The Future of PC Update Publishing

Hugh Macdonald

Over the years PC Update has been produced using many different software packages. These have included Corel Ventura, QuarkXPress, and Microsoft Word. For about the past six months, it has been produced using LibreOffice Writer. Neither LibreOffice or Microsoft Word have been ideal, as they aren't strictly desktop publishing packages. So the search has been on for something better.

One of the prerequisites has been that the software package must be cross platform so that any volunteer within the club, whether they run Windows, Linux or Mac OS, could take over production. This has ruled out Microsoft Publisher. Scribus (an open source desktop publishing package) was trialed, but this proved to be too cumbersome to use. So this eventually led to WordPress, and a web first production and distribution model for PC Update.

This is in line with many publications around the world today. Some of the biggest publications in Australia, such as the Herald Sun, use WordPress as their platform. Many niche publications that provide ICT news and reviews also use WordPress as their platform.

With the addition of a plugin called PDF & Print the WordPress based publication of PC Update can be outputted in a print friendly format.

The new approach to producing and publishing PC Update will offer several advantages to members:

If you prefer to read the magazine from cover to cover in PDF or printed format, you can continue to do so happily. You'll now also find that every article is bookmarked, so you can use your PDF software to navigate easily to the articles you want to read.

If you prefer to read the magazine on your smartphone or tablet you'll now be able to do so in a format that is most appropriate for these devices. The entire Melbourne PC User Group website is designed to be responsive to different screen sizes, so you'll automatically receive the best formatted article for your specific device.

Going forward other innovations will be introduced which will further enhance the online viewing format.

The last advantage is that it is now much less time consuming for the editor to produce the magazine. So this will allow time for more interesting articles to be included.

It is hoped that you enjoy the new dual format PC Update. A lot of thought, time and effort has been put into this updated approach to its production and publication. However all feedback on it is welcomed, and if you have any thoughts, please express them via Yammer or email.