Is it Time to Upgrade Your RAM?

We recently had a customer bring her laptop to our $5 Computer Clinic (which runs on Tuesdays and Wednesdays). This was an agonizingly slow Windows 10 laptop. The computer was only about 1 year old.

The laptop seemed to be 'clean' with no junk programs and only a single virus checker running. That eliminated the most common causes of slow downs.

Then we looked at the installed RAM and it had 2GB. *To find out how much RAM you have Click on your Start Menu, type System Information and select the result.*

RAM is 'Random Access Memory' and is not to be confused with DISK SPACE. On almost all Laptop and Desktop computers both the RAM and the DISK SPACE can be upgraded.

Low disk space can be a pain but it rarely slows down your computer. It seems however the 2GB of RAM is not enough to run Windows 10 well. Windows compensates for being short of memory by constantly shuffling things from the memory to the disk and back again. This slows down everything.

In many instances a RAM upgrade is a worthwhile investment. In other cases it is a waste of money.

◊ Upgrade your RAM if it is too low, or if you need to use high performance computer applications (like video editors). 'Too Low' is generally anything below 4GB.

Upgrading your hard drive can be more complicated and expensive. You may need to need to reinstall the Windows operating system. Not for the faint hearted! Consider the alternative of buying an external hard drive to store your large files.

We were able to upgrade the customer to 4GB of RAM and they have told us it is 'at least 100% better'. In this case we had some second hand RAM in the store-room. We researched on ebay and the customer could have purchased the additional RAM for around $50. Either way it would have been a worthwhile upgrade.

We have quite a bit of second hand Desktop RAM available in the CRC storeroom (not so much for laptops). Generally we supply this for a gold coin donation. If you come in on a Tuesday or Wednesday and sign up for our $5 computer clinic we can insert the RAM for you and give your computer a clean and checkup too.

a little CRC...

Telstra Mobile Deactivations

Over the past week or so we have had two customers who have discovered that Telstra mobile devices, which they haven't used for a while, have stopped working altogether. This included a customer who had just purchased a new plan for their device.

Telstra SIMS are deactivated 6 months after their last recharge runs out, or last usage. Any associated phone number is put back into 'the pool'.

This applies to mobiles phones and mobile broadband 'dongles'/modems, or any devices which have SIM cards in them. Other companies may have similar policies.

Random Security Tips

Don't open emailed .zip files unless you have verbal (phone) confirmation from a trusted contact that they intended to send you this zip file and that they are confident of its contents. A zip file can contain any number of other files and these other files can contain viruses.

Never open an .exe file contained in an email. An .exe file is a program. Even a trusted source shouldn't be sending such files to you. An .exe file is the most common way malware can find its way onto your computer.

Cyber criminals can make things seem personal. Thousands of people are expecting parcels and tax returns on any given day. Don't assume that because an email looks like something you are expecting that it is genuine. Computer criminals are even capable of targeting you based on something else you are doing. For instance perhaps you searched for 'tax return' online and a dodgy browser plugin sent your search query to online criminals. Now you receive an email message that your tax return is ready, asking you to submit credit card details.

Don't be led by the nose! Contact suppliers and government agencies directly using information which is not sourced from an email or website which you are checking out. (Eg. Do an independent google search for the supplier, perhaps from your phone. Look them up in the white pages and phone their contact number.)

Avoid risky payment methods. Never email credit card details. Always avoid paying a new supplier via direct debit until you have absolute trust in them.

Make multiple backups of important information.