Information Technology and Historical Societies

Survey Report

Vicki Court

2010

Introduction

Information technology can be described as the use of computers to retrieve, store and publish information. This report uses the results of questionnaires to indicate the extent of the uptake of computers and allied technology by groups such as historical societies in Victoria.

During the past 10 years computer technology has become more accessible for use in organisations such as historical societies and related organisations. The range of equipment has grown rapidly and equipment is becoming affordable for use by smaller groups. The number of people who regularly use computers at work and at home in Victoria has also increased. This survey report looks at the use of computer technology, particularly for collection management and communication, in RHSV affiliated organisations in 2010. It also compares the results with a similar survey undertaken in 2003.

 In April 2010 a questionnaire on how societies / groups affiliated with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) use technology was sent to all affiliated societies. In July reminder emails were sent to groups who had not returned the questionnaire. One hundred and sixty-seven (167) completed surveys were returned.

Metropolitan	**43**
Regional	117
State-wide	6
Anonymous	1

In June 2003 a questionnaire on how societies / groups affiliated with the RHSV use technology was sent to all affiliated societies. One hundred and twenty-three (123) completed surveys were returned.

Metropolitan	**35**
Regional	85
State-wide	3

The aim of both questionnaires was to establish the extent to which computers are used in RHSV affiliated groups.

Survey questions sought to discover

➢ The type of equipment (hardware) used by groups
➢ The type of programs (software) used by groups, particularly for collection management
➢ The range of computer related projects undertaken by groups both at the organisation and at homes of members
➢ Backing up of computer files
➢ Problems associated with establishing and maintaining computer projects
➢ Future plans

A focus of the surveys was on how the groups use computers for collection management.

As the internet has changed the way people communicate in the twenty-first century, the surveys also looked at the extent to which groups are using the internet to promote their organisation and collection and also the extent to which email is used.

Collecting the survey data

➢ Copies of questionnaire were circulated to the RHSV affiliated groups with copies of *History News*
➢ A copy of the questionnaire was also available for downloading from the RHSV website
➢ Additional promotion of the questionnaire was via the History Victoria Support Group mc2 forum
➢ Email reminders were also circulated to groups who were late in returning surveys
➢ Surveys were either posted to the RHSV Office or returned via email

Analysing the survey data

➢ A DB/TextWorks database was prepared to collate the responses and analyse the data
➢ Each field related to a question and validation lists were created in fields for the responses nominated for each question
➢ Additional fields were added for comments relating to questions
➢ Data was collated by using the browse list for fields in the query screen to obtain the number of responses to options for each question
➢ Boolean operators were used to aid data analysis in some cases by comparing selected options from different fields
➢ A search for the total number of respondents for each question was also made
➢ Data was presented in table form and in most cases also included data from the 2003 survey
➢ Percentages were then calculated. Percentages used in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number
➢ If more than one response was possible for a question this information is provided beneath the table
➢ Respondents did not necessarily answer all the questions on the questionnaire
➢ A selection of the comments is provided after the *Responses to the questionnaire* section of the report

A detailed analysis of the data from the 2010 survey is provided in this report. When the same question occurred in the 2003 survey, data from that survey is also provided as a comparison.

As not all groups responded to the survey it is not possible to categorically state that the results reflect what is happening in the state. However, by comparing results from the 2003 survey with responses to the same questions in the 2010 survey it is possible to indicate trends in the use of information technology by groups.

Many of the survey respondents took time to make additional comments relating to specific questions or to the topic of the questionnaire as a whole.

The comments are including at the back of the report and fall into categories that help highlight many of the challenges still faced by groups wishing to use information technology for their projects.

These challenges include:

➢ Computer literacy of members
➢ Age of members
➢ Building in which collection is of is not housed
➢ Equipment
➢ Finance

Some general observations, both negative and positive complete this section.

A draft report of the 2010 survey results was prepared for the History Victoria Support Group Seminar Day at Hamilton in August 2010.

A summary of the draft report results was made available on the blog, *Information Technology and Local History* - http://itlochist.blogspot.com/search/label/IT%20survey.

Hopefully the data collected in this final report will assist those in planning the provision of practical assistance to groups to enable increased use of information technology for promoting and preserving local history.

The data in this report may also provide encouragement and ideas for groups undertaking computer projects.

I wish to thank the many groups who took the time to answer the questionnaire and shared their experiences whether or not they were undertaking computer projects.

Vicki Court

January 2011

Summary of results

Computers technology used by RHSV affiliated groups

During the past seven years computer usage by groups has increased. Eighty-seven (87) per cent of groups responding to the 2010 questionnaire own a computer compared with seventy (70) per cent of the groups responding to the 2003 questionnaire that owned or had borrowed a computer.

Reasons for not having a computer in 2010 include:

➢ Use computers of another organisation (7)
➢ Do not have a collection or use collection in local library (4)
➢ Nowhere to store collection – stored at a member's house
➢ No headquarters for organisation – meet in members' homes
➢ Office bearers / members use own computers
➢ Members not interested
➢ Insufficient finance

Six groups currently without computers are planning to purchase a computer, printer and scanner

Computer equipment

Nine-two (92) per cent of respondents reported that their group used desk top computers, forty-one (41) per cent reported using laptops while thirty-two (32) per cent reported using both desk top and laptop computers.

Inkjet printers continue to be the type of printer most commonly used by responding groups [seventy-six (76) per cent in 2010 compared with sixty-five (65) per cent in 2003] though an increasing percentage of responding groups are using laser printers [forty-four (44) per cent in 2010 compared with twenty-eight (28) per cent in 2003].

Most groups with computers now own scanners with ninety (90) per cent of respondents having a scanner at the society.

CD-ROM burners or DVD burners are now owned by seventy-nine (79) per cent of responding groups with computers compared with forty-nine (49) per cent of respondents in 2003.

Computer use

Groups reported using computers at their organisation for

➢ Cataloguing collections [eighty-six (86) per cent],
➢ Administration [seventy-five (75) per cent],
➢ Indexing [sixty-four (64) per cent] and for
➢ Publishing [sixty-two (62) per cent

The percentage usage of computers for each of these tasks has increased since 2003.

Forty one (41) per cent of respondents reported having internet access at their organisation in 2010, an increase from eighteen (18) per cent in 2003.

Groups reported using members' computers at home for

- ➢ Administration [eighty-three (83) per cent],
- ➢ Internet access [eighty-five (85) per cent] and for
- ➢ Publishing [seventy-six (76) per cent

Although not specifically asked, a number of groups reported scanning images at home.

Collection management

Databases

Of the 153 groups using computers for cataloguing:

- ➢ Forty-five (45) per cent of the respondents use Inmagic DB/TextWorks database
- ➢ Twenty-four (24) per cent of the groups report using Excel spreadsheets for collection management
- ➢ Twelve (12) per cent use Access or FileMaker databases
- ➢ Four (4) per cent use Collections Mosaic
- ➢ Three (3) per cent use Heritage IV or Microsoft Works database
- ➢ Ten (10) per cent are using other programs

Other included:

- ➢ Specially designed / in-house database – 5
- ➢ Records directly added to library catalogue / database – 2
- ➢ Tellico (Linux), Tabularium, eLibrary, Bookmark, Copernic and Tribute were other programs mentioned

Thirteen (13) or eight (8) per cent of groups reported using only Excel for collections management

Excel was also used by groups using

- ➢ Inmagic DB/TextWorks (10)
- ➢ Access (10)
- ➢ FileMaker Pro (3)
- ➢ Collections Mosaic (2) and
- ➢ Microsoft Works (2)

Items catalogued

Photographs continue to be items most commonly catalogued by groups [ninety-five (95) per cent] along with books [eighty-one (81) per cent] and documents [seventy-eight (78) per cent.

Fifty-four (54) per cent of groups reported cataloguing artifacts. Not all groups have museums while some groups with both research collections and museums catalogue items from the research collection first.

Public access to catalogue records

Group members searching databases for researchers continues to be the method favoured by respondents though the number of groups with read-only databases for public use is increasing. More database records are also being made available online.

Backing up databases and other computer files

Generally groups appear to be more conscientious about backing up computer files in 2010 compared with responses provided to the same questions in 2003. The availability of portable storage devices holding large amounts of data such as external hard drives and USB drives as well as the availability of CD-ROM / DVD burners as components of new computers make backing up computer files easier to do. In 2003 the most common method of backing up computer files was using floppy disks.

However some groups still need to develop a regular back-up schedule.

Future plans

Thirty-five (35) per cent of groups with computers are planning to upgrade hardware in the next 12 months.

Twenty-four (24) per cent of societies with computers are planning to upgrade software in the next 12 months.

Communication

Websites

Seventy (70) per cent of groups in 2010 have either their own website or a page on the website of another organisation compared with forty-four (44) per cent of respondents in 2003.

Features included on society websites include contact details (99%), information about the society (94%), society events (64%), list of society publications for sale (67%) and society newsletter (34%).

Sixty-five per cent of respondents without websites indicated that they are not interested in training to help develop websites.

Email

Eighty-six (86) per cent of respondents to this question have a society email address or use the email address of a member for society business. Forty-seven (47) per cent of groups using email have their own email address.

Some respondents indicated that they did not know or were unsure of the number of members with email. As email is now an accepted communication method, a space for members' email address should be included on all membership forms.

Funding

Group funds are a major funding source for computer hardware for seventy (70) per cent of the respondents to this question while seventy-five (75) per cent of groups receive funding from council or other grants.

Group funds are a major funding source for computer software for sixty-seven (67) per cent of the respondents to this question while fifty-seven (57) per cent of societies receive funding from council or other grants.

Group funds are the major funding source for general running costs for society computers.

Thirty (30) per cent of respondents to the questions on funding for computer projects rely on fundraising.

Problems

Finding sufficient time and staff continue to be the major deterrents to groups undertaking computer projects.

Responses to the questionnaire

Computer technology used by groups

Groups were asked if they owned a computer or if not, whether they planned to obtain a computer.

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Group owns a computer	146	87%	85	69%
Group plans to purchase a computer in next 12 months	6	4%	12	10%
Group has no plans to own a computer	15	9%	24	20%
Group has borrowed a computer			2	1%
Total groups responding to this question	167	100%	123	100%

During the past seven years computer usage by groups has increased. Eighty-seven (87) per cent of groups responding to the 2010 questionnaire own a computer compared with seventy (70) per cent of groups responding to the 2003 questionnaire that owned or had borrowed a computer.

Reasons for not having a computer in 2010 include:

➢ Use computers of another organisation (7)
➢ Do not have a collection or use collection in local library (4)
➢ Nowhere to store collection – stored at a member's house
➢ No headquarters for organisation – meet in members' homes
➢ Office bearers / members use own computers
➢ Members not interested
➢ Insufficient finance

Six groups currently without computers are planning to purchase a computer, printer and scanner

Computer equipment

Computers

Type of computer owned by the organisation

(146 groups answered this question)

Computer Type	No.	%
Desktop	135	92%
Laptop	56	41%
Both	47	32%

(Multiple responses often given)

Printers

Type of printer owned by the organisation

(146 groups answered this question)

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Inkjet	111	76%	54	65%
Laser	64	44%	23	28%
Both	37	25%		
Dot matrix			5	6%
Printer - scanner	3	2%		
Society does not own a printer	9	6%	8	10%
Other			4	5%
Total groups responding to this question	146		83	

(Multiple responses often given)

Inkjet printers continue to be the type of printer most commonly used by responding groups [seventy-six (76) per cent in 2010 compared with sixty-five (65) per cent in 2003] though an increasing percentage of responding groups are using laser printers [forty-four (44) per cent in 2010 compared with twenty-eight (28) per cent in 2003].

Scanners

Groups were asked if they owned a scanner

(144 groups answered this question)

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Society owns a scanner	130	90%	58	68%
Society does not own a scanner	14	10%	27	32%
Total groups responding to this question	144	100%	85	100%

Most groups with computers now own scanners with 130 (90%) respondents having a scanner at the society

Types of items scanned:

(129 groups answered this question)

Responses	2010		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%
Photographs	124	96%	58	100%
Slides / Negatives	58	45%	20	34%
Documents – using OCR	82	64%	34	59%
Total groups responding to this question	129		58	

(Multiple responses often provided)

Not all groups scanning documents use OCR

CD-ROM / DVD burner

Groups were asked if they owned a CD-ROM or DVD burner

(142 groups answered this question)

112 (79%) respondents reported having a CD-ROM burner and or DVD burner

Responses	2010		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%
Society owns a CD-ROM/DVD burner	112	79%	42	49%
Society does not own a CD-ROM/DVD burner	30	21%	43	51%
Total groups responding to this question	142	100%	85	100%

(Only CD-ROM burner available in 2003)

CD-ROM burners or DVD burners are now owned by seventy-nine (79) per cent of responding groups with computers compared with forty-nine (49) per cent of respondents in 2003.

Computer use

Computers owned by organisations are used for:

(148 groups answered this question)

Responses	2010		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%
Administration	111	75%	60	69%
Cataloguing	128	86%	70	80%
Indexing projects	94	64%	53	61%
Newsletters and other publications	92	62%	51	59%
Internet access	61	41%	16	18%
Other			5	6%
Total groups responding to this question	148		87	

(Multiple responses often provided)

Groups reported using computers at their organisation for

- ➢ Cataloguing collections [eighty-six (86) per cent]
- ➢ Administration [seventy-five (75) per cent]
- ➢ Indexing [sixty-four (64) per cent] and for
- ➢ Publishing [sixty-two (62) per cent

The percentage usage of computers for each of these tasks has increased since 2003.

Forty one (41) per cent of respondents reported having internet access at their organisation in 2010, an increase from eighteen (18) per cent in 2003.

Thirty-seven (37) per cent of total survey respondents reported having internet access at their organisation.

Twenty-five (25) metropolitan and state-wide groups (fifteen (15) per cent of total respondents or fifty (50) per cent of metropolitan and state-wide respondents) reported having internet access at their organisation.

Thirty-six (36) regional groups (twenty-two (22) per cent of total respondents or thirty-one (31) per cent of regional respondents) reported having internet access at their organisation.

Computers at members' homes are used for:

(153 groups answered this question)

Responses	2010		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%
Administration	127	83%	81	76%
Cataloguing	47	31%	31	29%
Indexing projects	53	35%	32	20%
Newsletters and other publications	117	76%	83	78%
Internet access	130	85%	75	70%
Scanning	5	3%	3	3%
Other			5	6%
Total groups responding to this question	153		107	

(Multiple responses often provided)

Groups reported using members' computers at home for

- ➢ Administration [eighty-three (83) per cent],
- ➢ Internet access [eighty-five (85) per cent] and for
- ➢ Publishing [seventy-six (76) per cent

Although not specifically asked, a number of groups reported scanning images at home.

Use of member's computers compared to use of the group's computers for society projects

Computers owned by	Members		Group	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Administration	127	83%	111	75%
Cataloguing	47	31%	128	86%
Indexing projects	53	35%	94	64%
Newsletters and other publications	117	76%	92	62%
Internet access	130	85%	61	41%
Total groups responding to this question	153		107	

(Multiple responses sometimes given)

➢ Cataloguing and indexing projects tend to be carried out on group computers
➢ Internet access is normally via members' home computers
➢ Administration is carried out on both group and home computers
➢ Publishing is carried out on both home computers and group computers

Collections Management

Databases

Cataloguing program used:

(153 groups answered this question)

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Inmagic DB TextWorks	69	45%	41	48%
Inmagic Plus			5	6%
Excel	37*	24%	12	14%
FileMaker Pro	18	12%	7	8%
Access	18	12%	7	8%
Collections Mosaic	6	4%	1	1%
Heritage V (Heritage IV in 2003)	5	3%	4	5%
Microsoft Works	5	3%	3	3%
Other	15	10%	4	5%
Not using computers for cataloguing	16	10%	12	14%
Total groups responding to this question	153		86	

(Multiple responses provided in some cases)

Other included:

➢ Specially designed / in-house database – 5
➢ Records directly added to library catalogue / database – 2
➢ Tellico (Linux), Tabularium, eLibrary, Bookmark, Copernic and Tribute were other programs mentioned.

Thirteen (13) or eight (8) per cent of groups reported using only Excel for collections management

Excel was also used by groups using

> ➢ Inmagic DB/TextWorks (10)
> ➢ Access (10)
> ➢ FileMaker Pro (3)
> ➢ Collections Mosaic (2) and
> ➢ Microsoft Works (2)

Items catalogued

Type of items in the computer catalogue:

134 groups answered this question

Responses	2010		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%
Books	108	81%	53	78%
Photographs	127	95%	66	97%
Ephemera	72	54%	37	54%
Maps	75	56%	36	53%
Documents	105	78%	49	72%
Audiotapes	55	41%	27	40%
Videotapes	51	38%	20	29%
Artifacts	73	54%	35	51%
Total groups responding to this question	134		68	

(Multiple responses provided in some cases)

Photographs continue to be items most commonly catalogued by groups [ninety-five (95) per cent] along with books [eighty-one (81) per cent] and documents [seventy-eight (78) per cent.

Fifty-four (54) per cent of groups reported cataloguing artifacts. Not all groups have museums while some groups with both research collections and museums catalogue item from the research collection first.

Public access to catalogue records

Catalogue records made available to the public by:

139 groups answered this question –

Responses	2010		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%
Staff searching for researchers at the society	127	91%	60	87%
Researchers using a read – only database at the society	49	35%	14	20%
Researchers using a read-only version of the database at a library or another location	4	3%	3	4%
Local history database available on the internet	26	19%	8	12%
Society records not made available to the public			4	6%
Total groups responding to this question	139		69	

(Multiple responses provided in some cases)

Group members searching databases for researchers continues to be the method favoured by respondents though the number of groups with read-only databases for public use is increasing. More database records are also being made available online.

Backing up databases and other computer files

Back-up systems used:

(131 groups answered this question)

Responses	2010		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%
External hard-drives	72	55%	4	5%
CD-ROM/DVD burner	71	54%	34	41%
USB drives (memory drives, flash drives)	66	50%		
Floppy disks	28	21%	52	63%
Back-up tapes			4	5%
Zip drive			4	5%
Total groups responding to this question	131		82	

(A combination of backing up devices often reported being used)

Backing up recent records:

117 responses to this question

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Each time computer used	44	37%	26	39%
Weekly	28	24%	22	33%
Monthly	33	28%	7	10%
Other	13	11%	12	18%
Total groups responding to this question	117	100%	67	100%

Backing up entire database:

115 groups responded to this question

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Each time computer is used	24	21%	4	9%
Weekly	15	13%	7	15%
Monthly	49	43%	24	52%
Other	27	23%	11	24%
Total groups responding to this question	115	100%	46	100%

How many copies of the back-up files are saved?

97 groups responded to this question

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
1 back up	43	44%	21	43%
2 back ups	39	40%	23	47%
3 back ups	10	11%	2	4%
4 back ups	1	1%	3	5%
Other responses	4	4%		
Total groups responding to this question	97	100%	49	100%

Other responses included at least 2 (1), up to 4 (1), some, 10 (1)

Are back-up copies stored off site?

131 groups answered this question

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Back-ups stored off site	108	82%	43	68%
Back-ups not stored offsite	23	18%	20	32%
Total groups responding to this question	131	100%	63	100%

Comments provided about backing up included:

Quarterly / every few months(4), every 6 months (2) , regularly, irregularly (3), as required (1), never back up computer (2), occasionally, ad hoc, depends how many entries are entered, various times, not often, rather haphazard, intermittent, back-up plan being implemented (3), not done yet!

Generally groups appear to be more conscientious about backing up computer files in 2010 compared with responses provided to the same questions in 2003. The availability of portable storage devices holding large amounts of data such as external hard drives and USB drives as well as the availability of CD-ROM / DVD burners as components of new computers make backing up computer files easier to do. In 2003 the most common method of backing up computer files was using floppy disks.

However some groups still need to develop a regular back-up schedule.

Future plans

Society planning to purchase new hardware in next twelve months:

147 groups responded to this question

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Groups planning to purchase hardware	51	35%	21	25%
Groups not planning to purchase hardware	96	65%	63	75%
Total groups responding to this question	147	100%	84	100%

Type of hardware groups are planning to purchase:

Hardware Type	No. of Responses	Comments
Laptop	11	
Desktop computer	13	1 to use as read-only computer
Data projector	3	1 specifically for videos
Scanner	6	A3 scanner (3)
		Slide / negative scanner (1)
Printer	2	
External hard drive	1	

Planning to purchase software in the next twelve months:

143 groups answered this question

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Groups planning to purchase software	34	24%	19	23%
Groups not planning to purchase software	109	76%	65	77%
Total groups responding to this question	143	100%	84	100%

Type of software groups are planning to purchase:

Program Type	No. of Responses	Program Names When Provided
Cataloguing	11	Inmagic DB TextWorks (4)
		FileMaker Pro (2)
		Donortec (1)
Office suites	4	Microsoft Office (4)
Accounting software	2	Quicken (1)
		MYOB (1)
Operating system	1	Windows 7 (1)
Video editing software	1	
OCR software	2	
Family history program	1	
Image editing software	1	Photoshop Elements (1)

Communication

Websites

Groups with websites:

165 groups answered this question

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Group has own website	95	57%	40	33%
Group has page on website of another body only	21	13%	14	11%
Group does not have a website	51	30%	68	56%
Total groups responding to this question	167	100%	122	100%

Types of website providers hosting group websites:

Website	No. of Responses	Comments
My Connected Community sites	3	
VICNET sites	38	
Sites with own domain name	35	Some of these are hosted on VICNET
Attached to website of another organisation	7	
Part of website of parent body	4	
Blogs as websites	2	Blogger (1) Wordpress (1)
Community guide websites	2	
Google sites	1	
50webs	1	
Spaces.live.com	2	

➢ Eighteen (18) groups indicated help was required to develop a website
➢ Sixteen (16) groups indicated help was required to maintain a website
➢ Fifty-four (54) of the respondents without websites of their own did not request help to establish or create a website.
➢ Thirty-three (33) of these respondents indicated that they did not have a presence on any website.

Website features:

100 groups responded to this question

Responses	2010 No.	2010 %	2003 No.	2003 %
Contact details	99	99%	51	100%
Information about the group	94	94%	45	88%
Group events	64	64%	33	65%
List of publications	67	67%	29	57%
Newsletter	34	34%	11	22%
Other	20	20%	10	20%
Total groups responding to this question	100		51	

(Multiple responses provided)

Other responses Included:

➤ Blogs (3)
➤ Flickr (2) and other references to images or photo galleries on the website (3)
➤ Histories of the area, research, articles and / or items of interest (7)
➤ Links to other organisations
➤ Link to Victorian Local History Database
➤ Membership form
➤ Research form (2)
➤ Maps
➤ Sponsors
➤ Hiring details for buildings
➤ Oral histories
➤ Indexes (2)
➤ Roving time-line
➤ Tours
➤ Progress details of research project
➤ Puzzles for children

Email

Groups using email:

166 groups responded to this question

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Group has own email account	78	47%	29	24%
Group uses email account of member	65	39%	49	41%
Group does not use email	23	14%	42	35%
Total groups responding to this question	166	100%	120	100%

Responding groups tend to use web email services:

Web based email	No. of Responses
Hotmail / Live	11
Gmail	10
Yahoo	3
DSCI	1

Some use email provided by an Internet Service Provider:

Email provided by ISP	No. of Responses
BigPond	7
Optus	7
Australia	3
Chariot	2
VICNET	2

Some use email provided by a webhost portal such as Ausvic (1).

Some use email attached to the domain name of the organisation.

Number of members of groups with email:

Fourteen groups reported not knowing how many members had email addresses, though one reported that they were now collecting the information.
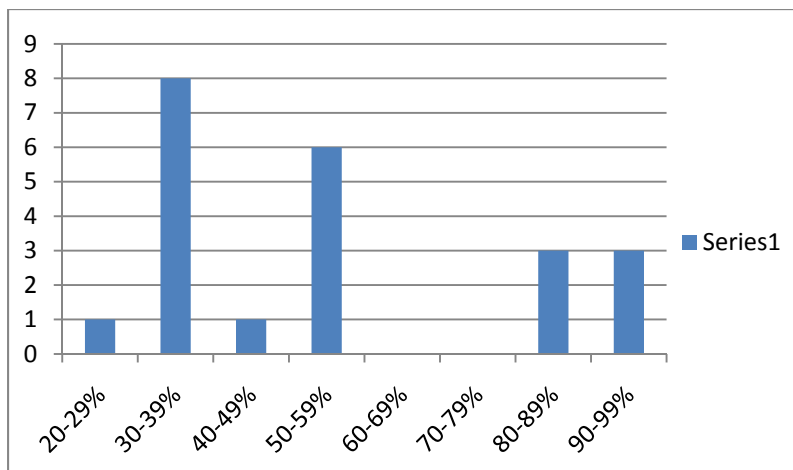
Graphs
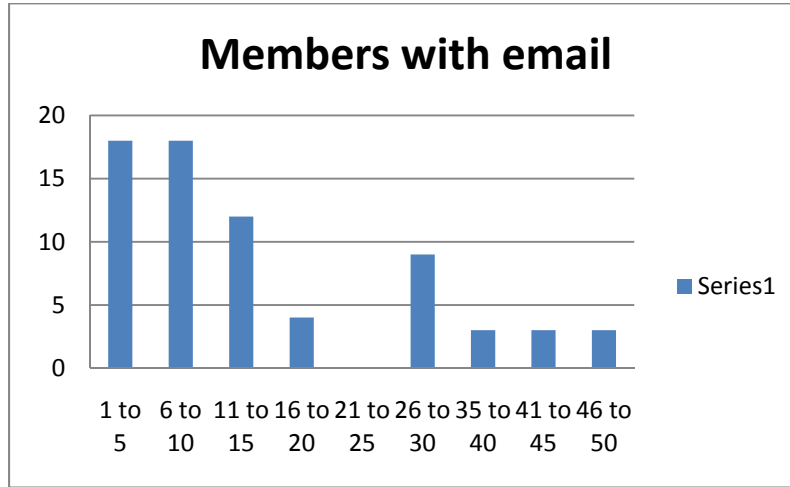
Data provided as numbers of members

In some groups a high percentage of members were reported to use email.

Other figures provided were one group each with 60, 65, 70 and 90 members using email, 3 with 100 members and one with 220.

Some groups provided information as number of members – other groups provided information as percentage of membership.

Data provided as percentage of membership

Funding

Purchase computer hardware from:

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Group funds	95	70%	61	76%
Council grants	49	36%	28	35%
Other grants	53	39%	27	34%
Fundraising	39	29%	18	23%
Total groups responding to this question	135		80	

Purchase computer software from:

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Group funds	91	67%	64	79%
Council grants	31	23%	26	32%
Other grants	41	34%	22	27%
Fundraising	33	29%	20	25%
Total groups responding to this question	135		81	

General running costs for computer projects from:

	2010		2003	
Responses	No.	%	No.	%
Group funds	114	84%	71	91%
Council grants	15	11%	9	12%
Other grants	10	7%	7	9%
Fundraising	41	30%	22	28%
Total groups responding to this question	135		78	

Grants from other organisations included:

FAHCSIA - Dept Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Volunteer Small Equipment Grant
Museums Australia (Victoria)- Building Better Museums
PROV Local History Grants Program
Bendigo Bank
ESSO
Local op shop

Group funds are a major funding source for computer hardware for seventy (70) per cent of the respondents to this question while seventy-five (75) per cent of groups receive funding from council or other grants.

Group funds are a major funding source for computer software for sixty-seven (67) per cent of the respondents to this question while fifty-seven (57) per cent of societies receive funding from council or other grants.

Group funds are the major funding source for general running costs for society computers.

Thirty (30) per cent of respondents to the questions on funding for computer projects rely on fundraising.

Problems

Problems encountered by groups when carrying out computer projects:

Responses	2010		2003	
	No.	%	No.	%
Time	118	80%	53	68%
Finance	56	38%	36	46%
Staffing	100	68%	53	68%
Inadequate guidelines	23	16%	19	24%
Inadequate training	48	33%	37	47%
Inadequate equipment	40	27%	24	31%
Inadequate computer skills / knowledge			55	71%
Other	25	17%		
Total groups responding to this question	146		78	

Finding sufficient time and staff continue to be the major deterrents to groups undertaking computer projects.

Comments

A selection of comments made by groups when completing the questionnaire is included below. Information identifying societies has been removed or replaced. Comments providing broad background information about computer programs have not been included. The comments have been grouped in broad categories and together help to illustrate many of the issues involved when implementing computer projects in RHSV affiliated groups in 2010.

Computer literacy

Lack of interest in members learning how to use a computer

People – not enough researchers or computer literate people

Computer literate active members (lack thereof)

Lack of volunteers – due to age find computers a challenge – don't retain computer skills learnt

Not many confident (computer) users in the older generation

Only the secretary is computer literate plus webmaster

Availability of volunteers

Limited number of volunteers

Recruiting people to be involved or commit to projects is sometimes difficult

Hard to find people interested in historical research – even their own properties

Availability of data entry operators – age of membership

Finding volunteers with appropriate skills

Insufficient number of volunteers computer literate

Limited time availability for those with limited skills

We always need more suitably skilled volunteers

Just commenced cataloguing project and currently training new volunteers

Had heritage volunteers – great

Age

Age of membership mainly seniors – multiple community commitments

Most of our twelve members are elderly

Membership of 15 members, mostly elderly – secretary does all the computer work – membership numbers declining – four moved recently to aged care

Majority of members past retirement age – most do not have computers or computer skills – those with computer skills, skills limited – many will not even turn on the computer to look at the database despite it being set up for easy access

Members in the 75+ age group – they have a go

Building

Room not big enough for more than three

Inadequate space (3)

Inadequate space – our space is storage – desperately need an office space area

Facilities inadequate – cold! No plumbing, telephone, internet – but not enough people to warrant it?

Difficulty of heating premises in winter

Space / area needs upgrading & fitting out to be used – currently work is done off-site

Society meets in neighbourhood house where no storage allowed

Access t o the building difficult at night

Equipment

Recently purchased a computer – now need to decide what to do next

Our computer is 7 years old – only Word Pad program

Old computer & software – we have had help and guidelines, but not enough people

Only two volunteers use the computer which is old

Group only uses computer for administration

Our major problems are training, organisation of equipment & fear of the unknown. Unfamiliar equipment is off-putting

Old group with no computers – I've just joined and am very interested in upgrading the society

Need special equipment – large scanner

Finance

Society has plans to purchase a computer, but no money for one

Not much money, not many volunteers, no interest in computers by many

We fundraise to pay cost of insurance, upkeep on building. We just manage to keep our heads above water.

General

Backlog of 50 years

More time would be good

Difficult to meet professional standards

Lack of members interested in computer use

Computers used mainly for display and cataloguing

No access to the internet

Handful do large numbers of all the jobs about the place – we are slow oldies and too busy – upheavals and new people change things too much – struggling with images, all in fact

Our story is probably not unique among the Historical Society Network but a brief history of our computer usage might be appropriate at this time.

With the introduction of the RHSV Local History Database we made an application to the local council for a grant to cover hardware and the DB TextWorks software.

We were successful and purchased 4 second hand computers which were connected on a wireless network and now share a Society purchased photocopier as a network printer. Two of the PCs have local printers attached, two have A4 scanners attached and the Printer/Scanner/Fax is also shared on the wireless network.

Recently we have added another 2 PCs of similar specification and we now have 6 PCs on the network. All the PCs are Pentium 4 and run Windows XP and the Open Office suite of programs.

Over the last few years, using these PCs and software, we have been able to increase the quality and quantity of our publications. These range from a 12pp walk book to the most impressive, a very professional looking, 220pp A5, digitally printed paperback.

[At the time of the survey this group had added 3121 records in the Victorian Local History Database]

The RHSV is asking all affiliated groups to complete this questionnaire on how their group uses, or does not use, information technology in 2010. The results of the survey will be compared with results of a similar survey undertaken by the RHSV in 2003 and will be used to plan programs to assist groups with technology based projects.
Individual groups will not be named in the survey report.

Please return completed questionnaire to
Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000
by Friday 14 May, 2010.

Name of society
Address

Contact names(s)
Phone number(s)
E-mail address
Society website address

SECTION ONE

All societies
Please tick one of the following:
The society owns a computer (go to Section Two)   ☐
The society is planning to purchase a computer in the next 12 months   ☐
The society has no plans to own a computer   ☐

Societies planning to purchase their first computer
The society plans to purchase
Computer   ☐
Printer   ☐
Scanner   ☐
CD-ROM / DVD writer   ☐
Other (please comment)   ☐

Societies without computers
The society has no plan to purchase a computer because:
Insufficient finance   ☐
Do not have a collection   ☐
Members not interested   ☐
Other (please comment)   ☐

SECTION TWO – to be answered by Societies using computers

A. Computer hardware owned by the society
A1. What type of computer does the historical society own?
Desktop   ☐
Laptop   ☐

A2. What type of printer does the society own?

Inkjet ☐
Laser ☐
Other (please specify) ☐
The society does not own a printer ☐

A3. Does the society own a scanner? Yes ☐ No ☐
A4. Does the society own a CD-ROM / DVD burner? Yes ☐ No ☐

A6. What back-up system does the society use?

CD-ROM / DVD burner ☐
USB drives ☐
External hard drives ☐
Floppy disks ☐
Other (please specify) ☐

B. Use of computers by societies

B1. Computers at the historical society are used for:

Cataloguing ☐
Indexing projects ☐
Administration ☐
Newsletters and other publications ☐
Internet access ☐
Other (please specify) ☐

B2. If the society has a scanner, items scanned are:

Photographs ☐
Slides / negatives ☐
Documents – use OCR ☐
Other (please specify) ☐

C. Use of members computers at home for society projects

Members use home computers for:

Cataloguing ☐
Indexing projects ☐
Administration ☐
Newsletters and other publications ☐
Internet access ☐
Other (please specify) ☐

D. Collection Management

D1. Collection management (cataloguing) program used:

Inmagic Plus ☐
Inmagic DB TextWorks ☐
Collections Mosaic ☐
FileMaker Pro ☐
Access ☐
Excel ☐
Heritage VI ☐
Claris Works ☐
Microsoft Works ☐
Other (please name) ☐
Not using computers for cataloguing

D2. If Inmagic DB TextWorks is used, name the version

D3. Types of items in the computer catalogue:

Books ☐
Documents ☐
Photographs ☐
Ephemera ☐
Maps ☐
Audio tapes ☐
Videotapes ☐
Artifacts ☐
Other (please specify)

D4. Society records are made available to the public by:
Staff searching computer for researchers at the society Yes ☐   No ☐
Researchers using a read-only version of the database at the society Yes ☐   No ☐
Researchers using a read-only version of the database at the local library (or other location) Yes ☐   No ☐
Local history database available on the Internet Yes ☐   No ☐

E. Backing up files
E1. How often does the society back-up recent computer entries?
Each time computer used ☐
Weekly ☐
Monthly ☐
Other ☐
E2. How often does the society back-up entire database?
Each time computer used ☐
Weekly ☐
Monthly ☐
Other (please specify) ☐

E3. How many copies of the back-up files are saved?
E4. Are the back-up files stored off site? Yes ☐   No ☐

F. Future plans
F1. Is the society planning to upgrade (or purchase additional) computer hardware during the next 12 months? Yes ☐   No ☐
F2. If yes, what type of computer hardware is the historical society planning to purchase?

F3. Is your historical society planning to upgrade (or purchase additional) computer software during the next 12 months? Yes ☐   No ☐
F4. If yes, what type of computer software is the historical society planning to purchase?

SECTION THREE – to be answered by all societies

G. Website
G1. The society has its own website Yes ☐   No ☐
If yes, provide URL
G2. The society has a page as part of the website of another organisation? Yes ☐   No ☐
If yes, provide URL

G4. If society has a website, what features are included?

Please return questionnaire to: Royal Historical Society of Victoria
239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000
by May 14, 2010

3

Contact details ☐
Society events ☐
Information about society ☐
List of publications ☐
Society newsletter ☐
Other (please specify) ☐

G5. If society does not have a website is help required to
Develop website   Yes ☐   No ☐
Maintain website   Yes ☐   No ☐

H. Email
H1. The society has its own email account   Yes ☐   No ☐
If yes, provide email address
H2. The society uses the email of a member as the email address of the
society   Yes ☐   No ☐
If yes, provide email address
H3. Approximately how many members in the society as a whole have an
email address?

I. Funding
I1. The society obtains funding for
A - computer hardware
B - computer software
C - general running costs for computer projects
from
Society funds – A (Yes / No) – B (Yes / No) – C (Yes / No)
Council grants – A (Yes / No) – B (Yes / No) – C (Yes / No)
Grants from other organisations (specify) – A (Yes / No) – B (Yes / No) – C
(Yes / No)
Fundraising – A (Yes / No) – B (Yes / No) – C (Yes / No)

Cross out options in above list that do not apply

Other (please specify)

J. Problems
 What problems make it difficult for the historical society to carry out computer projects?

Staffing
Finance ☐
Time ☐
Inadequate guidelines ☐
Inadequate training ☐
Inadequate equipment ☐
Other ☐

Please elaborate on any or all of these problems

K. Please add, on a separate piece of paper attached to the completed questionnaire, any
additional comments relating to the above questions or further comments on how information
technology is used by your group.

Thank you for participating in the survey.