



Computer clubs for seniors

A common fear seniors have about taking introductory courses in computers is the thought that they might make a fool of themselves, or won't be able to keep up with the younger students.

Luckily, Computer Clubs for Seniors provides an excellent alternative. They provide a friendly and non-threatening environment in which the senior gains confidence in finding his/her way round on the club's computers.

Computer Clubs for Seniors have been growing steadily in the last 10 years. Each club has a number of members who act as tutors or trainers. Members are given both the opportunity to learn about computers and the opportunity to share with others the computer skills that they already have.

The difference between learning about computers in one of these



clubs and taking a course is that here the knowledge seniors gain is driven by their own enquiries. This means they don't waste time learning large amounts of information that ultimately may not be of any use to them. Most importantly, they learn at their own pace.

The Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA) is receiving enquiries from people throughout Australia wanting to join computer clubs in their own areas. To help meet this increasing demand, ASCCA is keen to hear from individuals or groups who are interested in starting a Computer Club in their area.

ASCCA has produced a Development

Kit which can be used as a blueprint for new Computer Clubs for Seniors. It covers all you need to know to start a computer club and is available from the ASCCA website (www.seniorcomputing.org). Just click on 'Development Kit' to download it.

ASCCA is organised and run by seniors on a voluntary basis and welcomes enquires about sponsorship or donations of unwanted computers for emerging clubs or seniors unable to afford a computer.

If you would like to know if there is a club near you please ring (02) 9817 2606. For other enquiries about ASCCA, please ring (02) 9984 1982.

Greypath: from the sideline to the frontline



Raymond Lewis, an ex-public company chairman and high technology businessman found in his mid sixties that he was increasingly sidelined from key roles in business activities. Not content to sit back and let this happen, Raymond sought a socially responsible project that could enable him to continue in an active business role. The result was Australian website for retirees www.greypath.com, its mission to "empower seniors, and enrich the quality of their lives".

As well as providing hundreds of links to websites of particular interest to seniors the site lists various subject search categories, such as art and culture, travel, education, Government services, entertainment, science and philosophy

The site also offers light relief in the steadily increasing range of sociable offerings. These include a chat room, a unique seniors job site, a message board, a fun page, world news, weather, the white pages, a free seniors e-zine, opinion polls, state news, and free advice services (pets, gardening, travel, computing and disabilities).

The Greypath free e-zine DINKUM! is a shining example of the Greypath philosophy: it has been built, edited and written entirely by seniors, for seniors.

Greypath is currently completing the development of a virtual community for seniors, which will offer, among other things, a Sunday Chat Service in its St Isadores Church. This new virtual community development will be of real interest to all seniors, but especially so to those who may be remotely located, lonely and/or disabled.

Visit Greypath's free e-zine DINKUM! (www.greypath.com/dinkum) during June, and email the editor with a comment on it, to be in the draw for any one of the books reviewed there.

You're never too old

Here is a moving story emailed to us by a reader. It shows how the Internet really is the "life blood" for some seniors, and that age is no barrier to learning about the Internet.



Last Thursday at the age of 98 one of our participants died. I would like to tell you the story of my association with him. George [not his real name] came to me at the age of 94 to ask if he was too old to use a computer.

He could type, but the typewriter was a little difficult for his arthritic hands. George had no family in Australia and his son lived overseas.

Over the next year, George learnt to use the computer. He learned how to use word processing and even how to put photos in his letters to his son. After about a year he asked if I thought he could use email, so we set out to show him how to use email and the Internet.

For some time he sent his son a daily email to let him know that he was ok, and really appreciated the daily contact with his son.

One day I was talking to him about chat groups and he asked us to teach him.

George was a regular on our chat group until he mastered the skill, then he went off to find other chat groups that reflected his interest.

For some time I didn't hear from George and so one day I dropped in after work to see how he was. In the course of

conversation I asked him if he used his computer much.

"Oh Margaret, the computer is my life blood," he said.

"Every morning on the way to the toilet I switch it on. When I come back, I check my email and then chat to friends for about an hour. Then I get off and do my chores for the day.

"Later, about 4pm, I get on again and chat until about 8pm when I go to bed.

"If I didn't have the computer, I wouldn't talk to anyone."

George was getting all his socialisation from the computer except for the health professionals visiting his home. He was extremely frail and had serious health problems, but the computer stopped him from being lonely.

Some time ago, George moved into a nursing home. All he was worried about was whether the home would allow him to take the computer in and get on the Internet. He did not want to be cut off from his friends from all over the world.

Technology can work for older people if only we give them access and the skills to use it.

I will always remember this lovely man fondly.

Margaret
The Skylarkers 60 and Better
Program, Queensland.

Finally a really is " "

The iMac is the PC that reinvented Apple computer. Affordable, powerful and easy to use - it's a great way to get online.

Home computers were once divided into two camps: the IBM compatible PC, and the Apple Macintosh, or Mac.

Comparing them was like comparing apples with oranges. They had different operating systems, they could barely communicate with each other (although Macs could at least read some PC files), and they were targeted at completely different markets.

PCs generally were marketed for business, Macs were mainly used in education and creative industries. And because Macs established their own niche market, they were often more expensive.

But today it's a different story altogether. The iMac is the latest incarnation of the Apple Macintosh designed to get home users connected to the Internet with zero fuss. It still manages to combine Apple's easy and friendly interface with cutting edge design and striking aesthetics, but the best news is, it's now available at an affordable and competitive price.

The latest basic iMac model sells for \$1795 and comes shipped with a hefty 400 megahertz processor, 64 megabytes of ram, 10 gigabytes of hard disk space and a CD ROM drive. This is more than enough for the senior wanting to keep up with technology. For a little more money you can buy even more computing power and even upgrade to a built in CD-ROM burner that will not only let you listen to music or run CD-ROM games but let you make your own data and music CD's.

But where the iMac is in a class of its own is in the sheer simplicity and

If you have any stories about how the Internet has made a difference to your own or a friend's life, we'd love to hear it. Email it to us at seniors.card@add.nsw.gov.au.

computer that user friendly”

ease it takes to set up and connect to the Internet. It is no exaggeration to say that you can connect to the Internet within five minutes of taking your new iMac out of its box.

Apple has redefined the home computer as we know it. Instead of a separate monitor, computer tower and modem, the iMac has all these things combined in the one stylish unit. All you need to do is connect the keyboard to the monitor; connect the monitor to a phone line, plug it in, turn it on, key in a few details for the Mac Internet Assistant and with a couple of clicks of the mouse, you're surfing on the 'Net.

And the iMac has a couple of other tricks up its sleeve. You can enjoy listening to your favourite music CDs, or you can plug in your digital camera and download your latest snapshots or films of your family and friends. And once you get the hang of things you can even be editing your own movies using the imovie2 software provided with the computer.



If support is an issue for you, consider joining the Apple Care Protection program. For \$249, you get two years added to the standard 12 month warranty, plus three years of VIP telephone support between 9am and 9pm every day. Want to know more? Visit <http://www.apple.com.au/support/protectionplan/>

The release of the new iMac means the gulf between the PC and the Apple

Mac just got narrower. There are over 60 Apple retailers Australia wide. To find out which one is near you, visit this website address <http://store.apple.com.au/buy/>, and type in your postcode. Alternatively, contact Apple Australia on 13 36 22 or www.apple.com.au.

Seniors Online Strategy

Having Internet access and basic computer skills are becoming critical factors in older people's ability to communicate with friends and family. Internet access allows seniors to shop, explore hobbies, make informed decisions about health care and chat with children and grandchildren - wherever they are. Email can reduce social isolation, and strengthen family ties and friendships.

The Seniors Online Strategy, which aims to promote the benefits of seniors using computers and the Internet, as well as work towards removing the barriers which stop older people accessing information technology, has been allocated \$1.713 million over the next three years, as part of the 2001-2002 State Budget.

This funding will be used to:

- Provide affordable, quality access and training services in information technology to older people. The funding will allow successful model projects from the recently announced pilot phase in Western Sydney and on the Central Coast, to be replicated around the State;
- Provide fully funded computer courses for age pensioners;
- Provide computer literacy courses for older people from a non-English speaking background;
- Communicate the benefits of information technology to seniors;
- Maintain and update the Seniors Online website which is due to be launched by the end of September, 2001.

Microsoft Australia is supporting the Seniors Online Strategy through the donation of \$500,000 worth of software and licenses to be provided to seniors computing clubs.

A note from Seniors Card

We have been overwhelmed by the response to our first issue. Thank you all for your emails and calls asking to be included on the mailing list. Please spread the word and encourage your friends and colleagues to sign up and receive their copy.

Seniors Card is committed to assisting our members gain access to computers and the Internet. We are keen for your comments about our publication, and look forward to hearing your suggestions and ideas on what you would like to see in future editions.

Since last issue we have been inundated with questions about Macintosh versus the PC. So while it is never our policy to promote one product over another, this issue we feature the iMac. We hope you find it useful.

And to all those who have asked about receiving this newsletter online – it IS going to happen. You'll always be able to receive the edition via snail mail, but by the end of the year we hope to be able to email you all the information and much more.

Don't miss out on our next issue!

To receive the next issue of TechnoSeniors, register your details by calling 1300 364 758 or send us an email at seniors.card@add.nsw.gov.au

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Surf's up!

Here's a list of websites which you might find useful or interesting. Happy surfing!

www.learnthenet.com
If you've just started out on the Internet but are keen to learn more at your own pace, then make sure you bookmark this site. With an easy to follow step-by-step guide including smartly animated graphics to help you understand, this site teaches you about the Net from the ground up. Topics include: master the basics, surf the web, harness email, find information, download files, join newsgroups, conference, enjoy multimedia, build a website, do e-business and protect yourself.

www.aboutseniors.com.au
About Seniors is a comprehensive listing of information and links relevant to Australian senior citizens, veterans, retirees, pensioners and carers. It covers relevant Commonwealth and State government departments as well as lifestyle interests such as hobbies, sport, computers and travel. It also provides links to financial and health sites, as well as the latest news relating to seniors. Well worth bookmarking.

www.awm.gov.au
The Australian War Memorial online. If you can't make it to this famous museum in Canberra, why not take a tour online? Find a name on the Roll of Honour, search from 200,000 photographs, take a virtual tour of the galleries and grounds and research Australia's military history.

The Grey Leap Forward

Government and private research bodies around the world say that in the past 12 months, use of the net by people aged over 55 has trebled

In Australia, seniors are taking to the Internet in droves. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics there were 200,000 over 55s online in 1998, 600,000 in 1999, and now, a staggering 1 million people.

NetGuide, Australia's biggest selling Internet magazine, has found from its reader research that seniors are not only among the most energetic users of the Net, but among the most savvy. That's where NetGuide can help. The magazine is a no-nonsense, jargon-free guide to the best sites on the web, and a plain English adviser on Internet issues such as privacy, security, email, search

engines, and online shopping.

Each month we bring Australians the best of the Net – without the hype.

Recieve a free copy of Netguide Magazine

The first 50 people to email us at seniors.card@add.nsw.gov.au with their name and the name and address of a friend who would like to receive the TechnoSeniors Newsletter will be sent the latest copy of NetGuide free.

