

## IT Manager's Report on 2009

### Overview

Because we did not hold a meeting of our own in 2009, in many ways was a "quiet" year on the IT front. Some initiatives to do with ISAN and the Gage Conference, although only indirectly related to AuPS did require some attention, detailed below.

A major change to our server environment produced a minor crisis, but fortunately it was not quite at the worst possible time.

### A Private Server

Mid-year our web hosting service, dreamhost.com, offered me a "private server" to host the various web sites I operate, the most important one being aups.org.au. The idea is that instead of sharing a machine with a number of other dreamhost users, where there are always risks of interference amongst those users, you are provided with a private machine on which all users are under your control. It is a bit of a software trick in that it does not really mean they provide a physical machine, instead it is a "virtual machine", which has a complete operating system environment, but where a number of virtual machines exist on one physical machine. Despite it being this trick, the virtual machine system is well developed and quite robust in security terms. It is possible to have a system administrator account ("root" in Unix parlance), and it is even possible to reboot the virtual machine if a major configuration change is desired. The virtual machine has its own IP address.

In principle, the move from the shared environment to a private server was supposed to be seamless. Although it involved a small increment in cost, it also allowed me to consolidate some services which actually reduced the total cost. So I requested the move, provided it could be done in a time period of my choosing.

In practice, on 17 July I received a message "This is just a note to let you know that we've moved your account to a new server! We apologize for the lack of notice, but this was an emergency move as a performance and stability measure." A hardware failure on the old machine led to this change which was by no means at a convenient time. I was travelling on the mainland with our little caravan. More importantly, the message "What does this mean to you? Hopefully nothing!" was far from the truth. Many things did not work, especially email. The registrations for ISAN (see below) were open, and sending passwords to intending residents by email was an essential service.

I can only say thank goodness for the Telstra 3G internet service which coupled with my mobile phone and laptop allowed me to deal with the problems even from Wilpena Pound. And fortunately Murphy did not get his timing right, as my laptop power supply let its smoke out a week later by which time most things were working properly again.

Now that all the teething problems have been overcome, the private server is working well, and has the advantage of being almost identical to the working environment of our development/backup server at the University of Sydney.

### ISAN Satellite - Autonomic Adjustments to Environmental Challenges

This International Society of Autonomic Neuroscience (ISAN) satellite was held in Newcastle, September 6-7 2009. With the co-operation of the Treasurer, the meeting website and registration was supported by AuPS. A subdomain was established within the AuPS domain (isan.aups.org.au), and the website information on the programme, venue, travel etc. provided to interested parties.

60 people registered for the satellite (14 students), using an adaptation of the AuPS system, with payments made through the AuPS credit card merchant account with the NAB. The local secretary, Eugene Nalivaiko, was grateful to AuPS for its assistance.

### Gage Conferences

The residential conferences formerly known as the Curtin Conferences have been renamed the Gage Conferences in honour of Peter Gage who was the motive force behind the early instances. The domain name "gageconf.org.au" has been established and a website set up, again using an adaptation of the AuPS system. The registration and abstract submission system is "live" as of this

writing. Again the AuPS Treasurer agreed to registration fees paid by credit card going through the AuPS account with the NAB.

#### ANS/AuPS Sydney 2010

As was the case for the Brisbane Combio meeting, the information provided by Sally Jay on AuPS registrants and abstracts was incomplete and contained a number of errors. The inference is that registrants could easily select the wrong Society as their affiliation when using the on-line system. A number of submitting authors whose abstracts had been attributed to AuPS replied to email about drafts available on our web site saying that they had registered with ANS. An email to our members about abstracts revealed a number that had been attributed to ANS that the submitting author believed had been intended for AuPS. The words "confused" and "confusion" appeared in a remarkable number of emails. I referred these confused people to Sally Jay, so hopefully the final number of registrations with a part of the fee coming to AuPS will be reasonably correct.

The abstracts for the entire meeting were provided to Anuwat Dinudom on a CD. (So much for the internet). Anuwat emailed me a copy. As for the Combio meeting there was no database of authors, titles etc. The information needed to create the author index and contents for our Proceedings had to be extracted from the abstract RTF files. It remains a puzzle as to why Sally Jay does not have their website put the information provided when an abstract is submitted directly into a database. Creating spreadsheets "by hand" must contribute significantly to the error rate.

Given the opportunity to correct, and/or supplement the abstract provided by Sally Jay, a fair fraction of our members did so. Corrections to author lists were common, as was the provision of reference lists. In a few cases the text was significantly extended, and one impressive confocal micrograph was added. So while our anniversary Proceedings is disappointingly small, and lacks links to a programme, at least the editorial standards have been maintained.

#### Web statistics

In my last report I provided access counts for our web site for the 2005-2008 period. Here are counts for the calendar year 2009.

<i>Request</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Request</i>	<i>Number</i>
All	600065	Newsletter 2003-12	2088
Home page	7396	Newsletter 2004-07	1166
		Newsletter 2005-03	1541
Proceedings vol 32	37064	Newsletter 2005-06	1344
Proceedings vol 33	32755	Newsletter 2005-09	1591
Proceedings vol 34	9332	Newsletter 2005-12	2734
Proceedings vol 35	29663	Newsletter 2006-03	1980
Proceedings vol 36	63752	Newsletter 2006-06	2406
Proceedings vol 37	39226	Newsletter 2006-09	1956
Proceedings vol 38	66769	Newsletter 2006-12	2357
Proceedings vol 39	80960	Newsletter 2007-03	2003
Proceedings vol 40	3738*	Newsletter 2007-06	2124
		Newsletter 2007-09	1744
		Newsletter 2007-12	1592
		Newsletter 2008-03	1174
		Newsletter 2008-06	1741
		Newsletter 2008-09	1999
		Newsletter 2008-12	526
		Newsletter 2009-03	334
		Newsletter 2009-10	997
		Newsletter 2009-12	994

\* Volume 40 (2009) was completed only recently. As of compiling these counts, the abstracts of the Sydney Joint ANS/AuPS meeting had not been indexed by Google.

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