

News & info from...

Executive Stress

OFFICE SUPPORT

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Quote: "Begin each day as if it were on purpose."

-Anon

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WELCOME!

Dear [subscriber-firstname],



Happy new year to all our subscribers! We're looking forward to another terrific year this year. I hope you had a great Festive Season and new year, and were able to take some time away from business and enjoy time with friends and family.

We had my dream Christmas Day! Just the three of us hanging around home, playing with Ceilidh and her presents and a nice quiet lunch on the deck. Then some friends came over in the afternoon to round out the day. Boxing Day was spent much the same way so it was just great! Unusually for Queensland, the weather was quite cool which meant we were able to have a hot lunch for a change!

My new year's resolution was to keep my inbox under control this year. I spent a few days trawling through it over the holidays clearing out and responding to all those emails that I had left for "when I had time"! Now I'm determined to keep it under control - and I don't mean by filtering mail to various folders and subfolders! So far after three months it's going well and I deal with email the same day it comes in. Now, speak to me in another couple of months and see how I'm going! :)

This year kicks off with [OIVAC 2008](#) which is going to be another big event for business owners in all industries. The site is being updated with session and speaker information and should be ready for launch shortly, so I'd recommend checking back as there'll be something for everyone! Mark your diary for May 16 to 18 (for Australian readers).

The [AVBN](#) has also lined up a great year of monthly webinars with topics for anyone in business - check the article later in this newsletter.

Till next quarter!

Virtually yours

Lyn PB

PS: Don't forget: [click here to unsubscribe](#). If you have a friend/colleague who may be interested in the content of our newsletter you can forward the newsletter to them by

clicking [here](#). You can also view the newsletter online as a PDF at our site [here](#).

SECURE COMPUTING

Well, I guess that's kind of like a contradiction in terms these days, but as mentioned in previous newsletters, the minimum requirements for keeping your computing secure as possible are:

- a hardware firewall (usually built in to your router);
- a software security suite comprising antivirus software and a personal firewall; and
- a patch management tool to stay up-dated.



I've talked about the first two before. Here's some information on patch management tools from Scott Dunn at [WindowsSecrets](#):

In addition to hardware devices and software protection, you also need a way to get regular security patches and updates for both Windows and any other software you install.

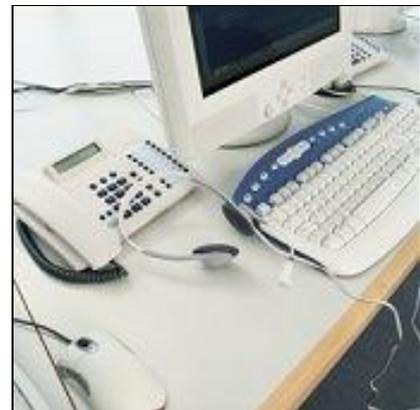
We recently added the [Secunia Software Inspector](#) to our Security Baseline page. This free service scans your hard drive, quickly and easily determining which software on your system needs updating. You're alerted not only to updates for Windows itself, but also for applications from many other vendors.

To download and install the actual updates, check out my [Oct. 4, 2007](#), article on the pros (and a few cons) of using [The Software Patch](#). This site makes Microsoft and non-Microsoft updates available in one easy-to-navigate service.

AVBN WEBINAR SERIES 2008

The **Australian Virtual Business Network** has launched its [Webinar Series for 2008](#). We have a great selection of speakers and topics for anyone in business. Starting February 20 and held at 10.00am Brisbane time on the third Wednesday of each month until December 10 (scheduled earlier because of the festive season madness!) topics include:

- Business Plans
- IP/Trademarks
- Search Engine Optimisation
- Year End Tax Planning
- Time Management
- Writing Press Releases
- Responding to Requests for Proposal
- Subcontracting Made Simple
- Scams
- Goal Setting for the New year



(Note: There is no session in May as this is when OIVAC will be taking place.)

Presenters are from around the world and are experts in their field. If you go to the [AVBN Webinar Schedule](#) you'll find more information on who and when!

If you've not experienced an online seminar before be not afraid! All you need is an internet connection and a headset/mic. The rooms are VoIP but if you do not have a mic

you can still participate in Q&A as there is a special text chat section running in the room. PowerPoint presentations and web browsing takes place right in the room and all participants are able to see the presentation and hear the speaker and questions from other participants.

The rooms are not Mac compatible at the moment, but all sessions will be fully recorded - that means the presentations too - and if you register for a session but can't make it, you'll be able to download the recording.

Given the quality of information, sessions have been incredibly priced at just **\$15 per session** - the price is kept low because the whole thing is online. In addition, you don't need to travel to the session and incur costs associated with travel, food and beverage, accommodation, and time away from work! The sessions will be kept to one hour. Who can't spend just one hour a month learning from experts on topics relevant to your business?

Register at the [registration page](#).

RSS READERS

What is RSS? Well ... it stands for Really Simple Syndication - and you'll know a site uses it if you see this symbol:



So what does it mean? According to Wikipedia, RSS:

... is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content such as blog entries, news headlines or podcasts. An RSS document, which is called a "feed," "web feed," or "channel," contains either a summary of content from an associated web site or the full text. RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with their favorite web sites in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually. RSS content can be read using software called an "RSS reader", "feed reader" or an "aggregator". The user subscribes to a feed by entering the feed's link into the reader or by clicking an RSS icon in a browser that initiates the subscription process. The reader checks the user's subscribed feeds regularly for new content, downloading any updates that it finds. The initials RSS are used to refer to the following formats:

- Really Simple Syndication (RSS 2.0)
- RDF Site Summary (RSS 1.0 and RSS 0.90)
- Rich Site Summary (RSS 0.91)

So, you'll need an RSS reader - not just a web browser - to get your RSS content. Google Reader is one such reader. Chris Wetherell, an engineer on [Google Reader](#), explains it like this: it's like email but for the internet. You don't have to go to Tom, Dick or Harry to check if they have sent you email - it just automatically comes into your Inbox. Similarly with an RSS Reader, you don't have to go to your favourite sites to check for content updates - you subscribe to the site's RSS feed and updates are automatically sent to your RSS Reader - just like email.

Here are some tips from Sharon Housley (Marketing Manager, FeedForAll Software) on selecting an RSS Reader.

Reading RSS Feeds

The vast majority of technically knowledgeable online surfers have begun incorporating RSS into their daily routines. Why go through the hassle of understanding something new, the novice might want to know? Because it saves time, and time is a precious commodity these days.

The contents of an RSS feed can be read any number of ways. A variety of tools, both fee based and free, to read RSS feeds are available on the Internet.

When determining what RSS feed reader to download, thought should be given to security. More and more publishers are using RSS feeds as a way to deliver podcasts or media

rich-content. Users of desktop software will want to find an RSS reader that allows for rich media to be delivered safely and securely.

Web surfers might want to give thought to another consideration of cross compatibility and synchronization. With the advances in RSS readers, many subscribers use multiple platforms to read their feeds. While this is convenient, if the the web surfer is not using a synchronized solution, they find themselves marking the same feed items read multiple times.

These days, aggregators are available in all shapes and sizes. Determine what type of RSS reader you would like to use to aggregate and manage your RSS feeds.

1. Desktop RSS Reader Software

A number of desktop RSS readers are available for download from the Internet. Many desktop readers allow subscribers to categorize and group their RSS feeds. Many users find it helpful to segregate personal and business feeds. Examples include:

FeedDemon <http://www.feeddemon.com>

Active Web Reader - <http://www.deskshare.com/awr.aspx>

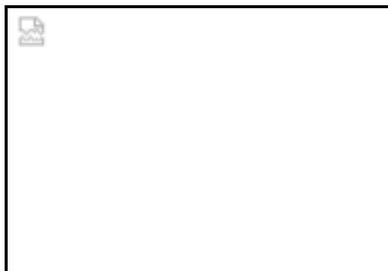
2. Web Based RSS Aggregator

Web based RSS news aggregators are accessible via any computer that has Internet access using a login and password. Web based readers are particularly useful to individuals who travel frequently. Examples include:

MyYahoo - <http://my.yahoo.com>

BlogLines - <http://www.bloglines.com>

NewsGator - <http://www.newsgator.com>



3. Browser Plug In

RSS readers are now being incorporated into newer versions of web browsers. In addition many popular browsers have third party tools that expand their functionality to incorporate RSS feeds. Examples include:

Firefox Sage - <http://sage.mozdev.org/>

Internet Explorer FeedScout - <http://www.bytescout.com/feedscout.html>

4. Email RSS Reader

A handful of popular email clients have add on modules that allow users to manage their RSS feeds in their existing email client. Examples include:

Newsgator Inbox - <http://www.newsgator.com>

5. Mobile RSS Readers

As the world becomes remote, mobile RSS readers are becoming increasingly popular. Surfers on the run appreciate receiving content updates remotely. Examples include:

Mobile RSS Reader - <http://www.dace.fi/>

FreeRange - <http://www.freerangeinc.com/products/>

Once you have a news reader set up, you will need to populate it with RSS feeds. Website visitors subscribe to RSS feeds by adding the URL of the feed to their RSS reader or aggregator. Many publishers use orange boxes or buttons marked RSS or XML to signify that an RSS feed exists for a website. In order to discover the URL of the RSS feed simply click the icon. Do not panic if as a result of your click, you see a page that contains code that makes little sense. Simply add the URL to the RSS reader. The RSS reader will decipher the code and display the feed's content in a format that is easily readable.

Some websites have added chicklets or icons for popular news readers to make subscriptions very easy. In those cases, you will see a subscription button for specific RSS readers, simply

click the icon that corresponds with your RSS reader and the feed will appear in your RSS reader. Some desktop aggregators and integrated readers will automatically detect that an RSS feed is available on a website. The RSS reader will pop up and ask if you wish to subscribe to the RSS feed.

While it does require initial effort to setup a solution for aggregating and reading RSS feeds, users find that it saves a lot of time in the long run. Determine what solution best meets your RSS needs and begin aggregating information.

About the author: Sharon Housley manages marketing for [FeedForAll](#) software for creating, editing, publishing RSS feeds and podcasts. In addition Sharon manages marketing for [NotePage](#) a wireless text messaging software company.

A personal project...

Many of you know I have an 8-year-old daughter, Ceilidh. After visiting Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary during the school holidays, she came face-to-face (literally) with the terrible Devil Facial Tumour Disease that is decimating our ever-reducing population of Tasmanian Devils. She decided to do something about it!



Lots of research later and some brainstorming sessions, she has come up with a plan of how to be the "one woman saviour" of her favourite animal! Oh to be an 8-year-old! :)

With the help of my wonderful webdesigner [Janice Kalyniuk](#), the research she gathered has been put together into a website that Ceilidh hopes to use to raise awareness and money for the **Save the Tasmanian Devil Project**, which is a combined effort of the Department of Primary Industries & Water, and the University of Tasmania Foundation.

100% of the proceeds raised from her website will be going to the Foundation.

Please do stop by and have a look at what's been put together by clicking the above link. This is first in a series of things she has planned for fundraising this year. If you can make a donation, that would be wonderful. Please note that the donation button will take you directly to the University of Tasmania Foundation.

There is also a [press page](#) on the site which has been updated with Ceilidh's recent visit to Currumbin - the staff invited her to get face to face with a devil and the experience was an interesting one to say the least! She has been asked to be the Ambassador for the Sanctuary's Green Guardian program and she is waiting for further information to arrive on that, and has been nominated for the [Quest Community Newspapers Young Star Award](#). (Do I sound like a proud mum?)



The best thing is this is all her work - of course she's received our support, guidance and assistance where we can, plus the amazing assistance of my wonderful web weaver [Janice Kalyniuk](#) - but all research for the site and ideas for fundraising have come from her.

We're planning a trip to Tasmania in the coming months so she can visit the "Land of the Devils", and meet up with the wonderful people from UTAS and DPIW who have been so supportive of what she is doing.

Pop by the site and check it out - make a donation if you feel so moved - and [visit her blog](#). This is where Ceilidh will keep posting information on fundraising activities and other interesting facts. You can subscribe at the blog. (Now that you know all about RSS Readers you'll know what to do!)

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