



Datamini Systems Pty Ltd

Incorporating QUADRANT COMPUTERS

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Sales, Service & Installations of Computers and Networks

Client Newsletter

Spring 2010

- *In this Issue:* *Staff News – Norm Hughes Retires, Business Name Change*
 When I Look Back – 20 Years in IT
 Office 2010 – Should you Upgrade?
 Windows 7 Service Pack 1 – coming
 Remote Access using Labtech

Staff News

Many of you will know that Norm Hughes decided to retire from the business on July 1. He and his wife Meg have decided to escape the hassle of city life — not to mention hassle of IT life — and move to the extremities of the Mornington Peninsula. While they still have their health (and the Aussie dollar has some value) they hope to enjoy some overseas travel; we understand that they plan to spend some months in France. It may come as a surprise but some of you will know that Norm is something of a Francophile; he admits that he speaks a pretty good broken schoolboy French! But while we will be sorry to lose Norm's full-time services, he has agreed to assist us from time-to-time with "Special Projects" involving network design and cloud computing.

So, all the best Norm for your retirement, and thanks & best wishes from the rest of us at Datamini. (*We have allowed Norm a small rant in the opposite column...!*)

Following Norm's retirement, we have decided to do something about the mouthful which became our business name following our merger on July 1 2009. So, from October 1 2010, our merged businesses will simply be known as **Datamini Systems Pty Ltd**. Our new logo is above, and in it you will note that we have incorporated the business name of Quadrant Computers. Importantly, the Quadrant Computers domain name remains valid, so the Quadrant website and all Quadrant email addresses are still functional.

When I Look Back ... a few words from **Norm Hughes**

As Boris has mentioned, I'm at the time of Life when I've realised that I'm not getting any younger, so for me it makes sense to go. My parents in New Zealand are not enjoying the best of health, and I seem to be getting not-so-subtle messages from my own body that I'm not 21 anymore. So after long discussions and a lot of thought and red wine, I've decided to call it a day.

The industry has changed so much over the 20 years I've been in IT. I left teaching back in 1989, from what was then the Moorabbin College of TAFE. There I taught apprentices and technical trainees in Analogue and Data Communications. Back then, we taught proprietary networking basics around a bulky NCR network server which boasted an enormous 10Mb hard drive (Gasp). The workstations weighed a ton and were equipped with 8" 1.2Mb floppy drives and hi-tech 7" B&W displays driven by Hercules Graphics cards. I recall my boss saying he'd blown the entire departmental budget on the LAN and we'd have to buy our own chalk... Incidentally, that same boss (Mr John McKay) is now Technical Director at Chisholm Institute in Dandenong. He never did re-imburse me for all that chalk I had to buy — I knew he'd come to no good. (Where's my money John!!!!)

Those were the days of innovative graphical upstarts such as Windows 2.0, but MS DOS 5/6 had trumped CP/M (Control Program for Microprocessors) and

had an increasing number of adherents. Since you could only run one application at a time in the DOS memory space, I and most of my colleagues used a little program called "PowerMenu" which allowed you to choose an application from a numbered list. Programs may have included WordStar, (shudder!) Lotus 1-2-3, Ventura Publisher, dBase IV & etc. When you selected the number assigned to your program, a small batch file would run the program and then on exit, return to PowerMenu. If you had 640Kb of RAM, you were flying!

Affordable printers were black-only Dot Matrix types such as the Epson LX/LQ300 series. As for remote computing, I demonstrated this miracle to my students by using a locally made Datacraft modem (it cost about \$600) to connect into Monash Uni at 1200 Baud, which was approx equal to 1200 bits per second. The speeds we enjoy now (e.g. 20 Megabits per second via ADSL2+) were unthought-of then, they were Dick Tracy stuff. If you wanted a network, it was usually Novell, and it cost a bundle; e.g. \$150 for a 2-10Mb network card!!! I could go on and on, but there have been so many changes that I'm already getting a headache trying to remember them all...

So I'll be (mercifully) brief. I'll miss you, our loyal customers, especially the biscuits and coffees I used to bludge, and the many jokes you shared with me. (You know who you are!) *Merci, et au revoir.*

Office 2010 – Should you Upgrade?

The answer is, of course: it depends. According to a contributor at LifeHacker.com, many of us won't need the powerful feature set offered by Office 2010. Especially since free, open-source tools like OpenOffice.org provide many of the more powerful features you'd want from a desktop office suite anyway.

So why would you upgrade to Office 2010? Really, you'd do it when you want the best of all worlds. If you need every powerful number-crunching, presentation-making, email-managing, document-creating feature available only in Office, and you rely on tools like Outlook or OneNote, or you need rock-solid offline support, or you have to traffic in Office documents for the work you do, then definitely upgrade. The upgrade comes with plenty of perks, including improvements to the ribbon, some integration with Microsoft Office Web Apps and plenty more. When it comes down to it, though, the only reason to upgrade to Office 2010—or pay for a suite like Office at all—is if it's the only tool capable of doing what you need done, and it does it how you prefer to do it.

So, for personal use, if you already have Office 2007 buying Office 2010 is probably not worth it. And, if you need it for work then your employer has probably already supplied it, along with those essential Training

Courses (ha ha.) However, if you own Office 2003 or even Office XP, there maybe another reason which may influence you to upgrade – this is the fact that by default, Office 2007 saves documents in the "*.docx" format, a format which (amazingly?) Office 2003 and Office XP cannot read without additional software to convert the file. Yes, there is free conversion software which can be downloaded from MS, but even so, definitely don't just upgrade just because a new version of Office is available. After all, there'll be another one out in a year or two...

But – having said all that, if you really and truly just have to try before you buy, download a trial copy from <http://office.microsoft.com/en-au/>

Windows 7 – Service Pack 1

The beta version of Windows 7 SP1 was released on July 10th for expiry on June 30 2011. By then, the RTM version (Release to Manufacturing) should be available for public download and installation. It will include updates based on those delivered by the Windows Update online service since the OS's launch in October, as well as additional tweaks based on customer feedback. For us, however, Service pack or not, the biggest bugbear for staunch XP users is that there is no MS-approved upgrade path to Windows 7; you have to do a fresh install then use the clunky "Windows Easy Transfer" program which transfers your settings but not your applications. We have however recently discovered a very good application from Laplink; remember them? It's called PCMover and at US\$29 for a single licence it works a treat, even on networked machines with network profiles. And, it does transfer programs! Have a look at:

<http://www.laplink.com/pcmover>

Labtech Remote Management Tool

We have been very happy with our existing software tools that we use in our SLA offerings for Windows Small Business Server and Windows Server. However, in the interests of higher efficiency, we are trialling a program which can be used in addition to our existing SLA remote management tools; a program which would refine what we already do but with the distinct advantage that it can be programmed to resolve issues automatically as they happen without human intervention, i.e. restart a stopped Email store service, a UPS monitoring service, various security services & etc.

This application can organise system information and support tools into one location, and provide a larger array of system health checkpoints and up-to-date user friendly SLA reporting. So, we are testing this tool with some enthusiasm as it looks likely to improve the level of service to our clients by shortening our response times to a larger number of issues. We will keep you informed!