



# Newsletter

July 2024

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

Member of NZ Federation of SeniorNet Societies

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## From the Chairman

Hello members

AI is becoming an increasing part of our lives. As an experiment, I asked it "How to set up a new smartphone." In a few seconds, it gave me the following, which I have copied here with no editing for your interest. You may find it useful. Our tutors will soon be out of a job!

**"Unboxing and Powering On:** Start by unboxing your new smartphone and powering it on by pressing and holding the power button.

**Language and Region Settings:** Follow the on-screen prompts to select your preferred language and region.

**Connect to Wi-Fi or Mobile Data:** To access the internet and complete the setup process, connect to a Wi-Fi network or use mobile data.

**Sign in to Your Google or Apple Account:** Sign in with your Google account on an Android device or your Apple ID on an iPhone to sync your data and settings.

**Set Up Security:** Choose a secure method to lock your device, such as a PIN, pattern, password, or biometric authentication like fingerprint or face recognition.

**Restore from Backup:** If you have a backup from your old device, you can restore your apps, contacts, photos, and settings during the setup process.

**Install Essential Apps:** Download and install essential apps like messaging, email, social media, and productivity tools from the app store.

**Customize Settings:** Customize your device by adjusting settings for notifications, display, sound, and more to suit your preferences.

**Explore Features:** Take some time to explore the features of your new smartphone, such as camera settings, widgets, and shortcuts."

Regards

Keith Garratt  
Chair

*Rotorua SeniorNet is just one of over 20 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.seniornet.nz](http://www.seniornet.nz)*

# Next members' forum

## Tuesday 8 July 2 pm at Parksyde

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

When I joined SeniorNet a few years ago I believed that within a few years SeniorNet would no longer be needed. I had assumed that the generation that followed ours would be computer literate and there would be very few Seniors who would require training. As things turned out I was very wrong with my assumption. I had totally underestimated the amount of innovation in the world of computers which occurred during the past decade. Although the newly retired often have good keyboard skills and some knowledge of specific computer programs related to their work, this only scratches the surface of what is out there in computer land these days.

To begin with there are so many devices that are essentially computers. It is a long list starting with mobile phones and including tablets, laptops, smart TVs and smart watches. Even our cars can be described as a computer on wheels. Most of these devices operate with a large and growing number of operating systems starting with Microsoft and Apple, then Android, Google and Linux who are the survivors of a process of elimination of the many systems that were out there but now no longer exist.

An operating system is basically the gatekeeper to the computer. For our computers to be useful we need to install software that carries out the tasks we demand. This software in the form of Applications (or Apps) is generally restricted to a particular operating system with the exception that some widely used applications such as Windows Office have been adapted to run on various other operating systems. A lot of the software available is free. There is a lot of it and it becomes bewildering as to which apps to install on your various devices.

Not so long ago the internet was delivered to our devices along a copper line through a modem into our homes. It is more usual these days to be delivered along a glass fibre line which is much faster than copper and provides a greater bandwidth. We have so much bandwidth to handle masses of data that we can, with our smart TV, watch movies and live TV from our home or anywhere that has a Wi-fi connection.

Our mobile phones can also deliver the same content from the internet using a mobile connection and they can do the same thing using the cell tower system which allows us to receive our telephone calls from practically anywhere. It can be quite expensive to use a phone to watch a movie or sporting event but that is a personal decision.

Our Wi Fi connection is made through an Internet service provider (ISP) who delivers data to our homes and the charges are based on the speed we download that data and the actual amount of data downloaded. There are many ISP's out there all with different payment plans.

Likewise, with mobile phones with familiar names like Spark, 2 degrees, Skinny and One (formerly Vodafone). Each of these has a series of very complex payment plans and many of our enquiries at the library are folks trying to work out which is the best deal for them.

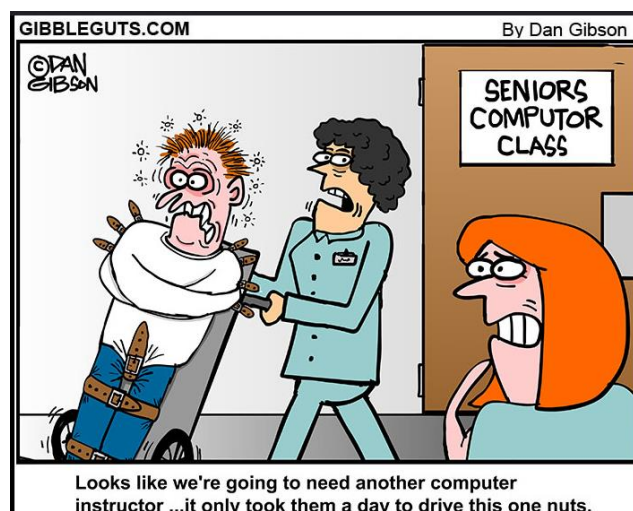
Should you have read this far, you will have an inkling of how complex our communication systems have become. The members of our Rotorua group assisting the public at our Drop-ins are very conscious of the changes that are taking place almost daily. This is mainly because it requires that we keep abreast of all the changes that are taking place. The people that call on us for advice are constantly seeking answers to questions on how best to operate their devices.

Many of the people we see are very aware that their lives would be much easier if they had some understanding of the use of their devices to communicate efficiently with the entities who they deal with, who realistically can only be contacted through their websites. These include the Government, the Banks, Ministry of Transport, Booking agencies and many others.

Generally, the people who consult us have problems that fall into three categories:

- Problems where it is VITAL that they understand the best way to deal with Government Departments or the Banks or Financial institutions.
- Problems where it is necessary to have some knowledge, such as registering a motor vehicle, online shopping, booking flights, obtaining a passport and many other everyday transactions.
- And people often ask questions about personal interests such as using Facebook or WhatsApp. They want to know how to store and file their photos in the cloud or on another device.

Every week they astonish us with the variety of their questions. They keep us on our toes and we welcome some of the avenues we explore with them.



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

### **THE PROS AND CONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

#### **“SOCIAL MEDIA”** *noun*

1. *websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.”*

Using social media can be daunting for some of us. We hear so much negative feedback, but almost all of the younger generation (12-30 year-olds) are connected to it and, often, dependent on it. So, here are some of the pros and cons of social media as I see them:

#### **Pros**

- Information available

This can be very useful if we are researching or learning. Anything from a recipe to highly scientific information. But remember to check!

- Communication

More and more people are using social media as their main means of communication, not always appropriately, and this can create conflict and confusion when others do not use the same medium.

#### **Cons**

- Disinformation

With so few checks and balances, spreading disinformation (and outright lies!) is very easy. The bad guys have never had it so good and it's up to the rest of us to be very careful of both our online and personal security.

- Negative social trends

When I took my first look at TikTok recently, the first thing I saw was a group of youths in the USA committing a smash and grab raid on a store! From my teaching days in South Auckland, I am aware that many young people in this country watch, not the news on TV, but TikTok. And TikTok is telling these disengaged young people that everyone is picking on them. Our big, brave youth are really just poor, intimidated victims! I'm still trying to work this one out.

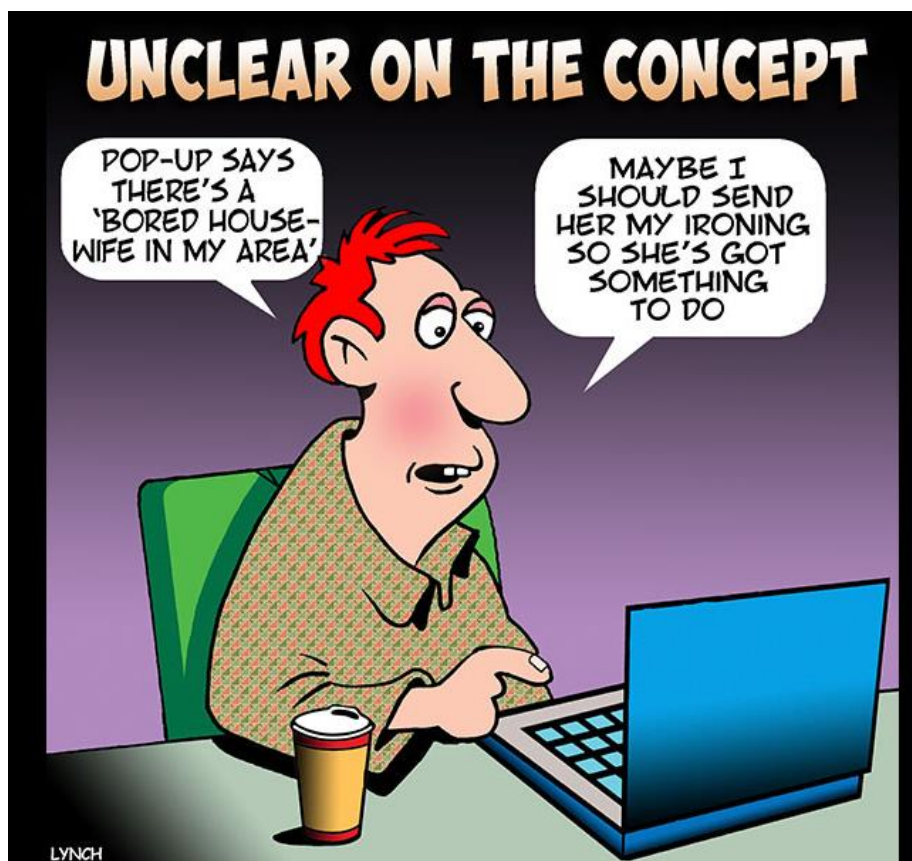
- Social conscience

The big tech companies seem to be more interested in the 'almighty \$' (i.e. their profits) than the social damage they are causing. It's become a world-wide, borderless problem that, currently, can only be tackled individually by simply refusing to be part of the problem and doing our best to ensure that the young people we know are aware and cautious.

Social media can be very useful for staying in touch with people and sharing information. It can also be dangerous. Just like telephones and cars, really. It's up to each of us to use it responsibly and do our best to help young people along the right path.

Ngairé

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