ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

IWPCUG

HOT KEY

AUTUMN 2010

Mike Parsons was giving a talk on the development of computers (see page 6) The PCB shown below is an "electronic" version of the ENIGMA coding machine that the Germans used during the last war.

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IWPCUG

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 £6 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 £1 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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Date	Subject	Speaker
Oct 6	Family History	Ray Boote & John Moxton
Nov 3	Short talks by Members	Various
Dec 1	TBA	
Jan 5 2011	Music and Technology	Steve Sutters
Feb 2	AGM and Short talk	

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman : David Groom

Treasurer : Phil Rogers

Secretary : Susanne Bone

Membership & Database Secretary : Ray Boote

Committee Member : Roger Skidmore

Committee Member : Steve Sutters

HotKey Editor : Bob Groom

<u>Note:</u>

**Contact details removed by 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.

Chairman's Report

Sitting here composing the Chairman's report in late September, I'm reminded that the summer is nearly over. It seems a long time since our August meeting when we met at Bembridge Lodge for the annual Club BBQ. I believe this was the most successful BBQ for quite a few years, the number of members (and partners) attending was higher than I have known it, and this was despite the rather poor weather we had had that afternoon. Members also seemed to linger longer, maybe it was warmer this year! It was, I think, a most enjoyable evening.

Unfortunately we had to change, at short notice, the subject of the September talk, but we do hope to be able to have a talk on Linux sometime in the near future. Does anyone know of someone who might be able to present this for us?

I have the impression that in the "home computing world" the pace of change, at least as far as PC's goes, has decreased. Looking through the computer magazines there seems to be fewer articles on things which are radically "new", and much focus just seems to be on speed, whether it be processor speed, graphics card speed, or the move from USB2 to USB3. The centre of attention now seems to be on smartphones or anything with an "i" in front of it (iPhone, iPad, etc.). Whilst this period of consolidation in the PC world does give us time to get to know our equipment and software and means that we are not forever forking out more cash, the downside is that there are fewer new topics for us to talk about at our monthly meetings.

Cover Disk

This month the cover disk includes a number of programs relating to family history. Also new this month are:

AutoRuns

This utility, which has the most comprehensive knowledge of auto-starting locations of any startup monitor, shows you what programs are configured to run during system bootup or login, and shows you the entries in the order Windows processes them. These programs include ones in your startup folder, Run, RunOnce, and other Registry keys. You can configure Autoruns to show other locations, including Explorer shell extensions, toolbars, browser helper objects,

Winlogon notifications, auto-start services, and much more. Autoruns goes way beyond the MSConfig utility bundled with Windows Me and XP.

Partition Wizard
MiniTool Partition Wizard Home Edition is a free partition manager software designed by MT Solution Ltd. Home users can perform complicated partition operations by using this powerful yet free partition manager to manage their hard disk. Functions include: Resizing partitions, Copying partitions, Create partition, Delete partition, Format partition, Convert partition, Explore partition, Hide partition, Change drive letter, Set active partition, Partition Recovery.

Lastly, the CD has the usual selection of essential / security related programs.

<u>John Stafford</u>

We all remember a quiet, pleasant and rather self-effacing member who was a reliable attendee at meetings and who would always greet you with a smile. And very often would walk off with a book token having defeated the most difficult of David Broughton's puzzles.

Regrettably John Stafford will no longer be coming, as he passed away on 26th August, age 81, after a short illness and with little suffering.

John gained a mathematics degree at Cambridge University where his achievements were more of a social than academic nature. He came to work for Saunders Roe on the Isle of Wight in 1952, installing the first mainframe computer to come to the Island. This was the typical steel cabinets and punched tape variety and, with his wife Lily, arranged guided tours of this amazing machine. He moved on to Cunard as a systems analyst and thence to Southampton University where he lectured in mathematics and systems analysis.

He retired in 1992 and occupied himself with the IW Natural History Society and ornithological record keeping, as well as being part of Brook Local Look.

He is succeeded by his wife Lily (whom he met on the school bus) and two sons William and Robert, both of whom have followed careers in science, mathematics and physics.

Roger Skidmore

A Brief History of Computing

Mike Parsons was a co-founder with Sean Colson of the IWPCUG from 20 years ago, and used to work for Marconi designing hardware for satellites while we were discovering early IBM compatible desk top computers. On 1st September he took us through a brief history of computing, from electro-mechanical decoding machines at Bletchley Park towards the end of the war, through the discovery of the first transistor and early integrated circuits and computers the size of rooms, to modern chips with millions of transistors on board and the prospect of photo and quantum computers.

He finished with a whistle-stop tour of PC Consultants' all Island embracing website "Island Eye" - particularly fascinating for its collection of old railway memorabilia. This represented a stage in the journey of computing far removed from the original number-crunching for which computers were originally intended.

All very fascinating and mind-blowing, but a wholly entertaining evening

Thank you Mike.

<div align="right">Roger Skidmore</div>

Photography Competition

Disappointingly there were no entries for this quarters photography competition. We will hold another competition, entries to be submitted to David Groom by 6 December, the theme is "Memory".

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.ipcug.org**

Upgrade Your Computer Power Supply

The power supply is often the most under appreciated component of a computer and an upgrade could well be the key to better, faster and smoother speeds of your machine.

But who ever thinks of that silver box with the fan, tucked away in the back of your computer?

Most people simply have the power supply that came already installed by the manufacturers. If it ever overheats and breaks down, stopping their computer from starting, that is the only time most users ever think of replacing or upgrading their power supply.

Imagine that you had an unreliable source of electricity to your home that was erratic or underpowered. In the same way if the power supply is an inexpensive one it may be erratic in its power output. You may well have upgraded your computer, added drives, added a second CD/DVD reader or burner, a new powerful video card, or a number of external USB devices whether they be mice, keyboards, external drives powered by the USB port alone, and never thought that you were taxing your limited power supply. All of this extra power usage by these new components that you have added to your computer without thinking of the consequences on your already stretched power supply, can both reduce your computer performance and shorten the life of the power supply.

How are computer power supplies rated? Computer power supplies are usually rated by wattage. However this is a peak loading. The rating can be of a most optimistic nature. Late in the day some technicians overseas put one or two of the better examples of their factories workmanship onto a load meter. They snap on the power briefly, and note 500 watts. "I'm sure I saw 500 watts" says technician number 2, and even 3, and they mark the test results down. If the numbers do not jive absolutely it can always be blamed on batch consistency or even a different group of products.

Everything in life, as they say, comes down to practical logistics.

Most of the mass market computers that you will find in big box stores etc are mass produced. This has advantages of low cost and easy repair at the factory. The product has been set up and tested. If there is a problem with the computer it can be easily fixed, in most cases with a simple swap of components at the factory. The computer model and its common problems and fixes are well known. The flip side is that the

components have been carefully sought out, extensively tested and component quality shaved down to the bone.

As a result you do not have a lot of leeway with power supply for any upgrades or simple USB hardware additions to your computer system. Thus it is a wise idea to replace your power supply.

How can you judge which power supplies are better than others. First of all you can do a rough judgment by weight. The better power supplies will have a lot more copper metal in their transformer and will be much heavier. Inexpensive power supplies are very lightweight. You will notice the heavier weight of better power supplies immediately.

Next the better power supplies will have higher wattage. 200 - 300 watts may be fine for older Pentium 2s and 3s; newer computers may well need a minimum of 350 - 400 watts or more. It is not only power in watts but the consistency that matters. The better power supplies will be marked with consistent power output levels on their markings. As well they may be marked as having dual or more channels, What this means is that there are two or more entirely separate power supply channels. Thus there will be one distinct channel of power for the motherboard and another for the peripherals. When a DVD drive comes on for instance, the power supply to the motherboard will not diminish even for a second.

The last thing to note is the number of plug outputs and how many fans are built into the power supply. The better examples will have the luxury of providing lots of extra plugs - both for convenience, and the expandability their power supply offers.
As well, there may be extra fans to properly cool the better, more powerful power supplies. Even though there may be extra fans, the power supply may be incredibly quiet due to the higher quality bearings and advanced sophisticated heat sensing power switching controls.

The AC power supply of your computer may well be the most unappreciated, taken for granted, component of your computer. A better power supply can be one of the keys to increasing the speed and consistent performance of your computer, especially as you upgrade your machine and add new components.

Now may be a good time to invest in a new, high quality computer power supply!

<div align="right">Maxwell Z. Rubin</div>

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 http://www.isnare.com/?aid=187329&ca=Computers+and+Technology

More on Computer Power Supplies

For reasons of simplicity, light weight, size and low manufacturing costs, power supplies ("PS's") operate in what is called the " Switched Mode " and this system generates a great deal of possible radio interference. If this is not properly suppressed, it can ruin radio reception especially on Long or Medium Waves. Until a few years ago even low cost PS's incorporated components to prevent this interference escaping via the mains input leads.

 Recently the chairman and I have built new computers, and the interference that their two power supplies (which came with the cases) generated and fed back down the power leads was quite intolerable, and could easily have ruined radio reception in any close properties, in addition to ours.

I took the power supplies to pieces and found that the mains suppression components had simply been omitted. The white crosses on the LH picture show where they should have been. I found two old unworking supplies, and the RH picture of an older unit shows the sort of arrangement that ought to have been in the newer supplies. I managed to remove the necessary components from the old units and put them into the offending ones, curing the problem. I can now use my radios again for Long Wave reception.

Before modifying the power supplies in this quite difficult manner, I had tried to purchase better PS's but I could not find a supplier who would guarantee that there would be no similar problems with any of their power supplies ! That's progress !
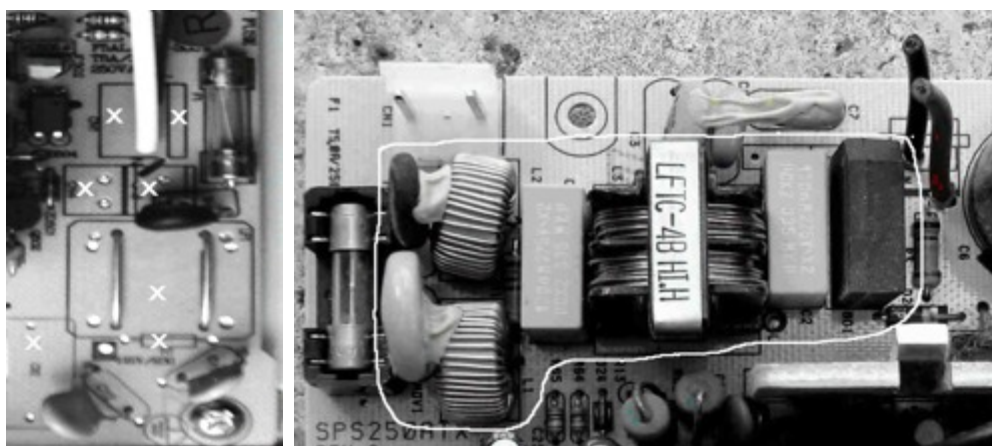
When the Cutting Edge Makes You Bleed

The recent brouhaha surround the latest version of the popular iPhone sheds interesting light on the early adoption of new technologies. Early adapters jump at the opportunity to use the latest and greatest digital tools and toys, from PC operating systems such as Windows 7 to digitised phones such as Apple's iPhone 4. Problem is, the cutting edge can become the bleeding edge when you have to deal with frustrating bugs that should have been caught in the "beta" or testing phase.

With the iPhone 4, the main complaints have been dropped calls and weak reception when holding the phone a certain way. This state-of-the-art "smartphone" functions not only as a cell phone but also a video phone, movie viewer, book reader, gaming device, Web viewer, email device, digital still camera, digital video camera, and more. Soon after the iPhone 4's release in June, the problems surfaced. Consumer Reports gave the product its "not recommended" rating. Others called for its recall.

At the time of this writing, Apple has resisted recall demands, which would cost it a whopping $1.5 billion, according to Bernstein Research, an investment research firm. At first Apple has curiously suggested as a fix that customers not touch the phone on its lower left when using it, which is difficult for lefties. Then they offered a 30 day money back guarantee, which most phones come with anyway, and a cover to protect the area of the phone they recommended not be touched. Others have found a better workaround, using duct tape, the universal cure-all. Taping over the antenna opening, reportedly, can mostly solve the problem.

The ultimate solution, according to some, is to avoid buying the product in the first place, same with other just-released products incorporating new and under tested technologies. Instead, according to this strategy, let others be the guinea pigs. Consider buying after the product has been on the market for several months and the major bugs have been eliminated.

As with previous versions of the iPhone, the iPhone 4 may well turn out to be a fine product. And it's far from the only much-hyped product to experience these kinds of opening-day jitters. In some cases such products

overcame their initial problems while in other cases they were eventually discontinued. Among the worst offenders through the years have been Microsoft Internet Explorer 6, released in 2001 and beset with security woes, PointCast Network, a mid-1990's "push technology" service that delivered news and information while slowing down PCs and overwhelming corporate networks, and Syncronys SoftRAM, a 1995 software release that promised to double your computer's memory only to have that claim criticized as "false and misleading" by the FTC.

The importance of new technology is undeniable. One aspect of progress results when investment in research and development leads to more effective ways of doing things. As a society we value this. A study a few years ago by the Pew Internet & American Life Project on information technology described Americans' love affair with technology as one of the defining characteristics of our culture.

Early adapters of new technology are typically, though not always, younger people. The Pew study labeled the heaviest information technology users as "young tech elites." But new technologies don't become mainstream until other sectors of society embrace them. The telephone, for instance, was first used largely by urban male businessmen, but rural women who used it to chat with friends and family made it popular. Like computers, radios were first used by young male hobbyists before others found uses for them.

With new technology, the wow factor is alluring. Trying out the latest and greatest can be like taking the wrapping off of a gift and seeing something truly amazing. But if you want to add some rationality to the process, before buying, tap into the collective wisdom of how well a new product delivers on its promises. You can read reviews in magazines and newspapers, often written by those who have tested out pre-release versions. Further you can go online to seek out opinions in discussion groups, consumer evaluation Web sites, and blogs. In office and similar settings you can get informal advice from those whose expertise you trust.

Organizations are typically more cautious than individuals about new products, with many deferring until the cost-benefit is clear. Many pay consultants to do a formal analysis. To some people, the old adage applies: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. This can be taken to an extreme when people

get stuck in their ways, actively avoiding anything unfamiliar even when it would make their work or personal lives more productive or enjoyable. Others jump in whenever something new comes along. Perhaps the best approach is somewhere in between.

<div align="right">By: Reid Goldsborough</div>

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

More on Computer Interference

Until a year or so ago, if one wanted to set up a home network, i.e a LAN from room to room, there were two methods of doing it. One was the old-fashioned, totally reliable, totally secure data cable or one could use the more convenient and simpler method via high-speed wireless LAN units.

There is now a third method called Power Line Transmission, with PLT units that simply plug into a 3 pin mains socket wherever needed and the computers and their ethernet cables are plugged into these units and the data is sent down the power cables.

Many years ago there was developed for secure communications, a transmission system called Frequency Division Multiplexing in which a message was divided up into a number of parts and these were sent, each by a different station, on a different frequency. For example a very simple system would have one station sending the even numbered letters and another sending the odd letters. Of course code breakers would need to know the details of the system in order to re-assemble the message for decoding. I believe that Bletchley Park were confused for some time by this sort of multiplexing, and much more complex systems are in general use today.

Power Line Transmission uses essentially this technique. In the PLT unit the high speed data stream is split up into thousands of separate, low speed, streams and each of these streams is used to modulate one of the thousands of separate, very low, power radio "Transmitters" that send their

signals simultaneously down the power line. At the other end, the "Receiving" section of the PLT re-combines these components to produce the original data stream.

Unfortunately, these radio transmitters operate right across the Short Wave Band from 1 Mhz to 30 Mhz and they are working into open, unshielded cables that form quite efficient "antennas " and the signals are radiated, causing serious interference problems with any use of the SW band. There has been a limit set to the power that the transmitters can legally use (EN 55022 Class B EMC Limit) but many of the devices now being sold, and used, generate around 1,000 times this limit. Many hundreds of complaints have been made about this interference, but OFCOM does not seem to have had much success in dealing with it. The responsibility for dealing with these complaints has now, curiously, been handed over to the BBC !

Many, perhaps most, of these complaints have come from Radio Amateurs and Citizen Band users, and some of the units do have the Amateur Bands left free, but the RSGB (Radio Society of Great Britain) has organised a petition, with some thousands of signatures, to have these units banned altogether, as I think they are in some countries including the USA.

But, in the pursuit of " Progress ", worse is to come ! !

In order to increase the speed available, the bandwidth that these new devices will use (and I understand that some are already on the market) has been increased and will now extend over the FM and DAB frequencies.

Unfortunately, DAB uses a very complex modulation system in order to get many broadcast audio channels down the same " pipe " and reception is very likely to be devastated in properties using PLT, or whose neighbours are using it.

This may well be one of the reasons why the Government has apparently abandoned (or delayed) the decision to eliminate all analogue (eg FM) radio in favour of DAB by the year 2012.

We shall see ! !

Editor

Phishing Away Your Identity

You know not to do it. You don't respond to those e-mails asking you to update your Social Security number or credit card, bank, or other financial information or verify your password at eBay, PayPal, or other e-commerce Web sites. You don't because you know that chances are high that this is a criminal attempt to steal your identity and your money, and you'd then be left spending many tedious hours trying to straighten out the mess afterward.

Among the latest phishing attacks are e-mails that appear to come from the Internal Revenue Service trying to trick you into revealing the bank you do business with. The criminals then send an e-mail that appears to come from that bank, asking you to log onto the bank's Web site - Only the Web site you're directed to only *looks* like your banks. It's actually a bogus site put up by the criminals to get your account data so they can log onto your bank's real site and clean you out!

People still get suckered into these "phishing" scams, with the Anti-Phishing Working Group (www.antiphishing.org) receiving an average of about 25,000 reports of such attacks each month. Many people think of cyber criminals operating abroad, away from the reaches of American law enforcement, and many do. But the country hosting the greatest number of phishing Web sites is the U.S., according to the group, and the average time that these sites stay up is about four days -- long enough to do their dirty work.

Phishing originated with American Online back in the mid-1990s with teenage tricksters enticing naïve users into revealing their password to "verify your account" or "confirm billing information." It later evolved into a more nefarious mode, involving credit cards and other financial information, but with the same kinds of pitches being used. By 2004 it was a full-scale crisis. It still is.

Among the other techniques used by phishers are addressing victims using their real name, sending e-mail that appears to come from a trusted friend or co-worker, using a Web address for the phishing site that's very close to that of the real site, featuring images at the phishing site that were stolen from the real site, using links at the phishing site that connect to the real site, and

employing scripts at the phishing site that place a picture of the real Web address over the address bar.

Protecting your self against phishing isn't difficult, and new software provides extra protection. Never click on a link in an e-mail message asking you to verify any personal or financial information via the Web. No legitimate company or government agency should ask you to do this. If you think it may be legitimate, phone the company and ask if such e-mail went out. Be careful, though, of e-mails asking you to phone your bank or credit card company to verify information. The phone number may be bogus, directing you to the criminals, who will then try to steal your information. Look up the phone number yourself.

Be wary of any links in e-mail messages. Verify that the Web address that the link will take you to is the same address it indicates. Phishers often use the correct Web address as the name of the link but code the link to take you to the bogus address. Be especially wary of Web addresses that include the @ symbol or e-mail messages that ask you to click on an image. Also be careful when typing Web addresses into your browser so a typo doesn't land you at a phishing site by mistake. Using a bookmark or favourite link will prevent this. Use the latest versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, or Opera, which all have anti-phishing features. Make sure you enable these features and keep the software up to date. Protect yourself with an Internet security suite such as Norton 360, McAfee Total Protection, or the security software provided by your Internet service provider if such software is provided. Make sure you keep this software up to date as well.

Be careful about social networking sites such as *MySpace* and *Facebook*, as well as the increasing number of business and professional social network sites that are popping up. Scammers troll these waters looking for innocents to bait, tricking them into revealing financial information, Social Security numbers, mother's maiden names, and so on. You may be savvy enough to avoid the above mistakes but make sure your family members, friends, and coworkers are as well.

By Reid Goldsborough

These pictures show some of the guests enjoying a fine evening at the Summer Barbeque and our Masterchef who was kept busy satisfying their appetites