

The

Southern Highlands Computer Users Group Inc.

Assisting all members to explore and enjoy the benefits of Information Technology.

Monthly Newsletter

Keyword

December 2020

*Wishing all our members
a
safe and joyful
Christmas
and the very best
for 2021*



2020 Committee

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Phillip Reay

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Lynette Reay

Editor Keyword & Webmaster

Martina Oprey

Phone 4862-1584



Please note: We are not computer professionals and our expertise is limited.

Scott Hall

Our weekly meeting place for activities for PC and Apple users.



HarbisonCare, 2 Charlotte St, Burradoo, 2576, NSW.

www.shcug.org.au

How to join SHCUG.

You can join us at one of our weekly “Monday help sessions” and collect an application form. Payment can be made in cash or by cheque and handed to a tutor. Annual fee is \$40 single or \$60 couple. Alternatively use EFTPOS transaction IMB Bank: BSB number is: 641 800 and the account number is. 200456000, or send the application form and cheque, made out to SHCUG, to the following address: The Treasurer, SHCUG, c/- HarbisonCare, 6/2 Charlotte St, Burradoo, NSW, 2576.

Renewing memberships.

Renewal forms are sent out each year in early December to all current members by email, with all the relevant information needed to renew membership for the upcoming year.

Correspondence: Letters to the committee can be addressed to shcugcontact@gmail.com

Our Weekly ‘Members Helping Members’ sessions are held in Scott Hall , all members welcome.

Please note

Due to social distancing rules, members attending our Monday help sessions must have booked a place in one of our time slots, which are as follows; 10 am to 1 pm and 1 pm to 5 pm. A maximum of 15 members are allowed in any session. Email your preferred time slot to: shcugcontact@gmail.com

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By Martina Oprey
By your committee
By Martina Oprey
By Martina Oprey
By Martina Oprey
Send in by Ron Cunnew
By Martina Oprey

Invitation to the
The Southern Highlands Computer Users Group
Annual Social Gathering
to be held on 21 December at the
Old Market Place at Berrima.



Join your committee
at 10 am for morning tea.

IN MEMORY OF MAXINE GRAY

We have been informed that Maxine has passed away recently.

Maxine was one of the founding Members of SHCUG. She acted as Secretary for many years and also did a wonderful job as our genealogy co-ordinator. Maxine was what all clubs need as she was so helpful with all aspects of computers.

We are certain that Maxine will be sadly missed by all our members.

From your committee

Your committee met on 14 December. Once again we had a light agenda, mostly dealing with the preparation for the upcoming AGM, to be held on Monday, 1 February 2021. All positions on the 2020 committee will be declared vacant in mid January 2021. Nomination forms for a position are available from the committee members during our Monday help sessions.

Our finances are sound and not much has changed during the year. Our membership list is down from last year and we hope that our present members will all rejoin, so we can carry on for another year.

A gently reminder to all members that SHCUG's membership is due again from 31 December 2020. Our fees for 2021 remain the same at \$40 for a single and \$60 for a couple. An application form is included in this issue of Keyword (see page 5). Fees can be paid in cash or cheque and handed to Martina during our Monday help sessions.

As you might have noticed, we have lost yet another long time member, Maxine Gray (see top of page).

All members are invited to enjoy morning tea, supplied by SHCUG, on 21 December at Berrima, (see page 3 for further information). This is because at present we can not have anymore than 15 people in Scott Hall at any time. This is also our last meeting for 2020. We will resume our Monday help sessions on **4 January 2021 with renewed enthusiasm.**

Have you ever wondered about "Virtual Reality" and its applications. When Martina researched this subject she discovered it was much more than playing games by teenage boys (see pages 6 and 7).

Scanning to go into clubs and pubs is about to become a common task. Ron Cunnew did send in some information about this "check- in" method (see page 8).

Last not but least, we would like to wish all our members a safe and happy Christmas and all the very best for 2021. **See you all back in January 2021.**

Your committee.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS COMPUTER USERS GROUP INC
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM
(*NEW OR RENEWAL*)

Membership renewals are due on 1 January each year.

MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR 2021 are SINGLE \$40. COUPLE \$60

First Name.....
(Include additional family member's name if applicable)

Surname.....

If paying by cheque send this with your fee \$..... Cheque No..... to
The treasurer, Southern Highlands Computers Users Group Inc,
c/- HarbisonCare, 6/2 Charlotte Street, Burradoo, NSW, 2576

If paying by Electronic Funds Transfer, enter your Membership Name in the
TO ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION and transfer your fee to SHCUG's Bank details.

BSB 641-800 Account No. 200456000
(be sure to include your name(s) in the account description).

Renewals can be paid on any Monday during our help sessions in Scott Hall
between 10 am and 5 pm.

FOR MEMBERS RENEWING: IF THERE HAVE BEEN ANY CHANGES TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S
DETAILS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE SECTION BELOW, OTHERWISE LEAVE BLANK.

Surname.....

Address.....

Town/Suburb.....

Phone/Mobile.....

Email address.....



Virtual Reality (VR).

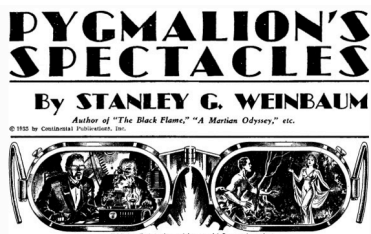
By Martina Oprey

One of our grandchildren has a passion for computers and on one of our visits, we watched him playing a video game. Wearing a VR headset and controls strapped to his wrists, he demonstrated how he could use the two peripherals. The headset allowed him to see his computer screen in 3D mode and the controls he wore on his wrists enabled him to move and pickup items, open doors, pull switches and more that he saw, via the head set, on his computer screen. Quite entertaining to watch.

So, what is virtual reality (VR)?

Have you ever lost yourself in a book, imagining being part of the story? It's the experience of a world that doesn't actually exist. The virtual reality our grandchild showed us was one created by computers that allows you to experience and interact with a 3D world that isn't real by putting on a head-mounted display (headset) and some form of input tracking (hand controls). The VR headset will typically split the display (computer screen) between your eyes, creating a stereoscopic 3D effect with stereo sound, and together with the technology and the input trackers, it will create an immersive, believable experience, allowing you to explore the virtual world being generated by the computer and seen on your screen. The images you see make you feel you are "right there" mentally and physically. VR can take you to places you might not be able to visit in the real world, for example going for a walk on the planet Mars.

Where did visual reality come from?



VR as we know it today has been around for decades and was invented in 1957 by Morton Heilig, a cinematographer. However the term 'virtual reality' was coined much later in 1987 by researcher Jaron Lanier. The idea of VR is even a bit older. In 1935, science fiction author Stanley Weinbaum wrote *Pygmalion's Spectacles*. In this fictional short story, the main character meets a professor who invents a pair of goggles that allows him to view a movie with sight, sound, taste, smell and touch. Between 1957 and today, steady progress has been made in the

development of the technology, such as programs, headsets and controllers. Virtual reality continues to find new applications and with backing of billion-dollar tech companies, we can be assured that this technology is here to stay.

How does virtual reality work?



In order to experience VR whilst playing a video game on a computer, you need to wear a VR headset (HMD) that blocks out the outside world and displays a 3D world or stitched images to create a simulation for you. Controllers, strapped to wrists or in the form of gloves, are designed to make you feel like you are using your own hands. You use the buttons, thumb-sticks and triggers of the controllers to perform certain actions during a game.

Virtual Reality applications.

In the 1990s, the exposure to virtual reality rarely went beyond a relatively primitive demonstration of a few blocky figures being chased around a chessboard by a crude pterodactyl (winged reptile). While the entertainment industry is still interested in VR applications and theatre experiences, the really interesting users for VR are in other fields.

Find on the next page VR applications, some used in unexpected places.

Virtual Reality used in the Space Industry.

Scientists at NASA have a difficult mission: to search for life on other planets. That's why they look to cutting-edge virtual-reality technology to control robots on Mars and to provide astronauts with a way to de-stress. Marissa Rosenberg is a NASA-based neuroscientist and is so enthusiastic about virtual reality that she's using it to train astronauts for their return to earth. Sensorimotor training, which is the prevention of being unbalanced and uncoordinated after a space landing, is one of the latest fields she is training astronauts in.

Virtual Reality and the Military.



The military in the UK and the US have both adopted the use of virtual reality in their training as it allows them to undertake a huge range of simulations. VR is used in all branches of its services: the army, navy, air force, marines and coast guard. In today's world technology is adopted from an early age and children are accustomed to video games and computers, VR proves an effective method of training. VR can transport a trainee into a number of different situations, places and environments for a range of training purposes. The military uses it for flight simulations, battlefield simulations, medic training, vehicle simulation and virtual boot camp, among other things. Because

VR is a completely immersive, visual and sound-based experience, it can safely replicate dangerous training situations to prepare and train soldiers, without putting them at risk until they are fully ready for combat.

Virtual Reality in the Class room.

VR is also adopted in education for teachers and learning situations where students can interact with each other and within a 3D environment. They can also be taken on virtual field trips, for example to museums, taking tours of the solar system and going back in time to different eras. Virtual reality can be particularly beneficial for students with special needs, such as autism. Research has found that VR can be a motivating platform to safely practice social skills for children, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

Virtual Reality in Building and Manufacturing Industries.

Virtual environments are used in architecture, where architects create virtual models of their building plans so that clients can walk around the exteriors/interiors and get the feel of the building before it is even built. Car companies too have used VR technology to build virtual prototypes of new vehicles, testing them thoroughly before producing a single physical part. A lesser known use of VR is in fashion where it has had a profound impact. For example, virtual simulations of store environments can be extremely useful for retailers to design their signage and product displays without fully committing to the build like you would in the real world. Some popular fashion labels have already begun implementing VR in their business, offering a 360-degree experience of fashion shows and allowing customers to try on clothes virtually.

Virtual Reality in Sports.

The sports industry too is making use of virtual reality, used by coaches and players to train more efficiently across a range of sports. Essentially, it is used as a training aid to help measure athletes performances and as a technique that could help athletes' cognitive abilities when injured.

Virtual Reality in Medicine.



The medical world is also getting involved in using virtual environments. Medical staff can use virtual environments to train in everything from surgical procedures to diagnosing patients. Surgeons have used virtual technology to not only train and educate, but also to perform surgery remotely by using robotic devices. Another benefit of virtual reality is the ability to view the inside of the human body which is not only useful for doctors, but also for patients. VR allows patients to be taken through their surgical plan by virtually stepping into a patient-specific 360° VR reconstruction of their anatomy & pathology.

Virtual Reality has been an interesting subject to have researched, as I wasn't aware that it is used in so many fields.



More on QR Code Covid Check-in

Sent in by Ron Cunnew

From the NSW Government website:

"From Monday 23 November 2020, customer check-in at businesses must be completed using electronic methods e.g. a QR code.

The [Service NSW COVID Safe Check-in](#) is strongly recommended to businesses as a free, secure and convenient system, but businesses are free to choose any electronic system that meets the [record keeping requirements](#)."

"For patrons who do not have access to a smartphone, businesses and organisations are encouraged to record their contact details and time of entry in digital form using a non-QR electronic device, such as a computer. In exceptional circumstances where an electronic method is not available, for example due to technical limitations or outages, paper records must be collected and be digitised as soon as possible e.g. by taking a readable digital photo."

So what's the privacy of your data? It depends whether the business uses the NSW Government scanning app or a third party app.

Here's the relevant part of the privacy statement for the NSW Government app:

Service NSW will hold the record of your attendance for a period of 28 days from the date it was collected, and will handle such personal information in accordance with the Order.

If requested by the Chief Health Officer, the record of your attendance will be disclosed by Service NSW to the Chief Health Officer for the Chief Health Officer to use in the manner contemplated by the Order.

Upon the expiry of this 28-day period:

if you accessed the COVID-19 Safe Check-in tool using your MyService NSW Account, Service NSW will permanently delete the additional information that was collected (i.e. details of the premises attended, time and date of attendance). Your contact details in your MyServiceNSW Account will not be changed or deleted; and

if you registered to use the COVID-19 Safe Check-in tool as a 'guest' or used the COVID-19 Web Check-in at a Service NSW Service Centre, Service NSW will permanently delete the record of your attendance. Any information transferred to the Chief Health Officer may be retained for more than 28 days in accordance with the Order.

With third party QR apps the privacy situation is uncertain as different apps have differing privacy policies and indeed, some apps have no privacy policy at all.

So what's the takeaway here? If you go to a restaurant, bar or other establishment you must register and you will be advised to do so electronically by scanning a QR code with your phone.

If the QR code is scanned via the NSW Government then your data should be deleted after 28 days unless needed for Covid contact tracing. That's a comforting assurance.

If the establishment uses a 3rd party QR scanner app rather than the Government app or uses any kind of computer form to collect your information then the best way to guard the privacy of your information is to sign in using a spreadsheet or whatever other device the establishment provides. You could ask to sign in with paper and pencil but it appears that establishments are strongly encouraged not to do this..



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