Ipswich SeniorNet

June 2025

"Seniors helping seniors use computers and the internet"

SeniorNet Association Inc.

www.seniornet.com.au

President's View

Social Events

Lunches

Friday 20th June
Yamanto Tavern. Meet at noon.

Friday 18th July
Christmas in July at PA Hotel.

Coffee & Chat

Friday 4th July
"Concessions & Support".
Meet at 10.

At the start of the month work commenced at the Raceview Congregational Church to install a new toilet block. Unfortunately one of the first steps resulted in the underground power being cut.

We therefore had very short notice that we would need to cancel workshops for the week. We apologise to those who turned up to the cancelled sessions. Again my apologies as we debrief the situation with cool heads we look at what happened, why did it happen and what can we do next time.

I am happy to advise we are adding new topics Libre Office (a free program to replace Office 365) Writer and Draw programs, to see if there is enough interest to keep them on the programme. Meanwhile we have commenced a series of classes on Microsoft Word (not free, but very widely used).

We are also reorganising the sequencing of such classes to render them more flexible to the attendees requirements – see the descriptions later in the Newsletter. This requires that you check through the weekly SeniorNet training emails for detailed information.

Christmas in July celebration is fast approaching. Would anyone with suggestions have a chat to Karen Hounslow our Social Coordinator.

John McViegh

Just Friends Social Group

Sunday 15th June
Lunch at Eden Brew House, Redbank Plains. Meet 12 noon. Lunch specials $15

Sunday 22nd June
Lunch at Springfield Garden Restaurant. Meet 12 noon. Lunches $14.

Sunday 29th June
Coach Trip to Roma Street Parkland and Fort Lytton
Explore the gardens, lunch at the Queensport Tavern, and view the museums, and the defences at the mouth of the Brisbane River. Cost including lunch $65. Pickup Redbank Plaza 8.00am

Sunday 27th July
Coach Trip to Caloundra Market and Queensland Air Museum
In the morning see around the extensive markets, then buy lunch at the Bowls Club. After lunch (optional) visit the Queensland Air Museum (entry $18). Coach cost $45. Pickup time 8.00 Redbank Plaza

Just Friends is not affiliated to SeniorNet. The Editor organises group activities. Ring on 3389 2950 for information

SeniorNet Workshop Programme: June – July 2025

Congregational Church Sunday School Hall at 117 Wildey Street, Raceview

Workshop Times   9-11am; however the hall is booked for the whole morning and this allows continued use of the facility if subject matter or participant interest requires it

Summaries of the workshop topics start on the next page

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
11th June Microsoft Word *Ken Curwen*	12th June Filing Email Attchments *Margaret Jensen*	13th June Family Tree Maker: Recording Your Ancestors *Bette Fritz*
18th June Libre Office 2 *Joan McKenzie*	19th June Organising Photos 1 *Margaret Jensen*	20th June Social Lunch *Yamanto Tavern*
25th June Microsoft Word *Ken Curwen*	26th June Organising Photos 2 *Margaret Jensen*	27th June Family History: WW1 & WW2 Unit Diaries *Esmae Mander*
2nd July	3rd July AI – Helpful or Intrusive *Margaret Jensen*	4th July Coffee & Chat *Seniors Enquiry Line*
9th July Microsoft Word *Ken Curwen*	10th July Introduction to Computing *Margaret Jensen*	11th July Trove *Bette Fritz*
16th July Libre Office 3 *Joan McKenzie*	17th July Introduction to Computing *Margaret Jensen*	18th July Lunch - Christmas in July *PA Hotel*
23rd July Microsoft Word *Ken Curwen*	24th July Introduction to Computing *Margaret Jensen*	25th July Finding Family and More *Esmae Mander*
30th July Libre Office Draw *Joan McKenzie*	31st July Introduction to Computing *Margaret Jensen*	

NOTE: All Workshops are subject to change if Trainers are unavailable due to illness or other commitments. If possible changes will be listed on the SeniorNet Website or you can contact John McVeigh–Training Coordinator – ph 07 3281 8548 – email _training@seniornet.com.au_ to confirm workshops are as listed. It is not necessary to make bookings for Workshops.

Please bring your USB drive with you as it is helpful in many lessons.

* For courses and workshops involving mobile devices (iPads and Androids) please make sure your device is charged and that you have your cable with you

Workshop Topics Described

AI – Helpful or Intrusive

Recently the search facilities of most browsers have been enhanced with Artificial Intelligence engines. They can be very helpful as they can analyse what you want to know, as contrasted with what you asked for. But if you did make a very specific request the AI can think it knows better than you what you want.

Family History: Finding Family and More

Utilising the internet, we hope to uncover more details about your family's past with tools and techniques you may not have explored.

Family History: Surname Meanings and Origins

When it comes to surnames, there's often a lot of meaning and history.

Find out the origins of your last name, search for the surnames in your family tree, or learn how surnames have developed and changed over time.

Family History: World War 1 and World War 2 Unit Diaries

Do you have one or more forbears who served?

By searching Unit Diaries, you will understand exactly where your soldier served in WW1 or WW2. This workshop will reveal how and where to search, then save the information to your documents.

Family Tree Maker: Recording Your Ancestors

This is a powerful and user-friendly computer software program designed to help you create, manage, and share your family's history. It offers a wide range of tools to build detailed family trees, attach photographs and documents, print reports or charts, and uncover rich genealogical information. You also have the option to sync with Ancestry if you wish, (using your preferred privacy level), and work on it there as well. We can show you how to get the best out of this very versatile program.

Introduction to Computers

If you are new to using a computer or are not confident around computers, come and find out about the basics including what you see on the screen, what all those keys on the keyboard do and how to make good use of the mouse

Introduction to the Computer and Accessories.

Personalization your Computer.

Introduction to Computing

These classes are intended for members, new or old, who need to reinforce their knowledge of personal computer handling. Topics will be offered in response to member feedback, and will be advised in our weekly SeniorNet Training mail outs.

Introduction to Emails

Learn how to use email and about managing the emails once you have read them.

Triage your incoming emails, Will I reply? keep for reference? Or delete them

How to safely file them. for future Reference and Recall. A must if we wish to recover, locate, our valuable Photos, Documents be they govt or Personal."etc.

Libre Office

Libre Office is a free suite of apps, similar to Microsoft Office.

The first lesson will be an introduction, but lessons 2 and 3 will be guided by the interests and abilities of the class.

To take part in the lessons, people will need a copy of LibreOffice on their laptops, available free from

https://www.libreoffice.org/

Libre Office Draw

Draw is part of Libre Office. It enables you to manipulate pictures and images in many ways – you can even create an entire photo album with it. We will be using it to create a simple advertisement for an event, with text and pictures. To take part in the lesson you will need a copy of Libre Office on your laptop.

Microsoft Word

These classes are designed to take members through all the features of Microsoft Word to the level where you can write essays, letters and records on your own topics. The material to be covered will be guided by the pre-existing knowledge of the participants. Details for each session will be advised in our weekly SeniorNet Training mail outs.

Trove: Searching Old Newspapers

Thanks to the National Library of Australia digitising a vast number of newspapers, gazettes, magazines, maps and more, we are able to access these for free online, much to the envy of the rest of the world as in most countries they have to pay for such a wonderful resource. We can show you how to get the best results when searching these old newspapers, up until approximately 1954, and what you can do with that information once you have found it.

Tech Talk

A New Computer for $300?

A few years ago, Intel produced a mini-PC called a NUC – Next Unit of Computing. This was a small box approximately 10cm square which held all the components of a regular computer. I purchased a couple of these and have been a fan ever since. Initially these were sold as barebones systems and you had to source and install your own memory, storage and operating system. While Intel has exited this market, the compactness of the mini-PC has been very popular and several other brands are now producing complete units which are ready to go out of the box.

One such brand is GMKtec which is selling a unit with an Intel N150 processor, 16GB memory, 1Tb storage and Windows 11 Pro for $299. This is a complete unit – connect your keyboard and mouse, plug in your monitor and away you go. With many people contemplating replacing their computer before Windows 10 goes end of life, this could be an option to consider.

I have purchased one for my wife to replace her Windows 10 computer (which could not be upgraded to Windows 11) and the performance is on par with her previous Intel i3 computer. While the N150 is a relatively low power processor, it is quite capable of performing the basic tasks she and many people need of their computer: email, web browsing, Office applications, viewing videos, basic photo editing, etc. Memory and storage are more than enough for the needs of most people. There is an Ethernet port for wired networking as well as WiFi and Bluetooth.

So what are the negatives? The first: who is GMKtec? This is a little like the new car space with many new manufacturers appearing over the last few years. In this mini-PC space the same has happened. Will these manufacturers still be around in future years? The good news is that memory and storage (the two things most likely needing replacement or upgrading) are industry standard so will not be a problem. Anything else that goes wrong with the hardware will be difficult/impossible to repair and especially if the manufacturer is no longer around.

There are only four USB 3 ports. That is one more than many laptops but less than a desktop. There is no USB-C port. The only monitor connection is HDMI (and there are two of these so you could run two monitors simultaneously) so if your monitor does not support HDMI you could be up for the cost of a new monitor as well.

And the biggee for many people? You are not going to find this in the local big box stores. It is only available online through Amazon. I won't include the link here because it is rather ugly but if you go to amazon.com.au and search for *gmktec mini pc* you will find several products from this company including the Mini PC Intel 150 for $299 (May 2025). If you have Amazon Prime membership then delivery is free and (at the time of writing) should come within a couple of days.

Here is a review on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIzc1XpTGpc

At this point I am happy with the purchase. My wife is happy with the performance and it does what she needs. A large tower on the floor below her desk has been replaced with a small, barely visible box on the desk. There is even an option to mount the computer to the back of the monitor putting it completely out of sight but that does cause some inconvenience getting to the power button and USB ports.

Which Anti-Virus Should I Choose?

I am often asked about the anti-virus or security software people should use. When people purchase a new computer it is not unusual for the sales person to promote the purchase of a security product – keeping in mind he or she has a vested interest in doing so.

There are two independent testing labs which are the 'gold standard' in anti-virus and security software recommendations. They are **AV-TEST** (https://www.av-test.org/en/) and **AV-Comparatives** (https://www.av-comparatives.org/).

AV-TEST's latest results from February 2025 gave its 'Top Product' award to 15 security software products. Products with perfect scores on three different measures (Protection, Performance and Useability) were (in alphabetical order):

- *AhnLab Internet Security*
- *Avast Free Antivirus*
- *AVG Internet Security*
- *Avira Internet Security for Windows*
- *Bitdefender Total Security*
- *ESET Security Ultimate*
- *F-Secure Total*
- *G DATA Internet Security*
- *K7 Security Total Security*
- *Kaspersky Premium*
- *McAfee Total Protection*
- *Microsoft Defender Antivirus*
- *Norton 360*
- *TotalAV*
- *Trend Micro Internet Security*

AV-Comparatives gave its highest rating to ten products (March 2025).

- *Avast*
- *AVG*
- *Bitdefender*
- *ESET*
- *G DATA*
- *Kaspersky*
- *Microsoft*
- *Norton*
- *Total Defense*
- *VIPRE*

As can be seen there is overlap in both lists. Basically choosing any product which is on these lists should provide good protection.

But here's the thing. Microsoft Defender made it to both lists. This product comes as part of Windows. It does not require any extra download or payment. It is regularly updated along with other Windows updates. And for Windows 10 users, Microsoft has stated that it will continue to provide security updates for Microsoft Defender even after Windows 10 goes end of life in October 2025. So the question to ask yourself: 'Do I really need something better?'

Certainly many paid products will provide extra features but if all you require is the basic protection against malware are you really benefitting from those features?

Simply Calendars

Online calendar apps (like Google Calendar) can be really useful ways of keeping track of meetings, appointments, birthdays, etc. The calendar can be accessed from a phone or tablet so our schedule is always with us when we are out and about.

There is a still a place for the traditional paper calendar. My wife still prefers to use a paper calendar even though she also uses Google Calendar. Some time back I bought her a program called *Simply Calendars* which enables her to create her own custom calendars, store special dates, incorporate photographs and print a calendar for any year.

Recently I had to transfer this software to a new computer. I still had the licence key but I went looking to see if there was a later version of the program. I found that the publisher, Skerryvore Software, ceased trading in 2019. Normally this would be the kiss of death for a software program but Skerryvore made the decision to release a public licence key which can be used by current and future users of the software.

You can find it on their Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/SimplyCalenders/

There is no longer any support for the program but it is pretty easy to work out if you play with it for a while and there is help built into the software.

Obtaining the software is a little harder. The Skerryvore website is no longer functional but the trial version of the program is available from many of the public software repositories. Many of these add 'extras' to the software or are a maze of DOWNLOAD NOW buttons which will download rubbish. One location I found which seemed more reliable is

https://simply-calenders.informer.com/download/

But even here I would suggest you be careful and, as always, I strongly suggest using an adblocker such as Ublock Origin. The name of the correct installer program is *sc57setup.exe* and is approximately 13Mb in size.

Once you have downloaded the trial version, you can use the licence information found on the Facebook page to convert it to the full, 'registered' version. So top marks to Skerryvore for not allowing a useful piece of software to become 'abandonware' as so often happens.

If you think this software would be useful and you are nervous about obtaining it from these public sites, please contact me and I will provide you with the latest version and licence information.

Bring back the old right-click menu

A minor annoyance for some people in Windows 11 is the truncated right-click menu. When you right-click on an icon (file, folder, image, etc) you open a context menu which provides additional options for operations on that object. In Windows 10, the context menu showed all options.

In Windows 11, this initial menu is truncated, offering the most common operations Microsoft believes people would want. If you want to see all, you must click *Show more options* at the bottom. This can be annoying if the option you need is always on the expanded menu.

Holding **Shift** down while right-clicking will display the 'classic' context menu as it was in Windows 10.

Phil Buchanan

Potty History

I recently watched a presentation by Lucy Worsley on the Black Death and its long-lasting consequences. I thought this could be a potty topic; but thinking further it is neither the first nor the last massive pandemic in history and each is a topic in its own right. So this article is the first of three.

The Plague of Cyprian

This plague, which ravaged the Roman Empire between about 250 to 270 CE, remains one of antiquity's most perplexing pandemics. Contemporary accounts describe an illness characterized by severe gastrointestinal distress, fever, vomiting, and other alarming symptoms such as blindness, deafness, and throat swelling. Modern scholars suggest it could be smallpox, or an aggressive form of measles. The lack of definitive symptoms like buboes, as seen in bubonic plague, and the mixture of systemic signs have made a precise diagnosis elusive,

The consequences of the plague were both immediate and far-reaching. In its most intense phases, some accounts note that as many as 5,000 people per day were dying in Rome alone. Urban centres like Alexandria experienced dramatic population declines—one estimate suggests that its population fell from around 500,000 to 190,000. This massive loss of life greatly unsettled the fabric of society. The workforce was decimated, leading to severe shortages in food production and labour, while the Roman military, already stretched thin by constant border conflicts and internal turmoil, suffered critical manpower losses. Economically and militarily, the empire was left more vulnerable, further complicating an already precarious situation.

The Plague of Cyprian not only exacerbated existing political and military challenges but also left an indelible mark on the cultural and religious landscape of the Roman Empire. With the empire weakened by repeated crises, the demographic shock of the plague accelerated shifts in power dynamics and societal values. The medical and social responses to the disease highlighted the limitations of traditional remedies and the capacity of emergent religious movements to offer hope and community in times of existential dread. In many ways, the plague served as both a symptom and a catalyst for the transformations that would eventually reshape the Roman world in the centuries to follow.

Indeed, many historians and scholars have noted that the Christian response to the Plague of Cyprian served as a powerful testimonial to the depth of Christian commitment and compassion. During the plague, Christians were well known for their active care for the afflicted. They not only provided rudimentary medical care and comfort but also ensured that the dying were honoured with proper burials. By contrast, many traditional pagans were often perceived as retreating into ritual and prayer without offering tangible support. This disparity in response led many in the wider population to view Christianity as a living, compassionate faith capable of both confronting and alleviating human suffering.
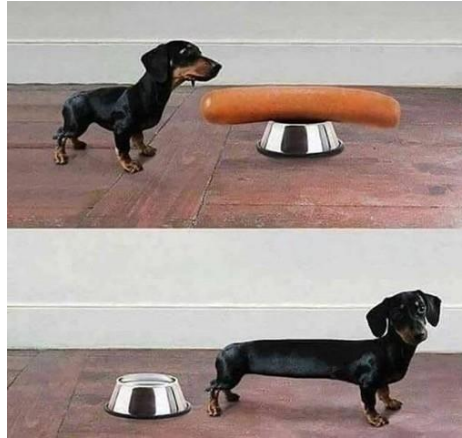
This dynamic—the contrast between the compassionate acts of Christians and the comparatively passive or ritualistic responses of traditional Roman religious practices—helped fuel a broader reconsideration of spiritual and religious values in the Roman world. In essence, Christianity's charitable response during the plague contributed to a rethinking of what a protective, life-affirming religion should look like. It wasn't merely a matter of doctrinal appeal; it was the observable, human compassion during a period of crisis that made the faith all the more attractive to many who were suffering.

The shift in attitude lead to a rapid growth of Christianity, and after a mere 40 years the Roman emperor Constantine became a Christian and removed all persecution of the Christian followers

Ken Curwen, from draft notes by Copilot

The other major Roman plague was the Plague of Justinian. That event (the first definite bubonic epidemic) put paid to the Eastern Roman Emperor's plans to reunite the Roman empire under Constantinople. His legions were so depleted that they could not withstand the attacking Lombard tribe in Italy.

Humour

Further Information

SeniorNet Committee

The listing of the 2025 committee can be found here.

Computer Repairs

A listing of repairers who our members have found satisfactory can be found here.

Disclaimer: While we have made every effort to give accurate information and tips in this Newsletter, we cannot guarantee that their use will provide the desired results in all circumstances. In no event will the Editor or SeniorNet be liable for direct, indirect, special, incidental or consequential damages arising out of the use of URLs and tips given in this newsletter. *We recommend members verify details before acting on information or suggestions contained herein*. The Editor would appreciate being informed of any erroneous information so that it may be corrected.

Ken Curwen. Newsletter Editor.