



# Newsletter

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[www.rotoruasenior.net](http://www.rotoruasenior.net)  
Member of NZ Federation of SeniorNet Societies

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## From the Chairman

Hello members

This is my first column for a few months, due to a couple of health events. These resulted in a few days in hospital followed by a recuperation period at home. This experience made me realise what a huge difference 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology has made to a hospital stay. The hospital had free WIFI, and I was able to have my smartphone and tablet with me. With the phone, I was able to be in regular touch by call or text with my wife, family and friends. With the tablet, I was able to keep up with news, read online books and check my emails. A cheap pair of headphones enabled me to enjoy videos from Youtube and elsewhere without disturbing other patients. (A small tip is to take a long USB charging cord for your devices so that it can reach your bed.)

Part way through my stay, my wife contracted a severe cold. This meant that she was unable to visit. However, I had my tablet in the hospital and she used a laptop at home, so we were able to enjoy virtual visits via Zoom. We even included family in Hamilton and Whangarei to have a virtual family get-together.

This all made the stay in hospital more tolerable than what it would have been a few decades ago. Even during the recuperation period at home, technology helped. Apart from following the news and reading online books, I consulted Google to explain some of the medical jargon in my hospital discharge report. I also took the opportunity to do some exploration of the world of AI (artificial intelligence), which was fascinating.

So my message is if you find yourself in hospital, make sure you are equipped to enjoy the maximum benefits of technology.

Regards

Keith Garratt  
Chair

*Rotorua SeniorNet is just one of 75 local groups in the New Zealand Federation. If you would like to know more about what goes on elsewhere, OR what discounts or services are available to members, go to the Federation website.*

[www.rotoruasenior.net](http://www.rotoruasenior.net)

## **FYI/FYE** (For Your Information/From Your Editor)

### **TECHNOLOGY AND SENIORS** – are they mutually exclusive?

Next time you feel that the technological revolution is leaving you behind, take a moment to think:

- \* What technology did we have growing up?
- \* What technology did our parents have?
- \* What technology did our grandparents have?
- \* How would today's younger people (under 40s) cope with those past technologies? (Did I hear snickering out there?)

Then, you can sit back and feel superior again! Would anyone under 60 know how to use a copper (no, not the local policeman, or the now 'ancient' Internet connection, or the penny - the other sort that grandmothers used to fire up and boil the sheets and towels in).

If you have really, annoying, smarty-pants grandkids, you could use your superior knowledge and experience to create a little booklet for them, of some of the 'ancient' technology that you can use and they can't! Something like:

#### **Copper and mangle**



Look familiar? Most of the pre-1960s generations would be able to use this equipment. Especially if the wooden stick was available for fishing the articles out of the copper and the galvanized tin bailer for emptying the copper after all the work is finished! For anyone born after that, it would probably be a total mystery.

I'm sure we can all think of many, similar, examples. What they all have in common is that they demonstrate how flexible and adaptable we can be. So, let's not stop now. Let's use the technology that's available as best we can, while still retaining the ability to go back to basics when we need to.

Both Bert's and Alan's contributions for this month are good examples of how important it is for us to keep up with technology, to embrace it and to use it efficiently and for the good of our families and communities. And enjoy its advantages.

Ngaire

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## Next members' forum

# Monday 14 August 2023

Our monthly members' forums are at Parksyde Centre, Tarewa Place, on the second Monday of each month at 2 pm, with interesting talks followed by afternoon tea. Visitors are welcome.

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## SeniorHangouts Update

SeniorHangouts sessions are underway but newcomers need help getting started. Not just in our Learning Centre but most others as well.

A lot of you have already registered. That's a two-step process, Gene applies on your behalf then you get an automated email explaining how to set up your login.

I've been part of Hangouts for over 2 years and recently helped redesign the new 'Hangouts 2' so I know it really well, and I've put my hand up to run 'get-started' Zoom sessions for our members on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 pm (beginning August 9th) for as long as members need them. Every kind of Q&A about Hangouts and as much practice with using Zoom as you need. It's drop in and you're welcome even if you haven't registered yet. Your camera and microphone need to be working but you don't need to have the Zoom App installed to get started. Without it paste the link below into your browser's Address Bar and press Enter:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/117597527?pwd=RmJlOGdlNi9JaDlyNEhJNmJFejBvdz09>

If you have the Zoom App installed say yes to "Open Zoom Meetings" then click Launch Meeting and Accept Cookies, but if you don't have it click Cancel and instead use the link lower down "Join from your browser," enter your name and click Join. That gets you connected but minus some Zoom services, so tell us you need to install the Zoom App and we'll show you how.

If you have already installed the App joining is a lot quicker. Just open the App, login and enter these details:

Meeting ID: 117 597 527  
Password: 3480

If there's nobody in a meeting and you're a few minutes early it's OK to do other things while you're waiting. Zoom will reopen from your Taskbar when you need it.

If you're still having difficulty, there are a series of Zoom video tutorials at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/p/zoom-meetings-guide> that will make things clearer before you try the above instructions again, and you can switch between Desktop and Mobile instructions which may be slightly different.

Tip: If you're camera-shy you can always turn it off at bottom left. Everything else still works.

Alan Armstrong

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### **From Bert, Activities Co-ordinator**

At our last SeniorNet Forum at Parksyde I was asked if I could write something in the Newsletter about "RealMe" which is a website run by the Government to allow New Zealand citizens to provide certified proof of their identity whenever such proof is required when accessing any Central or Local Government or banking service. It has been quite a few years since I opened my RealMe account so I consulted with Google Search to remind me of the process and to find out how the site had changed since I had joined.

I discovered that there are 85 different organisations that require Real Me verification for various services that they offer, starting with the government itself.

The Department of Internal Affairs uses RealMe for passport applications . The Department of Social Welfare requires a verification for many of their services. The full list includes many Regional Councils and the entire banking and financial system. Almost all applications for documents or licences nowadays require a Real Me Identity. A short list of typical requirements for RealMe identity verification are for Passport applications, registrations of births, deaths, civil unions and marriages. The list also includes driver's licences, vehicle ownership and registration.

The following paragraph was written by an Artificial intelligence app in about 25 seconds:

*RealMe is a digital identity service that allows New Zealanders to prove who they are online and in person. It is useful for New Zealand seniors because it can help them to:*

- *Access government services online without having to provide their personal information multiple times. This can save seniors a lot of time and hassle, as they will no longer need to fill out forms or provide identification documents each time they want to access a government service.*
- *Make payments online more securely. RealMe uses a secure authentication process to verify the identity of users, which makes it more difficult for fraudsters to steal their personal information or make unauthorised payments.*
- *Prove their identity when they need to, such as when opening a bank account or applying for a driver's licence. This can be helpful for seniors who may not have a passport or other form of government-issued identification.*

- *Stay connected with friends and family online. RealMe can be used to sign-in to social media accounts, email accounts, and other online services. This can help seniors stay connected with their loved ones and participate in online activities.*
- *Access information and services that are tailored to their needs. RealMe can be used to access government information and services that are specifically designed for seniors. This can help seniors find the information and services they need to live independently and safely.*
- *Get involved in their communities. RealMe can be used to sign up for volunteer opportunities and participate in community events. This can help seniors stay active and engaged in their communities.*

*RealMe is a secure and convenient way for New Zealand seniors to manage their online identity. It is free to use and can be accessed on a computer, smartphone, or tablet.*

Between myself, Google and the Artificial Intelligence program. I hope that I have managed to cover at least the basics of Real Me. I have not needed to actively use RealMe that often, mostly for passport renewal etc. However, there may have been many occasions where it has been working in the background verifying my identity for whatever transaction I was making.

### **A source of frustration**

I manage to deal with most government and local government organisations online. This morning I needed to talk to Rotorua Lakes Council and it took 8 minutes to get through to a human being. Whilst I waited, I was treated to some ear-piercing music played by a flute orchestra. This was interrupted every 30 seconds or so by a voice asking me if I would like to email my enquiry. As this was my second attempt at calling which had not initiated a reply I stayed on the phone. More messages followed asking me to press 1 to receive a call back when they were not so busy. A couple of messages said they were sorry they were so busy. And eventually I made the connection to the person I needed to talk to. They were able to quietly and efficiently deal with my problem.

I had a bit of a think about all of this and I realised that this problem over the years has caused me to change suppliers on a number of occasions. As an example, I use "NOW " as my internet service provider. A young fellow knocked on my door one day and asked if I would like to deal with an ISP based in Napier which employs Kiwis to answer their phones promptly. I signed up and I have never regretted that decision. Similarly I had all my insurance cover handled by my bank. Every time I needed to call them by phone I was treated to a half an hour wait. Eventually, I changed my supplier to an insurance broker based in Rotorua who answers the phone immediately.

As a further example: I have subscribed to the Listener magazine for many years through an intermediary magazine supplier. They recently moved their call centre offshore which I found out recently does not work when the delivery system fails. My call was diverted to the call centre in Indonesia who offered to extend my subscription for a week. I insisted that I wanted it delivered. It took three weeks for the missing edition to arrive. Previously it would have arrived the following morning. I cancelled my subscription.

During a tech talk session I found that my online subscription to the Herald which is paid monthly, has now been extended to include an online copy of the Listener. That was a win-win as far as I was concerned as I can read the listener for nothing. When I phoned to cancel my subscription the person in far-away Indonesia couldn't care less and the five months remaining on my subscription was in my account the following morning.

I have come to the conclusion that "Government" and large commercial organisations do not care about providing service to their customers. In the case of the large companies the remedy seems to be to move on and find someone who provides seriously good and efficient customer service.

Bert

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