

Midway Raven #007

(*'cause if I get to 993 – I'll have caught up on mailing comments!*) ☺

Originally Printed in **Aotearapa (NZ) # 184 (?)** Circa June or July 2005
and **Lasfapa 3??** May 2005

I went to New Zealand for my annual leave – 30 days from mid March to Mid April. I've been back for a month now and I had intended to write a trip report and also a convention report of iCON – the New Zealand NatCon (#NZNatCon2005). Instead, I find it's now Friday night in Australia the night before the May 2005 mailing is due. A quick check shows it's just after 3AM Friday on the West Coast – small saving grace.

My trip didn't go too well. I'll include the letter I'm writing to the Travel agent – it needs a couple of tweaks, but you'll get the gist of it no doubt.

Andrew IVAMY
PO Box 1138
Milton Business Centre 4064.

The Manager,
Flight Centre Carindale.
Shop

Re: Unsatisfactory service.

To whom it may concern,

I would like to draw your attention to the unsatisfactory service that I received in your store and the follow on effect it had on my annual leave.

I have used Flight Centre on many occasions over a 20 year period to arrange flights and on occasion peripherals such as car and hotel accommodation. I have travelled to NZ some 20 times, I have also travelled to the USA/Canada three times as well as to Germany and Hong Kong the UK. I have used all forms of transport, Planes trains and Rental Cars and have stayed at everything from YHA Youth Hostels to 5 star Hotels such as the Sheraton.

In January 2005, I made a booking for flights to/from New Zealand. At this time, I paid by EFTPOS with the promise by the sales staff that I could pick up my "ticket" within a week. I expressed an interest in obtaining car rental and accommodation. I returned a while later but the sales rep (Sarah Sullivan) was not in attendance. I spoke with a man (who's name I don't recall just now) and gave him the details of what I was requiring in travel.

- One way Car Hire Christchurch to Picton Pick up 10AM – Drop off 10AM
- Accommodation in Christchurch for two nights at a motel that offered 24 hours courtesy pick-up from the airport (Essential as my Plane was due to arrive at 1AM local time).
- One way Car Hire Wellington to Auckland Pick up 4PM – Drop off 4PM
- Inclusion of my iPod on the travel insurance.

I explained that I had included the iPod on my travel insurance last year and was assured that the information would be passed on to Sarah Sullivan. And so I waited to be contacted.

And Waited.... And Waited.

I made a number of phone calls and was always asked who was handling my details. I was always given the fob off that Sarah would be given the message and would phone me back.

I finally went back into the Carindale Shop and made an appointment for 3PM on the following Friday. Arriving early, I was disappointed to wait until 3:25pm before being served. I was even more disappointed

that Sarah then went on for a further 20 minutes to take phone calls. I finally pointed out that I had been made to wait (And suffered the indignation of being asked if I knew how to get to Coonabarabran by air to assist with a phone call). I was told that the phone calls were important. (Yet some how when I called I was not provided *any* service).

I went through the details again – Car hire / hotel / iPod on insurance. Sarah already had the car hire details arranged. The only problem was the price she quoted was double that quoted in the ANZCRO book. When I pointed out that I wanted to take advantage of the advertised one way discounts, I was told “Leave it with me and I’ll get back to you.”

ANZCRO it seems would not honour their own advertised discounted price. As it was now March and my departure was less than three weeks away, I first pushed for the discount, but it was not going to happen.

Due to my workings, I would not be able to collect my plane “ticket”, car rental and insurance until the Wednesday prior to departure. I had made it clear that I could not come in on the Thursday or Friday as I had other matters to attend to prior to departure on the Saturday. When I went in on the Wednesday, I was informed that the travel insurance wouldn’t be ready until Friday as I hadn’t made any arrangements. I reminded Sarah of the numerous messages that I had left (As well as the fact I had other arrangements for the remainder of the week). Then I was told that the insurance company would not cover my iPod.

Last year, I travelled to NZ, used the Carindale Flight Centre, and used the same Travel insurance company. At that time, I provided the details of my iPod’s serial number, paid the additional \$20 and was covered. This year, I was asked to provide the actual purchase receipt. I went home with out my plane “ticket” (let alone insurance or vouchers).

On Thursday I returned to Carindale Flight Centre with some two years worth of statements everything from Power and phone to Visa and Master card to Myer and David Jones) to show that I had made considerable effort to find the purchase receipt for the iPod. At the 9 AM opening time, I asked to speak to the manager; instead, I spoke to the Second in charge. I explained the situation that I was in of having no travel insurance two days out from my departure together with the car rental and accommodation not being finalised.

I also pointed out such ‘minor’ details as when a person comes in and all consultants are busy, then surely someone can at least great and explain that there will be a wait until a consultant is available. The second in charge took my comments on board and expressed some concern that the arrangements for the trip were failing.

After a protracted phone call to the insurance agency a partial compromise was reached. Even though they would not recognise the fact that they had insured my iPod last year if I provided the warranty card then they would insure my iPod. This would mean a return drive from Carindale to Hawthorne.

When I returned to Carindale the details of the Warranty card were taken down and sent off. I was also informed that the Hotel that I had requested to be booked was booked out however, I was given a complementary upgrade to a similar Hotel nearby. I was assured that this Hotel had complementary pick-up at 1AM from the airport. And I was also told that I would have to come back the following day (Friday) to collect the vouchers.

I again stressed that I could not return the following day (and that this day I should have been else where – like work). I will say in her defence that Sarah Sullivan did make the effort to drop the whole package off at my home address around 7PM on the Thursday evening, but she failed to include the actual vouchers for the Car Rental and Hotel.

Friday, the day before my travel and I again found myself driving to Carindale from Hawthorne, this time to collect the Vouchers.

I thought this would be the end of it and I would be able to enjoy the holiday.

Qantas flight () was 90 minutes late departure when I arrived at the airport. After checking in, I waited (And waited) Two hours after we were due to depart, announcements were made throughout the entire Terminal building requesting that the Qantas Flight staff report to their aircraft for immediate departure. (We hadn't boarded and wouldn't for a further 20 minutes). At the two hours late departing time, I called the flight centre 24 help number and asked if they could convey a message to the Hotel in Christchurch that my flight would be some two hours late and that I would now be arriving at approx. 3AM local time. I was given a very terse response that Flight Centre was not in the habit of phoning loved ones to let them know (that) I would be late. I attempted to explain that I was trying to advise the Hotel that I was staying at to save one of their staff waiting two extra hours, but the call centre person wasn't capable of understanding this request and refused to assist.

So I arrived over two hours late into Christchurch. No-one was there to collect me. I phoned to advise that I had arrived. The Hotels response:-

- We do not have you booked in.
- We do not offer a courtesy car at 3AM.

The whole point of my booking the Hotel I had requested was to be collected from the airport, now I would have to take a taxi. The Taxi driver turned left past the Antarctica and headed north. (Away from the city). Despite my pointing out the suburb names, street names and where I know people who live 'down that street' 'work in that building' etc., the taxi driver refused to alter his course towards the city. Instead of a trip (say) along the East West Arterial and along Sandgate Road and Abbotsford Road to Spring hill, the trip was the equivalent of driving across country to Chermshire Shopping Centre – Along Rode Road, Through Stafford and then to Newmarket before driving outbound on Samford Road until driving to Ashgrove before taking Milton road from the Toowong Roundabout into the city via Coronation Drive.

When I arrived at the Hotel, the night manager checked over the voucher I presented made a phone call and said that they would honour the voucher. The Second in charge that I had spoken to on the Thursday prior had stated that I would be given a complimentary upgrade of my Hotel room as the Hotel I had requested was not available. The room that I was allocated upon arrival in Christchurch was basic and not what I would have been prepared to pay for. Whoever footed the bill for this upgrade got ripped off. As to the Hotel that I had originally requested to be booked at – they were NOT fully booked out for the nights that I had intended to stay.

The Car Rentals.

Car Rental #1.

Neither of the two car rentals were with the car hirer that I had requested. The Thrifty car hire on the South Island was a fairly trouble free experience until it came time to refuel. The latch to open the petrol cap would not open and no service station was prepared to tamper with the rental car without authority, so I had to cut short part of my stay and race across to Nelson where it took two hours of work by an authorised service station to make a temporary latch for the fuel flap.

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25th June 2017

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Car rental #2.

I had stayed in Wellington for a week and arrived at the National (Ez) car rental depot in Thorndon at 4pm. The manager said to me "I see you've requested a such and such with this and that" making reference to the details on the form. "Yes, that's right" I replied. "Many people?" I was asked. "Just me" I responded. "Much luggage?" "Just the back pack." I answered. "Well," began the manager, we don't have the car you asked for, here's a smaller car.

The car had 197,000 + Klms on the Speedo, was some 15+ years old and had the worst fuel/klm ratio of any car I've had the misfortune to be in. There was no central locking (The hatch lock wouldn't work).

And the starter motor failed – in the middle of no where just on dark (As you would expect).

When I arrived in Auckland, the duty Manager of the Auckland Depot remarked that the vehicle should not have been given to me (No kidding) and I was informed of their actual "One way relocation" scheme.

Auckland airport.

I arrived two hours prior to my flights departure. There were some 10 check-in desks handling three flights (one each, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane). I took me 90 minutes in line to check my backpack in. I wasn't permitted to have my sleeping bag as a second item of checked luggage, so I strapped the sleeping bag to the back pack.

Between Check-in and arrival in Brisbane, my \$350 sleeping bag has been lost. Qantas won't return my calls for follow up on tracking the lost item. Despite my going into the Adelaide Street Service counter and requesting the Claim for lost item forms, Qantas' response has been "Why don't you just go out to the airport and take one of the other sleeping bags that are sitting out there?" You can have it dry cleaned. When I ask "What about the damage to my back pack (The ripped fabric where the sleeping bag was torn from the back pack)" I was told that "It must have happened in Auckland as our baggage handlers are trustworthy – In any case – we think your sleeping bag went to L.A. So, you won't see it again."

After a downwards discussion of the trustworthiness of the baggage handlers in Brisbane and the merits of travelling to Bali with a boogie board I was told by Qantas "Why bother claiming on your insurance? You'll have to pay \$350 excess." I again reminded the woman Trudi at Adelaide Street that the sleeping bag was \$350 and the back pack was also close to \$350.

But back to Auckland. Because of the combination of checking all three flights into the same counters, all three flights were delayed. When the first flight should have departed, there were still people in line behind me who were to board that flight that had not yet checked in.

When I arrived at the arrival carousel, (inside the customs controlled area) it became apparent that my sleeping bag had been 'lost' after it had been torn from my back pack. I went to the Qantas help desk, was given a card with a lost item number and explained that there would be a 21 day search before things could proceed. The Brochure contained information such as after 7 days a Claim for Loss form would be sent.

It has now been 21days since my arrival and I have neither received the *Claim for loss form* or the letter to present to my travel insurance which was promised by Trudi from the Adelaide Street counter.

As my return was two hours late, I had to take a taxi as opposed to the arrangements that I had made to be picked up and had to therefore pay a \$30 taxi fare I would not have otherwise have had to pay.

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In the next 18 months, I will be travelling overseas some four times, one a “major” trip, with three minor outings overseas, I’m sure you can imagine what comes next... Qantas still hasn’t coughed up the letter they promised to send off to the travel insurance people. Not one of my better trips.

There was some interest from the small amount I read in the March/April mailings about PGP Marty had emailed me frantically asking if the jumble of letters and symbols meant anything – I should have included the following to explain PGP better at that time. I ran at the convention a PGP key-signing party, it was a small event, but there was some follow on interest after the con.

PGP Information

PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) is the means to send encrypted emails and files over the internet. Every time you see a padlock in the bottom corner of your browser window, you can rest assured that your credit card details are being securely sent from your terminal to the company that you are making a purchase/payment through without any other person being able to view those details. This is possible though the discoveries made by Phill Zillerman (PRZ) which he implemented in his program PGP.

All information on computers is a sequence of binary bits (that is to say ones and zeros) added together, they make words, images, songs what-ever. PGP creates two 'keys' one public and one secret. You distribute your public key to everyone while your secret key remains just that – a secret. How PGP works is that it takes the sequence of ones and zeros and multiplies them with a really huge binary (prime) number (your public key). The result is put through a mod. The end result is an encoded file/e-mail which only your secret key can decrypt. The encryption occurs with the public key – the private key is the tool to decrypt.

Say the time were 3pm. This is also known as 15 hours. Both are correct, the number 15 has been put though the mod of 12, the result is 3. ($15 - 12 = 3$) if we said 30 hours we know that it is one day and six hours $30 \text{ mod } 24$ ($30 - 24 = 6$).

CLEAR SIGNING EMAILS

As well as the encryption aspect, a person can 'clear sign' their email. Anyone can read the email - a short sequence of seemingly jumbled characters follow the email which can be deciphered through PGP enabling anyone with your public key to determine if you sent that email or not.

A SHORT EXAMPLE OF A CLEAR SIGNED MESSAGE

```
-----BEGIN PGP SIGNED MESSAGE-----  
Hash: SHA1
```

This is an example of a clear signed message

```
-----BEGIN PGP SIGNATURE-----  
Version: PGP 8.0.3 - not licensed for commercial use: www.pgp.com  
Comment: http://www.planetezfind.com/
```

```
iQA/AwUBQmjKOE9z4XeRP5R7EQJ0JgCgm9gcZa2M63Qj3bf8MJ2JVVR9/94AoNXD  
Ji0FHUgq8qXSi5i7Dnv9L9Bq  
=aQuT  
-----END PGP SIGNATURE-----
```

***Note* 2017 – The examples used here are no-longer in use by me and should not be relied upon for other than example use.**

Which when decrypted and verified will look like this:-

```
*** PGP SIGNATURE VERIFICATION ***
*** Status:    Good Signature
*** Signer:    Andrew IVAMY <andrew.ivamy@sdqdesigns.com> (0x913F947B)
*** Signed:    22/04/2005 7:56:08 PM
*** Verified:  22/04/2005 8:01:32 PM
*** BEGIN PGP VERIFIED MESSAGE ***
```

This is an example of a clear signed message

```
*** END PGP VERIFIED MESSAGE ***
```

KEY SIGNING.

To start with, you never have to have your key signed by others; it is after all self signed when created. (But don't be surprised if no-one ever uses your public key.) If a person physically hands you their public key, then you can be sure that it is from them. (Unless you are paranoid that it isn't from them). If someone you know hands you their public key, then you can still ask for them to identify themselves and to advise you of their fingerprint (Found under the key properties). Satisfied the key is from the person who gave it to you, you import their key, sign it and then (most importantly) export their own public key back to them. They in turn import their own public key with your signature attached. It won't help sending them your own public key a second time (Unless you have updated key signings information that you want to pass on).

PUBLIC KEY DISTRIBUTION

As with anything, there are pros and cons.

Pub Key Dist PROS:-

- Anyone can access your public key and start sending you emails having obtained your valid email.
- You can find out a persons web of trust and therefore work out who that person associates with.
- You can update your personal details removing old details and replacing them with new details.
- You can see if anyone has signed your public key.
- You can work out who uploaded your public key to a public key server.

Pub Key Dist CONS:-

- Anyone can access your public key and start sending you emails having obtained your valid email.
- You can find out a persons web of trust and therefore work out who that person associates with.
- You can update your personal details removing old details and replacing them with new details.
- You can see if anyone has signed your public key.
- You can work out who uploaded your public key to a public key server.

You should brace yourself for the fact that your Public Key will at some point end up on a Public Key Server at some time in the future. You can be careful and never have that occur, but there is no need to revoke the key and start all over. Most Public key signing parties will now stipulate that the convener be supplied with your key before and those keys you have signed after a key signing party for distribution to those attending.

KEY SIGNING PARTY

The organiser will call for interested persons to send their public key to the organiser who will in turn generate a list of attendees. This list will usually contains details such as name, email, 'ID' eg 0x913F947B and 'fingerprint' eg EE2A 67FD 2A09 DA19 C246 9C8D 4F73 E177 913F 947B

Each person attending is required to bring 2 forms of photo id (Passport / Drivers licence etc) In Australia there is a 100 point system of ensuring a persons identity involving a combination of Passport/Drivers licence, Medicare Card, bill from two separate utilities (One communication, one power/water/council rates etc). Each person is required to identify themselves with their passport/drivers licence etc - then read out their Public Key 'ID' eg 0x913F947B and 'fingerprint' eg EE2A 67FD 2A09 DA19 C246 9C8D 4F73 E177 913F 947B

Each other person will be ticking off a series of boxes confirming that all of the details are correctly read out. If the details don't match - DON'T SIGN THEIR KEY!

After the party everyone goes home and signs the public keys that they are satisfied are valid and sends a copy of those public keys (Not just their own key, but the keys of others) to the convener who will distribute the signed keys to all attendees. Don't be offended if the person across the room from you doesn't sign your key, they may be very picky.

A word of caution:- Some websites suggest that no-one bring their laptop computers nor should you pass around floppy-disks or USB drives. These can leave you open to virii and also key logging/pass phrase data mining. If there are only five of you sitting around a hotel bar while on business travels and you only meet up once in a blue moon, then you may find it more convenient to have the above mentioned items.

HOW MANY KEYS SHOULD I HAVE?

That is entirely a matter of ones own needs. An example can be that you will need three keys:-

1. For immediate friends and Family
2. A work related key
3. You are a member of a club and send club related emails to other club members.

Once you give someone else your public key, ANYONE can get a hold of it. I don't mean that the person you gave the public key to is going to have their computer hacked into, rather, somewhere along the way, a friend/work colleague will pass your key onto a third party who in turn passes it on to another person and eventually your key will end up on a Key Server.

You can counter sign your own multiple public keys as a micro web of trust. This will at least tell anyone who has more than one of your keys that both/all are valid (If you trust the first public key and the second is signed by the first you can be confident that the second key is at least partially valid.

HOW SECURE IS PGP?

According to all published material available, current PGP keys will endure to the end of the universe (And a few after that). Only 'Quantum Computers' are likely to break modern PGP Keys. We do not have the knowledge yet to make plans for a 'Quantum Computer' let alone build one.

PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) can be found at <http://www.pgp.com/>

PGP Key signing examples/details can be found at:-

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<http://people.debian.org/~jaquette/keysign.html>
<http://www.koerber.org/APNIC2000/keysignbof.html>
<http://www.linux.org.au/conf/2004/keysigning/>
<http://zwitterion.org/keys/2003-03-01/>

Key Servers

As at May 2005, the following Public Key servers are reliable for including in your PGP program's list of servers. **I should point out that in 2017 some or all of these URL's may no-longer exist.**

ldap://europe.keys.pgp.com:11370
ldap://pgp.mit.edu
ldap://pgp.surfnet.nl:11370
ldap://www.keyserver.net
ldap://pgpkeys.mit.edu:11371
pgp.uk.demon.net
netcat.upb.de
keyserver.hadiko.de

Further reading.

Simon Sing's "**The Code Book**" **The Secret History of Codes and Code-Breaking ISBN 1-85702-889-9**
Takes the reader from the dawn of time to the Quantum computer explaining along the way how everyone from Caesar to Hitler were eventually brought down through the strength (And ultimate weakness) of the encryption codes.

Tomorrow is the Annual Medieval Faire, something that was started over 20 years ago by the Moreton Bay Morris Dancers. It's long since been handed over to others to be run, but this year we're going to be doing some May Pole Dancing.

May Day this year was well attended – being a Sunday there was an excuse to get out before dawn and dance up the May Day Sun. Some of the Dancers from yesteryear have returned from England and are planing to restart their dancing over here. I'm not too fussed to return to full time Morris as I've been dancing the Regency/Playford Dancing for a while now and I've just about resigned myself to the fact that I'm no longer dancing full time Morris. But, I'll keep an open mind about it.

Until next time,

Andrew IVAMY