



A Report

to the Committee
of the

14th National Caravan Clubs Rally

**Elmore Victoria
Dec 2010-Jan 2011**

Technology Classes

Presented by: Gary Fitzgerald

The Aims

Including technology classes as part of the rally were first discussed in late 2008 and after a number of initial meetings and discussion was put forward as an activity for the rally participants.

Our aims were to:

- Provide a variety of technology options for participants
- The options should be of special significance to Caravaners
- The focus of delivery would be to the Senior participants
- Provide hands-on delivery
- Provide knowledgeable and qualified facilitation
- Provide up-to-date and current information
- Support the delivery with written material
- Use as much free software as possible

Preparation

After several meetings with the committee, preparations were well in hand leading up to the start of the rally.

A delivery guide was produced and made available to those who had expressed an interest in the preceding months and also through the Rally Office Manager and Secretary.

Support was sought from a number of Organisations, whilst not all came to fruition there was sufficient 3rd-party support to allow us to continue.

The preparations for Mobile communications provided some anxious moments and plenty of discussion in relation to the capacity requirements. However, all preparations went smoothly and were adequate for the event.

Delivery

The delivery of topics were all facilitated by Gary Fitzgerald who has 30 years combined experience in teaching and a range of facets of information technology from both a technical and theoretical level and qualifications include: Training and Assessment Level 4, Grad Dip Ed, Diploma in IT, Microsoft Office Suite accreditation, Programming experience at Government and Small Business levels, Management of an ISP (Internet Service Provider), Teaching at University, TAFE and Adult education, Currently operates a Web Design service and specialises in assisting Community Organisations.

Originally a variety of topics were planned over 8 days (16 classes, mornings and afternoons). It became evident from the registrations that the demand was very high and a further 5 classes were included during the evenings. All classes were for 3 hours duration and were arranged at varying days and times to allow for some choice for the popular items.

Topics included:

- Internet
- Digital Cameras
- Mobile Phones
- Laptops
- Skype
- Emails
- GPS
- CD/DVD
- Scanning
- Editing Images
- File Management

In total we had 181 participants attend classes over the eight days.

Customer Focus

Our focus was on the participants of the rally, hence the additional classes. The class room was air conditioned and provided plenty of seating and space for the experience to be as comfortable as possible, although the extreme heat did test our patience at times.

Due to demand and short times between classes the provision of notes in classes was found too difficult to produce, so it was decided to produce a CD (in some cases a DVD) that would be made available on the last day to all of those who attended classes with software and notes applicable to all of the topics covered (even a few extras), regardless of what the participant attended.

This was found to be very popular (even though hastily prepared) and additional copies were made available to non-participants who had shown interest. All up approx 212 discs were distributed.

The attention to Customer Focus was evident as we received many compliments and expressions of appreciation in the way that the participants were dealt with and the level of knowledge, expertise, experience and patience that was provided.

Outcomes

It was evident that all of our aims were converted into positive outcomes for the benefit of participants.

I thoroughly enjoyed this face-to-face experience in providing assistance to so many new caravanning friends.

Rally Committee

I wish to thank the Rally Committee for the support they have shown and given towards the preparation and delivery of the technology classes. In some ways it was a bold move to introduce technology to this event for the first time, as there was no precedent to draw on.

Special thanks go to the office staff of the rally for their assistance, much appreciated.

In Hindsight

As always hindsight is a wonderful thing and there are always things you can learn from and even enhance for the future.

- More computers would have been nice. However, funding was a significant factor in restraining us to the 10 computers.
- If we can obtain the use of more computers then we could possibly have two classes and facilitators to spread the load and satisfy the demand.
- First day registration proved to be very eventful and we were overwhelmed with the interest shown, even though we expected the classes to be popular. There were some other external factors which hindered the registration process due to events that could not be avoided on the day. Perhaps the introduction of technology could enhance this process?
- Laptops would be a far more convenient tool instead of Personal Computers, simply from a management point of view.
- Several seminars or lectures could be provided to a mass audience, providing the correct topics were chosen.
- Free wireless access could be sought for the use of participants of the rally. This may be restricted due to the size and layout of the rally site and would require the support of an Internet Service Provider.
- Solar technologies could be introduced.

Supported by

The support we received was paramount to the success of this activity and we appreciate the support from the following:

My Expression P/L (Gary Fitzgerald) - for the preparation, management and delivery of the classes.

Also for:

Wireless Keyboard and Mouse kit prize given away on the last day.

Digital Cameras (including memory cards) and Memory Sticks as prizes for the Photography competition.

Telstra Country Wide – for the supply of broadband facilities for the classes and those handy emergency mobile phone chargers.

Bendigo Neighbourhood House – for supplying the computer equipment used in the classes.

Conclusion

There is no doubt the technology classes were a success and the participants enjoyed the experience. I would hope that similar classes would be made available at future national rallies as it is clearly of benefit to rally participants.

Gary Fitzgerald
My Expression P/L

PS: See you in Rockhampton at the 15th National Rally.