Radio Days – 2009-10-10

Tip of the Week – Who is Using Your Internet?

We spoke recently about how the Queensland Police are starting to crack down on unsecured wireless internet connections. This involves fines (and possibly worse penalties) for having an unsecured wireless internet connection. I understand that this has been going on for some months now, and that a number of people have lost their internet connections because they continued to allow insecure wireless connections after a warning.

The French government has recently gone further in this regard. They have made it illegal to have unsecured wireless connections (as in Queensland), and they have also made it illegal to allow someone to take control of your computer. The French law means that if your computer is controlled by a bot master you are liable for all the damage that is done by your computer.

To put this is more easily understandable terms: if you allow your car to be stolen you would be responsible for all damage caused by the thief while using your car. This is something that most people would not want, but something that most people have difficulty getting their heads around when it comes to computers.

File Extensions

For most people the subject of file extensions produces a puzzled look. They quite happily click on files and expect the correct program to run and then to open the file. They also expect that when they insert a music CD into their computer it will start playing. All this is handled behind the scenes by Windows, and I find that it helps to understand file extensions and what they do.

When you open My Documents you will see a list of all the folders and documents inside this folder. If you hold your mouse over a file a small window will appear which shows you what sort of file this is. This information is stored in the file extension, and the file extension is the last part of the file name and is often not seen. It consists of the last full stop and the letters and numbers after that full stop: for example a Microsoft Word document has the extension *.doc* and Windows uses that information to open Microsoft Word with the document inside. This makes using Windows much easier, until things go wrong.

When things go wrong you will need to find out the extension of the file and then correct the fault. To start, open My Documents then click on *Tools » Folder Options* in the menu. In the dialogue box which opens click on the *View* tab, then click on *Hide extensions for known file types* to remove the check mark. Now click the *File Types* tab, select the extension of the problem file and click *Change*. You can now select the correct program to open the file and all should be well. If necessary, please ask for help.

If you need help to find the correct program to open a new file type my best advice is to use a search engine (eg Google) and search for *open* and the file extension. You may have to look through a number of entries to find something useful, but the information will be there if you persist.

Websites

None this week.