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Local news 7

Help is at hand locally for you and your PC

By: Enid O'Dowd

Robert Phair fixes Enid's PC

There's three PCs in regular use in our household so as we don't have any regular person to call on when we have a problem I was delighted to meet Robert Phair of Computers of South Dublin for coffee in the Sentosa Art Café (opposite the Bank of Ireland) in Ranelagh. A great place to meet, by the way, with its comfortable couches and pleasant ambience.

Robert grew up in the States and is of Irish/Scottish descent. He proudly tells me he's a direct descendent of Robert the Bruce. After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in 1991 he worked as a computer consultant for a number of organisations including Harvard Business School.

He'd visited Ireland before he finally settled here in 2003 and set up his business providing technical support, computer training and Internet design for households, home offices and businesses in the south Dublin area.

Based in Ballsbridge, Robert will call to both homes and businesses within reasonable cycling distance. He's proud of being a 'zero carbon' business and hasn't found any need to have a car to service his clients. In fact it's refreshing to talk to him because his business philosophy is 'doing more with less' and he's into 'technological minimalism.' He loves a new challenge – he tries to show clients how to do things themselves so 'they never have to call me twice about the same problem'.

He believes 'the latest versions of software are not necessarily any better than the ones people already have.'

He does a lot of work with small businesses and says that blogging is a great way to promote your business, and he should know as he's worked extensively in on line marketing.

A current client is Aqueduct Investments, which according to director Kieran McKenna, 'will revolutionise the way people at home and in offices use water coolers.' Kieran started his business two years ago and has been using Robert's services since then. Having had two office moves in that period, he has found Robert's services re wiring and networking really helpful. 'I tell him what I want and he tells me what is possible.' Currently Robert is advising him on VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) as any exporting company must have an excellent communications system.

Other clients have included Setanta Landscapes, Halpin's Hotels and the Jesuit Community.

We discussed anti virus software and I learnt something interesting. When packages like Norton and MacAfee malfunction as can happen on occasion, 'this can have a worse effect on your machine than the virus you're trying to avoid'. Robert recommends Avast home edition which is free and has come out best in a comparison of all desktop antivirus programs. This package automatically upgrades itself. I had been using AVG free edition and recently had been receiving messages every time I switched on my PC pressurising me to upgrade to the paying version and implying the world would end if I didn't. Avast doesn't do this, at least not yet!

We finished our coffee and Robert came to my home/office nearby and installed Avast for me. He also cleaned up my PC, removing unnecessary programs like Norton which I still had though I was using AVG as my anti virus software. This he said was one of the reasons why my PC had slowed up. I definitely notice an improvement in performance since his visit.

Computers of South Dublin can be contacted at 087 9171580 or at solution@cosd.com or visit them on the web at www.cosd.com