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Email – friend or foe?

On p. 9 of this issue you will find an article about the history of *Preview* celebrating this 150th issue which also marks the 25th year of publication. In the course of researching that article, I stumbled across an interesting piece entitled ‘Well Connected – Hooking up to the global network of electronic mail and news’ by David Hayward (p. 22, Issue 42, February 1993). In an era where email and Internet access are ubiquitous (and almost mandatory) in our industry, it was fun to read an article which walked readers through the absolute basics – defining the Internet, how email works, electronic news, the technology required to make it happen, etc.

Less than 20 years ago, this technology was new and noteworthy and the article describing it took up four pages in our magazine. Now, the whole production of *Preview* is enabled by the Internet. Emails flow out from me sourcing material, flow back (hopefully!) with articles and contributions, then transfer to CSIRO Publishing for layout, then back to me for checking, etc. And finally, the magazine is published online for all to read well before the printed copy is distributed. At my end of the magazine’s production at least, the process is almost entirely paperless.

Coincidentally, I have also been reading a book called *Shrinking the World* by John Freeman. This book looks at ‘the 4000-year story of how email came to rule our lives’. The book starts with a fascinating exploration of the history of communication through early mail services, telegram services, typewriters, newspapers, etc. This history sets the scene for a population that gradually experienced faster and faster modes of communication, right up to the modern day where we live in an era of ‘instant’ communication around much of the globe.

However, the real theme of the book is to question whether email has been a positive development. Freeman’s point is that email consumes so much of our lives that for many it is almost an addiction. And the quoted statistics are alarming – 65% of North Americans spend more time with their computers than with their spouse! Handheld devices have enabled the checking of email just about anywhere and anytime. Apparently, more than 60% of Americans check their email when they are on holidays and respond to work queries, and a similar number check their emails in bed before they go to sleep and when they wake up.

The book ends with a list of 10 things you can do to control your email usage. I read the list and found that I do most of them already. But then, I am not an email junkie. I love the fact that this technology keeps me in ready and easy contact with everyone involved in producing *Preview*. It makes the job of producing the magazine very straightforward. However, it is just a tool and when I am not actually working I figure the messages will keep. I don’t check my email on my iPhone and I typically check it only once a day on my computer, except when we are right in the middle of the production cycle. So, my apologies in advance if it

takes me a few days to respond to your email – I’m not ignoring you personally, I am just choosing not to be connected all the time!

In this issue

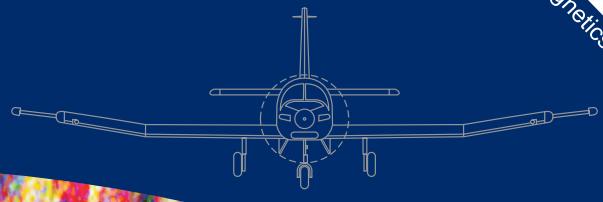
In keeping with the theme of this issue marking 25 years and 150 issues of *Preview* publication, there is a wide variety of material to peruse. John Denham’s article is based on his ASEG2010 presentation, ‘The History of Seismic Resolution’, and looks back but in doing so makes us think about the way we work today as well. Marina Costelloe’s article reports the latest exciting results from the Kombolgie AEM data. And Kim Frankcombe takes a look at the claims made for Real Section IP with a modelling study. Whilst it is the 25th birthday of *Preview*, it is also sadly the 25th anniversary of the aircraft accident that killed Grahame Sands. Bob Timmins remembers Grahame and his contribution to geophysics in Australia. And our regular columns include Industry News, Research News, Geophysics in the Surveys, and two Book Reviews.

As I was preparing this issue, the flood crisis was developing in Queensland and then further south in New South Wales and Victoria. This followed hard on the heels of the WA floods in December. My thoughts have been much occupied by the tragic loss of life and devastating impact on property and businesses. I heard that at least one geophysical contractor was relieved that the Brisbane River did not reach the predicted peak and thus their office escaped flooding. Also, some crews were either left stranded or separated from their equipment as large areas were affected. Our best wishes go to all the people affected and especially to members of the ASEG and their families.

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