

Lifelong learning: computer courses



Computers can be terrific tools for staying in touch with friends and family, keeping organised and researching topics that interests you. And learning how to use one may be easier than you think!

This Fact Sheet describes computing courses that are available for older people, including those who are new to using computers. Many courses are run by people who are older themselves. The Fact Sheet also outlines options for purchasing an affordable computer, where to find computers for public use, and arranging internet access.

Computer courses

Australian Senior Computer Clubs Association (ASCCA)

This association provides information on seniors' computer clubs near to where you live – there are local clubs throughout NSW that teach older adults a range of computer skills. ASCCA also coordinates mutual support computer groups for retirees.

ASCCA's role is to bring seniors and technology together through friendly Seniors' Computer Club environments, where seniors can learn about technology and computing at their own pace – without any exams.

Hands-on training is provided for seniors from the very basics of using a computer up to Information Technology (IT) Certificate Level 1 (or the nationally recognised computing "Drivers Licence").

The "Basics" class is truly basic - the perfect starting point for anyone wanting to use a computer confidently.

There is an annual fee that entitles you to free weekly training, as well as a monthly newsletter and monthly meetings. Fees vary between clubs, so please contact your local club for the most up-to-date costs.

ASCCA is the umbrella group for establishing and supporting local Seniors Computer Clubs throughout Australia. It also advises and supports Government bodies, organises seminars and activities, and negotiates discounts on computer software on behalf of member clubs. Membership of ASCCA is open to all Computer Clubs for Seniors.



If you would like to find out about a Seniors Computer Club near you, or if you are already in a Seniors Computer Club that ASCCA may not be aware of, phone **9286 3871** or email **office@seniorcomputing.org**. Their website is **www.seniorcomputing.org**.

Getting started - purchasing a computer

Australian Consumers Association

This association publishes Computer Choice, offering the same consumer interest tests and comparisons as Choice Magazine. It is much more “user friendly” than other computer magazines. You can only buy through subscription, but your local library may carry copies. Phone: **9577 3333**.

Charity Computers

This organisation provides recycled user-friendly computers to pensioners at a very low cost. For a small additional amount, you can purchase a modem as well, to give you internet access and/or email. To find out if you qualify, and for more information on current costs. phone: **6101 6931**.

Technical Aid to the Disabled (TAD)

TAD provides a computer loan service to people with a disability, for a small fee. TAD also provides a very low cost internet service (a monthly fee and a reasonable, once-off establishment fee) to older people who hold a DVA Pension entitlement card or an aged Pension Concession Card.

There are TAD branches in Sydney, the Hunter, Illawarra, Northern Rivers, Port Macquarie, Shoalhaven, Central West, Central Coast, Albury-Wodonga and elsewhere across NSW. To find the number for your local branch call **9808 2022** (or **1300 885 886** for rural callers).

WorkVentures Connect IT

For a fee which is substantially lower than market rates, an affordable, recycled computer with a 3 month warranty - capable of running Microsoft software, other main stream applications & browsing the internet - is available to people holding a current Centrelink benefits card or HealthcareCard. For more information phone **1800 112 205** or contact the **Seniors Information Service** on **13 12 44**.

Computers for public use

There are a number of places you can go to use a computer and access the internet if you don't actually own one yourself. These include:

- Your local library, where access is usually free and a librarian may be available to help you get started. Be aware that, at busy times, you may need to book a computer in advance.
- Your nearest Community Technology Centre (CTC). These centres are based in small country towns and were set up to make sure that residents in these towns could find information about a range of (government and non-government) services. A staff member will be able to assist you. Courses will be available, as well.
- Internet cafes, which are open to the public. You will need to pay by the half-hour. While these cafes are generally staffed, you will need to have basic computer and/or internet skills.

Useful websites (senior-friendly)

Adult Learning Australia	www.ala.asn.au
Australian Correspondence Schools	www.acs.edu.au
Australian Seniors Computing Clubs	www.seniorcomputing.org
Endeavour Web	www.endeavour-web.org
Open Learning Australia	www.ola.edu.au
Senior Net	www.seniornet.com.au
TAFE	www.tafensw.edu.au
University of Third Age (U3A) Online	www.u3aonline.org.au

Seniors Information Service is an initiative of the NSW Government

Every care has been taken in the preparation of this document and the information it contains is believed to be accurate. Seniors Information Service does not endorse, recommend or guarantee the services listed in its Fact Sheets, in any other publication or on its website. Before seeking advice or services you should make your own enquiries about the accuracy and reliability of the information provided, and decide whether the product or service is of good quality and is suitable for your needs. The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care suggests that professional advice be sought wherever necessary.

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