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Google and shared endorsements

Google has quietly altered the terms and conditions of its service. The default setting for privacy now permits Google to use your name and photo to endorse products in web advertising.

This means that, if you have ever written a testimonial on a Google site or 'Liked' something on YouTube, your friends could see your name, photo and comments linked with that product on Google ads. Google calls this *shared endorsements*. If you don't want to share your endorsements with Google or your pals you can adjust the privacy setting here: <https://plus.google.com/settings/endorsements>.

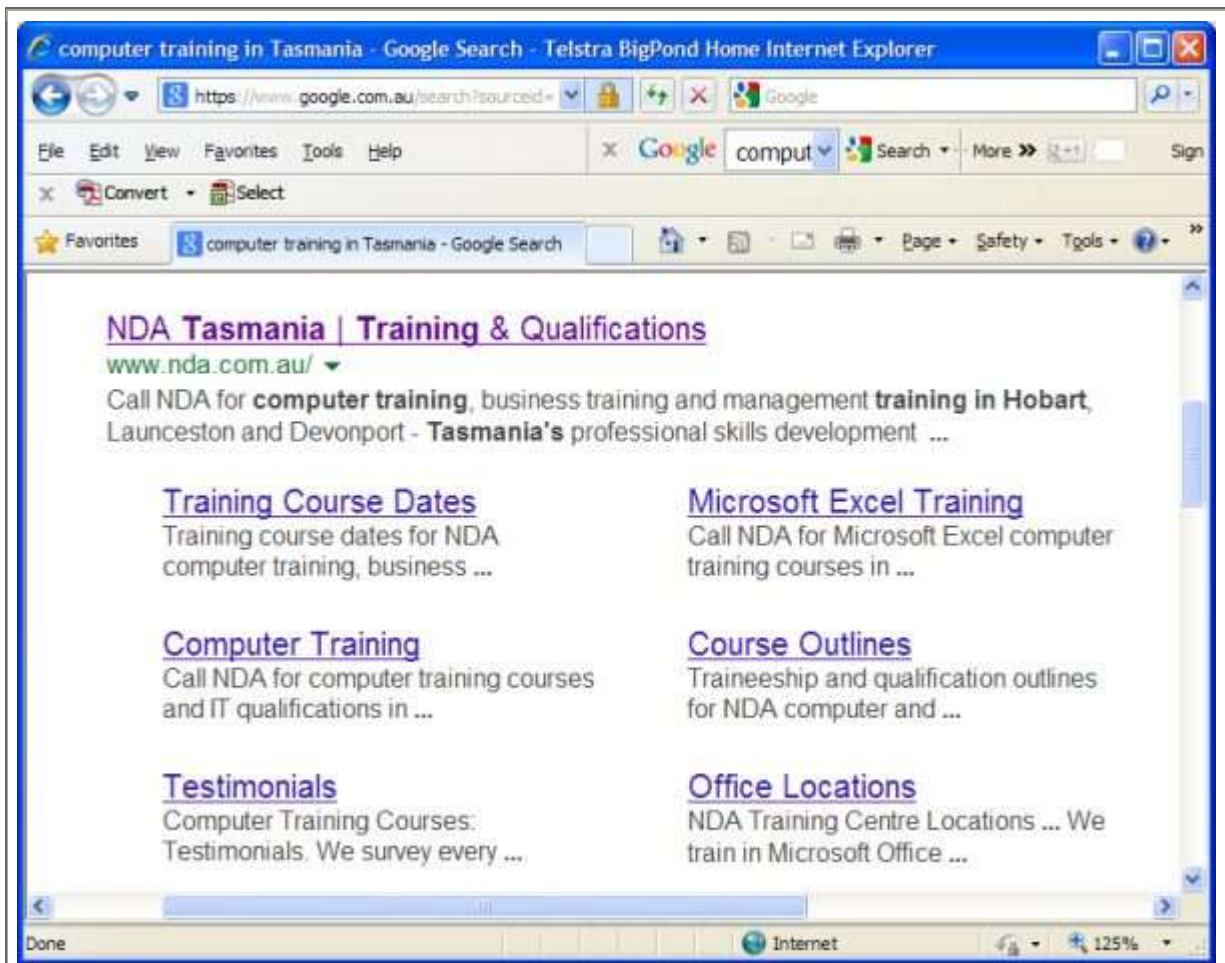
Google Hummingbird

You might also be interested to know that Google made significant changes to its search algorithm last month. The new algorithm, Hummingbird, gives much greater prominence to websites that are regularly updated with new material - especially social links and multi-media.



You might want to check that your website still appears high on the page when people make relevant searches. If you have a static website and it has 'disappeared' from the search pages, you may need to consider how you can build regular new activity into your home page. For example you could post updates on your organisation's activities or links to other sites, such as social media or sites with information relevant to your activities.

From a user's perspective, the new algorithm supports more complex queries - especially voice and natural language. I notice that if you search for *Computer training in Tasmania*, NDA still occupies first position in the search results, but the results now display multiple associated pages from our website immediately beneath.



New home technology

New age thermostats

How sexy are thermostats? Very, you might say, if they are not working and it's so hot you have to get all your gear off, but when they are working? – nah!

Which is why you might like to read about the world's sexiest thermostat.

According to their blurb, "Nest reinvents unloved but important home products, like the thermostat and the smoke alarm. We focus on simple, beautiful and thoughtful hardware". And because Nest was founded by a team of ex-Apple employees it does look rather pretty...



Of more interest to your correspondent, who has just received a quarterly

winter power bill well past the four figure mark, is their promise to save up to 20% on your next power bill. How does it do this? It does it by having more sensors than a cruise missile and constantly re-programming itself to match your preferences. Here's how it works:

- After the first week of manual operation, it anticipates your temperature preferences and movements by automatically adjusting day / night temperatures and warming up the place 30 minutes before you wake.
- It uses your wifi to make adjustments based on the weather forecast and current external temperatures.
- You can adjust the system remotely by using iOS7 and Android apps.
- The software updates online, just like your PC / phablet.
- It emails you a monthly audit of your heating / cooling energy usage.
- It is designed to plug straight onto your wall in place of your existing thermostat and control your existing heating systems.

Negatives? It is not officially released in Australia yet. Plenty of people have found that it works OK, although others complain that it doesn't work with all local heating and cooling systems. Also, when connected to wifi, it gets a USA time zone from the Nest servers, which messes up some of the software smarts.

Worth a look. You can read a detailed review here: <http://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2012/08/a-thermostat-that-learns-three-months-with-the-nest/> and a bulletin board of Australians who have tried it here: <http://forums.whirlpool.net.au/archive/1945850>.

A smoke alarm to die for

The same company that makes the thermostat has also developed a [smoke detector](#). Instead of hitting you with a World War II siren when you burn the toast, it has a range of verbal warnings in a female voice, as research shows a female voice is more likely to wake sleeping occupants. If you have a large house and multiple detectors, they automatically network so that, if the detector in the kitchen is activated, then other detectors in the premises are also activated and give a warning.



To silence the detector after a false alarm you just wave a hand at it - so no

more wobbling on chairs with broom handles to switch the damn things off.

Also (and this appeals), when you make the late-night trips to the bathroom, the alarm's motion sensor activates the built-in light with just enough illumination to guide your footsteps.

iPhone activated door lock

Our final piece of smart hardware is an iPhone activated door lock. [The Kevo lock](#) from Kwikset is powered by 4 x AA batteries. The electronic key is an app on your smartphone. With the phone on your person you just touch the lock and it opens. You can also email electronic keys to other users and manage all the keys from a separate app.



Recalling my previous experience with keyless lock and ignition systems, this is one technology I will be avoiding (see [Too Much Technology](#) in the July 2011 issue).

Making meetings work for you

Meeting: an assembly of people for a particular purpose, especially for formal discussion. Unfortunately, not all meetings are well run and, when run badly, can be one of the ultimate time-wasters. NDA's [Conducting Successful Meetings](#) course explains how to run both formal and informal meetings. The next presentations are in both **Hobart and Launceston on Wednesday 13 November**. Call Janelle on 1300 765 736 to enrol.

Facilitation was inclusive at all times, breaks were timely & topic was made interesting by general discussion & groupwork.

ML, University of Tasmania

A great course. It was fun & engaging with heaps learned.

AL, Australian Red Cross

Course met all of my objectives. Very informative and I will put a lot of the things learnt into place.

BH, DIER

I feel like my objectives have been met. I believe the next meeting I organise will be more successful.

DB, CSIRO

Conflict Resolution and Assertiveness

Don't hit me - I'll do anything you say.

How high? Yes, immediately. Just let me dust my knees off...

Or you could attend NDA's [Conflict Resolution and Assertiveness](#) course, **Thursday 7 November in Hobart and Wednesday 27 November in Launceston.**

I got a lot out of the course to help me professionally and personally in the future. I felt that our facilitator was extremely good at presenting the course content.

The presenter was excellent. He provided me with the environment to feel comfortable about expressing myself and be able to share my fears and experiences to assist me in achieving my goals.

Good, presentation gave me the tools to use in both business and at home.

Enjoyed it. Gave me lots of ways to deal with problem situations.

To enrol, grovel to Janelle@nda.com.au or whimper on **1300 765 736**.

2014 Skills Fund - don't miss out!

Applications for the [2014 Skills Fund](#) will open shortly. Organisations may apply for funding in partnership with an RTO (such as NDA) for either **short course training** ('skill sets') or **complete qualifications**.

Used sensibly, the Skills Fund could subsidise your entire staff training program for 2014 - but only if you act promptly. Last year the fund was exhausted before the expiry date. **Contact NDA now** and we will:

- Help you identify your training needs
- Ensure you meet the requirements of the program
- Write the application with you

1300 765 736 or chris@nda.com.au.

Forthcoming training courses

The following courses will shortly be presented by NDA - some at significant discounts on standard rates. To obtain the discount, please phone Janelle on 1300 765 736 and mention this email when making bookings. Clients with existing bookings for discounted courses may not change them, but additional people may be added at the discounted rate.

Hobart IT Courses

[Excel Advanced](#) 28/29 Oct - \$480
[MYOB Payroll](#) 1 Nov - \$285
[Excel Introductory](#) 4/6 Nov - \$480
[Excel Intermediate](#) 6/7 Nov - \$480
[Excel Advanced](#) 7/8 Nov - \$480
[PowerPoint](#) 11 Nov - \$240 **two for the price of one**
[Word Introductory](#) 12/13 Nov - \$480
[Word Intermediate](#) 13/14 Nov - \$480
[Word Advanced](#) 14/15 Nov - \$480
[Intro to PCs with Windows and Office](#) 20/21 Nov - \$480
[MYOB Setup and Operation](#) 21/22 Nov - \$570
[Excel Introductory](#) 18/22 Nov - \$480
[Excel Intermediate](#) 22/25 Nov - \$480
[Project](#) 27/28 Nov - \$480 **full - call for dates**

Hobart Business Skills Courses

[Superior Customer Service](#) 30 Oct - \$285
[Conflict Resolution & Assertiveness](#) 7 Nov - \$285 **two for the price of one**
[Conducting Successful Meetings](#) 13 Nov - \$285 **two for the price of one**
[Assessment](#) 20/21 Nov - \$570

Launceston IT Courses

[Publisher](#) 25 Oct - \$240
[Excel Introductory](#) 5/6 Nov - \$480 **full - call for dates**
[Excel Intermediate](#) 6/7 Nov - \$480 **full - call for dates**
[Excel Advanced](#) 7/8 Nov - \$480
[PowerPoint](#) 11 Nov - \$240 **two for the price of one**
[Word Introductory](#) 12/13 Nov - \$480
[Word Intermediate](#) 13/14 Nov - \$480
[Word Advanced](#) 14/15 Nov - \$480
[MYOB Payroll](#) 19 Nov - \$285
[Intro to PCs with Windows and Office](#) 20/21 Nov - \$480
[MYOB Advanced](#) 26 Nov - \$285
[Project](#) 27/28 Nov - \$480

Launceston Business Skills Courses

[Conducting Successful Meetings](#) 13 Nov - \$285 **two for the price of one**
[Managing Successful Projects](#) 25/26 Nov - \$570
[Conflict Resolution & Assertiveness](#) 27 Nov - \$285 **two for the price of one**

Devonport IT Courses

[Excel Introductory](#) 1/5 Nov - \$480 **two for the price of one**

[MYOB Payroll](#) 5 Nov - \$285
[Excel Intermediate](#) 5/6 Nov - \$480
[Excel Advanced](#) 6/7 Nov - \$480
[Word Introductory](#) 12/13 Nov - \$480
[Word Intermediate](#) 13/14 Nov - \$480
[Word Advanced](#) 14/15 Nov - \$480
[Outlook](#) 22 Nov - \$240
[Project](#) 27/28 Nov - \$480

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