatic updates turned off, and probably forget that these patches and updates also include many system security fixes in order to combat virus infections. Either turn automatic updates on, or manually obtain and install all available updates.

6: *Ensure that you do not click on any links or attachments in emails from persons you do not know, or unless you trust the source.*

Most antivirus programs include an email scanning feature, so ensure that this is turned on.

7: *Ensure you perform regular back-ups.*

The best way to protect your information is to do regular back-ups. A back-up is simply a copy of all your data (pictures, letters etc), which can subsequently be used in case your computer has for any reason ceased to work.

8: *Consider what version Operating System you are using.*

Most viruses and cyber attacks exploit weaknesses in older versions of Operating Systems because they are no longer supported by the manufacturer. It is worth noting that Windows 7 stopped being supported (meaning no security updates or patches for it *and* its inclusive programs) in 2015, and Windows 8 support will cease in 6 months' time.

It was found that many of the corporate computers suffering from the recent ransomware attacks were running old versions of Windows.

For other steps you can take to protect yourself, read the article on Ransomware on our website [Course and Workshop Notes](#) page.

Reading computer screens: The default font and point size (meaning the size of the characters you see on your computer screen) are often quite small and in some cases almost illegible.

There are many ways to increase the size of what you are reading, and thus avoiding squinting, leaning into the monitor, and avoiding physical harm such as back-ache and head-aches.

Many programs themselves have size changing abilities built into them, and some excellent advice and instructions are found [HERE](#), [HERE](#), and [HERE](#).

Laptop overheating and care: By way of their construction, laptops have very limited air space inside them, and cooling vents are usually on the bottom of the device. For this reason, care should be taken to ensure that sufficient space is allowed underneath for air to be drawn in and out, and NEVER operate a laptop on soft materials such as duvets, blankets, pillows or cushions. Even though named 'laptop', they should not be used on a lap unless the cooling vents are clear of clothing.

Laptops also regularly suffer cooling fan failure or become noisy, and a simple way to avoid premature problems is to ensure that the vents do not become clogged with dirt or dust build up ... turn machine off, remove the battery, and using the brush implement on your vacuum cleaner gently vacuum the vent slots.

If your laptop fan is continually noisy (probably due to the bearings starting to fail), it is not unreasonable to get it fixed (or at least get a quote), as the cost compared to a new computer is usually acceptable ... if only a few years old you may also have the protection of a Warranty, and The Consumer Guarantees Act.