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Telecom New Zealand bounces gay e-mail April 29, 2007

Telecom New Zealand has apologised to Gay Hamilton after her e-mail was bounced because it contained the word gay eight times. The automatic reply Ms Hamilton received stated that the e-mail was not suited for "business-like communication".

Website designer and lesbian, Gay Hamilton had sent the largest public company in New Zealand a message to their help desk via e-mail, asking if she was able to receive their broadband services in her Nelson suburb.

Lenska Papich, spokesperson for Telecom, has said that e-mails are usually only monitored internally, and the words are blocked to help reduce harassment cases by threatening disciplinary action. "Our systems internally detect a number of words, including both the words gay and heterosexual, that could be deemed as inappropriate for use at work." Telecom refused to list the other words that are blocked.

Ms Hamilton has said that she is worried about the amount of time and effort Telecom must have put into deciding that gay was an inappropriate word in e-mail communication. "If they do have to put content filters on, then maybe they should ensure that it only gets genuinely abusive words."

Ms Hamilton has been apologised to

by Lenska Papich, who said that she was very good about it all.

Daylight savings extended in New Zealand April 30, 2007

The New Zealand Government has announced that the daylight saving period has been extended by three weeks. Clocks will be brought forward by one hour for 27 weeks in a year beginning a week earlier on the last Sunday of September and ending on the first Sunday of April.

The extension is due primarily to a petition signed by 42,000 New Zealanders backed by Mark Holmes, Nelson city councillor, who says it will benefit those workers who work from 9.00 a.m. till 5.00 p.m.. It was also backed by politician Peter Dunne, leader of minor political party, United Future.

The change is done by an Order-in-Council signed by the Governor-General, Anand Satyanand, acting under section 4(1) of the 1974 Time Act.

The Department of Internal Affairs and the Internal Affairs minister, Rick Barker, also received a lot of support for a change, including from the Federated Farmers. Farmers had usually opposed a change to the daylight saving period because it hampered with operations.

Helen Clark, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, stated that she

personally did not support a change to the start of daylight saving in March. However the main reason that the start was altered was to avoid clashes with the fourth school term.

Rick Barker says that they will be working with various companies in the information technology sector to make sure computers are updated and ready for the first new daylight saving period change since 1990.

The Department of Internal Affairs will monitor the amount of energy has been saved because of the longer amount of daylight, and the effects it has on the economy.

In a press release, Mr Barker said, "The decision means people will have an extra hour of daylight in the evenings from late September to early April to enjoy the outdoors. This builds upon the extra half an hour already built into New Zealand's time throughout the year."

The United States and Canada have both also recently extended their daylight saving to a 34-week period.



There will be more time for sunbathing with the extension of daylight savings. Credit: Matthew Bowden.

Free to air digital TV switched on in New Zealand

May 2, 2007

New Zealand's new digital free to air television platform, Freeview was 'switched on' today at the Auckland Museum by the Government. This is the beginning of digital, and within 10 years, analogue transmission will be switched off for good.

Broadcasting minister, Steve Maharey said that it may take time for people to be persuaded to change to Freeview, but says changing to it is necessary. He describes Freeview as the path to a digital nirvana.

Broadcasting spokesperson for National Dr Jonathan Coleman says that the Government was told that, for Freeview to work, quality content was needed, otherwise people wouldn't see a need to change.

Before the launch of Freeview, the only way New Zealanders could watch digital TV was to subscribe to the only pay TV operator, SKY Network Television.

Viewers who have brought the required NZ\$300 set top box can only watch TV ONE, TV2, TV3, C4, and Māori Television. Radio New Zealand National and Radio New Zealand Concert are also available on Freeview to listen to. The most notable exception from the current line up of channels is SKY's free to air channel, Prime.

There is a possibility for an extra 13 channels to be added at a later date.

State broadcaster, Television New Zealand (TVNZ), who owns TV One and TV2, announced earlier that they will be launching two new channels. One will carry family, arts and entertainment type programmes and the other will be a news and current affairs channel. The former will be

launched later this year, and the latter being launched next year. As well as the \$25 million the Government has already contributed to Freeview, TVNZ's new channels will be given \$79 million over five years.

Various local broadcasters are also worried how they will survive when the analogue transmission is turned off. The Regional TV Broadcasters Association Chairman Jim Blackman has estimated the cost for regional broadcasters to be up to \$1 million annually. He says the Government needs to help these broadcasters for them survive.

"Every New Zealander can now receive digital television with no monthly fees and no contracts. They simply purchase a Freeview satellite set top box, and if they need one, install a dish, and their favourite television programmes are free," Freeview General Manager, Steve Browning said. Freeview terrestrial transmission will start sometime next year.

Controversy has been thrown up recently that Sky has told its contractors not to help install set top boxes for Freeview. SKY refused to comment to Radio New Zealand about this.

Mr Browning said that the launch is as significant as the launch of colour television was 30 years ago.

World Health Organization launches clinical trial website

May 5, 2007

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced Friday, the launch of a specialized search website, which will facilitate access to "high quality" clinical trial information for health researchers, doctors, and patients.

Accessing clinical trial with multiple source information was reportedly a

difficult task, unless the data is reported in the published literature. A significant number of clinical trials, however, are not published. And for trials that are published, not all of the data is reported in some cases.

The WHO's Assistant Director General, Information Evidence and Research, Tim Evans suggests the new WHO clinical trial website will facilitate access to published and unpublished clinical trials through the registration and tracking of the research projects. "For health care researchers, funders, policy-makers and consumers the portal represents an enormous step towards greater access, transparency and accountability of health research globally," said Evans.

"The registration of clinical trials is a scientific, ethical and moral responsibility," stated the WHO. Clinical trial registers have become accepted widely as common practice. The new WHO website provides easy navigation through the large number of registers that currently exist.

Registers providing data to the search portal are required to participate in the new WHO Network of Collaborating Clinical Trial registers. The network will provide a forum for registers to collaborate on procedures for clinical trial registration. Registers are also required to disclose details such as ownership, governance structure, and for-profit status.

Jeff Drazen, Editor-in-Chief of the New England Journal of Medicine supports the portal and is pleased with the ability to find all trials in a particular area of interest. "The onus now lies with all investigators to be sure that their work is fully and meaningfully registered in a WHO compatible database," said Drazen.

Data from approximately 50,000 clinical trials from United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and the

United States have been made available on the WHO site.



Flag of the World Health Organization

**New Zealand dog saves five children; receives international attention
May 5, 2007**

A small, "nicely trained" Jack Russell Terrier gave his life to help save a group of five children from two aggressive pitbulls last Sunday in Manaia, Taranaki, New Zealand.

The dog named George is being described as a hero, gathering a huge amount of international media interest in the process.

The dog suffered massive injuries that the vet had never seen to that extent before, which resulted in 69-year-old Alan Gay, the dog's owner, allowing George to be put down. He now regrets this decision.

The two pitbulls rushed at the group of children that George was following to the dairy, including a four-year-old. George then started barking loudly at the pair of dogs, and put himself between the dogs and the children. Mr Gay told Fox News, "If it wasn't for George, those kids would have copped it."

Despite having received offers of new dogs, Mr Gay has said that he will wait a while before getting another Jack Russell Terrier, as he is afraid it could happen again.

It is also believed that the two attacking dogs, which have been

destroyed, were bred to be aggressive, including being fed the drug methamphetamine, commonly referred to as "P" in New Zealand.

Mr Gay has said that Manaia has had a problem with stray dogs before, but he never expected that George would become a victim.

One story ran in USA Today, which prompted over 120 comments, and one reader to personally call Alan Gay expressing their condolences.

Responding to the huge amount of media interest, Mr Gay said, "This really surprises me, and it's marvellous. I never expected this ... I'm surprised it got around the world as it did." He says he has been getting a huge amount of phone calls from the media and the public. "The phone has been going since about half past seven this morning. Every time I hang up it rings again. It's worn out; I might have to get a new one."

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