

Article: [COMPUTERS BEHAVING BADLY](#)

Topic: Looking Forward, Looking Back.

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Another year and I thought I would start it with a trip down memory lane.

Who can remember their very first hard drive?. Mine was a 20megabyte monster, capable of holding 14 floppy disks' worth of data. Why would I ever need so much storage when I had only been using a dual floppy drive unit up to that point?. You had DOS on one floppy and Word on another. Life was simple.

A little as 10 years ago, hard drive space was measured at about \$100 per gigabyte. That figure is now around \$1. You used to have to sell a body part to afford memory (or at least your Grandmother), now it's the same cost as to refuel your car.

Talking to other computers meant delving into the black arts of geeks and nerds, acquiring the latest and greatest 14,400 bits per second modulator/demodulator (what we now call a modem) and subscribing to Public Bulletin Boards. Most of us now surf the Web through ADSL at 512,000 bits per second. This can even be done wirelessly, in a plane, at 35000 feet doing 900kms per hour.

Our screens weren't colour; they weren't even black and white. They were monochrome, one colour – either green or orange. Floppy disks once were actually floppy. Data was saved to cassette tapes. And there was once a time (a long time ago, in a far away galaxy... and all that) when Microsoft wasn't even around.

As to guessing where we will be in 2 years time let alone 5 or 10 years is anyone's guess. And guess you may as well do – you'd have just as good a chance of hitting the nail on the head as the next person.

We have Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's), like Palm Pilots and Pocket PC's that can wirelessly surf the Web, check your emails, type up a Word Document and schedule your next appointment all from the palm of your hand. Not only can we watch TV and DVD's on our computers, but our computers are now moving into the lounge room and can record TV programs straight to their hard drives.

Our PC's can talk to our mobiles and digital cameras. We transfer loads of data on USB memory sticks the size of lipstick cases with storage capacities exceeding NASA's during the Apollo 13 mission. This and more without raising an eyebrow!.

We are slowly but surely all becoming more computer literate - like it or not. Most of us can install software, setup an email account or network 2 computers. Well, OK, maybe not so many for the later, but at least we know what we want and what is needed to get the job done. These technical advances were in your grandparents dreams, they are in our brains and they will be in our children's blood.

Yes, computers can drive you insane, cause expletives to gush forth that would turn Johnny Rotten's cheeks red and plant a deep desire in you to punch the keyboard (or is that just me!) but when it's all said and done – where would you be without them.

And for the mandatory start of year resolutions how about; I will install antivirus protection, I will keep said protection up to date, I will do regular backups, I will remove unwanted software and I will endeavour to find out what that annoying error message means during startup.

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