JOHN HITS TECH FOR A SIX

"I want retirement to be about continued learning. ReadyTechGo is adding a lot to this new life."

WRITTEN BY AMBER GIBSON

Seventy-two-year-old John Gascoigne has been a ReadyTechGo client for the past five years. This month he undertook his one-hundredth session to understand the new digital technologies.

As a journalist, author, scriptwriter, cricket umpire and soon to-be-tech expert, there's no challenge John won't tackle.

Having mastered Microsoft, he has migrated to Apple products. ReadyTechGo education sessions introduce new apps and programs to their clients.

> *"I don't see any end in sight", John tells ReadyTechGo. "I want to learn everything there is to know. It's a challenge and I'm rising to it, but it's incredibly slow [laughs]."*

John's quest began with a PC, using Microsoft then Apple, and led to three brands of mobile phone (he lost the first two mobiles) and an Apple iPad.

John shared his career experiences With ReadyTechGo, describing the challenges of being a hyperactive-born journalist. He has reported and sub-edited in each of the mainstream media: newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Virtually eight separate disciplines under the banner of journalism.

The digital devastation to "traditional media" has led to massive cuts to proprietors' revenue and employment of journalists across the Western world, and John recognises his retirement probably came "just in time". His farewell speech was not just to Fairfax but a 53-year career.

For the past 14 years John worked as a journalist for Fairfax regional and suburban newspapers in Victoria. For 12 of those years he was a 'check sub', improving grammar, fixing errors, "streamlining clunky copy - anything the sub-editors may have missed".

> "I was where the buck stopped," he says. "If it wasn't correct in the paper, it was my fault."

He's also written two books. Over and Out, published by Penguin, is a humorous account of 32 years' umpiring cricket in the parks of Melbourne, while Nuggets: Golden and Human (Brolga Publishing) is a beefed-up version of 40 of the hundreds of articles he wrote while feature writer on the Bendigo Advertiser in the early 2000's.

He now enjoys apps, including Kindle, but, like most seniors, finds books in hard copy "hard to beat".

John tells how he has been a "voracious" reader since his mid-teens and recalls bringing books home from the library for his parents and two brothers. "I'd have my 12-year-old arms extended as far as I could, resting the bottom book on my hands, the top book under my chin."

Asked about his experience with ReadyTechGo, John expresses his "love of the process of learning and working with Lisa (founder) and Matt (session facilitator)". He says he enjoys both the friendly environment for learning - in his top-floor apartment next to the 1935-built art deco Astor Cinema in East St Kilda - and the interaction with his teachers. In Lisa's eyes, John is a friend, not just a student.

John ascribes "determination" as the key to keeping up with the IT revolution. "For me, it's probably stubborn determination," he adds. "I want retirement to be about continued learning. ReadyTechGo is adding a lot to this new life."

John insists he's "unsuited to the equipment" of IT but is comforted that "at times we're all stumped by technology. We're all learning this brave new world of technology, all of the time."

For five decades this New Zealander, who migrated to Australia in 1967, has been building his own story. Daily, he's at his keyboard recording it for what he hopes will be his third book. Some freelance writing, he hopes, will further keep the rust at bay. Stay tuned!
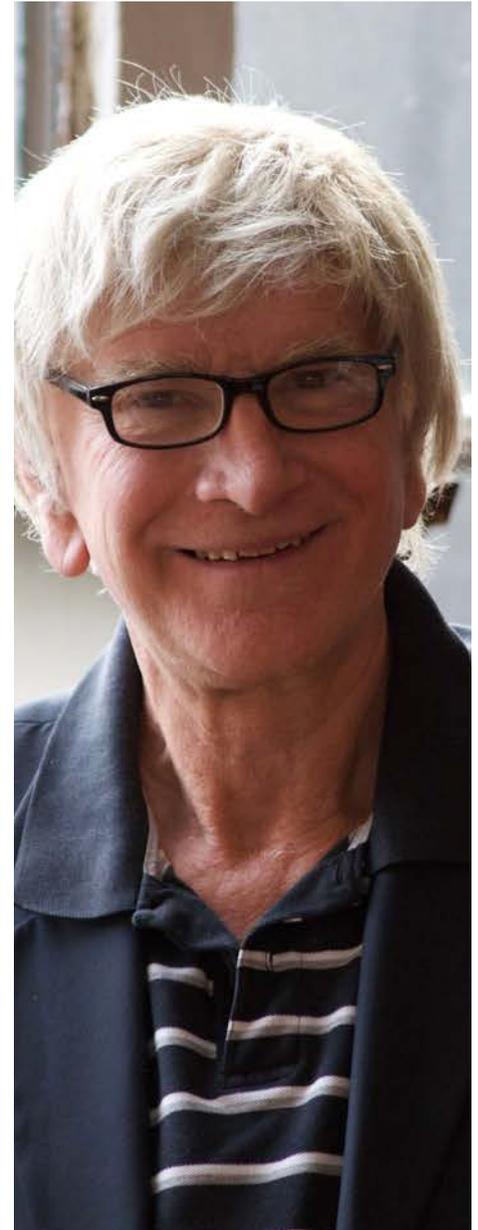
What's John's favourite discovery so far?

Youtube: "I'm lost for hours, in shock and amazement at people's talent."