



THE VCN USER NEWS... YOUR 'ON-LINE' NEWSLETTER

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VCN will NEVER request your password via email.

Further, VCN advises you NOT to email your account information to anyone.

Simply contact the VCN Help Desk, 411 Dunsmuir Street, 2nd Floor, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Open Monday to Friday, 10 AM to 4 PM ...voice: 604 257 3811 ...fax: 604 257 3808

BILLY BISHOP VCN PAC SITE - GRAND OPENING!!!



At The New VCN WiFi site in Kitsilano's Billy Bishop Royal Canadian Legion, VCN's 'Tony the Editor' demonstrates by showing his UK childhood home via Google Earth, to Billy's President's wife Angela, enthusiastic Chef and lounge volunteer. Note that 'Tony the Ed' is wearing his special laptop viewing eye-glasses. This new VCN Public Access Computer site is located in the RCL #176 Hall, on Laburnum St. near Cornwall Ave, a block east of Arbutus, and easily accessible via the #22 MacDonald Bus.

Guests are welcome, and 'The Billy' is a long time favorite social gathering place for a quiet evening drink, in a pleasant atmosphere. The lounge opens at 4pm Monday thru Saturday and at 2pm Sunday for their traditional Meat Draw. A regular nominally priced 'Roast Beef' dinner is held most Friday evenings...And special sports event nights. Well worth becoming an Associate RCL member to enjoy these amenities!

Try it, you'll like it....For now, you need a wireless enabled laptop, but in the near future, VCN Tech Staff will be installing a standard 2 computer & printer VCN PAC site in the lounge area. We are particularly pleased that this site will be open to Legion members and guests in the evenings, when many of our other sites are closed. Note that this Public Access site is a VCN initiative, outside of the Federal funded CAP Site program. ...ED.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING... JAN 2011...



At the AGM, attendees listen intently as Hugues gives the VCN Web Design Team presentation.

All pics by Tony the Editor

FROM THE CHAIR...

My report this year will be short, and not entirely sweet. First, the good news, VCN has continued to deliver quality internet service to its individual and group members, and we have expanded other services such as the VCN web team program, which just moved to a new location in the new Woodward's building.

Our staff has been great, as always. We actually survived a year without Kalia, thanks to the efforts of Izabela, who did an outstanding job as her replacement. Chris and Steven have not only maintained the technical quality of our services, but have steadily improved them.

The VCN web team has expanded its services, and the help desk is doing a great job thanks to the efforts of our dedicated volunteers. The CAP and CAP-YI programs have also been a success, and the public Internet access sites supported by CAP funding have allowed thousands of people to take advantage of the Internet. Staff reports will describe all of these services in more detail.

But other news is not so good. For the first time in years, we incurred a substantial deficit in 2009-10, and we're likely to incur an even bigger one in the current 2010-2011 year. This has been due to several factors - low interest rates on the money in our reserve, higher costs for certain things like liability insurance, reduced donations from our members, and the loss of gaming funding.

The staff and board have been working to find a solution that won't mean reduced services or staffing cuts, but it's going to be a challenge. We are not, however, planning to reduce VCN's services in any way. In fact, we are working on some exciting new ideas, which may generate revenue, but more importantly would further our mission of making the information highway more accessible to everyone. We'll talk about some of those ideas in the discussion session after the break.

The directors thank you for your confidence in us, and for continuing to use and support VCN.

James Sayre, VCN Chair

VCN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT...

The VCN AGM came to order at 6:25 pm, 6 January 2011, at 411 Dunsmuir St. in Vancouver, with a quorum of 6 board members, 4 staff, and 15 plus regular members. After agenda approval, the 2009 minutes

were accepted with one change. Chantal then presented the accountant's report, and the Board of Directors were given discretion to appoint accountants for next year.



VCN Office staff report at the AGM. L-R, Admin Tom, Program Coordinators Izabela & Kalia and Chris, the Tech Guy.

President Jim provided a brief update of VCN and its key services, specifically the CAP and CAPYI, approved for 2011, VCN WebTeam, BC Housing project, Tech Team project, low-cost tech support, discussion of the deficit VCN faces both this and next year. Jim thanked Izabela for her work last year during **Kalia's** maternity leave, caring for her new baby girl. He also thanked Chris for his special work with spam filters, and generally thanked other staff, volunteers, members, and funders.

Izabela then summarized the CAP (Community Access Points) and CAPYI programs funded by Industry Canada, with such 102 CAP sites administered by VCN in the Lower Mainland. These sites are still used by people with no Internet access at home or at work. New immigrants, people seeking employment, senior citizens, First Nations people, at-risk youth, those literacy challenged, the homeless, and people with disabilities or mental health issues.

VCN were advised in March last by Industry Canada that CAP was ending, however fortunately CAP was eventually renewed for 2010. ...For B.C. CAP site info see <http://cap.vcn.bc.ca/map>
For general CAP Information see... <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cap-pac.nsf/eng/00003.html>.

VCN SEEKS A NEW HOME...

We have just learned that the Senior Centre building is to be redeveloped, so we are urgently hunting for similar premises in the vicinity. Ideally within walking distance of our new Woodward's Office, north of Georgia between Seymour and Main Street.

We envision our 'Public Face' presence at Woodward's, with supporting personnel nearby. To accommodate all our services, administration, Help Desk, CAP site, Technical Team, Web Team, and Basic Internet Coaching, we need the approx equivalent of a simple one bedroom apartment, about 900 square feet.

With the present economic pinch at federal and city government levels, maybe we could find help from the private sector. VCN seeks modest office space at nominal rent, so, should we find a landlord to support our community services, by asking minimum rent, plus maybe a tax top-up receipt to market ...that would be most welcome!

So if you know people with spare office space in the area, please copy them this Newsletter, and ask them to consider helping us as a Public Service. Go spread the word!

OTHER VCN PROJECTS & ISSUES...

2010 Administrator Izabela summarized projects such as VCN's Web Team's new office since Nov 2010 at the restored DTES Woodward's building, which is also used for CAPYI and special projects. VCN people have participated in Outreach events such as the Heart of the City Festival in the DTES, which resulted in a Radio Canada interview.

CAPYI PROGRAMS DESCRIBED...

Jill described the 2 main goals; (a) to provide youth with the skills to find employment, and (b) coach CAP site users on the effective use and skills of Internet Computer Technology. She offered specific success stories of some VCN's CAPYI interns. To ease this 'digital divide', we have 45 interns at 44 CAP sites.

VCN WEB TEAM ACTIVITIES...



Hugues reported how the Web Team continued to work closely with non-profits in Vancouver and advise organizations of the availability of VCN's low-cost or free services and online public relations opportunities. He spoke of the team's growth potential, and experiences they've had with clients.

HELP DESK & SERVICES...

Chris gave an overview of help desk services and expansion to the new W building, where they share internet services and provide technical support.

- Penny & Tony wanted it on the record that the staff at the VCN help desk have been very supporting, helpful, and useful

Members from the floor asked if maybe Jill could write about CAPYI workshops for VCN News. Chris suggested how the Tech Team initiative might earn revenues from non-profits.

The Board members thanked our active volunteers. Certificates and gifts of appreciation were then awarded. See item 'From the Front Desk' below...

THE 2011 BOARD... There being no nominations from the floor, the present slate remains... Jim Sayre, Richard Smith, Chantal Iorio, Michael Felczak, Craig McLachlan, Pedro Mora, Brendan Houle, Travis Keyworth, and Anthony Swain.

MEMBER'S INPUT... After a short refreshment break, small discussion groups were formed, resulting in numerous suggestions to the Board, such as partnering with Free Geek... (However, staff noted that Free Geek do not currently install dial-up modems in their re-built computers.) The BC Cooperative Association use tech team services similar to VCN's... Negotiate a deal with Telus, or other corporate internet service for VCN discounts, similar to the partnership between BCAA and Husky gas stations. And... Coupling VCN's mandate and vision with the impact on individuals and the community, by providing services to non-profits and providing experience to individuals for the workforce. ...Thus this most informative 2010/11AGM meeting adjourned at 8:35.

FROM THE FRONT DESK...

We will be starting a VCN Volunteer Appreciation Page on our webpage. The page will feature a list of all our dedicated volunteers to recognize their hard work. The VCN Volunteer Appreciation page will also feature write-ups on volunteers!



Chairman Jim presents volunteer Azhar Ur-Rehman with his VCN appreciation Award.



Help Desk Volunteer Joe Shestra gets recognition for his work for VCN

VCN has incredible volunteers, Tatyana being one of them. Tatyana started volunteering at VCN in May 2010 and since that time has been very helpful in various ways. Amongst helping clients, attending to the Technical Help Desk she has also helped on a special project reviewing the VCN webpage. Tatyana has gone through the entire VCN webpage looking for any small bugs, checking to see how easily navigable the page is and making suggestions and recommendations. She has completed a detailed report that will be utilized by the VCN webteam and other volunteers to update and improve the VCN webpage. Her work has been tremendously appreciated. Tatyana continues to volunteer at VCN and has just taken the initiative to update the VCN online Community Directory - Just in time for summer! Other volunteers recognized were Sylvia Neubaur, and Jason Hsia.

----- **END OF A.G.M. REPORT** -----

VCN'S EVOLVING MISSION MAKING THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

The mission of VCN, ever since it was formed in the early 90's, has been to make the benefits of the information highway accessible to everyone. All of our services, in one way or another, are intended to help achieve that goal.

Times change, and on the internet they change faster than anywhere else. So while our mission remains the same, the services that we need to provide to accomplish it are very different from the services we provided 10, or even 5 years ago.

This article is about the first and most important requirement for using the information highway: getting online. In future editions, we'll talk about the other services we provide, such as email accounts, email list and web site hosting, web site design, training courses, and much much more. *[insert a link to the page of our website listing our services]*

There are three basic ways people can do that:

1. by using a smart phone with a plan that includes internet access.
2. by going to an internet café, library or other public place which has computers for public use,
3. and/or... by using a home computer with a modem, highspeed, or wireless connection.

1. Cell phone access: VCN hasn't become involved with cell phones. We need remain aware, though, that more and more people are using the information highway via their phones, rather than or in addition to their computers. That trend will continue. In fact, as the cost of unlimited data plans comes down, people may find it more affordable to use their cell phone plan for high speed internet access, and to drop their DSL or cable internet plans. As said above, times change...

2. Public internet access sites: Since 2003 VCN has played major role in administering public internet access sites through the CAP (Community Access Program) and CAP-YI (CAP Youth Initiative), which are funded by the federal government. The CAP pays for approximately 100 publicly accessible computers located in community centers, schools, and other public institutions. The CAP-YI provides funds for youth interns who work at the CAP sites where they help people make use of the public computers. See... <http://www.cap.vcn.bc.ca/capyi2010/> ...for more information.

VCN also helps individuals and groups provide public internet access apart from the federal programs. For example, see the article about the Billy Bishop Legion.

3. Dial-up internet access from home: To help people access the internet from their homes, VCN maintains a bank of 69 phone lines and modems. Members with a VCN account can dial in and connect to any unused modem, so our 69 phone lines and modems can serve many hundreds of users, so long as they don't all try to connect at once or to stay online continually.



The VCN Board display keen interest in the proposals at the December **Director's** Retreat.

Dial-up is no longer sufficient: The internet has become more and more demanding in the last decade, and dial-up access is too slow to make effective use of many of the services that most internet users want. That includes social networking and online games, streaming video, cloud computing, file-sharing, and exchanging large picture or video files. These are the services young people are especially interested in. And even getting basic information like bus routes and schedules from Translink is a painful process over dial-up. There will probably always be a role for dial-up, because it's a way for anyone with a phone line to get online without

paying for services or living in a location where wireless access is available. But, to be frank about it, VCN will become obsolete if all we do is to dial-up internet access. Like the internet itself, we must evolve or die.

The board has looked into the possibility of providing high speed access by reselling DSL or cable internet connections, but the cost and risk would be very high. If we did all that, all it would accomplish is to provide high speed access at a somewhat cheaper price than the commercial providers, which wouldn't make the internet more accessible for people on very low incomes. VCN won charitable status because we seek to provide the public in general with the benefits of the information highway. The public includes people who couldn't afford to pay for high speed access from us anymore than they could from the commercial companies. It would be wrong to offer a two-tier service – high speed for those who can afford it, and dial-up for those who can't – just as most of feel that it would be wrong to provide a two-tier medical system.

Are wireless networks the answer? Where does that leave us? The most promising solution is wide-area wireless networks. Ideally, the municipalities in the Lower Mainland will eventually realize the advantages such a service would provide for everyone, including businesses, and commit the necessary funds to make it happen. VCN can advocate with local councils to make public wi-fi a priority. We can help to demonstrate that it is feasible, and at the same time provide quality access to people who need our help the most, by working with BC Housing and non-profit housing societies to set up wireless internet access for family housing complexes. VCN is actively pursuing such projects.

Final comment: There is no one “right” way to accomplish VCN’s mission. We need to be creative and flexible. Public internet sites are a crucial part of the solution. Dial-up will remain an important service as well, until something else is available that provides quality high speed access for everyone, including those living on very low incomes. We invite your comments and suggestions.

Reply to... help@vcn.bc.ca ...This is a ticket system that directs emails to related staff .

VCN WEB TEAM NOW AT WOODWARDS!!!

VCN staff and The Web Team now hold regular Monday afternoon conferences in VCN’s attractive new offices in the historic Woodward’s Complex. The room is comfortably spacious, with a pleasant view from the large windows. Chris theTech Guy (L) ponders proposals by Web Guy Hugh(R).



VCN HQ Program Co-ordinator, Kalia,(R), back from leave, joins the Web Team to discuss current programs.

LINUX AND OTHER USER GROUPS...

VCN met with representatives of the Vancouver Linux Users Group (VanLUG - www.vanlug.bc.ca) in late October to discuss ways in which the two groups can cooperate on projects of mutual interest, such as providing more free training for new linux users. VanLUG is one of several important community groups in the Lower Mainland that is dedicated to goals similar to VCN's own mission. Another such group is FreeGeek (www.freegeekvancouver.org), which rebuilds and resells used computers and recycles unusable equipment in an ethical manner.

VCN looks forward to cooperating with these and other such groups, whenever possible, to advance our common goals.

HEART OF THE CITY FESTIVAL...

We were there! ...Our CAPYI workshops were a part of the Heart of the City Festival recently. The French CBC contacted us prior to the workshop about videotaping us. They came, videotaped our workshops, and interviewed one of the CAP site clients (UBC Learning Exchange CAP site user) who was present and who speaks French.

They aired a 2-3 minute story on CAP, VCN and the CAP site users, which was in French. ...Hugues has provided us with a quick translation.

The video tells the story about Alain (a CAP site user @ the UBC Learning Exchange) and others that use the CAP sites and why. The focus then moves to Izabela and explains what will happen with Industry Canada with the funding scare, and finishes with Alain explaining that if the program gets cut, a lot of people will lose their access to the internet. Here are the links to the CAP story that Radio-Canada broadcast.

Straight to Video.... <http://www.radio-canada.ca/audio->

[video/pop.shtml?urlMedia%3D/Medianet/2010/CBUFT/LeTelejournalColombieBritannique201012052100_1.aspx&promo%3DZAPmedia_Telejournal&duree%3Dcourt](http://www.radio-canada.ca/audio-video/pop.shtml?urlMedia%3D/Medianet/2010/CBUFT/LeTelejournalColombieBritannique201012052100_1.aspx&promo%3DZAPmedia_Telejournal&duree%3Dcourt)

Link to video from page...

<http://www.radio-canada.ca/regions/colombie-britannique/emissions/emission.asp?pk=70>

HI THERE, SUPER-USER!!!

This is a message from the VCN Help Desk. Our recent scan of the system disk drive shows that your mail inbox is occupying 15 Megabytes. This is an unusually large size and it may be indicating that you are not using your VCN email account anymore. If you want to continue to receive email, then please reduce the size of the inbox. You can do this in two ways:

1. Use a web browser and go to 'http://mail.vcn.bc.ca'; Log into the webmail program and delete mail from your inbox.
2. Use the email program on your computer to download the mail, and set it up so to have it automatically deletes the mail from the server when it downloads.

After having emptied your Webmail inbox, VCN email service should return to normal by 6pm that evening, or sooner. If you do not reduce your inbox and it reaches 26 Megabytes in size, we will take further action by blocking your inbox from receiving email.

If you have trouble reducing the size of your inbox, please email, call, or visit the Help Desk for more instructions (see below for contact information).

VCN Help Desk (open Mon to Fri, 10 to 4 PM) Email: help@vcn.bc.ca Voice: 604 257 3811

Loc'n: 411 Dunsmuir Street, by Homer Street, 2nd floor, Vancouver

Two blocks west of Stadium Skytrain station

WARNING!!!! CONTINUED PHISHING ATTEMPTS....

VCN users should ignore stuff like this that appears in their inbox! ...

We are currently upgrading our Message Centre database. We are deleting all unused vcn.bc.ca accounts to create more space for new ones. In order for your account not to be suspended or deleted, you will have to update your account by providing the information listed below: etc etc etc....

This is NOT a VCN post!!! VCN will never request such information on-line!

You may wish to create an account with SpamCop. We have a guide on this webpage...
<http://www2.vcn.bc.ca/email#spam>. It is under the title "SPAM Cop".

MEMBER or COMMUNITY NEWS ANYONE...???

...Where readers write us about anything vaguely related to VCN.

This section invites short articles from members or allied groups about stuff related to VCN or with a focus on collaboration with VCN, Like Free Geek recycling or VONIC... How you use VCN services, or might use new services, in 300 to 500 words. Any budding Tech Writers out there? Send them to... editor@vcn.bc.ca
...We await your input! ...But here's some already...

UNEXPECTED WIRELESS GLICHES...**Satellite Internet plan could interfere with planes' GPS**

A plan to bring high-speed Internet to rural areas could hamper satellite-based air traffic control systems, according to the Air Transport Association and other aerospace interests. Technology company LightSquared wants to rebroadcast satellite L-band communications via a land-based network of 40,000 antennas, but ATA says it is "extremely concerned about spectrum issues and the possibility of inadvertent interference."

FlightGlobal.com (2/4)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

VCN welcomes our user's query letters....

Hello, Tony the Ed

I want you all to know what happened to me when I brought my computer to the VCN office after opening an email with a trojan virus attached, and thus could access no functions on my computer. I wanted to clear it up as soon as possible.

Andre at VCN spent several hours clearing my computer system. He patiently took all the necessary steps till the trojan was gone. He then downloaded the upgraded Avira Anti-Virus Program I asked for. I'm so happy to have my computer back again. While I was in the office, Althea answered a call from someone with the same problem as me and also needing assistance. So it seems I'm not the only one opening emails with attached trojans or viruses

I asked Althea about compacting that I'd asked others about for several years. We keep saving and deleting items until the memory fills with empty space, slowing down the computer. An office manager once told me that 'compacting' cures this. Althea said he meant 'defragmenting' not compacting, and put a shortcut on my desktop for quick access.

I'm so thankful for this kind of assistance. These two VCN volunteers really knew what they were doing, and dealt with my problems patiently.

. This is an invaluable service to us helpless computer users when something unfamiliar happens, and we don't know what to do

THANK YOU VANCOUVER COMMUNITY NETWORK AND VCN VOLUNTEERS!

Onni M

Answer... Dear Onni... Thank you for your praise. Your message has been posted to our notice board. Tony the Ed.

Hi VCN Ed...

I was unable to open VCN NEWS normally by double clicking a shortcut icon, but was eventually successful with a 'Right Click' on a newsletter link, then 'Save target as...' to Desktop, and the file Popped right up. It suggested I update my Adobe Reader 8 to 9.1 ...at 25+ MB. ...Which, on VCN dial-up promised a 3 hour download! Hence I passed. I eventually used Foxit PDF Reader. Works as good, if not better than Adobe Reader, with a much smaller download size. Best of all, its FREE: See...

<http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/reader/>
Andy

Answer... VCN Help Desk has used and likes Foxit as an alternative to Adobe Reader. Or... You might try copying it to a CD or Thumb-drive at a library, or if a portable use a friend's high speed WiFi, the library, or an Internet Café.

Also, VCN User Mrmc had the same problem, his dial-up conking out after 20 or 30 minutes .. so repeatedly losing all he'd done. He finally bought REGEX software.. which was excellent and solve the conk out problem. He can now shut down, to resume the download later.

VCN Help Desk say many download managers are available for free they don't recommend anything specific, but most people should find appropriate software to suit them. Try... http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_download_managers
Tony the Ed

And finally, a reminder...

MEMBERSHIPS & DONATIONS...

With Governments generally cutting back on grants, it's critical for our continued service that VCN users don't forget to make a generous annual donation, or more!!! ...Thanks for remembering!!!

Your membership in the Vancouver Community Net is important to us, and we thank you for your financial support. Memberships are: \$25 Regular, \$40 Family, \$15 Low Income, \$75 Premium, \$10/month Sustainer and \$200 Really Special!

Note that * Donations of \$25 and over are tax deductible!**

The VCN Community e-mail & Web service is ideal for seniors who have obtained a new or used computer to keep in 'on line' touch with far off family and friends. I know that's what I did. The computer must be 'dial-up modem' equipped.

So please give possible VCN users our contact number 604 257 3811, or to visit us at the Senior Center, at 411 Dunsmuir, 2nd Floor, in *downtown* Vancouver. Thank you! And that's it!

CHEERS!!! ...Tony, your VCN Newsletter Chair

* * * * *

And Now... The FINE Print...

VCN has increased security measures against spam and identity theft. VCN users are reminded that for security reasons, having parts of the account name as the password is not recommended. There are various ways you can **request a new password**. You may come to the office with picture ID or phone the helpdesk at 604-257-3811. **Please note...** The VCN file system requires a 6 to 8 digit password combination of numbers and letters... **Please have the following information ready:**

For Individuals: - Name- Phone Number- VCN login- Keyword (mother's maiden name)- Your Birth date

For Groups: - Group Name- Contact Person Name- Contact Person Job Position- Phone Number- VCN login- Keyword

The VCN USER NEWS is presently an occasional publication by the Vancouver Community Network. Contributions in the form of articles, news items, letters and photo's are welcome, as are any comments. No payment is offered for any manuscripts, etc, submitted for publication here-in, and the opinions or advice are those of the authors.

The Editor reserves the right to edit such submissions for brevity and clarity, without intentionally altering the meaning there-in. ...All rights are retained by the authors.