ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

IWPCUG

HOT KEY

AUTUMN 2014

SUMMER BARBECUE

In This Issue   Pages

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 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**
1 Oct	**Use of technology in Investigative Matters**	**Jamie IOW Computer Geek**
5 Nov	**Mini Talks**	
3 Dec	**Christmas Meeting**	

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman : David Groom
Treasurer : Phil Rogers
Secretary : Susanne Bone
Membership and Database Secretary : Roger Skidmore
Committee Member : Steve Sutters
Committee Member : Soren Johanson
HotKey Editor : Bob Groom

Note:

contact details removed prior to publishing on the internet

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.

Chairmans Report

Our August meeting was the annual summer barbecue and although the weather wasn't as pleasant as it had been for much of the early summer we were lucky that the rain that had been forecast earlier in the week did not materialise and we had an enjoyable evening, made all the more so because we celebrated Su Bone's birthday.

As noted in the last issue of Hotkey we held an EGM at the September meeting in order to put changes to constitution to the members. The resolutions on the table were passed and as a consequence the minutes of all General Meetings will now be approved by the members within 9 weeks of the meeting rather than having to wait for the next AGM as was previously the case. The "Documents" section of the club web site has been updated with a copy of the changed constitution.

I'd like to thank Steve Sutters and Roger Skidmore for stepping in short notice to give a presentation at our September meeting, Steve & Roger talked about trying to repair a projector (images of the dichroic mirror assembly showing how the unit splits up white light before passing it through three separate LCD screens and then re-combining the light, are on the back cover). Roger also talked about his recent experiences of installing and using the Linux Mint operating system, which he now intends to put onto the Computability project computers before handing them over to clients.

Joining the Yahoo Group

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**

Why Libraries Still Matter
Personal Computing By Reid Goldsborough

The short answer to the question of why libraries still matter is, Not everything is available on the Internet, especially the free, legal Internet.

You won't find most recent books, most magazine and journal articles, or back issues of most newspapers and magazines. Pay search services such as LexisNexis (www.lexisnexis.com) can help. Illegal "pirate" sites and BitTorrent services, on the other hand, can get you in trouble and are just plain wrong.

Sometimes you need a library, and sometimes you need the services of a librarian.

It's true that there's a lot of material on the Internet. At the time of this writing, the Internet included more than 920 million active web sites, according to Netcraft (www.netcraft.com). Google claims to have indexed nearly 20 billion webpages.

But libraries can be pretty big too. The British Library, the world's largest, contains 150 million items. The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., is about the same size. The New York Public Library, in third place, is about a third as large.

Even with small community libraries, you'll find books and other materials you won't find online.

It's also true that information keeps growing. Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt has been quoted as saying, "There were 5 exabytes of information created between the dawn of civilization through 2003. But that much information is now created every two days, and the pace is increasing." An exabyte is one followed by eighteen zeros. Some believe that Schmidt was conservative in his estimates.

But it's not just about the quantity of information. According to James Gleick's book The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood, sometimes the

sheer amount of information compromises wisdom and the trivial overwhelms the meaningful. Data needs to become information, information needs to become knowledge, and knowledge needs to become wisdom.

This is one way in which librarians can help. They can help you figure out the best sources of information, says Jessamyn West, author of the blog Librarian.net (www.librtarian.net) and community technology educator in Randolph, Vermont.

"Libraries are essential to the idea of a functioning democracy. If you trust people to vote, they need access to unbiased impartial information and public space available for contemplation of those things," West told me in an email interview. "America needs public spaces for community cohesion, unfettered by people trying to sell you something."

Librarians can also get to know you, says West. They can thus tailor your search according to your personal informational needs, whether based on the job you have, the town or city you live in, or your family situation, and they can do this better than a set of computerized algorithms.

Much here has to do with overcoming the mindset that more is better. You can always find more websites, blogs, wikis, online discussion group posts, Twitter tweets, Facebook posts, newspaper and magazine articles, newsletters, white papers, reports, books, and so on.

Using the conscious mind to try to uncover more and more information, according to information scientists, can thwart the involvement of the subconscious mind in decisions about what to do with that information. The goal shouldn't be sheer information accumulation but making the best possible organizational, family, or personal decisions using that information.

Creative thinking and sound judgment are needed. This necessitates integrating new information you uncover with the existing information you have to discover connections and patterns. Intuition and emotion can be just as important here as reason and logic.

After you find the best sources of information for your purposes, allow for

serendipity, for hearing the unheard and seeing the unforeseen. Opening a book randomly can take you to the unexpected, the useful, and the uplifting.

Despite its newfangled digital trappings, information overload isn't a new problem. In the eighteenth century the English poet Alexander Pope lamented the "deluge of authors cover[ing] the land."

Going back far further, the ancient Roman philosopher Seneca wrote, "What is the use of having countless books and libraries, whose titles their owners can scarcely read through in a whole lifetime? The learner is not instructed but burdened by the mass of them, and it is much better to surrender yourself to a few authors than to wander through many."

Some local and state governments, facing pressure to reduce taxes, have cut library budgets. But according to a Pew Research Center Library Services Study, 90 percent of Americans feel that the closing of their local public library would damage their community and 67 percent feel it would affect them and their families.

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.

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.

David Groom

Mobile phones and Security Issues

Early in September reports in the newspapers suggested that a number of celebrities had had compromising photos (which had probably been shot on their mobile phones) stolen from their Apple iCloud accounts and subsequently leaked online. At the moment details of how the photos were illicitly obtained seem to imply that rather than there being a vulnerability in Apples' systems, access to the celebrities accounts was gained by hackers guessing usernames, passwords and answers to security questions.

We probably don't have similar photos which we have taken on our own phones, but it is timely to consider what other information we do have, and what security risks may be involved. It is important to stress that whilst in the first paragraph I talked of Apple's iCloud, similar issues occur on Android and Windows based phones.

One consequence of mobile phones and tablets becoming more common place is the we may have become blase to some of the security risks they pose. With our desktop machines and laptops we are used to being careful about what information we store on them and more importantly what information we share online. One of the problems with mobile phones, and here I'm talking about smartphones (iPhones, Android based phones, and the new Windows 8 phones), is that we are still thinking of them as phones rather than more accurately as portable computers. As a consequence we may not give security issues on our phones as much thought as we do when using laptops and computers.

In order to get the best out of these devices most of them require that you enter a username and password for your online account with the system provider, whether that be Google, Apple or Microsoft. We are encouraged to believe that if we turn on synchronising of our data then this has positive benefits; we like the fact that our contacts list, e-mail addresses, documents, photos and all the other myriad of things stored on one device are accessible on all the other devices we own. However this "being available on all our devices" doesn't happen magically, the information is first sent to (and stored on) the system providers servers in the cloud, and then downloaded to all your other devices. Since the information is "in the cloud" then access to it is possible if someone knows your username and password.

So what steps should we take to protect ourselves?

The first and most obvious step is make sure that you never store anything in the cloud which is private information. However one problem with this approach is how much do we really know about how our new devices work? How much is stored locally on the device and how much is automatically uploaded to the cloud? What do the options for online backup, photo-streaming etc actually mean?

The next and equally obvious step is USE A STRONG PASSWORD on your account with the service provider. I really can't stress this enough. It's such an obvious step its almost embarrassing having to remind people to do this, but since it seems the hackers who accessed the celebrities iCloud accounts were able to guess the passwords and usernames it would seem that the passwords the celebrities used were not strong enough.

I would also recommend activating two-step verification on your accounts. Once this is activated then even if someone knows your username and password they cannot access your account unless the computing device they are using has been authorised to access your account. Typically this authorisation is achieved through sending a verification code by text message to a phone number which you have previously set. This verification code then has to be input before anyone can access your account. This should stop an unauthorised user accessing your account (unless of course they have also access to your phone). If the celebrities had set this up then it is unlikely that their photos could have been accessed.

Also remember that since your tablet or phone stores your account username and password it is now a means of gaining access to all your data. So you need equally strong passwords on the tablet or phone so that if the device is lost or stolen then someone can't gain access to your accounts using it.

You should also consider activating the "lost phone" type of app on your device, not only do these apps allow you to locate your device should it be mislaid, but they also allow you to log on to the cloud service and lock the lost or stolen device.

David Groom

Whence Windows 7?
Personal Computing By Reid Goldsborough

Microsoft seems to alternately release a brilliant major version of Windows followed by a brain-dead version. Windows 95 was good, Windows ME bad, Windows XP good, Windows Vista bad, Windows 7 good, and Windows 8 bad.

The first preview version of the next major version of Windows, the world's most popular personal computer operating system, is scheduled for release to developers on September 30, 2014. That release is codenamed "Threshold," but most people expect it to be called Windows 9 when it's released to consumers with new computers or as an upgrade to existing computers, which should happen sometime in 2015, perhaps in the fall.

It's not clear whether Windows 9 will be brilliant or brain-dead. But it does appear that it will bring back the much clamored for Start menu. What's not yet known is if it will continue to sacrifice the needs of PC users for the purpose of trying to sell more Windows tablets and smartphones, like Windows 8 did.

The failure of Windows 8 to meet the needs of PC users is the reason it has failed in the marketplace and has been nearly universally condemned by reviewers in the computer press. It's also a key contributing factor to the relative decline of Windows PC sales by PC manufacturers, dragging other companies down. Corporate, government, and other organizational buyers in particular have stayed away in droves, sticking with Windows 7 and earlier operating systems.

Organizations typically don't like Windows 8 because of the costs associated with its implementation, particularly training users how to use it. Consumers don't like it because of its dual nature that combines desktop and touch-friendly interfaces, forcing you to switch among the two, with it often not being clear where to go for specific features.

Microsoft, however, forced the hand of many organizational buyers when it discontinued support for Windows XP on April 8, 2014. This means that Microsoft stopped developing and making available security and other

updates, which makes it riskier to continue using Windows XP computers while connected to the Internet.

But organizational buyers haven't migrated to Windows 8. When they need to buy new PCs, most are buying machines that still come with Windows 7. Consumers don't have it as easy. If you walk into a consumer electronics store such as Best Buy, a discount retailer such as Target, or an independent computer store, you'll likely find Windows PCs running only Windows 8.

You may be able, however, to special order a Windows 7 machine from a retail store. Or you can buy one online.

It's generally not a good idea to buy a Windows 8 machine and attempt to "downgrade" it to Windows 7. Most PC manufacturers don't support such changes, so you'd be on your own. Microsoft provides downgrade rights only if you have a Windows 8 PC that's running Windows 8 Pro, which is the version designed for businesses.

Also, you may need to buy a new, unused copy of Windows 7, though some users have reported success using other techniques. You will need a Windows 7 product key. You may experience glitches with wireless adapters, video cards, and other hardware that are supported by Windows 8 but that may not be supported by Windows 7. Alternately, there are various ways you can make Windows 8 act more like Windows 7, though they take time to set up.

Generally, if you want Windows 7, it's easier to buy a machine that comes preinstalled with it. I just bought a Lenovo ThinkPad laptop over the Internet on Amazon for $390, including shipping. It weighs 5.2 pounds, runs an AMD 2.9 gigahertz processor, and comes with a 15.6 inch monitor, 4 gigabytes of RAM, a 320 gigabyte hard drive, and Windows 7 Pro. It's not the lightest, fastest, or most capacious laptop on the market, by a longshot, but it meets my needs.

Other people have reported similar experiences. The websites of Best Buy and Newegg are other good choices.

Microsoft is trying to put the brakes on the sale of Windows 7 in other ways as well. The end-of-sales date for computers with Windows 7 Home Basic,

Home Premium, and Ultimate is October 31, 2014. After that, the only Windows 7 choice generally available will be business-focused laptops and desktops running Windows 7 Pro. Though more expensive, it isn't a bad choice for home PCs.

All of these shenanigans should be largely irrelevant by this time next year if Microsoft repeats its past performance and puts out a brilliant Windows 9.

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.

Disinformation on the Internet

By now, virtually nobody believes that if it's on the Internet, it must be true. Clearly the nature of the Internet makes it easy for misinformation -- accidentally incorrect information -- and disinformation -- deliberately incorrect information -- to slip through.

One recent incident shines interesting light on the problem of disinformation, self-promotion, and Internet history.

In early September 2014 the Huffington Post (huffingtonpost.com), a high-quality online news and opinion site launched in 2005, posted a series on the history of email. Soon afterward, it removed the series, posting this explanation: "Readers and media commentators alerted us to factual and sourcing issues in the series and, after an internal review, we removed it from the site."

The Huffington Post's fatal flaw was publishing as fact the fiction of V. A. Shiva Ayyadurai, an American email entrepreneur born in India who for years has claimed to have invented email. According to the retracted article, quoting Ayyadurai, "The reality is this: in 1978, there was a 14-year-old boy and he was the first to create electronic office system. He called it email, a term that

had never been used before, and then he went on and got official recognition by the U.S. government."

Ayyadurai was referring to his naming an electronic version of an interoffice mail system "EMAIL" and to his copyrighting this name in 1982. However, the generic version of email had been around for seven years, since U.S. Department of Defense contractor Ray Tomlinson sent a test email to himself in 1971 (openmap.bbn.com/~tomlinso/ray/home.html).

Email was standardized by RFC 524 in 1973 (tools.ietf.org/html/rfc524). RFC stands for Request for Comments and is a publication of the Internet Engineering Task Force and the Internet Society. Tomlinson doesn't claim to be email's inventor, acknowledging others' contributions as well. Ayyadurai has no such modesty, at his own website (vashiva.com) and elsewhere. Ayyadurai is behind a number of different businesses, including EchoMail (echomail.com), an email management company.

The Huffington Post isn't the only publication to have been snookered in this way. In 2012 the Washington Post also falsely reported that Ayyadurai had invented email. In 2011 Time Magazine did the same. The bogus claims keep resurfacing, getting refuted, and resurfacing again. The technology blog Gizmodo provides more details on the issue (gizmodo.com/5887480/the-inventor-of-email-did-not-invent-email).

Though disinformation and misinformation exist in both the worlds of online and traditional journalism, standards for accuracy are weaker online. There are typically few or no gatekeepers to check if someone is exaggerating to impress others, neglecting to tell the whole truth by omitting important information, downplaying the significance of something known to be crucial, saying something in a deliberately ambiguous way to provide an out, or telling a barefaced lie.

As a general rule, texting and discussion areas are less reliable than websites because less care goes into creating the information on them. But everyone on occasion makes mistakes, even when considerable effort goes into avoiding them.

One reality of the online world is that people can position themselves as experts, and many do. You frequently see, for instance, lay people playing doctor or lawyer, offering opinions about complicated subjects, when it's clear that all they've done is Googled a medical article or court case and don't have a clue how to interpret its meaning or what its limitations are.

As a reader, you should be skeptical, not cynical, about information you come across, whether its source is a traditional or new media outlet.

Ask yourself "Is it true?" Then also ask:

- Does the site look professional? If a website is carefully constructed rather than slopped together, chances are greater that the information within it will be accurate. But looks can and do deceive. A flashy site can merely be a marketing front for quack health remedies or an illegal pyramid scheme.
- Who's behind the information? Different sources employ different levels of thoroughness in research and fact-checking and different levels of objectivity.
- Why is the person or organization presenting the information? Sources may have agendas, sometimes explicit, sometimes hidden.
- Is the information paid for? Ads and advertorials, whether labeled or not, are inherently less credible than other information.
- Does the information diverge from my current understanding? If it diverges widely and may affect an important decision, try to verify the same information with at least two other sources, and make sure those sources aren't copycatting the information from the same source.

Whether online or off, the byword is, and will likely always remain, Caveat lector -- Let the reader beware.

Karren Hammond

Recommended Programs

At the AGM it was decided to cease production of the coverdisk, and instead we would periodically produce a list of recommended programs, and where to download them from, the next page contains that list.

Program	Description	Download from
AxCrypt	File Encryption	http://www.axantum.com/axcrypt/
KeyPass	Password manager	http://www.keepass.info
Foxit Reader	PDF Reader	http://foxitsoftware.com/Secure_PDF_Reader/
LibreOffice	Office Suite	http://www.libreoffice.org
ImgBurn	CD/DVD burner	http://www.imgburn.com/
TrueCrypt	File Encryption	http://www.truecrypt.org/
Adobe Reader	PDF Reader	http://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/otherversions/
FireFox	Web Browser	http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/
PeaZip	Archive Manager	http://peazip.sourceforge.net
Advanced System Care	PC Tune Up utilities	http://www.iobit.com/advancedsystemcareper.html
SpyBot	Spyware Remover	http://www.safer-networking.org/mirrors/
AdAware	Spyware Remover	http://www.lavasoft.com
AVG Free Free	Antivirus	http://free.avg.com
Avast Free	Free Antivirus	http://www.avast.com/en-gb/index
CCCleaner	PC Tune Up utilities	http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner
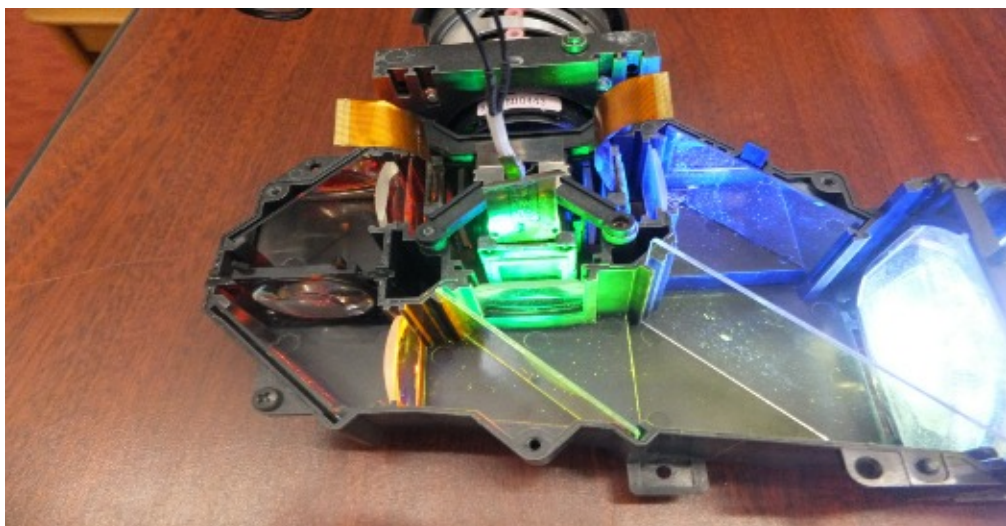
See the last paragrapgh of the Chairmans Report for an explanation of these images