ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

IWPCUG

HOT KEY

SUMMER 2012

Sean Colson, from PC Consultants, was talking about the Island Eye Web Site

In This Issue   Pages

The Isle of Wight Personal computer User Group

We welcome all owners and users of IBM compatible Personal Computers.
We are a group which seeks to exchange ideas and new information.
Membership is £12 per annum

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

FUTURE MEETINGS

Date	Subject	Speaker
July 4	Trading Standards	Susan Hughes
Aug 1	Summer BBQ	
Sept 5	Migrating to a Mac	Carl Griffiths (Just PC's)
Oct 3	Windows 8 (TBC)	David Groom
Nov 7	Mini Talks	Various
Dec 5	Christmas Meeting	

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman : David Groom

Treasurer : Phil Rogers

Secretary : Susanne Bone

Membership & Database Secretary : Ray Boote

Committee Member : Roger Skidmore

Committee Member : Steve Sutters

Committee Member : Soren Johanson

HotKey Editor : Bob Groom

Contact details removed prior to
publishing on the internet.

Suggestions for new events, topics or speakers for talks are always welcome.

Please contact any committee member with your ideas.

If necessary we may be able to find a speaker for your subject.

Chairmans Report

It has been good to see a few visitors at our recent meetings, hopefully they will decide to join us on a permanent basis.

A glance at page 2 will show you that we have now arranged meetings all the way through to next years AGM. Septembers' meeting will, I believe, be the first time we have discussed an Apple Macintosh computer in detail.

With the last issue of HotKey we sent out a questionnaire asking your preferences for the format in which you received HotKey and the Cover Disk. The most obvious thing about the responses was how few we got, with only 17 responses. Eight people would not mind receiving HotKey as a PDF, but that's not really going to make much difference in the overall printing cost. Twelve people said they did not need a cover disk, and could make do with links to the programs instead. Whilst this would achieve some small cost savings over the year, I'm not convinced the saving is enough to justify a change, since the change to two methods of "distribution" would lead to more work. So for the moment I think we will be maintaining the status quo.

The Annual Club BBQ on Wednesday 1 August

This will be held again at Bembridge Lodge, 114 High St, Bembridge.
Starting at 7:00pm (note the earlier start than normal meetings)

It would assist catering for the event if you could let me know if you are planning to come, no definite commitment needed, I just need some idea of the numbers expected. It would be appreciated if you could either call on 873853, or email david@vectis-webdesign.com before 29 July.

As usual the invite is extend to members' wives / husbands / etc. Hopefully we shall have good weather, and a high turnout of members and guests.

David Groom

Joke from Steve Sutters:

2 TV aerials fell in love and decided to get married. They invited all their friends from rooftop land to the wedding which included other aerials, satellite dishes, chimney pots tiles and slates. The wedding was dull but the reception was amazing!

Book Review:
"Colossus: Bletchley Park's Greatest Secret by Paul Gannon 2006"

In April, May and June 1944 the Jellyfish link from Paris to Berlin was being "broken" (de-cyphered by the Allies) and provided the knowledge that German high command anticipated landings at Calais rather than Normandy. Jellyfish was non-Morse although carried by wireless (intercepted at Brora in the north of Scotland). Its encryption and decryption was built in to the telegraphic machinery used at either end of the link. This used Siemens and Lorenz equipment which worked on-line, unlike the entirely manual Enigma.

The shorter Enigma messages were vulnerable due to operator error and the stereotypical nature of the messages, and were broken using electro-mechanical equipment, know as Bombes. Think Post-Office relays! To attack the Fish traffic the higher speed of electronic circuitry was necessary. Jellyfish was broken using a new statistical method running on a Colossus. This processor was designed by Professor Max Newman and engineered by Tommy Flowers, using electronic valves. The breakthrough was the insight by Flowers that thermionic valves could be made to operate reliably if left powered-up. At present day Bletchley Park the rebuilt Colossus is never switched off; rather it is held at reduced voltage when out of use.

The Fish machines were known to the Germans as the Geheimschreiber (secret writer). Their theoretical operation had been diagnosed by a Bletchley mathematician called Bill Tutte. In 1942 he conceived a method of statistical attack which could be carried out by a machine. A Machine Section was established, known as the Newmanry: Max Newman had given lectures attended by Alan Turing, and had helped with his seminal paper on computable numbers. He was joined by Jack Good and Donald Michie (who later directed a Machine Intelligence unit at Edinburgh). The first machines, known as (Heath) Robinsons, were delivered in 1943, but success was limited. Bletchley conceived an improvement, however the Post Office Research Establishment had already proceeded with its own design. There was a major row over use of skilled staff and the use of valves which could be used in radar, also vital to the war effort. However the Chief Engineer of the Post Office together with its research head supported Flowers, even without formal backing from Bletchley. Paul Gannon describes this as "perhaps one of the most courageous and far-sighted decisions

to be made within the British information technology and telecommunications industries in the twentieth century."

Wireless interception was originally a Post Office function, to detect unlicensed transmission. An engineer called Harold Kenworthy gained expertise in the use of undulators to record tone transmissions. He monitored German developments during its secret peace time build up, and saw the change from Morse to Baudot code. Gannon describes Kenworthy's transfer to the Foreign Office, just one piece of the Bletchley jigsaw. Paul Gannon's background in technology and his historical research makes his book one of the best I have read on signals intelligence. He has explanatory appendices including one with the Colossus 'Processing Tree'. He even includes material on punch card retrieval systems, not often mentioned but very important to manage information.

Gannon deals with the strategic importance of the intelligence product. He follows the history of the Government Code & Cipher School, which became post-war GCHQ. This, along with Bletchley itself, was a deep secret until the mid 70's. Although the existence of Colossus was revealed then, its processes were secret until 2000 and much information was lost. However many US personnel worked at Bletchley and Gannon says that reports were produced on their return while many parts of Colossus were sent to the US or were reconstructed there. Post war (US) computer industry developments are described by Gannon. To those interested in computers I recommended Colossus, Bletchley Park's Greatest Secret, by Paul Gannon, available as paperback from Atlantic Books.

Alex Lawson

Joining the Email Group

Send an e-mail 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**

The Tenacity of the Desktop PC

With all the excitement, and sales revenue, being generated by portable devices such as smart phones, tablet computers, digital media players, and laptop computers, it's difficult to avoid feeling at times that the desktop personal computer is a dinosaur.

After all, most desktop PCs are big, heavy, and not very mobile. Will they eventually go extinct? Are we headed toward a "post PC era"?

The headlines are ominous. The world's largest desktop PC maker, Hewlett Packard, recently announced the layoffs of more than 27,000 workers. Dell, another major manufacturer, had weak second-quarter earnings. Meanwhile, Apple, maker of leading products in the smart phone, tablet, and digital media player spaces, is enjoying booming earnings.

Some pundits are predicting that even in business settings, where desktop PC sales remain strong, lower-cost "thin clients" and laptops will ultimately predominate.

Thin clients are a what's-old-is-new-again concept, similar to the underpowered computing devices that connected to powerful mainframe PCs widespread in the 1970s and earlier. Today they rely the "cloud," either Internet-based server computers or in-house corporate servers, to provide them with programs running within web browsers as well as with storage space.

But concerns remain about the reliability and security of the cloud. Without local programs and storage, if your Internet or network connection goes down, you're left with "Does not compute."

Further, the majority of those devices taking market share away from desktop PCs are largely consuming tools, used mostly for such activities as listening to music and participating in conversations. Desktop PCs are both consuming and producing tools, far superior for writing a report, producing a presentation, and crunching out a spreadsheet.

I just looked at one of the latest and greatest desktop PCs, from market leader Hewlett Packard (HP). As with just about every other new desktop PC I've used, it's leaps and bounds more powerful and impressive than its predecessors of just three or four years earlier, which is a common period of time people go before replacing one PC for a newer one.

The unit I looked at was an HP Pavilion HPE h8-1050 Desktop PC, since replaced with an only slightly different HP Pavilion HPE h8-1220 Desktop PC. The specifications alone are mindboggling, at least to a computer geek.

It comes with a quad-core Intel processor, 10 gigabytes of memory, and a 1.5 terabyte hard drive, with a terabyte roughly being a trillion bytes. One-and-a-half trillion bytes translates into approximately 1 billion books, 750,000 photos, 3,000 hours of CD-quality audio, and 500 DVD-quality films.

The unit also comes with a CD/DVD drive, eight USB ports, a memory card reader, wired and wireless networking, a wireless keyboard and mouse, a TV tuner, and a remote to control the playing of video and audio.

A PC like this shouts for a large monitor, so I had paired with it an HP 2511x. This 25-inch LED monitor sports a resolution of 1920 x 1080.

In recent years PC makers have been scrimping on the software included, and this unit is no exception. Along with the 64-bit Microsoft Windows 7 Home Premium Edition, the only major program it comes with is Microsoft Office Starter 2010 Edition. The latter includes reduced-functionality, ad-supported versions of Word and Excel, with the ads largely beckoning you to pay for one of the more complete versions of Office.

HP is a "good guy" U.S. company headquartered in Palo Alto, California, with a storied history, having been founded in a one-car garage in 1939. Along with PCs, it's also well known for its printers as well as its networking and storage products, and its target market ranges from households to multinational corporations.

HP earned a second-place finish among PC makers in the American Customer Satisfaction Index's latest customer-satisfaction survey for desktop PCs (www.theacsi.org). Apple came out on top, as it has in the past, though its products remain more expensive than the industry norm. Tied for third were Dell and Acer.

The HP unit I looked at represents a continuation of the tradition of desktop personal computers providing remarkable versatility and flexibility. You won't be able to carry it around with you. But sitting in a comfy ergonomic chair in a space you've dedicated to your PC, you can use it for a wide range of productivity, communication, and entertainment purposes.

Changes are inevitable. The next version of Microsoft Windows, Windows 8, which is expected out later this year, has an interface designed more for tablet computers than desktop PCs, a concern for many desktop PC aficionados.

Karen Hammond

How they're Trying to Control Your Web Use

As you read this, the landscape for how you use the web and how you'll be charged for it is changing. The repercussions may be profound, if not immediately then down the road.

Comcast, the largest home Internet and cable TV provider in the U.S., and Verizon, the largest U.S. wireless communications provider, just announced changes in their "data cap" policies. This effects the amount of text, music, and especially video that you can stream or download on a monthly basis using your personal computer, tablet, smartphone, and other devices.

In test areas Comcast will be boosting its data cap from 250 to 300 gigabytes per month and more importantly won't be terminating users who repeatedly exceed this limit. Instead it will be charging them.

At first look this seems like a sensible plan. You pay for what you use. But increasingly people are using Internet services that compete with Comcast's TV offerings, particularly Netflix (netflix.com), Hulu (hulu.com), and YouTube (youtube.com).

Netflix is especially worrisome to cable and fiber-optic TV providers such as Comcast and Verizon. Provided that users have fast broadband Internet connections, Netflix lets people use the Internet to conveniently obtain movies and TV shows at a lower cost than strictly through their televisions, just $7.99 per month. Fewer offerings are available this way, with live sports events being the most commonly missing, according to users. But enthusiasts say that for them the cost savings more than make up for this.

Comcast recently rolled out an Internet video service to compete with Netflix, called Streampix (comcast.com/streampix). Depending on what other services they subscribe to, some Comcast customers will receive Streampix for free, while others will have to pay $4.99 per month. Verizon reportedly is planning a similar service.

All this raises questions in the minds of some about the fairness and legality of one company controlling access to the services of competing companies. "Net neutrality" is the buzzword for a level playing field that gives equal advantage to all who compete in a particular market segment.

Still, Comcast's data caps are generous... for now. Only about 1 percent of households currently exceed 300 gigabytes of data per month, with the average usage

being about 32 gigabytes, according to Sandvine (sandvine.com), a company that makes cable network management tools.

But as high-definition video offerings over the Internet increase in popularity, more people will likely be paying extra in the future.

Verizon, which is competing aggressively with Comcast for Internet as well as TV and phone customers, doesn't have an Internet data cap for its wired Internet customers, not yet anyway. On the other hand, Verizon recently announced it was eliminating unlimited data plans for its wireless customers. Users who stream lots of movies, TV shows, and other video will wind up paying more.

Some wireless companies still have unlimited data plans or throttle the speed of customers who exceed a monthly threshold. But if this trend plays out as it appears that it will, many or most wireless companies will follow Verizon's lead and make customers pay for what they use.

As history has shown, large companies have a history of engaging in cooperative efforts that can limit competition in order to "stabilize" prices. There's no reason to suspect that this has stopped.

In a widely discussed story in eWeek.com (eweek.com/c/a/Mobile-and-Wireless/VerizonCable-Deal-Poses-Big-Threat-to-Internet-Access-Competition-680412), Wayne Rash alleged that Verizon is leading an effort to create an arrangement with cable companies to fix prices for wireless access to the Internet.

Not all of the consequences of the changes underway are anti-consumer. Cable companies, including Comcast and Time Warner, are also cooperating to give customers free access to one another's WiFi hotspots for Internet access when traveling. What's more, one benefit to the pay-per-usage pricing model is that it decreases the chances that a small minority of heavy users in a particular geographical area will compromise the wired and wireless experience of the majority of users.

Demand for video and other data-intensive content by PC, tablet, and smartphone users, which can compromise others' Internet experience, is exploding. Internet traffic around the world is expected to quadruple in 2015 compared with levels in 2010, according to networking equipment manufacturer Cisco (cisco.com), with most of this increase coming from high-definition video.

Comcast, Verizon, and other service providers are investing heavily in infrastructure to handle future increases in traffic. They rightly deserve to profit from their investments. But benefits to society as a whole, including U.S. economic efficiency, will be maximized if competition is kept open and vigorous.

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 www.reidgold.com.

The above article comes courtesy of my cousin in the USA, and your initial reaction might be "What dies this have to do with us in the UK?" Well, a general point is that what happens in the USA quite often filters through to business practice over here.

In particular the comments regarding "net-neutrality" seem particularly relevant given BT's recent purchase of broadcast rights to some premiership football matches. This could suggest BT is gearing up to increase the content available from its BT Vision packages, increasingly becoming both a supplier of the broadband infrastructure and the content delivered over it.

David Groom

The new "Cookies Law"

The Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 ("the Regulations") were passed into UK legislation on 25 May 2011. The Information Commissioners Office ("ICO") gave one year for web sites to ensure compliance before it started prosecuting people. This legislation is all about Cookies, little files created by a web browser, which store bits of information about you, or which sites you have visited.

Some cookies are vital – online shopping carts would be hard to function without them; some are useful for web site visitors - such as cookies which store your preferences so the web site can deliver content tailored for you; some are useful for web site owners - eg Google Analytics which track your usage through a web site, and so determine which pages are most viewed and for how long; and some cookies are "evil" - at the moment scripts from some ad networks deposit cookies in order to personalise ads on websites that users visit later.

The rules about cookies are essentially designed to protect the privacy of internet users – even where the information being collected about them is not directly personally identifiable. The Regulations now require that users give their consent to

cookies being stored by the browser, and were prompted in part by concerns about the tracking of individuals use of the internet.

It is important to note however that in many cases this consent can be implied, rather than be explicitly obtained.

So why am I telling you all this? It affects you, our readers, in two potential ways.

1) Web site users

If you are a web site user, you may start to see new messages on web sites asking you to accept cookies. On the back cover there are some examples of the sorts of messages you might see.

As you might expect, the ICO's web site is perhaps among the best. It has a very prominent display at the top of the home page, and you have to make an explicit decision to accept the placement of cookies (however this notice doesn't actually tell you what cookie is being used). BT take a different approach, here an overlay pops up for ten seconds, warning of the possibility of cookies, and asking you to decide what you want to do, if you do nothing then after 10 seconds BT assume you have consented to the cookie placement. The Isle of Wight Council take yet another approach, at the very bottom of their homepage their have a link to "Privacy and Cookie information", and you then have to follow that link to determine what cookies they are using and why.

What if you want a quick way of seeing what cookies a web site is storing about you? I can recommend the Ghostery plugin available from www.ghostery.com . Ghostery tracks over 1,000 trackers and gives you a roll-call of the ad networks, behavioural data providers, web publishers, and other companies interested in your activity. For each of these trackers there is a profile that will help you learn more about their technology, their business, and their privacy policies. You can choose to block the placement of all cookies, or cookies based on their classification, or simply specific cookies.

If you have the Ghostery plugin installed then when you visit a web site, and there are any cookies the site would like to set which Ghostery is concerned about, then a window will appear in the top right of the screen. This will show the cookie name and whether that cookie is allowed by your Ghostery settings. The plugin also installs a small icon in the menu bar of the browser, and clicking on that you can find out information about the cookie, and then choose whether or not to block it.

If you use Firefox, then I can also recommend the "Cookie Monster" plugin, which gives details of all cookies the site has set.

2) Web site owners

I know that a number of our members have their own web sites. If you do, then you need to check that you comply with the regulations. Probably the best starting point is the ICO's web page (tinyurl.com/dyytjsr) on the EU Cookie law.

The first step is to determine if you site uses cookies at all, and here the "Cookie Monster" plugin can help. Note to ensure you pick up all instances of where cookies are being used on your site it is important that you not only visit the homepage, but also every page of your site, and perform any actions on your site which a user might be expected to do.

The second step is to determine, what type of cookies are used, and for what purpose. If the use of the cookie is vital for the operation of the web site, such as those used by online-stores, then you do not need to gain consent.

Then as a bare minimum you need to provide some information about your use of cookies, and you have to make sure the users will find this information. In this regard I'm not convinced the Isle of Wight councils web site notice is quite as prominent as it should be, since it could be argued it is "lost" within the other links at the bottom of the page.

Next you should decide whether you need to obtain explicit consent from the site visitor, or whether implied consent is acceptable. The ICO offer the following advice:

Implied consent is a valid form of consent and can be used in the context of compliance with the revised rules on cookies.

If you are relying on implied consent you need to be satisfied that your users understand that their actions will result in cookies being set. Without this understanding you do not have their informed consent.

You should not rely on the fact that users might have read a privacy policy that is perhaps hard to find or difficult to understand.

In some circumstances, for example where you are collecting sensitive personal data such as health information, you might feel that explicit consent is more appropriate.

David Groom

Adventures with mono laser jet printers.

My first printer was a cheap inkjet which worked ok till it ran out of ink. I bought a refill kit after I found the cost of replacing the cartridges was about as much as a new printer. I got inky fingers and found the only colour that worked was yellow and if you have ever tried to read yellow text it is not easy. Now I use this ink to refill highlighter pens.

I looked on Wightbay for another printer and came across an HP Laserjet 4L. Most of the printing I do is for text so what a good idea to only have black to refill it with I thought. Not only are mono lasers cheaper to run than inkjets, they also generally have a sharper print, and work faster. This was my main printer for a couple of years. When the print became faint I looked on Wightbay and found a Samsung ML-4500 which could not be demonstrated. When I asked if it had an installation CD he said no, manual? no, leads? no makers box? No; but I could have it for nothing. It did not feel right being given it, so I gave him £2 and then had several years use before the print became faint.

Meanwhile I was given an Epsom colour printer which gave great quality photos but would dry up if not used for a while, and then would waste loads of ink on a cleaning cycle. This I find the biggest problem with inkjets, as well as the high cost of replacement inks.

My mother bought a Samsung all in one mono laser and when the print became faint I bought a refill kit for £7 and then got toner dust all over the kitchen table and the print was just as faint. £25 for a new cartridge from Ebay got the printer working great. I used the toner to refill my next mono laser a Samsung ML-1520 and found plenty of toner still in the cartridge? I distributed the toner anyway and it did print slightly darker but is still faint on the right hand side of the page. I would like to hear from anyone in the club who has tried to refill a laser cartridge.

Overall I have found mono laser jets to be reliable, economical and they give clear fast prints.

By Stephen Sutters

Editors Musings

Karen Hammonds article on pages 7 and 8 really emphasises the rapidity with which computer technology and user requirements are changing.

Now here is another problem concerning obsolescence !

The next edition of Hot Key will be due out in three months time, in October. With a reasonable amount of luck I will then be only three years short of my 90 th birthday !

It would be very acceptable if, by then (no, not by my birthday !) one of our members had agreed to take over the position of Editor.

I feel that I am not making as good a job of this function as I used to and I have not written an article since the Autumn 2011 edition. I am finding it increasingly difficult to come up with anything interesting to contribute. Most of what I know about computers is fairly out of date now and with the rate at which things are changing, I find is a little difficult to keep up with. This is demonstrated by the fact that, for most of my internet and email work I am still using a computer that I put together about 5 or 6 years ago (could be more) and is still running Windows 98. I could say " Why not ? If it works, don' fix it " As the Americans say !

In the event that there is no great stampede to accept this offer of useful employment, I will continue as long as I can (with the usual help from our Chairman) but I can't help feeling that there ought to be some new blood available to do a better job than I am doing !
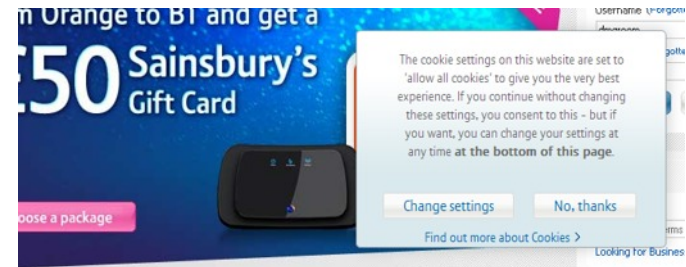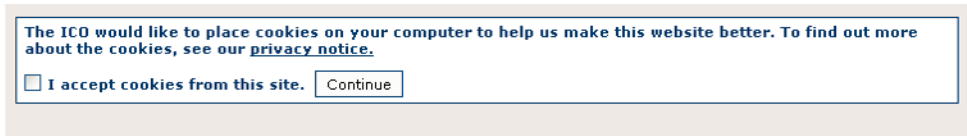
Ed.

Car Sharing / Lifts

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.

The following images are linked to the article on cookies which starts on page 11.

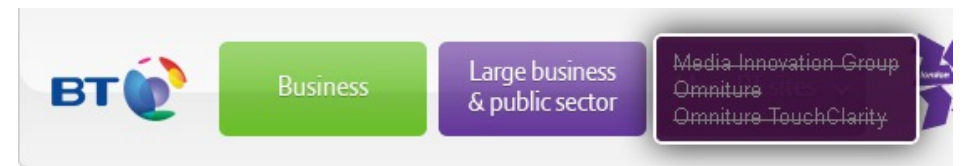The ICO web site has a very clear, explicit opt-in at the top of its home page:

The ICO would like to place cookies on your computer to help us make this website better. To find out more about the cookies, see our **privacy notice.**

☐ I accept cookies from this site. [Continue]

BT uses a different approach with a pop-up window appearing for ten seconds

The cookie settings on this website are set to 'allow all cookies' to give you the very best experience. If you continue without changing these settings, you consent to this - but if you want, you can change your settings at any time **at the bottom of this page.**

[Change settings] [No, thanks]

Find out more about Cookies >

The Isle of Wight Councils web site, has a third approach, putting the information about cookies in a link at the bottom of the page:

©2011 Isle of Wight Council
Disclaimer | Privacy and Cookie information | Contact WebTeam | Direct Gov | Freedom of Information | Report a website problem

At the right hand side of this image we see a window which is displayed by the Ghostery plugin, showing which cookies would be used by the web site, and if these are struck through then it shows these cookies have been disabled.

BT Business Large business & public sector ~~Media Innovation Group~~ ~~Omniture~~ ~~Omniture TouchClarity~~