

# Bytes & Pieces

Newsletter of the Hobart Computer Users Group Inc.

Volume 4 – Issue 13

<b><u>Activate XP from a backup</u></b>	
Before you need to reinstall, you need a backup floppy .....	1
<b><u>Our website</u></b>	
Things you didn't know .....	2
<b><u>Why aren't your digital pictures sharp?</u></b>	
Get the best from your camera .....	2
<b><u>Customise the Places Bar</u></b>	
Use TweakUI to have the Places Bar you want .....	3
<b><u>Editing the Send To menu</u></b>	
While you're at it, customise the Send To menu .....	3
<b><u>XP auto-logon</u></b>	
Why click on your name when there is only one user? .....	4
<b><u>ActiveX controls</u></b>	
Do you need them? Are they dangerous? .....	4
<b><u>Dealing with spam (Part 3)</u></b>	
Spam filtering and removal .....	5
<b><u>Windows 98 and ME support discontinued</u></b>	
Win4Lin goes XP/2000 only; Microsoft discontinues support for Win98 .....	6
<b><u>Next meeting</u></b>	
Basic computer maintenance .....	6
<b><u>New format and name</u></b>	
What is the Editor planning? .....	7
<b><u>Just for fun</u></b>	
The wit of Harold Harding .....	7
<b><u>From last meeting</u></b>	
John James didn't make it, but did provide us with his notes .....	8
<b><u>Databases</u></b>	
An introduction by John James .....	8
<b><u>Using Microsoft Excel as a database</u></b>	
An introduction by John James and Paul Horne .....	8
<b><u>Other database applications</u></b>	
Some other programs you could use to create a database .....	10
<b><u>Database tutorials</u></b>	
Where to look for help .....	10

---

## Activate XP from a backup

From time to time, you may wish to do a complete reinstall of Windows XP on your computer. If you have not made any major hardware changes, you can reactivate the reinstalled Windows XP from a floppy disk, prepared in advance. Here's how:

### Backup the current activation status

- Navigate to C:\windows\system32 folder (where C:\windows is the folder into which you installed Windows XP).
- Copy the wpa.dbl and wpa.bak files to the floppy diskette.

### Reinstall Windows XP

- Reinstall XP in the normal manner.
- When asked whether you wish to activate Windows, decline and allow the installation to complete

## Activate the XP Reinstallation

- Restart the computer and use the F8 key to bring up the Advanced Boot Options menu.
- Select Safe Mode using Up and Down Arrow Keys and press Enter.
- Navigate to C:\windows\system32 folder, or whatever your windows folder now is.
- Find the existing *wpa.dbl* and *wpa.bak* files and rename them *wpa.old* and *wpa.bk1* (or similar).
- Using the floppy disk, copy the previously backed up wpa.dbl and wpa.bak files into the same folder.
- Reboot the computer.

**Note:** If you have made major hardware changes or Windows informs you that it cannot verify the activation status, the above procedure will not work and you will probably need to follow the telephone activation procedure. This will take about five minutes, if punching the numbers into the phone works, and a little longer if you have to speak to a Microsoft operator.

[Index](#)

---

## Our website

Want to know when the next meeting is on and what the subject is? Just check the website. A short note near the top of each page will tell briefly what you want to know, and more details are only a click away. Want to give a copy of our newsletter to a friend? Download it from the website. Need a hint or two? A tutorial? It's all available via the website. And now there's Google Search with which to search the site, or even the whole World Wide Web!

However, the visit counter on our website shows that many of our members do not visit the site, or do so very infrequently. At least one member indicated that the reason they did not do so was that he found the navigation system confusing. Of course, he has a fairly disorganised mind and that may be the problem, but nevertheless I decided to implement a new home page that gives access to most parts of the website with just a couple of clicks.

To get all the extra information on to the home page it was necessary to adopt a small font. Hold the CTRL key and turn the scroll wheel on your mouse to enlarge it.

If you don't have a scroll wheel, try holding the CTRL key and pressing '+'. That will work with Firefox, Mozilla, SeaMonkey and Opera. Internet Explorer 6 doesn't offer the same convenience and you will need to use View/Text Size/Larger (or whatever size you want).

Please try the new home page and let me know what you think.

<http://hobartpcgroup.org.au>

[Index](#)

---

## Why aren't your digital pictures sharp?

Of course it could be the camera. Maybe it's a cheap one with a poor quality lens, but it is more than likely that the reasons lie elsewhere. Here's some reasons why your photos may look blurry and what to do about them.

### Camera movement:

In the more than 50 years that I have been taking photos, I have seen more photos blurred by camera movement than by anything else, my own included! Users of lightweight cameras are particular prone to this problem. That's the law of inertia at work. If you lean on a heavy object, it doesn't move. If you lean on a light one, it does. Thus it is easier to move the camera while taking a picture if it is lightweight and most digital cameras are not only lightweight but also small.

To eliminate motion all together, use a tripod. If you have to take the picture handheld, brace your elbows against your body to steady your arms, take a deep breath and hold it. If your camera has a viewfinder use it in preference to the LCD display on the back of the camera. Squeeze the camera button gently. Many digital cameras give an audible signal before they actually take the photo. Be as still as you can after you hear that signal and press the button the rest of the way.

Another answer to the problem of camera movement blur is found in a few cameras which have "image stabilisation". If you are contemplating the purchase of a new camera, check out the Panasonic range with this

feature and compare the results against other similarly priced cameras that do not have image stabilisation.

There is one situation where you will want to move the camera. If you are trying to photograph a fast moving object, swing the camera gently in the direction of the object's motion as you take the picture. The background of the photo will blur, but the object will be rendered sharper than it would be with a stationary camera. The overall effect, when done correctly, should convey a sense of the speed the object was travelling.

#### **Dirty lens:**

Keep your lens covered when not in use and never touch the lens surface with your fingers. Follow the camera maker's instructions when cleaning it. Most photo dealers can sell you a blower brush that will let you gently brush and blow away dust.

#### **Flare:**

If you shoot in the direction of a bright light, such as the sun, your picture will be degraded by flare. Try to shade the lens so that the bright light doesn't strike the lens surface, unless you are after a special effect caused by the flare.

#### **Grain:**

Many digital cameras have a digital zoom. This produces the same effect as enlarging your picture with the computer. It should be used sparingly and not on shots that you want to make large prints from. If you have an optical zoom as well as digital zoom, try to confine your zooming to the optical one. Getting as close as possible to your subject will help. It may even be possible to switch off the digital zoom, preventing you from "accidentally" using it.

#### **Enlargement:**

If you do large prints from your photos, there are limits before the picture degrades. As a rule of thumb 2 MB is enough for an A4 print, 3 MB for an A3 enlargement. If you enlarge portion of your picture, then the end result needs to be reduced proportionally. For example, half of a 2 MB picture enlarges to A5 instead of A4.

Use the maximum resolution (pixels) that your camera is capable of, get as close to your subject as possible, and use *optical* zoom if necessary. You will then have a picture that needs a minimum of cropping and enlargement and which has maximum detail. That means greater sharpness in your finished enlargement.

[Index](#)

---

## **Customise the Places Bar**

In Windows XP, you can customise the Places Bar in the Open and Save As dialogues, using the Tweak UI PowerToy (downloadable from [www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/downloads/powertoys.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/downloads/powertoys.asp)). When you run Tweak UI, go to Common Dialogs/Places Bar on the hierarchical list; this is where you can change the folders that appear in the Places Bar. Note that you can have only up to five places, and for each your choice is limited to certain system folders (such as History, My Pictures, and so on).

Another great tool for configuring any version of Windows is FreshDevices FreshUI (from [www.freshdevices.com](http://www.freshdevices.com)). This tool is free for personal use and customises all versions of Windows.

[Index](#)

---

## **Editing the Send To menu**

While you are customising your version of Windows, you may like to customise the Send To menu. Here's how:

Right-click on a file and a menu will pop up. One of the choices on that menu is Send To. This lets you send the file to a floppy, the My Documents folder and some other places. You can add to these options so that you can send files to any folder you want.

Browse your way to C:\Documents and Settings\username\SendTo for Windows 2000 and XP, or C:\Windows\SendTo for Windows 98 and Me.

If you don't see the folder you want, select Folder Options from the Tools menu, click on the View tab, and check Show hidden files and folders. In a second Explorer window, select the folder in question. Right-drag it into the Send To folder and choose Create Shortcuts Here. Rename the shortcut as you want to see it in the Send To menu.

[Index](#)

---

## XP auto-logon

If there is only one account on your computer and you don't need to protect it with a password, you can simply omit the password step when setting up. However, if you have set up the account with a password, there is a quick way to change that user account so that it automatically logs on.

- Go to Run on the Start menu.
- Type ***control userpasswords2*** and press ENTER
- On the Users tab, untick the ***Users must enter a user name and password to use this computer***
- Click **OK**.
- In the **Automatically Log On** dialog box which opens, type the username and password for the account you want to auto-logon whenever you start the computer.
- Click OK

Note: If there is more than one account, pressing the **SHIFT** key while booting will bring up the normal entry screen.

[Index](#)

---

## ActiveX controls

If you go to Symantec's website to run the company's online virus scanner using Internet Explorer, you will find that it wants to download ActiveX controls on to your computer. What are these and should you allow them to be downloaded?

**CNET's Glossary** defines ActiveX controls as "software components typically used to enrich Web pages by calling on the functionality of locally installed Microsoft applications."

[http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-6029\\_7-5748090-1.html](http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-6029_7-5748090-1.html)

These controls act as sets of rules that can be executed by Internet Explorer. They permit Internet Explorer to open Excel so that you can view an Excel attachment without requiring you to open Excel separately. In my opening example, the ActiveX control gives Symantec's scanner full access to Windows, which is not a problem. However, what if it were a keylogger, a trojan or some other program that took control of your computer? How much damage would that cause?

While the sharing of information among applications is not inherently bad, to do their job, ActiveX controls require full access to the Windows operating system, and this represents a significant security risk. So much so that the designers of Mozilla's browsers decided not to include ActiveX controls. As a result, you cannot use Firefox, for example, to download Windows updates (or run keyloggers, trojans and other programs that use these controls).

Windows XP Service Pack 2 addresses this security risk through the Internet Explorer Information Bar. See:

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/843017/en-us>

Whenever a potentially dangerous action is detected and blocked, the bar is displayed. You are given a choice how to proceed: Allow the blocked content, seek more information about the risks involved or the nature of the threat. whenever a potentially dangerous action is detected - and blocked - on the web page you are viewing. When it doubt, you could do worse than clicking the More Information link.

ActiveX controls impart functionality and whenever you encounter them, think what functionality is being imparted. Is it relevant to what you are doing? If you aren't sure, close the Information Bar without downloading anything - the worse that can happen is that you will be unable to carry out whatever task you were trying to perform. This, in turn, should corroborate the legitimacy of the ActiveX Control in question.

By contrast, web sites that repeatedly attempt to download ActiveX Controls (or other files) before the page has fully loaded and/or without an obvious functional need should raise some serious red flags. You shouldn't need to download the aforementioned controls in order to do something like play an audio or video file.

Something that can assist you in determining the relative risk of a given website is McAfee's SiteAdvisor. This free plug-in for IE places a small button on your browser's toolbar, which changes in color depending on the particular site's safety ratings. To quote Ron Perlman in Hellboy, "Red means stop!" or in this case, "Avoid with extreme prejudice!" You can learn more about SiteAdvisor and download a copy by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.siteadvisor.com/>

Once you have downloaded an ActiveX Control, you can easily disable or remove it from your computer in the following manner:

1. Click **TOOLS** on Internet Explorer's toolbar.
2. Scroll down to **MANAGE ADD-ONS** from the drop-down menu, then
3. Select **ENABLE OR DISABLE ADD-ONS**.
4. The **MANAGE ADD-ONS WINDOW** will now open.
5. Select one of the options under **SHOW** to view the ActiveX Controls in your computer.
6. You can now highlight an ActiveX Control from the list, and either disable it in the **SETTINGS** box, or delete altogether in the **DELETE** box.
7. Press OK to perform the appropriate change.
8. Repeat as necessary to remove other controls.

Of course, one way to avoid the security risks inherent in ActiveX Controls is to switch to a browser that does not rely on that technology. As mentioned the Mozilla browsers – Mozilla Internet Suite, Firefox and SeaMonkey – do not accept ActiveX controls, nor does Opera.

<http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/>  
<http://www.opera.com/>

[Index](#)

---

## Dealing with spam (Part 3)

### The story so far:

In this series we have looked at avoiding spam and having the Internet Service Provider (ISP) filter it out of your incoming emails. However, you cannot always avoid your email addresses getting onto spammers' lists and ISP filtering is constrained by the need to avoid filtering out messages you want to receive. That means some spam will probably get through. What can you do about that? The answer is obvious: Add your own methods of dealing with spam and that's what this third part of our series discusses.

### Rule 6: Use inbuilt filtering, if available

#### Thunderbird

First take a look at your email client. If you use Thunderbird, for example, it has built-in filters to filter out junk. These can become reasonably effective, but will need training first. Work through your incoming email and identify those which you consider are spam. Right click on the junk message and Mark it as Junk. Thunderbird will learn from this over time to identify the characteristics of the messages you consider junk and will mark them for you. If you find a message that Thunderbird has marked as Junk, simply right click and Mark it as Not Junk.

When Thunderbird is identifying spam reasonably accurately, it is time to have it remove the spam to its Junk folder. You do this by going to Tools/Junk Mail Controls. Set Thunderbird to Move the messages to a Junk mail folder and to move manually marked ones to the same folder (or to delete them, if you prefer). Also turn on the Junk Mail Log.

You will notice that Thunderbird is set to retain the contents of the Junk folder for a number of days. Within that period you should check the contents of the Junk folder and unmark any that have been incorrectly marked. You will then need to drag these back to your Inbox.

#### Others

Several other email clients have their own filtering. Some only offer the feature in Paid or Professional mode, so you may need to buy that version, or change to a free email client that has spam filtering.

### **Rule 7: Use anti-spam software**

#### **SPAMfighter and more**

Outlook Express, for example, does not have its own anti-spam filters and it is necessary to use an external program. Microsoft on their website recommend SPAMfighter. Some others are POPFile, eXpurgate, Spamihilator, SpamPal, K9, Spam Interceptor, G-Lock SpamCombat, MailWasher, Email Express! and SpamWeasel.

I have not used most of these so it is difficult to recommend one as “best”. All of the above are free and there are many more which offer a free trial. Visit the website for each anti-spam program that you think may be suitable and read what they claim it can do. Then do a search on the name of the program and see what that unearths. If the results of the search are encouraging, download the program and give it a trial. Don't expect it to work perfectly, especially when you first install it. All such programs need training.

MailWasher deserves a mention because it shows you what emails are waiting for you on your Internet Service Providers server. You then have the option of deleting and bouncing the obvious spam. This can save a lot of downloading. MailWasher Free is somewhat limited, but, if you like the way it works, you can always get the added features by buying MailWasher Pro.

### **Rule 8: Apply all the advice**

If you don't want your email correspondence buried in a heap of rubbish, adopt aliases when visiting websites that require registration and on your own website. Be very careful who you give direct access to your email address. Have your ISP filter for spam. Use Thunderbird, or add an antispam program to your email client.

And when all else fails, change ISPs and start again adopting the above strategies.

[Index](#)

---

## **Windows 98 and ME support discontinued**

Win4Lin (formerly NeTraverse) in announcing Win4Lin Pro version 3.0, also announced that after its release they would no longer issue licences for the older Win4Lin 9x product. Win4Lin Pro allows Windows XP to run as a “well-behaved Linux application”. While there are still a few features missing, it works well and makes the transition to Linux much easier for anyone who has Windows applications that they feel they must run – at least, until they can find suitable Linux replacements. Win4Lin 9x allows Windows 98 and ME to run on Linux.

Microsoft has announced that all support for Windows 98 will end 16 July 2006 and increasingly support for Windows 98, 98SE and ME is being discontinued by application writers. XP/2000 is required for the latest Adobe and Picasa products, MS Office 2003, and other software. If you haven't already moved to XP, now may be a good time to do it, with Windows XP Pro Upgrade Academic on sale around town at \$98.00. The Academic version cannot be used in a commercial environment.

[Index](#)

---

## **Next meeting**

“Basic computer maintenance” is the subject of our next meeting on 11 July 2006. Just as keeping your car running smoothly requires regular maintenance, so, too, does keeping your computer functioning at its best. Where with the car you, or your mechanic, has to get down and play with the dirty bits, keeping your computer in tune is much easier, cheaper and cleaner. But far too many of us neglect this vital maintenance until the computer starts to act up. Come and learn what you can do to postpone the evil day when your guru advises you that there is nothing else for it but to “Format C:” (or some equally drastic measure)!

The following meeting on 8 August 2006 and, with the departure of our Secretary on a trip to the UK, there's sure to be a vacancy or two. Here's your chance to help. Contact President Paul and discuss what you would be prepared to do, even if it is only to organise supper, as my dear wife used to do before we moved beyond the city fringe.

For last minute changes to the scheduled meetings, please go to:

<http://hobartpcgroup.org.au>

[Index](#)

---

## **New format and name**

Once upon a time we produced a printed newsletter called "Keyboard & Mouse" and "Bytes & Pieces" was just an ad-hoc supplement to that august production. Unfortunately, due the rising cost of printing, we were forced to discontinue "Keyboard & Mouse" and the email-distributed "Bytes & Pieces" took over as our sole publication.

Now I think the time has come to revive "Keyboard & Mouse". We still can't afford to print it, but, with a little redesign, we can make it into an attractive newsletter that can be read online. With a little further work, it could also be an A4-printable publication so that you can print your own copy, should you feel so inclined.

I have the software tools needed and a sample of another publication produced in a similar format to use for guidance so I am going to produce a prototype and get some input on what you think of it. Stay tuned!

[Index](#)

---

## **Just for fun**

### **Car repair:**

A blonde was driving home after work, and got caught in a really bad hailstorm. Her car was covered with dents, so the next day she took it to a repair shop. The shop owner saw that she was a blonde, so he decided to have some fun. He told her just to go home and blow into the tail pipe really hard, and all the dents would pop out.

So, the blonde went home, got down on her hands and knees and started blowing into her car's tailpipe. Nothing happened. She blew a little harder, and still nothing happened.

Her roommate, another blonde, came home and said, "What are you doing?" The first blonde told her how the repairman had instructed her to blow into the tailpipe in order to get all the dents to pop out.

Her roommate rolled her eyes and said... "HELLLLOWW ... You gotta roll up the windowwwws!!!!!!!"

### **Brake problem:**

A young girl (18ish) walks into a prestige car sales room. Looks around at all the Porsches, Lamborghini's, Jags etc., and says to the salesman "can I have the red one?" - a top of the range Porsche. "I'll pay cash!" and starts taking handfuls of tenners out of a carrier bag until she gets to the right price.

The deal is finalised very quickly and the girl drives it away. She is back 2 days later - "I want my money back...it smells awfully bad when I use the brakes", she states emphatically.

Not wanting to lose the sale (having taken cash and fiddled the books) the manager decides to ride in the car with her 'in case she is not driving it properly'. He gets in and she roars out of the dealership, drops it into second gear at 55 mph, floors the pedal again and slips into 3rd at 80mph does a handbrake turn into a country lane and then really starts to accelerate. 120mph into 4th gear; 5th at 145mph.

The engine is screaming, trying to leap out of the bonnet when it reaches 170mph. The scenery is a green blur the G-force has him pinned in the seat. In the distance, to his relief, the barriers of a level crossing are beginning to come down and she will have to slow down (he thinks!) instead the pitch of the engine increases. 100 yards from the crossing she slams on the brakes and the car stops inches from the barrier. "Can you smell it?" she says.

"SMELL IT? I'M SITTING IN IT!"

All complaints should be directed to Harold Harding who submitted these.

[Index](#)

## From last meeting

Our intended speaker at last meeting was John James. However, because of a personal emergency, John was unable to make it and Graeme Scobie ably filled in. A copy of Graeme's presentation is available from our interim Secretary, Colin von Bibra. Just give him a call or drop him an email to arrange to view the CD.

Although John was unable to make his presentation at the meeting, he has made his and Paul Horne's notes available and they appear below.

[Index](#)

---

## Databases

### An introduction by John James

There are many programs used in the construction of Data Bases. Amongst the most common perhaps are Microsoft Access, Microsoft Works and Microsoft Excel. Of these, Access is the most complicated and not recommended for simple data base projects.

Data bases are ideal where you want to be able to readily find something from entries you have made of a collection e.g. Stamps, a Library of Books, CDs, Video or audio Cassettes, Vinyl Records, DVDs, Addresses of Friends and Relatives and so on. The list can be endless but the principles remain the same. For example, if you had a properly constructed data base of say 100 audio CDs, each of which contained music by many composers you could identify which CDs held music by Chopin with a couple of mouse clicks.

An Excel data base is constructed by entering the data in separate "Columns"; in Works the columns are called "Fields". In Excel you can, if you wish start each column with a "Header" i.e. a description of what the column contains. In Works you give a name to the "Field".

Before attempting to construct a data base, whatever program you intend to use, it is wise to give plenty of thought to what you want to be able to do with it. Its principal purpose will be to sort the data into alphabetical or numerical order according to the particular attribute you choose. Probably the most common database would contain the names and addresses of friends and relatives.

I cannot emphasise enough the need for preparation. For instance lets say you enter 200 or so addresses with the Street and Town in one column and then decide that it would be useful to sort just on Town – too late, you would have to re-enter and split that data into two separate columns. You cannot sort on a portion of a column.

With items such as Video Cassettes, you could consecutively number each cassette 1, 2, 3, etc and file them in that order. In this instance the first column would simply be the number of the item.

You can adjust the width of the columns to suit the data in several ways. In Excel or Works go to "Format/Width" or place the cursor on the right side of the column at the top until you see a cross, then holding the left mouse button down, drag the side of the column to the width you want.

In all likelihood you will need to print in Landscape mode to incorporate the total data base. If you go to "Print Preview" it will show you the limits of each page.

[Index](#)

---

## Using Microsoft Excel as a Database

### An Introduction by John James & Paul Horne

Most computer users would be familiar with spreadsheet programs and these can be effectively used for the construction of data bases. The following will deal with the use of Microsoft Excel (a spreadsheet program) as a data base.

We have prepared a file "[Database Sample Addresses.xls](#)" and you will see from that that all entries of the one kind go into one column i.e. Surnames in column A, their relationship (Family, Acquaintance or Friend) in column B, Initials in column C and so on.

Sorting is very simple. Select a **single cell** in the database Go to "Data/Sort" and select the column you want to

sorted and **also** if your database has column headers tick “My data range has Header Row”. This action excludes the first row from the sort.

We use Excel 3 and when we do this the whole data base is automatically highlighted. On earlier versions of Excel you may find that this is not the case and you have to manually select the database, ensuring that **ALL the columns** are highlighted.

( Beware that if you select the whole column instead of a single cell you could end up only sorting that individual column. However if you do this a warning drop down box appears which recognizes that you have data in adjacent column(s) and seeks your confirmation that that data in those other columns which directly relate to the data about to be sorted, will also be preserved. If instead you click on “Continue with the current selection”, only the data in the column you initially selected will change. Clicking on “Sort” takes you then to the “Sort” box. This box allows you to prioritize your required sorting into first, second and third degrees of relevance ).

Having selected the columns you now have the ability to sort any of the columns alphabetically. If you wanted to put all my family members together you would sort on column B. If you wanted to see who were in the same postcode, you would sort on Column H.

If, for example, you wanted to sort out family and within that group show their names in alphabetical order then you would go to “Sort By”, use the arrow and select “Column B”, then immediately below that go to “Then By” and select “Column A”. There are other options to sort by Day, Month, and Year depending on what entries you have in your database.

Whatever the data, think beforehand on what information you would want to sort because you must enter that particular data in a separate column. If you have missed out some data in your initial construction you can always go to edit and insert another column. When you enter data there is no need to initially enter it in any particular order, a “Sort” will fix that. The data in the sample data base are fictitious.

Another useful feature is the Data/Filter command. This allows you to sort the data base so as to leave in place only the data you require at that time. Highlight the relevant column in the data base and go to Data/Filter and select “AutoFilter”. A tick will appear against “AutoFilter” and you are returned to the data base where a dropdown arrow appears in the heading of the column you selected. On **clicking on the arrow**, all available options are shown. Click on one of the options and the database will immediately reveal only that data which relates to your option.

To filter more than one column, highlight the entire spreadsheet and then click Data/Filter/AutoFilter and then progressively filter the columns in the priority you require. To return to your original data base simply click Data/Filter/AutoFilter and the ‘tick’ will disappear.

A Works Database is basically the same but it has additional features such as – viewing the data in a list or form view, marking records and showing or hiding them.

Transferring a database from Excel to Works or vice versa is simply a matter of saving the data in Excel as .csv Comma Delimited and in Works as Text and Commas .csv and opening it up in the other program. Experiment and have fun.

[Index](#)

## John's sample database

Surname	Relation	First Names	Title	Initials	Address	Town	Post Code	Country	Telephone	Notes
Brown	Friend	Edward & Mary	Mr. Mrs	E.M	1 Argyle Ave, Riverside	Stirling	FK8 1UL	Scotland	01666 58146	
Paterson	Friend	Bill & Betty	Mr. Mrs	B.B	10 K.Q.Ranch Rd.	Westmere, Julian CA	92036-9446	USA	01463 731307	
Rolinson	Family	Alastair & Jill	Mr. Mrs	A.J	11 Boswell Road,	Inverness		Scotland		
Burnett	Family	Walter	Mr.	W.	2 Thrigby Rd.	Filby, Norfolk	NR29 3HJ	England	01236 608791	
Burnett	Friend	Walter	Mr.	C.E	3 Thrigby Rd.	Clarkston, Glasgow	FK8 1UL	Scotland	01666 58146	
Cowan	Aquaintance	Fred	Mr.	F	4 Carolside Avenue,	Clarkston, Glasgow	7008	Scotland	01236 751414	Mary's cousin
Cowan	Aquaintance	Fred	Mr.	D.J	5 Carolside Avenue,	Bexhill On Sea	NR29 3HJ	England	01236 608791	
Davidson	Family	Charles & Edith	Mr. Mrs	C.E	6 Normandale House, Normandale	Bexhill On Sea	TN39 3NZ	England	01236 764370	
Davidson	Friend	Charles & Edith	Mr. Mrs	J	7 Normandale House, Normandale	Coatbridge, Lanarkshire	7008	Scotland	01236 751414	
MacKinnon	Friend	Darby & Joan	Mr. Mrs	D.J	8 Swinton Place, Kirkwood	Coatbridge, Lanarkshire	ML5 5SE	Scotland	015 603 21313	
Marshall	Aquaintance	Joan	Mrs	J	9 Coronation Terrace	Penarth, Glamorgan	8429	Wales	01659 58162	
Waterson	Aquaintance	Marjorie	Miss	M	12 Kingsknowe Dr.	Galashiels, Selkirkshire	2481	Scotland	0141 644 1408	

A copy of the Excel file is available from here:

<http://hobartpcgroup.org.au>

You'll not only find it easier to read than the slightly modified version appearing above, but you will be able to work through the exercises John and Paul discuss.

[Index](#)

---

## Other database applications

A flat-file database is described by Wikipedia thus: "A flat file is a file containing records, generally one record per line. Fields may simply have a fixed width with padding, or delimited by whitespace or tabs or commas (CSV) or other characters. Extra formatting may be needed to distinguish an internal space from a delimiter. There are no structural relationships. The data are "flat" as in a sheet of paper, in contrast to more complex models such as a relational database.

"The classic example of a flat file database is a basic name-and-address list, where the database consists of a small, fixed number of fields: Name, Address, and Phone Number. Another example is a simple HTML table, consisting of rows and columns. These types of database are so common that we often see one without regarding it as a database."

For simple flat-file databases, any good spreadsheet will do. In fact, Wikipedia says the flat model of a database was the basis for the spreadsheet. Examples are MS Excel, Open- Star- Office Calc, Quattro Pro and Lotus 1-2-3. There are also some database programs for producing flat-file databases, such as the one included in MS Works. Others flat-file database programs are dedicated to a particular task, such as organising your music library, cataloguing your books, keeping a record of your photos, listing your stamp collection and so on.

For more advanced databases try MS Access, Lotus Approach, FileMaker Pro, Paradox, Alpha Five, or Open- Star- Office Base. Professionals use databases such as Oracle, IBM DB, MySQL and SQL. These require a knowledge of programming, but are extremely flexible and can be tailored to the customer's exact requirements. Point-of-sale, medical practice, newsagency and other specialised databases are usually based on such professional programs.

[Index](#)

---

## Database tutorials

You may find you need help getting started with the more complex database programs discussed above. Do a search on the Internet using *free xxxx tutorial* (where xxxx is your chosen database program). The search engine should find you some introductory material such as this for OpenOffice.org's Base (ooBase).

<http://sheepdogguides.com/fdb/fdb1main.htm>

For MS Access, try this tutorial from Florida Gulf University (listed on our website):

[http://hobartpcgroup.org.au/files/links/office\\_20001.htm](http://hobartpcgroup.org.au/files/links/office_20001.htm)

Don't forget to examine the database package thoroughly – a tutorial may well be included on the CD or installed when you install the database application. Also visit the supplier's website to see if any are offered there.

[Index](#)

---

©Hobart Computer Users Group Inc. (except where stated otherwise)  
Produced using StarOffice 8.0 from <http://www.sun.com> running under Xandros Linux 3.0

**Editor:** Peter Campbell,  
C/-Hobart Computer Users Group Inc.,  
PO Box 3179, West Hobart Tas 7000, Australia  
**Phone:** 0414 402 092  
**Email:** [editor@hobartpcgroup.org.au](mailto:editor@hobartpcgroup.org.au)

**Disclaimer:** Opinions expressed herein are those of the Editor or the author of the item concerned and are not necessarily endorsed by the Management Committee of the Hobart Computer Users Group Inc. While care is taken in compiling the information in this newsletter, the Hobart Computer Users Group Inc. and its officers and members cannot take responsibility for any problems arising from the use of the information

**Website:** Back issues are available from our website <http://hobartpcgroup.org.au>

**Subscriptions:** To subscribe to this newsletter, please visit our website. It is available in PDF format only

**Reprinting:** While permission will be given to other non-profit organisations to reprint items from this newsletter, (where the Group holds the copyright to the material in question), please contact the Editor for verification before reprinting