

CADZOW NEWS

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DEVELOPING SOFTWARE FOR BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT

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HELLO, GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME

If you can read this newsletter, you obviously haven't melted yet!

COMPUTING: Extreme Temperatures

Heat and electronics don't mix. Never have. But the first time it was an obvious problem in the computer industry was when the 486DX processor was released in the early 1990s. They were significantly faster and hotter than the 486SX, and there were widespread problems. And it's been a battle ever since.

With the heatwave in South Australia and Victoria, computer equipment is under stress. Computers in an air-conditioned office will most likely function fine, but with temperatures still in the 30s overnight, once the aircon is off, computers left on will warm up very quickly and may crash, freeze or even fail outright.

If you have computers which need to remain on overnight, such as 24x7 web or e-commerce servers, you'll need to keep them air-conditioned. Otherwise, shutting everything off overnight, even the 8x5 line-of-business servers, is the best approach. In the morning, let the office cool off from the overnight heat before powering them back on.

Other devices which should be switched off include routers, hubs/switches, fax machines, printers and photocopiers. Some of these may slip into a low-power or sleep mode, and therefore cool off by themselves, but problems from blackouts may cause problems anyway, and being turned off is safest.

BROADBAND: What Are You Paying?

ADSL services have improved in recent years, and become much cheaper in the last 12 months. Today there are ADSL2+ services (up to 24Mbps) at price-points that previously only provided 0.5Mbps (512Kbps).

So it's certainly worth reviewing your current broadband plan and the speeds you're achieving, because in the metropolitan area you may be able to switch to an ADSL2 service for only a modest migration fee. In most cases you can stay with your existing ISP, which means no outages and no messing about.

Furthermore, you usually don't need to change your hardware: you can run an ADSL2 service on an older ADSL1-modem, although you'll only achieve a maximum of around 8Mbps.

Another development is so-called Naked DSL which is ADSL over a copper line but without requiring a dial tone. In most cases, the value proposition for Naked DSL is when you have moved all your voice telephony to VoIP and no longer require a traditional fixed-line phone service, or if you no longer run a fax machine but need a separate line for ADSL anyway. But Naked DSL can also work over lines which were not good enough for DSL+voice, so if you've previously been unable to access ADSL because of line quality/distance issues, it's worth checking whether a Naked DSL service will work for you.

Also, recently Internode released a service called Internode Ultra which combines ADSL2, a traditional fixed-line phone service, plus NodePhone VoIP. The advantage of such a plan is that it can be cheaper than the combination of a line rental with a telco and broadband with an ISP. This service is not for everyone, however, as there are migration issues for existing lines, and you can't use Internode services such as Annex-M (double-rate uploads) or full-speed ADSL2+, but it is compelling in some cases.

Please call us if we can assist evaluating or migrating your broadband services.

(NB. We receive no commissions from any ISP.)

COMPUTER SECURITY: Wireless Networking

Some of us here have new Apple iPhones, and one of the most amazing things about these devices (apart from all the other amazing things) is that they reveal the vast number of wireless computer networks scattered around, because the iPhone continually prompts to connect to any available wireless LAN or hotspot within range.

But what is *most* amazing is the number of these wireless LANs which are completely unprotected, so anybody with a laptop or a wireless-enabled phone can connect, and use their bandwidth. And if the machines on the network are unsecured, they can browse files, alter settings and create havoc.

This has become a bigger problem in the last few years as wireless access points have stronger antennas and greater range. So whereas the early wireless 802.11a/b/g models might be accessible only in a few rooms, modern 802.11n models are accessible from across the street and in neighbouring buildings.

Protecting wireless LANs is achieved in two basic ways; restricting access to a specific list of known machines, and encrypting the data transmitted. Using one method or the other is a reasonable mitigation against intrusion, but using both techniques is preferable.

To restrict access to specific machines, you need to determine the machine ids (known as MAC Addresses — see <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=2022>) and add them to your router or wireless access point.

To achieve encryption, a secret password is configured on the router and then keyed in to each machine. These passwords are usually in hexadecimal notation (eg. 7E4CB719), and can be long or short. But a common mistake made by many people is to use a default or simple password such as A1B2C3D4E5. This is a common wireless password, and it makes it very simple for a knowledgeable person to gain access.

Furthermore, the encryption technology itself is important. WEP, an older standard, is no longer considered secure, so wireless access points should be reconfigured to use newer standards such as WPA or WPA2. And short passwords (roughly 8 characters) are also too weak. Longer passwords (16-20, or as much as 63) are much more secure.

Please contact us if you need help auditing and securing your wireless network.

CADZOW SOFTWARE: Can We Help?

We're always looking for ways to make our suite of productivity and accounting software, **Cadzow 2000**, or our web solutions, **Cadzow Weblink**, work more effectively for our clients. Business needs change. Often people make suggestions or request certain functionality, and most of the time we can provide it without a fee. If there are tasks you perform that could be quicker, or require fewer keystrokes and clicks, or reports that could have more (or less) information, please **let us know your thoughts and ideas**. Over 15 years we have found often our best features start as suggestions from clients.

COMPUTING: Another Day, Another Battery Recall

Dell, Hewlett-Packard and Toshiba have issued a recall for certain Sony-manufactured notebook batteries. This is quite a small recall in comparison to previous recalls. The affected machines cover a range of late-2004 to mid-2006. For details, see <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1744>.

Note that we have determined that no models sold by Cadzow are affected by this recall.

LITERATURE, Great Moments In

The door opened and in came a tall, clean-shaven man with the firm, austere expression which is only seen upon those who have to control horses or boys.

“The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place” (*The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes*), Arthur Conan Doyle (1927)

The Cadzow team has been developing business and accounting software solutions for over 25 years. Cadzow is an Australian organisation addressing the software requirements of business and government. Software solutions in the Cadzow 2000 family include: Cadzow Contact Manager, Cadzow People Manager, Cadzow Time Manager, Cadzow Training Manager, Cadzow Call Stats Manager, Cadzow Booking Manager, Cadzow Job Manager, Cadzow Accounts Receivable, Cadzow Accounts Payable, Cadzow Stock Control, Cadzow Weblink, Cadzow Room Manager plus other web-based and customised solutions. To learn how they can be used individually or together, visit <http://www.cadzow.com.au/?Article=1288>.

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