

SAGE *Advice*

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SAGE-AU

The System Administrators Guild of Australia

<http://www.sage-au.org.au>

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SAGE Advice is the official newsletter of the System Administrator's Guild of Australia. It is available in PDF format free of charge to members of SAGE-AU via download from the SAGE-AU website. Past copies are available online at www.sage-au.org.au/newsletters_index.html

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Position Vacant

Broken or lost keyring?

Contact Phil Gerner in the SAGE-AU office (office@sage-au.org.au) and he will arrange a replacement to be mailed to you and for your password to be re-set to the new keyring number.

Advertising Rates (all prices are GST inclusive) Inclusions with SAGE Advice

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Ad space in four or more issues paid in advance attract a 20% discount.

See www.sage-au.org.au/newsletters_advert.html for our publication schedule for 2008.

Secretary's Report

A Message From Robert Hudson

Hello all,

It's been a busy year for SAGE-AU, and it's only going to get busier!

As you would all know, we recently held a Special General Meeting of the membership in order to change the way the SAGE-AU executive committee are elected. In order to both reduce cost and our environmental footprint, a change was proposed (and accepted by the membership) to allow electronic voting. We are now working with the membership on ways to implement a secure and reliable electronic voting system for the organisation - if you're interested in this topic (or any other relating to how SAGE-AU is run) please feel free to subscribe to the meta list.

We also recently put forward to the membership (again on the meta list) the idea of hiring a staff member to fill the gap between the function of our back-office outsourcer (PAMS) and the strategic role the executive committee of management should be filling for the organisation. The idea was well received, and we are now moving on with the next phase of the tasks around this matter, which is to clearly define the role and its associated responsibilities, and to then to gain full board approval to recruit a person into this position. This will be a big change for SAGE-AU, but one we believe will help us to grow and move forward as an organisation.

SAGE-AU has also recently welcomed Red Hat as a Platinum Sponsor. As well as sponsoring the guild, our sponsors often offer additional benefits to our members - all three of our Platinum Sponsors (Internode, Technical Architecture Solutions and now Red Hat) offer discounts to members on some of their services. If you are interested in finding out more about our sponsors and the services they offer, please check our sponsors page (<http://www.sage-au.org.au/display/SAGEAU/Our+Sponsors>) for more details.

Last but certainly not least, this year's annual System Administrators Conference (being hosted in Adelaide, and SAGE-AU's 16th annual conference) is also starting to come together, with programs currently being finalised. This year's conference will have a focus on environmentally friendly IT, a topic which is becoming more and more important in the IT industry both here in Australia as well as globally.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the conference.

Until then,

Robert Hudson
Secretary, SAGE-AU

IronPort - SAGE-AU Silver Sponsor

SAGE-AU is delighted to welcome IronPort® Systems as our newest Silver Sponsor.

IronPort® Systems is an independent business unit of Cisco. Operating as a part of Cisco's Security Technology Group, IronPort is a leading provider of anti-spam, anti-virus and anti-spyware appliances for organizations ranging from small businesses to the Global 2000. IronPort email security, Web security and security management product lines utilize SenderBase®, the world's largest threat detection database, to address issues faced by corporations large and small combining powerful performance with preventive and reactive security measures that are easy to deploy and manage.

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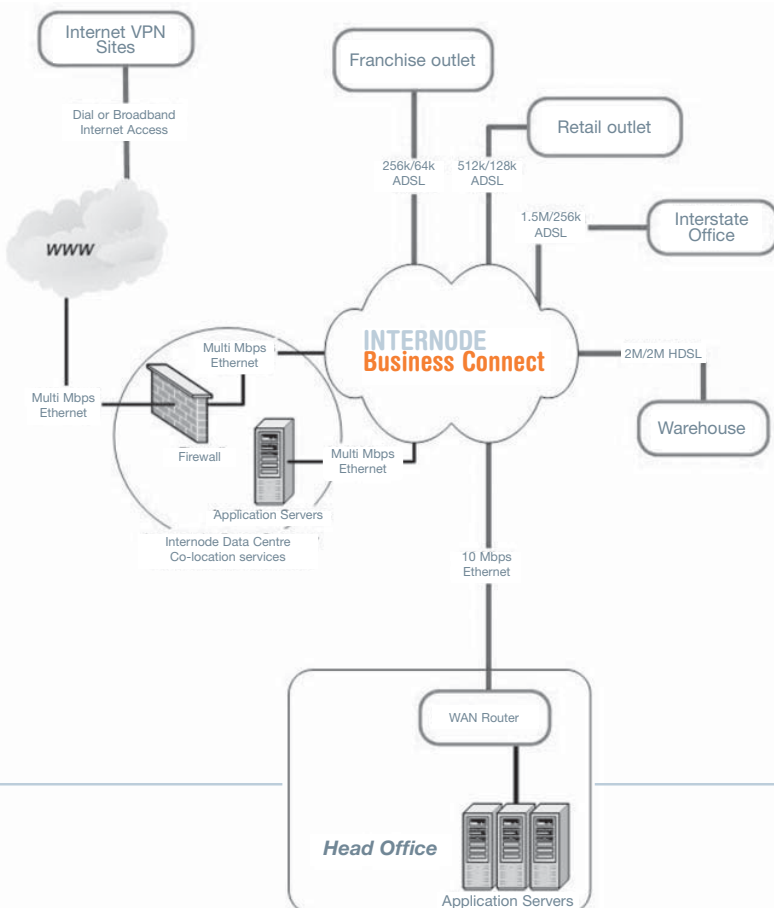
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For more information call 1300 788 233 or visit our website:
www.internode.on.net/ibc



Meet the Exec

Introducing Jess Wightman (SAGE Advice Editor)

Over the next few months, we hope to introduce you to the rest of the Executive Committee.

This month, we introduce you to General Committee Member (and Editor!) Jess Wightman.

What is your name?

Jess Wightman

When did you first get involved in the SAGE-AU committee? Why?

I'm a first-timer, and became involved through helping with the SAGE-AU website revamp during the end of 2006. It was around the beginning of 2007 that I was approached to become an executive committee member, after my help with the website.

How long have you been a SAGE-AU member?

I'm a relative new-comer to SAGE-AU. I became a member for the first time in November 2006, after hearing about it through work colleagues.

What do you like most about SAGE-AU?

The people - while SAGE-AU offers fantastic services to it's members, it's the people who make up SAGE-AU that make these services so worthwhile. Without our incredibly knowledgeable and helpful users, our mailing lists wouldn't be anywhere near as useful a tool as they are.

What are your goals for SAGE-AU this year?

I would like to get the SAGE-AU wiki up to decent standard, and crammed full of information from our mailing lists. I would like the wiki to be a tool for SAGE-AU sysadmins to find answers to questions they know have been answered before.

As I'm also one of the editors for 'SAGE-AU Advice', I'd really love for the newsletter to become a sought-after piece of information, and full of bits-and-pieces that members want to read about.

What do you do for your day-to-day job?

I'm an IT Officer for the UQ Business School. My main roles so far have been to help in the roll-out of our content management system and website redevelopment, organize our printing facilities and coordinate an Exchange mail migration.

Does your employer support you SAGE-AU membership? Your committee activities?

Most definitely. All members of my team are SAGE-AU members, as well as my manager - who also happens to be the SAGE-AU President for 2007-08.

What do you do in your leisure time?

I'm a creature of habit - reading anything fantasy related, gaming fairly heavily on my PS3 and, when weather permits, fishing!

Anything else you'd like to add?

Any SAGE-AU members who are keen to help re-vamp the our member wiki - please lend a hand. Just summarizing a tech list mail and summary into the wiki once a week (or even once a month!) would be a fantastic help.

Regional Group Report - W.A. Chapter

In April the W.A. chapter of SAGE-AU was treated to a demonstration of three OLTP laptops from the One Laptop Per Child project. Coming up we have Michael Kleef from Microsoft presenting at the May meeting - Linux and Microsoft's virtual server can play nicely together - and future meeting topics include a look at technical writing, the HSM backup product Commvault, and GPU supercomputing.

Please make sure you're subscribed to the SAGE-WA mailing list to be informed of coming meeting announcements. If you're not on the list, start here for help: <http://www.sage-au.org.au/display/SAGEAU/Mailing+Lists>

Andrew Shugg - WA President

Meet our members

Most of the time, members join our ranks silently, and unless they are very active on the mailing lists, regularly attend regional group meeting or speak at our national conference the existing membership doesn't really get the opportunity to find out who they are and what they do. This month, I'd like to introduce you to two new members, and also introduce you to a SAGE-AU member who's been around for over 10 years!

Today we introduce Lester Cheung.

Name: Lester Cheung
State: New South Wales
Member since: April 2008

What's your job title/description?

Sysadmin.

What's your business name?

Open Kernel Labs (www.ok-labs.com).

What does your business do?

Provide software and OS for embedded devices.

What do you do in your work?

Infrastructure, network, server etc design-admin-one-man-band.

How long have you been working in the System Administration field?

About 4 years.

Please tell us a story about one of your professional experiences.

A (horror) story of mine:

At a previous job the company had to move to a different location with almost no previous notice. We literally had to pull the plug and pack up. It was in such a hurry that no one has thought of the fact that our DNS master is located in the office and pulling the plug means that we

were unable to update our DNS records after the move. The problem was resolved after we got our hands on our friendly DNS secondary admins a couple of hours later.

Lessons learnt:

- Be friends with your admins who do your DNS secondaries.
- Long TTL for SOA/NS RR is probably not realistic for SMBs.
- Sleep (and not coffee) helps you to stay cool under stress.

How did you first hear about SAGE-AU?

2 years ago.

What have you gained from SAGE-AU in that time?

More mentioning from my mates.

Does your business support your SAGE-AU membership?

Yes.

Do you work in a team or on your own? How big is your team?

One-man-band here.

What do you do for fun?

Hang out with family, friends.

SAGE-AU welcomes our new members

SAGE-AU extends a warm welcome to our newest members. These include:

Queensland

- Mark Slingo from Far North Networks

Western Australia

- Francois Machabee from Bunnings
- David Morgan from Accord/Crox
- Mark Glossop from Sam4Life
- Peter McCrackan from Accord Crox

Victoria

- Benjamin Slater from Casmens Pty Ltd

New South Wales

- Mark Walkom from the ECN Group Australia Pty Ltd
- James Greive



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Wiki Article for the month

Disaster Recovery Plan

This month's article was based on a SAGE-AU Tech discussion which started with a problem proposed by Herwin Sularko. Thanks to Herwin & William Shipway for summarising this discussion.

Disasters happen. A disaster recovery plan (DRP) helps you or someone else respond to a disaster or other emergency that affects IT systems, and can minimize the effect on the operation of the business. The aim of a DRP is to get business-critical IT systems operating again, as quickly and efficiently as possible, and then bring up the non-critical stuff.

A DRP for IT systems is usually associated with a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) but they can be created and exist separately if necessary. It is normal for the BCP to come first and then the DRP can be written more easily to satisfy the BCP's requirements.

One suggested approach from Herwin's summary post - <https://lists.sage-au.org.au/pipermail/sage-au/2007-September/024472.html>:

Problem: facility on fire.

Solution: apply marshmallows

The Preferred Approach

1. Understand the business functions so you know which are critical - for example, functions/teams which bring in income or which support life.
2. Understand the role of your IT systems in supporting these functions, and their dependencies - for example, credit card processing is important, needing web and database servers running.
3. Understand the risks or the types of disasters you need to plan for (fire, flood, terrorism, pandemic, theft of servers, etc)
4. Understand the resources available to you now, and which may or may not be available in a disaster.
5. Develop a recovery strategy as a high-level description of what must be done when
6. Write the disaster recovery plan, which is more detailed and also describes who/how/where etc.
7. Publish the plan and make it available to everyone who needs it, in a format that will be usable during a disaster.
8. Implement parts of the plan that help prepare for disaster, such as creating a hot site or engaging a recovery provider
9. Make improvements in systems to help recovery, because you probably identified some issues when writing the plan.
10. Test the plan, at least to the extent that is possible.

What Goes Into a DRP?

Here are some suggestions, but every situation is different. Remember that the BCP should be handling lots of things in parallel with the DRP.

Initial response to the disaster

Communication needed, including employees, customers, suppliers

Facilities needed, and what you can do depending on whether your own stuff is available

Connectivity (networking) needed, between systems and for users

What system functionality needs to be restored, in what order, and how

What data needs to be restored, in what order, and how

How and when to test

Roles and responsibilities

Decision guides - i.e. when you have a choice between some things, how do you choose?

You can use this IBM template: <http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/series/v5r2/ic2924/index.htm?info/rzaj1/rzaj1sampleplan.htm>

The System Administrator's Guild of Australia thanks
our generous Platinum sponsors



Wiki Article for the month

Continued

Two concepts usually discussed in this context are Recovery Time Objective (RTO), which is how fast you want to recover something, and Recovery Point Objective (RPO) which is how recent the data/system needs to be at recovery. As a simple example, consider any single file on one of your servers: if you back up nightly and it takes four hours to fully restore from tape, then you can meet a RPO of 1 day and an RTO of 4 hours. Anything less might be possible, but couldn't be expected.

It's important to distinguish between disaster recovery and backups. In the event of a disaster your server hardware is probably fried/flooded/flat, your computer room is probably unavailable, your online procedures and other documentation are probably offline, and it's possible that you (or your sysadmin) is unable to do their job. It does no good to point to a blob of melted plastic and say "but we have a backup!" Backups are there for you to recover files. They are very important, but only a small part of a disaster recovery plan, and should be managed as a separate process.

Some Useful References and Further Reading

- The Disaster Recovery Journal - <http://www.drj.com/> is available by free subscription
- Seven Tiers of Disaster Recovery - <http://recoveryspecialties.com/7-tiers.html> is a way of identifying continuity needs, capabilities, and cost
- Wikipedia: Disaster Recovery - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disaster_recovery
- Disaster-recovery-guide.com - <http://www.disaster-recovery-guide.com/>
- DisasterRecoveryWorld.com - <http://www.disasterrecoveryworld.com/>

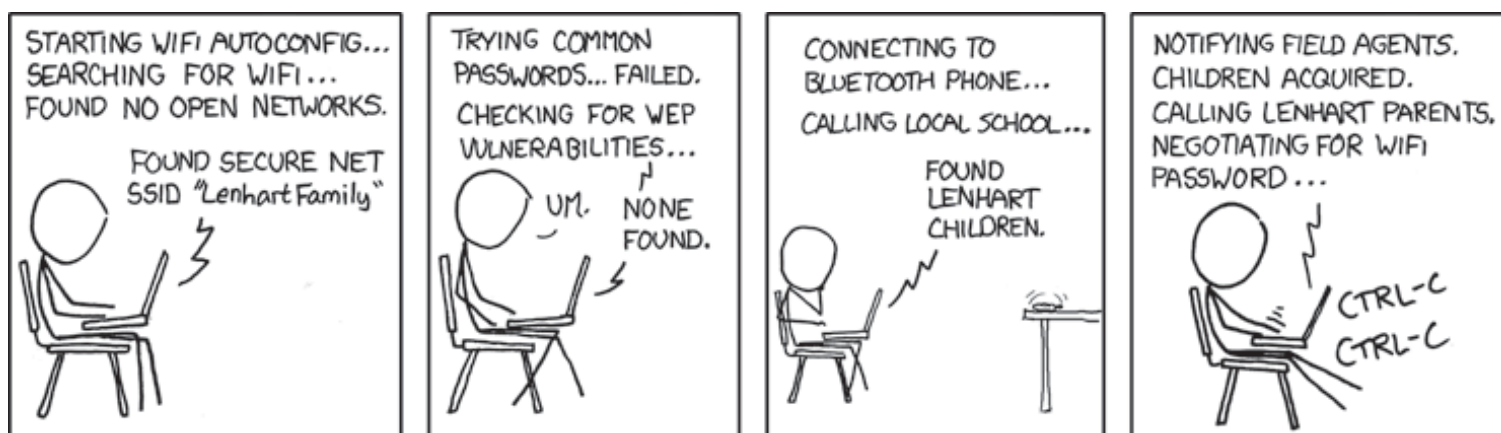
AusCERT 2008 (SAGE-AU endorsed event)

AusCERT2008 IT Security Conference, theme: Security, Privacy and the Internet Citizen

Join us at AusCERT2008, the Asia Pacific Information Technology Security Conference - an international conference focusing on IT security; for CFOs, CIOs, CTOs and technical staff from government agencies, universities and industry. Learn about the latest IT security issues from a business and technical perspective.

This will be the seventh AusCERT conference and will take place from Sunday 18th to Wednesday 21st May 2008 followed by two days of workshops. The venue will be Crowne Plaza Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. Visit <http://conference.auscert.org.au/conf2008/>

Members of SAGE-AU receive a special discount equal to the four plus level. Members should put 'SAGE-AU' in the last text box when registering.



Randall Munroe xkcd.com



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SAGE-AU Events

SAGE-AU 2008 Victorian IT Symposium - Friday 30th May 2008

The SAGE-AU Victorian Chapter is holding the 5th annual SAGE-AU Victorian IT Symposium on Friday the 30th of May 2008. It is a one day technical event held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in the Melbourne CBD. The conference will focus on topics relevant to System Administrators ranging from latest technologies to best practices. The feedback from the previous years has always been very positive and has helped us to make this conference better every year.

We have a great line-up of expert speakers including Paul Fenwick, Neal Wise, Tim Hogard, Paul Edginton, Michael Wahren and Lachlan Kidd. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the terrific sponsors that are supporting this event including Red Hat, TRT, EMC and O'Reilly Media. We will also be giving away lots of great door prizes including some of O'Reillys latest titles.

Make sure you log on and register soon so you don't miss out on the early bird registration that finishes on the 16th of May. You'll find more details about this event and register online at:

<http://www.sage-au.org.au/display/2008VIC/Home>

If you have any questions about this event please feel free to contact Chris Burgess from the SAGE-AU Victorian Chapter at: chris.burgess@member.sage-au.org.au.

Coming Events

AusCERT 2008
18th - 23rd May 2008
Crowne Plaza Royal Pines Resort - Gold Coast

SAGE-VIC - IT Symposium
30th May 2008
Hotel Grand Chancellor - Melbourne

Program Details now available online

16th Australian System Administrators Conference
11th - 15th August 2008
Holiday Inn - Adelaide

Program Details now available online



Randall Munroe xkcd.com

Regional Groups

Full lists of Chapter executive committee members, meeting schedules and up to date Chapter information can be found at <http://www.sage-au.org.au/regional.html>

Victorian Chapter

The Victorian group currently meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm at:
Ground Floor Tutorial Room, Baillieu Library
University of Melbourne, Parkville

President

Chris Burgess
chris.burgess@member.sage-au.org.au

Vice President

Jason Wood
jason.wood@member.sage-au.org.au

The group mailing list is: sage-vic@sage-au.org.au

Queensland Chapter

The Queensland group currently meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00pm at:
Room 621
General Purpose South Building (No. 78)
Staffhouse Road
University of Queensland, St Lucia

President

Jason Andrade
jason.andrade@member.sage-au.org.au

Vice President

Iain Robertson
iain.robertson@member.sage-au.org.au

The group mailing list is: sage-qld@sage-au.org.au

There is also a **Rockhampton** group - see
www.sage-au.org.au/rgqld.html

South Australian Chapter

The South Australian group currently meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm at:
Internode
Level 3, 150 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000

President

Steve Challans
steve.challans@member.sage-au.org.au

Secretary

Matthew Benwell
matthew.benwell@member.sage-au.org.au

Treasurer

Greg Warner
greg.warner@member.sage-au.org.au

The group mailing list is: sage-sa@sage-au.org.au

NT Chapter

If you are interested in being involved in getting the NT Chapter up and running again, please contact the Executive Committee (exec@sage-au.org.au)

New South Wales Chapter

The New South Wales group currently meets in Sydney on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm at:
Ernst & Young Building
680 George Street, Sydney
Meet in the Equilibrium Hotel

President

Stephen 'Max' Gillies
stephen.gillies@member.sage-au.org.au

Secretary

Sam Lor
sam.lor@member.sage-au.org.au

The group mailing list is: sage-nsw@sage-au.org.au

Tasmanian Chapter

The Tasmanian group currently meets on the second Thursday of every month at:
Bridie O'Reilys
124 Davey Street, Hobart

President

Geoffrey Day
geoffrey.day@member.sage-au.org.au

Secretary

Sim Alam
sim.alam@member.sage-au.org.au

The group mailing list is: sage-tas@sage-au.org.au

West Australian Chapter

The West Australian group currently meets on the first Tuesday of every month at:

The Moon and Sixpence Pub
300 Murray Street, Perth

Regional Co-ordinator

Andrew Shugg
andrew.shugg@member.sage-au.org.au

The group mailing list is: sage-wa@sage-au.org.au

ACT Chapter

The ACT chapter meets on the third Wednesday of each month at:
Staff Training Lab, ICTS - Building 14
Ground Floor, Australian Defence Force Academy
Northcott Drive

Chapter Contact

Tim Carson
tim.carson@member.sage-au.org.au

The group mailing list is: sage-act@sage-au.org.au