

The Quill

N E W S L E T T E R

QUILL OFFERS NEW COURSES IN LAUNCESTON!

While The Quill Consultancy has always offered our Northern corporate clients excellent training opportunities, we now make it even easier with an extended range of public courses! Our range of courses available in Launceston include Word and Excel at Introduction, Intermediate and Advanced levels, and Access and FrontPage at Introduction and Intermediate levels. We are also offering introductory courses in Project, Internet, Outlook, Windows, PowerPoint and Publisher.

Long time Quill employee Michelle Cooper (profiled on page 3 of the newsletter), will be our new key person in the North. Many of you would have met with Michelle on SACS courses or other applications courses in the past.

Special introductory pricing is being offered to all our existing and new clients in Launceston, and group bookings are also available at very competitive rates.

In an alliance with Launceston College, our high quality training facilities in Hobart have been replicated in Launceston, and we will continue to maintain our small group size and personal contact. After seminar course support is available for all Launceston attendees for a 3-month period.

For upcoming course dates in Launceston, refer to our inserted course schedule, and look for the (L) symbol.

For more information, or to book into a Launceston course, contact us on 1 800 100 577.

QUILL GOES TO THE USA

Technical Director for the Quill—David Briggs—recently packed his bags and headed for the sun! No, not to escape the Tassie winter (he says!), but to update his skills at **Microsoft Technology Week** in San Diego. Sponsored by Microsoft Australia, David joined over 700 international Microsoft certified technical trainers at the conference, which aimed to showcase the latest technologies, tools and training resources. Technology Week gave David the opportunity to update his technical skills in Windows 2000 and Exchange 2000, as well as interacting and working with other Microsoft certified trainers and professionals. David also got the latest information on the CTEC program, and brings all this information back with him to deliver in his training courses.



Don't forget to ask David for his best accent when you next speak to him!

The Quill Consultancy
34 Patrick Street
Hobart 7000
GPO Box 1793
Hobart 7001
Tel: (03) 6231 0577
Fax: (03) 6231 0490
quill@quill.com.au
<http://www.quill.com.au>

New Launceston courses
San Diego conference
Schools Managed
Network case study
Linux
Staff profile
Book review
Tips and techniques



SCHOOLS MANAGED NETWORK CASE STUDY

Last year, the Department of Education identified an increasing need within the school system to administer network systems using trained professional staff.

Traditionally, school networks have been managed by IT coordinators, often a dedicated teacher within the school who may not have had the necessary training or time to administer large computer networks of increasing complexity.

In December 1999, the Department of Education initiated the first phase of a project designed to assess the viability of outsourced network management within the state's schools. The project meant that those vendors successful in the tender process would take part in a pilot program to manage the networks within a group of schools. The department set up a number of trial clusters across the state, containing 3-6 schools in each cluster. The Quill Consultancy was successful in the tender process, and was given the Bridgewater cluster containing 6 schools.

Two of the Quill's consultants, Duncan Lee and Dean Estcourt, were given the responsibility of managing the Bridgewater cluster in the state's south. Working with the primary IT coordinator in each school, they provided advice and planning expertise on server set-up, administration, e-mail and printing procedures. A wide variety of software was used, including Windows NT, Windows 95, Windows 98 and Proxy Server.

In the course of the pilot program, The Quill Consultancy was also given the Sorell cluster after the previous vendor withdrew from the trial.

Duncan is a Microsoft Certified System Engineer (MCSE) who found that the knowledge he gained through his studies was of immense benefit in managing the project. Dean is currently working towards this certification, and found that this practical experience added another dimension to the knowledge he had gained through study. Recent Quill employee Brett Henderson is also working on the project, gaining valuable insight in preparation for his MCSE studies.

At the end of the pilot, the Department of Education undertook an evaluation of its outcomes and decided to extend the project statewide. The remaining schools were divided into clusters across

the state and after a tender process a list of qualified vendors was provided to schools, allowing them to choose a vendor best suited to their needs.

The Quill Consultancy was successful in securing the Bridgewater, Rosetta, Sorell, Taroom and Ulverstone clusters, and also provides support to the successful vendors in additional three clusters—Lindisfarne, Burnie and St Marys. Two new Quill employees, Chris Kuplis and Damon Kingshott will provide support for the Taroom and Ulverstone clusters respectively, while Duncan, Brett and Dean will continue to provide support for the Bridgewater, Rosetta and Sorell clusters.

WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT LINUX?

Linux. Funny name, but it keeps popping up in the computer magazines and sometimes even the mainstream press. Depending on your perspective, Linux is either going to be the "next big thing" which will knock Microsoft from its lofty pedestal, or is simply a plaything for geeks and nerds, which will never escape their playground.

As in most things that generate extreme views, the truth is most probably to be found somewhere in the middle.

Linux is a computer operating system and performs the same principal role as Windows and the Mac operating systems. It provides an environment and commands that allow a user to interact with the computer and perform various functions.

Linux is derived from Unix—an operating system that has been around for years and which runs large-scale computer platforms. Linux was created in 1991 by a Finnish university student, Linus Torvalds, who wanted to be able to operate his IBM compatible PC with a Unix-like operating system instead of Microsoft's DOS. Dissatisfied with the options that were available at the time, he decided to write his own system. Eventually, the project spread to the Internet where thousands of programmers joined in. The name Linux is a combination of Linus and Unix.



During the last two years the development of Linux has accelerated greatly and has spread from its grass-roots supporters to include heavyweight corporate organisations such as *IBM, Sun, Compaq* and *Dell*.

Linux is available in several versions from companies such as *RedHat, Caldera* and *Corel*. While you can buy a copy of Linux from retail stores, it can also be downloaded free from the Internet, or is available for the cost of creating the CD that it comes on. There are no license restrictions on the number of copies that can be installed, and it is legal to create a copy for other users.

So what can you do with it?

Linux is a multi-user, multi-tasking, network-based operating system that can be compared to Windows NT or Windows 2000. As such it is aimed at organisations that have a need to support large numbers of users on a network, with different security profiles. It is a system that requires technically competent administrators to manage and tune it to their system. Many of the management tasks are performed using command prompt syntax, in a similar way to using DOS.

Increasingly however, Linux is making a move towards the desktop—the province of non-technical users who simply want to use a computer as a tool to perform tasks, rather than as an end in its own right. In this area, Linux has made considerable headway over the last two years. Graphical User Interfaces (GUI's) have been developed to shield the users from the intricacies of the command prompt. These GUI's perform similar functions to the Windows interface, but unlike Windows there is a choice differing interfaces for various needs. The two most common desktop managers are *Gnome* and *KDE*. New versions of both have been released recently, significantly improving the general usability of the system.

Application software is also available for Linux. While Microsoft is unlikely to create a Linux version of Office there are alternatives such as *StarOffice* and *Corel WordPerfect Office*. (StarOffice has the advantage of being free). There is no PhotoShop for Linux but *GIMP* is widely regarded as being just as good, and it's free too! Most other applications such as web browsers, email packages and CAD tools are also available.

So who should consider using it?

Linux is not for everyone. If you have no interest in how a computer works and simply want to use it as a tool, you are better to stay with Windows or Macintosh systems. If you belong to an organisation that has a need for a large-scale

network system but are strapped for cash, Linux could be for you. If you are interested in learning more about computing and like to tinker with different software, then Linux can be great fun.

In any case, Linux is here to stay and will continue to develop. For more information, visit www.linux.com.

The Quill Consultancy's David Pitt has been experimenting with Linux for nearly two years. Contact him at Quill if you would like more information about this article.

MEET MICHELLE COOPER ...

Michelle Cooper has been with The



Quill Consultancy

since 1995, where she has worked as a software trainer and consultant. Tassie

born and bred, Michelle graduated from the University of Tasmania in Launceston in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science, (majoring in Mathematics and Computing Science), and a Diploma of Education. She was immediately employed by the Department of Education, and worked at Brooks High School, Burnie High School, Alanvale Matriculation College, and Triabunna District High School. In her 5 years with the Quill, Michelle has been responsible for delivering training courses in Windows, Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, FrontPage, Internet, Publisher, PageMaker, Outlook, Exchange and Visual Basic. In fact, Michelle has taught almost every applications course the Quill has ever run! Michelle has been responsible for developing customised courses for a variety of clients, and with her expert programming skills and has developed a number of Access and VBA systems for clients over the years.

This versatility makes Michelle the ideal person to launch our new training courses in Launceston. She will be relocating there with husband Chris and her son Angus, and is looking forward to meeting Northern clients both old and new.

BOOK REVIEWS

Studying for an exam, thinking about MCSE qualification, or just need to update your technical skills? In this newsletter, we give you some books to help you on your way. Both these books are available from the Quill, and can be ordered by contacting Anna.

MCSE Training Kit—Windows 2000 Server

Publisher Microsoft Press
ISBN 1-572-319-038
Price \$109.90 (inc GST)



Designed for the Microsoft systems engineer candidates, as well as current MCSE's who will need to update their certification, this book includes a CD-ROM with practice files, and maps to MCP exam goals and objectives.

This book covers:

- ?? Installing or upgrading to Windows 2000 Server by using automated set-up tools and by deploying service packs
- ?? Managing access to shared system and Web-based resources
- ?? Administering disks and data storage
- ?? Monitoring and optimising system performance, reliability and availability
- ?? Implementing network protocols and services, including virtual private networks, routing and remote access and Terminal Services
- ?? Ensuring system security through Encrypting File System and security configuration tools

This book is recommended to complement the courses leading to MCSE certification. For more information on this qualification, contact David Briggs at the Quill.

Inside Microsoft SQL Server 7.0

Publisher Microsoft Press
ISBN 0-735-605-173
Price \$130.00 (inc GST)



This is the definitive guide and reference for Microsoft SQL Server 7.0! Written by a Microsoft SQL Server guru, this comprehensive guide provides updated,

authoritative advice for installing, administering, and programming with version 7.0. The included CD contains product evaluation documentation, sample code and scripts, white papers and a benchmarking kit.

With this book and CD package you will:

- ?? Explore critical new areas of functionality—including dynamic memory sizing and integrated cache, automatic statistics management and full row-level locking.
- ?? Use sophisticated built-in tools to simplify system administration and optimise performance.
- ?? Dramatically simplify application development with Transact-SQL; extend functionality with batches, stored procedures and triggers.
- ?? Examine new query processing techniques such as multiple indexes and hash and merge joins, and data manipulation capabilities including parallel queries.
- ?? Exploit SQL Server's integration with Microsoft Office 2000, the BackOffice family and the Visual Studio development system
- ?? Understand your application design options by reviewing a full chapter of practical examples

Intended for administrators, support personnel and advanced users, this book is essential for optimal operation of SQL Server 7.0.

FROM THE HELP DESK

Q. How do I view a Word file on a system that does not have Word installed?

A. Microsoft Word Viewer is a freeware program that allows users who do not own Microsoft Word to view and print documents that were created in Word. While you cannot edit an open document in Word Viewer, you can copy text to the Clipboard to paste it in other applications. It is worth remembering that you cannot run macros in Word Viewer, which means you cannot receive a Word macro virus by reading a document with Word Viewer.

To obtain a copy of the Microsoft Word Viewer, visit the Microsoft Download Centre on the web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/search.asp>, and search for "Word Viewer".