

Tip for September 2005
Courtesy of Wyvern Technology
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Ah, September, my favourite month – not just because it is when I was born but because of the wonderful fragrances that fill the air from the beautiful blooms in my garden and, no, before you ask, I do not suffer from hay fever, as is pretty obvious.

You all know how interested I am in language and in the words that companies in particular use. Apparently when they no longer support a product they talk about it having “sunsetted”. A lot of connotations with that one, principal amongst them being that if they use the active voice in connection with the program, it sounds as if it was the program’s decision, but if they were to say, “we no longer support it/them” then they sound responsible, and we could never have that, could we?

Programs are becoming more and more complex and the language even more so. I was helping a client with a program and the instructions told him to exit at the welcome screen. Taking it literally, he was looking for the word “Welcome”, but the writer just meant the first screen that opens up in the program.

I am continually finding that what was once a simple process is becoming much more complex and not just because of the language in the instructions. I first mentioned some time ago that the programmers were taking control of the program with their wizards, but that I could usually get around them. This is becoming more difficult and programs interfere with each other but don’t let you know – you have to go looking and often find this note many levels down.

It is very hard for the user and I mean you ordinary mortals out there to contend with the difficulties that arise.

Enough of the pessimism. My younger daughter pointed me towards a useful link that enables you to access your email when you are having problems.

The link is called mail2web. Google it and have a go at it.

As the windows firewall is next to worthless, make sure you have an excellent firewall like the one at Zonelab, an excellent antivirus program like AVG from Grisoft and an excellent remover of intruders like Adaware – all of the above are free on the internet to private users - i.e. those who don’t use their computer for business purposes.

Till next month,

Cheers,

Deirdree