

Never buy a computer you can't throw out of the window



This statement by some unknown sage speaks to me right now. 2009 will be engraved in my memory as *the Year of the Dud Computers*. Six (count them: **six**) computers have died on me since this time last year. Two desktop machines at work, plus my own desktop at home; and two work laptops, plus my own new laptop. And no, I didn't throw them out of the window *first*!

The desktop machines all died during the **Big Virus Infection** of December–January (though not all for that reason).

My **work laptop**, which has served me well since 2006, had to be set up again from scratch after the BVI, and has done double duty as a work and home machine for most of this year. It did a good job during the Chumburung typesetting while I was laid up at home with a bad back. Then in the last two weeks of August it slowed down drastically, threatening the end-of-August deadline. PTL, some extra gifts enabled me to buy a **new home laptop**. I put all my work data and programs on that while still working on the Chumburung, and was just able to meet the deadline.

Then as I was preparing to typeset the **Mbuko New Testament** (*see separate post*), my new home laptop started behaving erratically. A visit to a local IT repair shop brought the verdict that there was a hardware problem they couldn't fix, as it was still under guarantee. *So, three dead desktops, one glacially-slow laptop, and one unreliable laptop—and the Mbuko starting in a few days!* What was I to do?

Answer: A **new work laptop**! The new machine arrived promptly, and the Wycliffe IT Dept. fired it up... only to find a large area of dead pixels on the screen! So that went back for replacement, and I started work on the Mbuko still limping along with my home laptop. (To my delight I found that **Richard Gravina**, the translator I'm working with, has an IT background. So I help him with the typesetting, and he helps me with the laptop!)

The replacement for the new work machine arrived last week, and during the weekend I started installing programs and transferring data (surrounded by three laptops!). I was also preparing material on it for a presentation at one of our supporting churches on Sunday. *But ... (wait for it!) ... Late on Saturday night it developed a major problem!* I inserted a USB stick to copy the presentation files... and the computer didn't recognise it! Trying out other things, I found it also didn't recognise my external hard drive. For a while it looked as though we'd lost the presentation files, but after some urgent prayer I was able to copy them to Johanna's laptop over our local home network... (*whew!*).



So on Sunday we did have our pictures and video to show in the church; but we also made a heartfelt appeal for prayer for the computers. It was a great encouragement to have our friends clustering round us—with the latest dud laptop sitting in the midst on the lectern!—asking God to protect these vital pieces of equipment, without which I would be unable to prepare His Word for publication in languages that have never had it before.

Today I took the new work laptop to the Wycliffe IT department, and there was a collective groan as they received it back! *Please pray that it can be repaired quickly*, as my home laptop is becoming more and more erratic.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12, NIV). Those forces will do all they can to prevent people from receiving the printed Word of God, as we've found time and again. They are not mediaeval myths, they are a reality here and now—and if technology is our weakest point, that's where they'll strike.

Thank you for standing with us in the struggle!