

Information Highway Hazard

The World Wide Web has given us information at our fingertips, but how do we find it ... and is it safe?

Do you have a problem keeping up to date with day-to-day industry reform and changes? Are things becoming harder, or is it my imagination? Everyone I have spoken to recently seems to have the same response – there are complaints about not enough time in the day. Maybe it has something to do with the holiday period – at least that's what I keep telling myself. I know I am one person who finds that, no matter how many hours there are in the day, it will still never be enough to get all things done which seem to pile up on my desk (like Mount Everest). Much to my disappointment I tend to put things on the back burner from time to time but, like everyone else, "this will change in the New Year and I will be more

I wonder if my fridge will be able to tell me if the chicken is off?

Unfortunately, it's not a matter of finding telephone numbers, it's a matter of remembering e-mail and internet addresses. I admit that I rely very heavily on the internet for truck industry information, but have found – if you do not know what you are looking for – it's a time-soaker. Let me tell you, I have spent many long nights trying to find very basic information.

I admit it. I'm a technology buff but, unfortunately, technology does not get it right all the time.

Here's a funny example to demonstrate what I am referring to. Does anyone pay accounts or purchase things on-line? Supposed to be a less stress approach? On the whole it's a great way to shop, however it poses a

using. Your internet program might even tell you when you are on a secure site. These sites verify that the site you are using has what they call encryption or coding which scrambles your credit card numbers and makes it very difficult for outsiders to get a hold of.

So where can I get industry developments as well as appropriate and practical information which relates to the job? Every month I will list a few websites – regardless of the topic, or the organisation – which should be able to assist people getting information quicker without the stress and hassle of having to look through hundreds of useless pages. One of my picks this month is the National Road Transport Commission's web site. Their address is:

www.nrtc.gov.au/news/index.html

This 'link' should take you to the latest transport industry news and developments. While you are there – register. It's free and e-mail advice is sent out every time there's a news update.

Another hot tip – if you are looking for a free copy of the 1999 Australian Road Rules you can get it from the following address: www.law.gov.au/nrtc

Make sure you download Version 3 which is the latest version as at October 26, 1999. It includes amendments approved by ministers. A word of warning – the Australian Road Rules is a 2.5 megabyte file (400 pages) and will take a while depending on your modem speed and connection. Have fun.

I trust that everyone had a great festive season and will continue to have a brilliant year. Hope you haven't broken your new year's resolutions yet. Catch you all next month.

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You may find that mysterious foreign transactions have been made with your trusty credit card

organised!" That was my New Year's resolution.

Believe it or not, changes do occur quickly; particularly when you are left to keep up-to-date on legislation and standards from a variety of areas. These include driving hours, approved routes, workplace health and safety, WorkCover, food safety, TruckSafe, industrial relations, Department of Primary Industry requirements and quality assurance. These are just the tip of the iceberg. Dare I mention GST and its effects that are not yet clearly defined and visible?

We live in a technologically-advanced world with computers, internet, e-mail, tracking systems and the like. I was reading an article the other day which said most new electrical appliances, such as refrigerators, will soon have e-mail and internet functionality built in.

new problem for the credit card user.

When your credit card statements find their way to your house (which they always do), make sure you check them, or you may find that mysterious foreign transactions have been made with your trusty credit card when you have never even been to California! A true story, which I am told by the banks is a very common one. It seems relatively easy for 'hackers' to get these details.

My advice to you is always print out your authorisation number or confirmation as receipt of transaction if you use your credit card on the net and always, always, make certain that you read your statement carefully.

So what else can you do to protect yourself? Only use secure sites where possible. These are sites where you see a little lock (closed) at the bottom or top of your screen, depending on what internet program you are