

# Radio Days – 2013-08-17

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## ***Tip of the Week – Hard Disc Failures***

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During the last few weeks I have had a number of calls from listeners' problems with their computers. Listening to the story behind the story (the back-story) it turns out that each of these listeners was using Windows XP on an old computer. Most Windows XP computers are at least ten years old, and this is an eternity in the life of a computer.

It is often said that a year in the life of a dog is equal to seven years in the life of a person. On this basis I proclaim that a years in the life of a computer is equal to fifteen years in the life of a person. This means that a ten-year old computer is equal to a person of 150 years!

If you are one of those still using a ten-year old computer please make sure that you have a good backup of all your data and that you have the installation CDs for all your programs. I say this because I expect that your computer's hard disc will die very soon. Most people have gone from Windows XP to Windows 7 or Windows 8. This is a good move because Microsoft's support for Windows XP will stop next year.

Another reason for converting to the current version of Windows is that more and more programs will not run on the latest versions of Windows.

### ***Checking Your Hard Disc***

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There are many programs which can check your hard disc and one of the easiest ones to use is Defraggler. This program may already be on your hard disc; if not it is easy to download and install. When you have installed and run Defraggler there are two things to check:

- In the bottom section click on the tab marked *Health*. If your hard disc shows anything other than *Good* then you need to think about getting a new computer. With the present state of Windows XP it is not worth updating your computer: you are better off spending your money of a new computer as your old computer is likely to die very soon.
- In the menu select *Action » Advanced » Check drive for errors*. This runs Windows' disc check program which will check to see that the file system on your hard disc is in good shape. If there are any errors it will ask you if you would like to correct these errors when your computer next starts. Accept this and type *Y* then enter. To leave this new windows type *exit* then press *Enter*. Now, next time you restart your computer it will perform an extra task and try to correct the errors on your hard disc.

### ***MYOB Rollover***

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During the week I had a call from a new client who could not access old transactions in her MYOB data file. She knew that they were there because she had just got her file back from her accountant and her accountant had rolled her data file over after doing the end-of-year tax return.

She was unaware that MYOB needed to be rolled over at the end of every year so I sat her down and explained just what was going on with her data file. I explained that, in the good old days of last century and last millennium all accounting data programs needed each month to be completed then closed so that the new month could be started. This made accounting software most complicated and frustrating, and many people thought that there should be a better way of doing this. MYOB came to fame because it only needed to close each year, not each month, so saving the average user a lot of problems.

There was another reason that MYOB needed to have each year closed: the way that its data was stored on disc meant that there often was not enough available space in the data file for more than one year's worth of data. Now that there is a new filing system in use there is no reason for MYOB to need to close each year to be able to print reports for later years.

There are many temporary buildings still in use, and MYOB's temporary need for each year to be closed is now longer relevant. Other, better, accounting programs like QuickBooks manage to keep going year after year after year without the need to end each year.

### ***The Problem***

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My client's problem was that her MYOB data file lost data when her accountant ended the year and rolled her data file over. This process removes data from the year two years ago so that MYOB only has to keep track of last year's data, this year's data and next year's data.

When you perform a year-end rollover you are warned to make a backup copy of your data file before all the early data is removed but, as so often happens, her accountant did not read the screen or know that data was removed during the rollover. Thus, when her returned my client's data file on her memory stick there was only her new data file with a whole year's worth of data gone to data heaven (or, in her case, data hell!).

### ***The Solution***

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She, fortunately, had made a backup of her data file before taking it to her accountant so we were able to recover her data as it had been before her data file went to the accountant. This was a good move on her part so I congratulated her on her foresight.

The next step was to ring her accountant to see if he had entered or changed any transactions while he had had her data file: he had! The next step was to get him to come over and re-enter these transactions so that we could get a fair copy of the data file for the previous year. He objected to this intrusion in his working day but, because my client was a determined woman who had my skills to back her up, he soon realised that the easiest thing was to come over and re-enter these transactions.

Once he had entered the missing transactions I was able to explain to him just what happens when an MYOB data file is rolled over and how to prevent this sort of error in future. The steps that I follow are quite simple:

- Make sure that the file name has the financial year as part of the name. Because the year just ended was the 2013 financial year I renamed my client's data file to look like this: *company-2013.myox* because it was the file for the 2013 financial year.
- Check the data file for errors. This step only applies to older versions of MYOB: later versions do not need this.
- Compact the data file. Again, this step is not needed for current versions of MYOB.
- Because her accountant had done all necessary year-end transactions there was no need to do any more so on with the next step.
- Close MYOB then use Windows to copy her file and rename it to *company-2014.myox* so that it could be used for the coming financial year.
- Start MYOB and open the new data file then perform the year-end rollover.
- In earlier versions of MYOB you also need to compact the data file.

Now everything is ready to go! All the old data is available in the previous year's data file and the new data file is ready for a whole year's transactions to be entered.

### ***Alternative Programs***

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There are other accounting programs which do not need an annual rollover. It is not really necessary in MYOB, but the whole structure of the program, from the beginning of time, is built around an annual cleanout. The program has had at least two changes of data file structure since I worked there in the mid-1990s, but the underlying program has not changed to keep up with these changes.

This is one of the reasons that I prefer QuickBooks. It has a much easier way of handling the end of a period: just lock the transaction date with a password. This means that you cannot add, change or delete a transaction before the set date without knowing the password. This is far more convenient, and you can access all transactions, and print reports, for any period for which there is data in your accounting file.

MYOB is locked in a past which is no longer exists, and its users are locked into that past by the structures which were needed twenty years ago.

### ***Further Information***

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Defraggler [www.piriform.com](http://www.piriform.com)