ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

HOT KEY

AUTUMN 2015

For the first half of our July meeting Andy Tuckwell gave us a very informative talk on the subject of Web Robots

The Isle of Wight Personal Computer User Group

IWPCUG

We welcome anyone who has an interest in computers and related technology and what you can do with it.
We are a group which seeks to exchange ideas and new information.
Membership is £12 per annum

Our meetings are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month at
The Riverside Centre, Newport from 7.30 to 9.30 pm
Visitors are always welcome.

A charge of £2 is made per meeting, which includes tea or coffee during the break.

If you would like to know more about us, you are most welcome to come along to one of our meetings, or you can contact one of our Committee Members listed on page 3.

The Club Website address is **www.iwpcug.org**
We also have an e-group discussion area on
Yahoo groups: **iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com.**
See page 11 for how to join.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Date	Subject	Speaker
7 October	PC Utilities	Jonathan Burt
4 November	Mini-talks	various
2 December	Christmas Meeting	

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Suggestions for new events, topics or speakers for talks are always welcome.
Please contact Steve Sutters, or any committee member, with your ideas.
If necessary we may be able to find a speaker for your subject.

Chairman's Report

At our July meeting we had two particularly impressive talks, it was such a shame that we had not allocated a full evening to each speaker, and also that so few of our members were in attendance to listen to the two talks.

Yahoo Groups Calendar seems to have undergone an update recently, and one noticeable change is that it when it sends out reminder emails it seems to completely screw up the times for our events. Unless there is very good reason to beleive otherwise all our events will continue to be from 7:30pm - 9:30pm irrespective of what Yahoo Group reminder emails might say.

August saw us gather in Bembridge for the annual summer BBQ, as in the previous two years the weather forecast was not promising, and unfortunately unlike past years the forecast was accurate. We started the evening outside, but after about thirty minutes the rain started and we had to move indoors. Fortunately it did not dampen the spirits too much and the evening was enjoyed by all who attended. The picture of the attendees at the BBQ is on the back cover, a special mention will be made in the next issue of HotKey to anyone who spots what is particularly interesting about this photograph!

David Groom

How to Make a Computer Game

New member Davey Boon is showing how he made a computer game at GAMERS - Play and Program on Saturday the 10th of October at the Salvation Army Hall in Pyle Street, Newport.

He is running the event and will have PCs running programs used to make the games. Life time membership to Gamers is free for IWPCUG members. So please come along and see how he did it. It starts at 10:00am and finishes at 2:00pm.

The worlds cheapest computer?

A few weeks ago I was looking at buying as Raspberry Pi, the low cost small sized computer on a board developed in the UK and which sells for £30, and which I reviewed in the 2012 Autumn edition of HotKey. Before buying it I thought I would look for other alternatives, and whilst doing so I came across news of a new micro computer which is soon to be launched.

Developed by Next Thing Co, a US company, the CHIP has quite impressive (for its size) specifications. It is 60mm long by 40mm wide (smaller than a credit card), has a 1GHz processor, 512MB of RAM, and 4GB of storage (but no SD card slot for increasing the amount of storage). It has built in WiFi and Bluetooth, and composite output for a video signal, and a USB port, but no ethernet port. It will run any standard Linux distribution, and so will be able to run lots of software applications. Built in wireless is something the Pi does not have, and nor does the Pi have onboard RAM.

Development of the project was funded by crowd sourcing on Kickstarter, which essentially meant pre-orders being taken for the product, nearly 40,000 people pledged money to the company, allowing it to bulk buy many of the components it needed. The first "alpha" batch of boards started to be shipped out last week.

So what is the expected price of all of this? Well it's $9, that is not a typing error, it really is expected to sell for nine dollars! Sadly, at the moment, it looks like shipping costs to the UK will add substantially to this price, but hopefully if demand is high enough a UK distributor will be found and the cost will drop.

At a price like that I can see it being built into lots of projects, and I can't wait to get my hands on one, though I am likely to have to wait until the first quarter of 2016.

For more details see http://nextthing.co

A picture of one of the first production models is shown on the back cover of this edition of HotKey.

David Groom

Putting Your Emotions on Screen

The funny faces and colorful symbols you see, or use, in your texts, chats, posts, and emails are one of the most distinctive aspects of online communication. Understanding them can help you be understood, or to understand.

Smileys, emoticons, and emojis are all meant to communicate emotion.

Smileys and emoticons are largely synonymous and describe online punctuation that consists of standard keyboard characters. The most common is colon followed by a right parenthesis, or :), which is a smiling face rotated 90 degrees counterclockwise.

Emojis can be tiny pictures of actual faces, and many computer programs, tablets, and smartphones today offer them as one of their standard features. Emojis can represent human faces and animal faces, and some aren't even faces at all but hearts, flowers, fruit, or just about anything else you can think of.

Digital punctuation marks came into existence in the early 1980s to help prevent dashed-off online communications from being misunderstood. Emojis can also be a fun and twinkly envelope for your online letters. A tiny picture may not be worth a thousand words, but it can still be a whimsical addition to the sentences you write.

Despite the variety of emojis available these days, most people on the social media network Facebook express laughter the old-fashioned way. A new Facebook study shows that 51.4 percent of Facebook subscribers use haha (or a variation such as hahaha or haahhhaa, 33.7 percent use an emoji, 13.1 percent use hehe, and 1.9 percent use LOL (Laughing out loud). Still another way of expressing laughter or a grin, not measured in the study, is <g>.

Facebook users aren't all on the cutting edge of technology. Another new study, this one by SwiftKey, maker of input productivity apps, found that nearly half of Instagram comments include emojis.

The SwiftKey study also offers interesting insights into how people around the world use emojis:

* The French are the biggest users of heart emojis.

* Canadians use the most sports-oriented emojis.

* Americans are the heaviest users of emojis related to bags of money, basketballs, birthday cakes, slices of pizza, and eggplants. [Editors note: the reference to Eggplants (or Aubergines) has got me really confused, why on earth would anyone want that for an emoji?]

Also according to the SwiftKey study, the most popular emojis around the world in general are happy faces (44.8 percent) followed by sad faces (14.3 percent), hearts (12.5 percent), and hand gestures (5.3 percent). Less popular but still measurable are monkeys, parties, flowers, and clocks.

Emoticons and emojis are a partial substitute for tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. Be careful though not to overuse them. Doing so can make your meaning more difficult to decipher, not less.

In a similar vein, avoid too much dropping of standard punctuation as well as standard spelling, capitalization, grammar, and usage, which some people do with online communication. Doing this can also shift too much of the burden onto readers.

Some traditionalists avoid and even scorn emoticons and such, regarding them as silly modern crutches. But emoticons, acronyms, and similar conventions aren't new.

Telegraph operators in the mid-nineteenth century used acronyms such as IMHO (In my humble opinion) and FWIW (For what it's worth) when communicating among themselves, according to the book The Victorian Internet by Tom Standage. Later, teletype operators used emoticons when chatting. In both cases it was to save time.

What's more, question marks, exclamation points, and other standard punctuation also promote the correct understanding of meaning, and this is the reason they came into use in the first place.

The exclamation mark was introduced into English printing in the fifteenth century. As with emoticons, the exclamation mark's usage varies in different parts of the world. In French and German, for instance, it can be used after a

nonexclamatory request. The question mark came into being in its present form in the thirteenth century.

Not all new punctuation marks catch on. In the nineteenth century the "irony mark," a small, elevated, backward-facing question mark, was unsuccessfully proposed to signify that a sentence has a secondary meaning, such as irony or sarcasm.

Though it hasn't happened yet, some emoticons may someday become as accepted as exclamation points and question marks. Until they do, it's safe to assume that emoticons and emojis are inappropriate in some situations, in buttoned-down business writing, for example, and that using them there won't make you look good.

Probably the best advice for the use of emoticons and emojis in online communication is to follow the conventions of those you're communicating with. Most important, you want to make sure your readers understand what you're trying to say.

Reid Goldsborough

<u>Car Sharing / Lifts</u>

It is possible that a number of our members do not attend our monthly meetings because they find transport to Newport difficult and the committee have wondered if it might be possible to arrange lifts for those members. With a membership as large as ours it is not always obvious who might like to attend but has difficulty with transport, and secondly, who might live nearby and be able to offer them a lift.

As a first step, if you would like to attend the meetings, currently can't get to the Riverside Centre on a Wednesday evening and would like to see if there is a nearby member who might offer you a lift, then could you please get in contact with me. We will then try and find a member who might be willing to give you a lift.

Windows 10 & Privacy

At last months meeting I showed the final version of Windows 10, demonstrated its use, and how it differed from previous versions of Windows, but I ran out of time before discussing some issues concerning privacy of data, and what might be sent back to Microsoft. So I promised to try and address that omission in this article. Assuming you have performed a standard instillation / upgrade to Windows 10, you will have accepted the default privacy settings.

Data Collection

Unlike previous versions of Windows, Windows 10 sends back much more information about you, your usage of the OS and its programs, and your data. Microsofts justification for this is twofold. Firstly that it is necessary "to provide the basic aspects of these modern services and to enable the features that you use today – and which you may want to use in the future", and secondly that it "enables optional personalised experiences, which work better if your interests and preferences are understood."

WiFi Sense

There is also a feature in Windows 10 called "WiFi Sense" which, if the device you are using has a WiFi connection, allows it to share your network connection with your contacts. In order to do this, Windows 10 has the ability to automatically join wireless networks and to look at your Outlook, Skype and Facebook friends.

So that means every person you talked to on Skype or emailed with Outlook can access printers and even other computers on the same network!

If you have a WiFi enabled device you can turn off WiFi Sense from the "Network& Internet" section of the Settings menu. Click "WiFi", and then "Manage WiFi Settings", and then move the sliders to "off".

Reclaiming our Privacy

If we click on the start menu, and choose "Settings" and then click the "Privacy" section, we see 13 sub-sections where we can change what is sent back to Microsoft.

Unfortunately the amount of changes to settings that you may have to make is so extensive that it would almost fill the whole of this edition of HotKey to list them, but instead I will draw your attention to the following three web pages:

http://bit.ly/1gO5H1c   http://bit.ly/1JrYiur http://tek.io/1K1WdpQ

The fact that there are so many sections in the privacy notice (each of which have various sub sections) starts to set my alarm bells ringing. On each of these sections is a link to Microsoft's Privacy Statement, so I thought it worth taking a look at that.

Microsoft's Privacy Statement

This is a long document, and I can't comment on all of it here, but it really is worth taking a look at the whole document. I will however repeat below some of the text from that statement.

From the "Personal Data we Collect" Section;

We collect your first and last name, email address, postal address, phone number, and other similar contact data, your age, gender, country and preferred language.

Content. We collect content of your files and communications when necessary to provide you with the services you use. This includes: the content of your documents, photos, music or video you upload to a Microsoft service such as OneDrive. It also includes the content of your communications sent or received using Microsoft services, such as the:

- *subject line and body of an email,*

- *text or other content of an instant message,*

- *audio and video recording of a video message, and*

- *audio recording and transcript of a voice message you receive or a text message you dictate.*

I make no apologies for repeating in full the section marked "content". I'm sure it was only last winter that Microsoft ran an advertising campaign

encouraging people to move away from Google since Google read the content of your emails, and Microsoft did not.

From the "Windows" section:

Windows generates a unique advertising ID for each user on a device. Your advertising ID can be used by app developers and advertising networks to provide more relevant advertising.

for example, to provide personalized speech recognition, we collect your voice input, as well your name and nickname, your recent calendar events and the names of the people in your appointments, and information about your contacts including names and nicknames. This additional data enables us to better recognize people and events when you dictate messages or documents.

Additionally, your typed and handwritten words are collected...

I hope the above extracts have got you sufficiently interested / worried to make you want to read the full Privacy Statement, and to see what you can do to help maintain your privacy.

David Groom

<u>Joining the Yahoo Group</u>

Send an email to: **iwpcusers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com** with "join" in the subject line.

All members are encouraged to join this group (which costs nothing and is private to club members) in order to keep in touch with events and to join in with the discussions.

You can also keep in touch by regularly visiting **www.iwpcug.org**

Protecting Your Data On the Road

When you're travelling or otherwise away from your home or office and carrying a laptop or tablet computer, you should take the same kind of care with your data as you do with your wallet and other valuables.

Some of the same protections you take while stationary apply to travelling. But there are additional travelling protections that are worth their effort. The most commonly recommended travelling protection is to use a virtual private network (VPN) service.

A public VPN creates a private network within the larger public Internet, as if you were connecting through a fiber or coaxial cable that linked only your machine and the machine you're connecting to. The main benefit is increased security, and it accomplishes this through dedicated servers and encryption.

When you send email or view a website through a public VPN, that data travels through a server computer of the VPN company you're using. Thus, it seems to others as if it's coming from that computer, not yours.

Through VPN software installed on your computer as well as the server computer, the data is also encrypted, so if it's intercepted it's impossible to read.

VPNs are useful because the free or low-cost Wi-Fi provided by many hotels, airports, libraries, bookstores, and coffee shops typically don't provide secure connections.

A secure connection requires you to type in a security key or password provided to you by the facility. The best Wi-Fi security today is WPA2, with the earlier WPA a step behind. WEP is even less secure. And many facilities providing free Wi-Fi provide only unsecured connections, with no password required.

With your own Internet connection and unsecured Wi-Fi, neighbors or passing drivers could log on to your network and use your Internet connection, which at the least could slow you down.

With the Internet connection at a coffee shop or airport and unsecured Wi-Fi, other users of the particular Wi-Fi network could intercept and read your data

with the right software.

Such software is called packet analyzers or "sniffers." It serves the legitimate purpose of letting companies analyze their network traffic to best use its bandwidth or to monitor intrusion attempts. But the same software can be used by a bad guy sitting two seats down from you at Starbucks.

At a coffee shop not long ago someone captured my email address and password and the addresses of people I emailed. The next day my email recipients got an email impersonating me and making me sound foolish, a sophomoric joke probably by someone around the age of a college sophomore. It could have been worse.

Now I use a VPN service. Three highly recommended VPN services, getting good reviews in the computer press and anecdotally from fellow users, are Hotspot Shield (www.anchorfree.com), WiTopia (www.witopia.net), and Private Internet Access (www.privateinternetaccess.com).

With some such VPN software, a free, limited version exists. But when you're protecting yourself in this way, it probably makes sense to spring for the beefed-up pay version. You simply download and install the software before you use a public Wi-Fi hotspot. You can keep the software running all the time, or you can disable it temporarily when you're back to using a secure business or home connection.

Other benefits of VPNs are anonymous browsing and access to content in foreign countries that may be restricted to U.S. users. In some cases, with VPN vendors that have lots of servers, your Internet speeds may increase. In other cases speeds can slow down slightly or remain about the same.

Sometimes a VPN can cause problems in connecting with websites or retrieving email. In such cases all that's typically needed is temporarily disabling the VPN software and immediately turning it back on again. Other times when you've paid for the full, fast version of a VPN service, it may mistakenly indicate you're using the limited, slow, free version. In such cases all that's typically needed is logging on to the VPN vendor's website, logging off, and logging back on again.

Even with a VPN service, it's important to use good passwords. Don't reuse the same passwords. Long passphrases are more effective than short words

such as "password."

Far from everyone who uses a laptop or notebook on the road uses a VPN service. As with much in life, much about security on the Internet depends on how much risk you're willing to take. If all you're doing is surfing websites for fun, you have less to worry about. If you're doing online banking or shopping, you have more exposure.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway. He can be reached at reidgoldsborough@gmail.com or reidgold.com.

<u>Computer autobiography</u>

The first time I used a computer was at King Alfreds College on a Design and Technology course in 1987. The college had plenty of Archimedes computers but I was not interested in using them because I reasoned I had got by without them before and could not be bothered to learn how to use them. Our first essay could be hand written or word processed so I chose pen and ink. The second essay had to be typed. What a revelation! No more crossings out and easy to move text around.

After failing the 2nd year exams I came back to the Island and a few years later I was offered a free PC by the emploment service to help me get a job. Using Windows 98 and in the dark days of 56k modem dial up internet connection I discovered the joys of internet shopping and was surprised at what a vast source of information was on tap.

As time went on I became more interested in computing (especially the hardware side) so attended a CISCO course in hardware and software at Newport Tech. By far the hardest part was how the internet worked! I passed this course and it has helped me work on computers as one of my self employed sources of income.

The first PC I bought ran windows XP with a gig of RAM and had a 2.6 (later upgraded to 3 Ghz single core pentium 4 processor). I wanted to use it as a multimedia centre so also bought a TV tuner for it. The machine was so noisy that I had to turn the sound up to drown the noise of the fans. When blu ray

disc players appeared globally in 2006 I wanted one and bought a blu ray drive for my PC. The shop said my PC would be able to play the discs but they were only partly right because half the discs played fine and the other half pixilated, stuttered etc. and were un-watchable. Time had come to get a dual core machine that would cope with HD movies. I now had a wish list of a PC which was quiet, low power and could handle multimedia or a HTPC (home theater PC). I decided to build my own as then I could get the specific components I wanted. This also led to my first talk for our club. The second build with mostly the same components in a new aluminium case led to another recent talk.
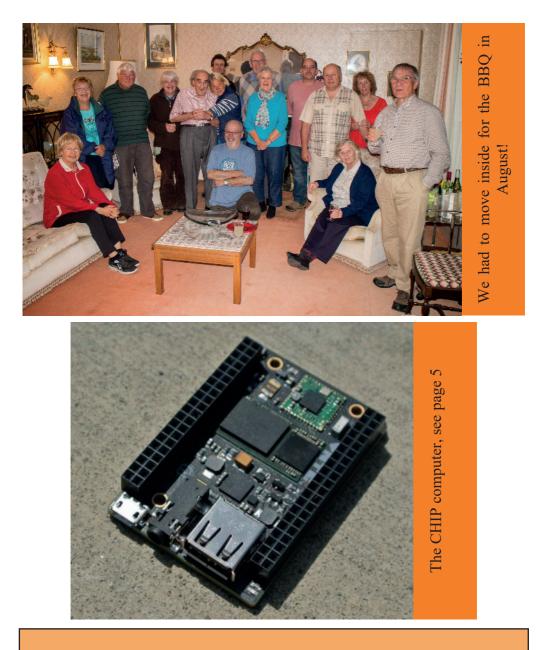
I use it for the usual email / internet surfing / shopping activities as well as: -

Printing songs for a singing group I run
Watching terrestrial and satellite TV
Playing all types of DVD and CD's
Recording original songs and listening to music
Skype calls
Printing / sending photos
Viewing my photos and videos
Advertising my services on Wightbay
Giving presentations for our club
And of course Word processing
Etc.

As for operating systems I have mainly used Windows products. I have flirted with Linux and found it useful for quickly installing an op. sys. for basic use but I would need to be far more experienced to use it as a multi media PC as the drivers for most of my hardware have to be built from scratch. As for Apple PC's they do not have as much hardware or software made for them and I prefer the more open approach of Windows. Long live Windows, 7 is my present op. sys. Long may it live!

I love my PC as much as ever and still think the most practical type of computer is a desktop with a separate monitor. I won't be buying a tablet anytime soon!

Stephen Sutters

We had to move inside for the BBQ in August!

The CHIP computer, see page 5