

East SIG Report - December 2015

The December meeting commenced with the usual pre meeting Christmas BBQ with the meeting to follow. What was intended to be a short meeting ran over time due to interest in the Windows 10 presentation by Dave Botherway.

The first session was Q&A with George Skarbek.

Q: On 3 occasions I've had the same problem with Windows Live Mail. When I send an email it is sent multiple times, in some cases up to 14 times. Emails appear to stick in the OUT box so I now have to keep an eye on the OUT box to see when this occurs. Can you suggest anything I can do to stop this?

A: Unfortunately I don't use Live Mail for other than testing and that problem hasn't happened. In all mail clients when an email is sent it should disappear. I suggest you look at some of the Microsoft forums for help. These are very good and you'll usually find someone very knowledgeable that will be prepared to help.

Q: I recently bought a second hand computer with the Operating System on a SSD and 2 hard drives operating in RAID zero. I would like to add another 3 hard drives and from my reading of the manual, once you set up RAID, everything else has to be RAID also. As the SSD isn't on RAID it doesn't make sense that the other drives must be RAID also. Is this normal?

A: It is definitely not normal for everything to be on RAID. I don't know of any motherboard that forces you to have all hard disks on RAID. You should be able to set the extra drives you want to add as non-RAID drives. For those not aware, RAID stands for Redundant Array of Independent Disks and there are many different configurations available.

Q: I use Thunderbird for my emails and some emails are registered as having been read when I'm sure I haven't read them. On occasions someone may phone me and say "did you see my email" and I find it in the previous days as having been read when I hadn't read it. I receive a lot of emails per day and go through them carefully, but there can be up to 5 of these unread emails. Have you got any suggestions?

A: The only thing that makes sense for this to happen is if you were using webmail. However Thunderbird gets your email from the server and directs it to your desktop. The most likely cause is user error.

Our next presentation was from Trevor Hudson on "How to avoid Windows 10 notifications" using a program called "GWX Control Panel". This program from www.golab.com controls the "annoying" Windows10 notifications without deleting them. GWX Control Panel only hides the notifications so you have the option to re-enable the icon and notifications if and when you decide to move to Windows 10. Trevor showed a video from Golab which detailed how the program is used and configured. The latest version of the program V1.3 supersedes all earlier versions. This newest version is essential to control the latest batch of notifications from Microsoft and includes an option to disable Windows 10 updates, which can be over 3 GB in size. (At the time of writing this report, later versions of GWX Control Panel are available so check the website or Google if planning to use this program)

The final presentation for 2015 was by Dave Botherway, on the current status of Windows 10. Dave covered his history with Windows 10 as a member of Microsoft's Insider program. As an Insider program member, Dave has tested many builds of Windows 10 on numerous PCs including multi-boot configurations. This testing preceded the release of Windows 10, right through to the most recent update.

November 2015 saw a major upgrade to Windows 10 equivalent to the first Service Pack of earlier versions of Windows. This upgrade also saw a new Windows version numbering system introduced. As the upgrade was in November 2015 the first part of the version number is based on the date and becomes Windows 10 #1511. In addition Microsoft has included a build number so the version now becomes Windows 10 #1511 build 10586. However as the steak knife salesman says “and there’s more”, the build number is followed by a suffix, in this case #12. So the full version number becomes Windows 10 #1511 build 10586#12.

One final change Microsoft introduced in November was to withdraw the standalone upgrade version of Windows 10. This change meant upgrades could now only be done through the normal Windows upgrade process. However negative feedback from Insider members was so strong that the latter change was reversed and standalone upgrades are now possible again.

In summary Dave believes:

- Windows 10 build 1511 is more resilient and stable.
- Classic Shell is still the best bridge for Windows 7 users
- Privacy aspects need user customisation
- There is still 6 months available for the free upgrade
- For many users the old saying holds true, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”. Windows 7 will still receive security upgrades up to 2020.

Questions to Dave on Windows 10:

Q: I noticed on your desktop PC you had Windows 8 and 10 on it. How did you put Windows 10 on when Win 8 was already installed? Did it not complain about Windows 8?

A: The machine was a dual boot machine and originally had Win 7 & 8 on it. I blew away Windows 7 to make room for Win 10 and replaced it with the Insider version of Win10. That’s the beauty of understanding how multi-boot machines work.

Comment from George Skarbek: I plan to upgrade my main machine midway through next year. I have already upgraded a Win 7 laptop and all went well until the last major upgrade in November. That upgrade crippled the machine as I’ve now lost the use of all USB ports. From my observations only about 80% of upgrades go well, your chances are better with Russian Roulette.

Q: As I understand it, the software for Windows 10 is downloaded on your machine and is only loaded if you agree to install Win10. What happens with the upgrades that occur after the original download?

A: It is my understanding that the hidden files \$Windows.~BT and \$Windows.~WS are updated over time.

Q: My question is about rolling back to after the 30 days with my 2015 version of Acronis. Do I need the 2016 version of Acronis for Win10? (Note: 30 days is the maximum time Microsoft gives users the ability to revert to their previous operating system)

A: Rolling back with Acronis 2015 to Windows 8 is guaranteed to work. This is because you boot from the Acronis boot disk which is based on Linux.

Q: I only have a 4GB per month download limit but 6 machines that need to be upgraded. With all those machines how am I going to control all those downloads?

A: You could use the stand alone upgrade, find a mate or use the services at MelbPC offices at Moorabbin where we have fast downloads and uploads. The fast uploads are called Business Trade uploads or BTL and reach 100 megabits /second uploads. This is good for storing data in the cloud.

Q: Is there any difference in speed using Classic Shell?

A: I haven't seen any, it's mainly for convenience that I'm still using Classic Shell.

Q: I use Nortons anti-virus and after the last upgrade I got a message that Nortons and Windows Defender were both turned off. It seems to be working fine now. I'm really enjoying and like Windows 10.

A: Do I pay you now or later!

Q: My upgrade to Win 10 went well but I now find the Office programs instead of stacking one on top of the other are now stacked offset diagonally. I find this disconcerting and would like to get back to these windows staking on top of one another.

A: Answered by George Skarbek: By drilling deep into the system registry I've been able to change this back as it also annoyed me. The setting that needed to be changed did prove difficult to discover.

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