ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

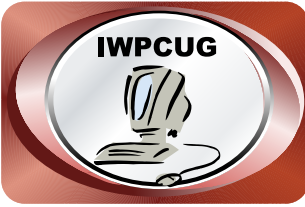**IWPCUG**

HOT KEY

SPRING 2017

Rob Jones from the Isle of Wight Library Service gave a very interesting talk at our March meeting on the various services available to users of the library service.

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 them.
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 web site address is **www.iwpcug.org**
We also have an e-group discussion area on
Yahoo groups: **iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com.**
Details of how to join are on page 4.

FUTURE MEETINGS		
Date	**Subject**	**Speaker**
3 May	Mission Building in Computer Games	Ron Keeler
7 June	Common Issues People want Fixed on their Computer	James Pilcher
5 July	TBA	

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

Committee Member : Mike Hoar

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.

Chairman's Report

Firstly an apology for the late delivery of this HotKey, I've been trying to catch up with things on my return from holiday but getting the file to the printers for HotKeys normal production schedule defeated me.

We have had a few visitors to our meetings recently which is encouraging.

Sadly, as you may already know, both Judy Thaxter and David Broughton have passed away recently. Judy had been a member of the IWPCUG for a number of years, and joined our committee after last year AGM.

David Broughton was one of our early members, and served our our committee for many years, including being Chairman for a long stint. He also gave many of our monthly talks, contributed to HotKey, both writing general articles, but also providing for many years a puzzle for our members to solve every quarter. These generally were on a mathematical theme, though not always so, and were often quite challenging. He was also the first "web master" for the IWPCUG web site, and although the current site has a slightly different presentation to that designed by David, much of the page layout and content remains the same - a testament to how David got it right in the first place. His puzzles are on the web site, and remain one of the most visited parts of the site. Over the last few years health issues meant it was difficult for David to always attend our meetings, but he came when he could. His made a significant contribution to the IWPCUG over the years, and he will be sadly missed.

David Groom

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 (it's free and private to club members) so you can keep in touch with events and join in with the discussions.

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

Nerds Vs. Geeks

A new survey shows how devoted we are to our gadgets. Nearly three out of four Americans -- 74 percent -- say they would rather have their house broken into than their smartphone hacked, according to a survey by MiMedia (www.mimedia.com), a personal cloud company.

Other findings of the nationwide survey of 1,120 cell phone users are equally revealing. More than half of all people -- 56 percent -- admit to using their phones while driving a car, a dangerous form of distracted driving that leads to as many car crashes each year as drunken driving.

We can't keep away from our phones in other settings as well. About one in five people say they use their phones on dates (21 percent) or at church, temple, or other place of worship (18 percent). Fortunately, we're more respectful at funerals. Only 8 percent of us admit to using our phones here.

Being a gadget geek isn't new. Many of us have been "addicted" to our personal computers, whether laptops or desktops, since we were first introduced to them. Then there are the plethora of other distractions, including tablets, ereaders, game consoles, media players, digital cameras, and more.

PCs and Macs deserve special recognition, since they launched the personal digital revolution in the 1970s and 1980s. It's easy to see why personal computers are so enticing. Through their versatility, power, and customizability, in the minds of many, PCs transcend mere machinehood.

Personal computers allow you to communicate with far more people than a phone or letter. They help you write far more efficiently than a typewriter or pen and paper. They make it possible to keep track of people and things far more easily than a roster or list. They let you budget, forecast, and plan far more effectively than a calculator or table. And they make education far more compelling than words and pictures on paper.

Now with portable digital devices you can take much of this power with you wherever you go.

Hardcore devotees of digital technology are sometimes called "geeks," sometimes "dweebs," sometimes "wonks." But probably the most common term is "nerd," at least the most disparaging.

The stereotypical image of a nerd is a stiff, humorless, socially inept male with thick eyeglasses and buck teeth and carrying a big assortment of pens and pencils in his plastic- protected shirt pocket. A geek is typically seen as more like a wonk, an expert in a particular field who may or may not be able to engage in small talk smoothly at a cocktail party. Nerds "get their nerd on" while geeks "geek out."

The origins of both words are interesting. The word "nerd" was coined by Dr. Seuss in his 1950 book If I Ran the Zoo to refer to a small humanoid creature. "Geek" has an older, and weirder, origin. It was first used to refer to carnival performers whose act involved biting the heads off a live chicken, bat, or snake. Before this, "geck" in nineteenth century England meant fool, and today a related word in Dutch, "gek," means mad or silly.

Language evolves, and so have these two words. According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, "nerd" was being used as slang meaning drip or square later in the 1950s, perhaps by older siblings of the five- and six-year-olds who had read Dr. Zeus.

The word "nerd" received major boosts in popularity when it was used frequently in 1970s in the sitcom Happy Days and by the 1984 film Revenge of the Nerds. By this time, in the minds of some anyway, "nerd" had come to mean not just socially awkward but intelligent as well.

The word "geek" also took time to evolve to its present, albeit hazily defined, meaning. The 1976 edition of the American Heritage Dictionary included only the carnival definition. By the 1980s geeks were regarded as people deeply involved with such interests as computers, science fiction, or comic books. The 2004 documentary film Geeks dealt with people devoted to narrow, "geeky" subjects such as Star Trek. Today, Best Buy's Geek Squad will try to cure whatever ails your digital device.

However you use the words "nerd" and "geek," if you recognize aspects of either in yourself, you can choose to celebrate the your "nerd pride" and to participate in "geek culture."

In its Nerd Art department, FirstArtAmerica (fineartamerica.com/art/nerd) has posters depicting neural networks and "nerd dogs." ThinkGeek (www.thinkgeek.com) has tee shirts illustrated with binary numbers and dresses emblazoned with HTML and JavaScript.

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Travelling in the age of IT

As we use more and more technological devices in our everyday lives, so the tendency to take more of them on holiday with us increases. Sixteen years ago I spent a year travelling, and the only "technology" I took with me was a mobile phone (just for phone calls and text messages in emergencies), and a film camera which had a replaceable alkaline battery. The only way of me accessing the (still quite young) internet in those days was to visit Cyber Cafes.

Last month I went away for just two weeks, and took with me two smartphones and two charging leads, one GPS unit and charging lead, one small laptop and power supply, one powerbank, one digital SLR with charger, one compact digital camera with charger, one USB memory card reader, one memory card reader with WiFi. (Had my drone, see back page, not met with an untimely death just before Christmas then that would have been packed as well.) Luckily I still had room in my suitcase for a few clothes!

So what lessons did I learn? Well firstly the powerbank which allowed me to recharge my mobile phone and GPS unit when away from mains electricity, was very useful, particularly since my Android smartphone developed a tendency to discharge very quickly. Secondly, when in parts of the world where roaming charges for UK based phones are high, the ability to have a second phone with a local SIM card was very useful. I could use one phone to receive text messages on my UK number (receiving txts was free), and which people could contact me on in emergencies, while using the second phone to make local calls for booking taxis, etc. More importantly this second phone SIM also had mobile data, so I could access the internet (Facebook, Skype, web sites, emails etc) much more cheaply that had I been using my UK phone. This was important, as a number of hotels which supposedly had free WiFi seemed to have a slow / non-existent connection. Thirdly, relying on a smartphone for access to the internet would have been frustrating, the small laptop was much used for accessing the internet, booking hotels, writing long posts on Facebook, and transferring photos from the memory cards from my cameras onto the internet (either onto Facebook, my own web site or by email).

One other significant difference I found travelling this time was when I wanted to make a phone call back to the UK. Sixteen years ago the cheapest

way was to purchase prepaid phone cards in the country I was in, and dial back to the UK using them. This time I used Skype! Although we probably mainly think of Skype as a means of calling between Skype users, it can also be used to phone any telephone number. This feature is a paid for feature, and you have to purchase "Skype Credit" in advance. A five minute call to a UK landline used £0.11 of my credit, while a similar length call to a UK mobile used £0.38. (Note: Skype Credit will go inactive after 180 days of no use, so its important to make a call or send a text every 180 days). Call quality was good, with no noticeable delay, or breaking up of the call. I also purchased a Skype number, this is a phone number with a UK dialling code, which can be called just like a normal phone number. However instead of calling a landline, the phone call would be put through to me on Skype. However I never needed to use this.

I also need to thank Denny for his recommendation, during December's meeting, of the Dashlane password manager. I had been using Keepass for a number of years, but it did not have a version for Android, whereas Dashlane does. It was essential that I be able to access all my login details while travelling, and Dashlane was just what I needed.

Overall I came to realise how technology really has "shrunk the world". Though almost 7,000 miles away from home I was kept in constant touch with what my friends were doing, and they with what I was doing, via Facebook. I could easily call home, and calls could cheaply be made to me whenever I had an internet connection.

David Groom

Opening Up a Good Book, Online

The Internet has been called the greatest boon to literacy since Johannes Gutenberg refined moveable type in the fifteenth century. Some cybernauts even predict that it will do away with conventional printing. Just as paper replaced papyrus, clay, and lambskin as a publishing medium, they believe the screen of digital devices is destined to replace paper.

This won't happen anytime soon, according to recent findings of a survey by Pew Research Center. Fully 65 percent of those polled who said they read a

book during the past year read a printed book while only 28 percent read an ebook, with younger readers as expected more likely to do so. Also interesting is that only 73 percent said they had read any kind of book.

More people are using tablet computers and smartphones to read ebooks rather than a stand-alone ereader. Over the past five years the percentage of people reading books on an ereader rose from only 7 percent to 8 percent, while it rose from 4 percent to 15 percent on a tablet, from 5 percent to 13 percent on a smartphone, and from 7 percent to 11 percent on a desktop or laptop PC.

Though the phenomenon of books being on a screen may not have done away with printed hardbound and paperback books, the Internet is causing a significant transformation. In 2012, sales revenue from ebooks in the U.S. surpassed hardbound books, according to the Association of American Publishers.

The benefits of ebooks are palpable. An ereader, laptop, or smartphone weighs the same whether it stores one book or a thousand. Ebooks are searchable, which can be especially beneficial when doing research. You can obtain ebooks immediately over the Internet, without having to go to library or bookstore. Unlike printed books, ebooks don't require trees for paper and petroleum for ink.

Paradigm shifts never happen without drawbacks, and ebooks are no exception.

Unlike with a digital device, if you drop a book on the sidewalk, you rarely risk ruining it. Likewise with keeping it in your car's trunk on a hot summer day.

You won't have a problem reading a printed book on an airplane during takeoffs and landings. It can be difficult if not impossible to loan an ebook to a friend or sell it in the used book market.

Ebook publishing has seen its share of controversy. This past March the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear Apple's appeal of a lower court decision that it conspired with five publishers to monopolistically increase ebook prices. Apple was fined $450 million.

Apple's scheme had raised many ebook prices from $9.99 to $12.99 or $14.99.

After this was uncovered in 2010, the price of many ebooks has fallen back to $9.99.

One of the unfortunate legacies of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, as documented in Walter Isaacson's flattering biography of him, is his threatening Amazon in 2010 that it wouldn't get ebooks from big publishers if it didn't go along with Apple's pricing model.

Some ebooks, to the bewilderment of many ebook aficionados, cost more than the hardback version and sometimes even the paperback version, when the cost to produce the ebook version is significantly less. In the future, with healthy competition, the price of ebooks should decline and more accurately reflect production costs.

Many people rue this changing world. Popular bookstore chain Borders liquidated all of its stores, more than 600, in 2011. Its main competition, Barnes & Noble, makes much of its money these days from the sale of coffee, sandwiches, and non-book gifts.

There's no denying printed books' physical attraction, the way they look, feel, and even smell. But there's also no denying the economics and practicality of ebooks.

Will books in general ever disappear? People will always need, in one form or another, the results of others' in-depth research, analysis, and storytelling. Books don't appear to have any likelihood of disappearing any time soon.

Printed books are another story. Still, it's likely that they will persist as well. But it's also likely that they will be produced in smaller numbers.

Just as radio found a niche after television, printed books will likely find their niche after ebooks become ubiquitous. One possibility: Handsome bound books will be used in the future primarily for such specialized purposes as gift giving and collecting.

Just as with the prestige distinction for writers between being published in hardback or only in paperback, there will likely remain a similar prestige distinction between being published in print or only in ebook format.

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Open source alternatives to Adobe Acrobat for PDFs

Aren't we supposed to be living in a paperless world by now?

I can't be the only person who imagined the office of the future, free from the confines of the eight and a half by eleven sheet (or A4, for my international friends), would have long since arrived. Instead, we've managed to land in an intermediate state of not paperless, but less paper.

It could be worse.

Between a trusty scanner, email and various other communication tools, and getting really good at organizing my digital archives, I'm not totally unhappy with where we are today. And I do occasionally admit to reading a paper book, sending a postcard, or (gasp) printing something off to give to someone else.

Until the world moves a little further from paper, print-ready file formats will continue to permeate our digital landscape as well. And, love it or hate it, PDF, the "portable document format," seems to be the go-to format for creating and sharing print-ready files, as well as archiving files that originated as print.

For years, the only name in the game for working with PDF documents was Adobe Acrobat, whether in the form of their free reader edition or one of their paid editions for PDF creation and editing. But today, there are numerous open source PDF applications which have chipped away at this market dominance. And for Linux users like me, a proprietary application that only runs on Windows or Mac isn't an option anyway.

Since PDF files are used in so many different situations for so many different kinds of purposes, you may need to shop around to find the open source alternative to Adobe Acrobat that meets your exact needs. Here are some tools I enjoy.

Reading PDFs

For reading PDFs, these days many people get by without having to use an external application at all. Both Firefox and Chromium, the open source version of Google's Chrome browser, come bundled with in-browser PDF readers, so an external plugin is no longer necessary for most users.

For downloaded files, users of GNOME-based Linux distributions have Evince, a powerful PDF reader that handles most documents quickly and with

ease, while KDE's Okular serves a similar purpose. Evince has a Windows port as well, although Windows users may also want to check out the GPLv3-licensed SumatraPDF as an alternative.

Creating PDFs

Personally, LibreOffice's export functionality ends up being the source of 95% of the PDFs I create that weren't built for me by a web application. Scribus, Inkscape, and GIMP all support native PDF export, too, so no matter what kind of document you need to make -- a complex layout, formatted text, vector or raster image, or some combination -- there's an open source application that meets your needs.

For, well, practically every other application, the CUPS printing system does a pretty good job of outputting documents as PDFs.

Editing PDFs

Ah, this is where things start to get tricky. Or at least where they used to. The world has changed a bit and it turns out that recent versions of LibreOffice Draw do a fantastic job of editing PDF files, and not just adding and deleting pages as you might expect, but for editing text and images as well (so long as your PDF was created directly from a source document and not from a scan). It's not perfect, and I've had it choke up on a few more complex documents, but I'm still impressed with what a good job it does on many of the documents I've had to work with.

Inkscape, too, does a good job with opening documents created elsewhere, and may be a more intuitive choice if your document is heavy on graphics. There are standalone tools as well, like the GPLv2 licensed PDFedit, but I've had such good luck with Inkscape and LibreOffice that I haven't had to use a separate editor in recent years.

Now a rant and a rave from Steve

This is a follow up review to initial impressions of using the Blackberry Q10.

On the plus side it has a lovely qwerty keyboard, clear bright OLED screen, 100% reliable for making calls and texts and a good battery life.

On the minus editing text is awkward as there are no cursor keys. You have to move about a bubble with a cursor in it with your finger (which gets in the way of the text). It can take several taps to make the bubble appear and then leave it for a few seconds and it disappears so more tapping again to bring it back! As if this did not make life hard enough tap too near the bottom edge and the attachment screen or a row of smiley faces appear. Well let me tell you I no not feel like smiling at all while editing text. I find cursor keys (up / down left / right) are so much easier to use. Maybe this system would work better for someone with tiny fingers, perhaps a small woman (mind you mine are small for a man)

Having no back button often meant at least 2 taps / swipes to get back to a screen where I could make phone calls or send texts.

I kept getting a text message of 'One or more applications/services require you to verify your Blackberry ID'. One time it woke me up in the middle of the night with this notification. Never have I felt more anger to one of our electronic friends! It only takes a few minutes to verify ID this so not a major problem.

Overall I could accept the quirky way of going from text to phone and back again but I could not accept clunky, time wasting procedure for editing text which makes this the worst mobile phone I have ever used. Even my first phone a Motorola M3788e was more practical and therefore better.

Or poetically. Editing text got to do? Blackberry ain't got a clue.

Best mobile I have ever used is a Sony Ericsson Xperia Pro. So I spent ages on the internet looking for one and ended up buying 2 second hand ones. That

has proved to be somewhat of a saga so will be reporting back in the next edition of Hotkey.

I reckon Nokias re-release of the Nokia 3310 was a smart move and I still cannot understand why so many people do all their computing on a small screened smartphone.

Now the Rave

A big thank you to everyone who turned up to a celebration of Judy Thaxters life on the 17th of March and especially for Roger Skidmores brilliant presentation, including a slide of Judy at different times in her life.

I took 40 photos of her paintings which had to be uploaded fast to Roger and so used a fantastic free file sharing program called Wetransfer. Sent all the photos in under half an hour from inserting the SD card in the PC to sending them to Roger's email address.

What Is WeTransfer and WeTransfer Plus?

By James T. Cains

Sometimes, you may need to send very large files to someone, but perhaps your regular e-mail account can't accommodate such large file sizes. That's where cloud storage services can help. But instead of using a service like DropBox or Google Drive — which requires you to log in, upload the file, and then share the file — you can take the quick, no-frills route of using WeTransfer.

How does WeTransfer work?

WeTransfer is file sharing at its simplest. It works as if your e-mail account can support those large file sizes — you type in your e-mail address and the recipient's e-mail address, add a message, attach the file, and send. That's it. For the basic (and free) WeTransfer service, you don't need to set up an account. You can transfer files as large as 2GB, which should be enough capacity to send a bunch of high-resolution photos, a few decent-sized videos, just about anything. The recipient gets an e-mail with a link to download the file, and — voila! — you just sent a huge file that otherwise would have choked your e-mail service provider.

WeTransfer claims that its service is secure, meaning that only you and your recipient have access to the files that you transfer. And there's no reason to doubt their word. However, as with any cloud storage services, be cautious in what you send. A few cloud storage services have been hacked in the past. Luckily, WeTransfer stores your files on its servers for only seven days, so the window of opportunity to hack your files is narrow.

What do you get with WeTransfer Plus?

The basic WeTransfer gives you simple file transfer. But if you need to transfer files larger than 2GB or need to password protect your files, you may want to check out WeTransfer Plus. Upgrading to Plus costs $10 per month (but you pay for an entire year's worth up front). Here's what that $120 per year gets you:

•**Increased transfer sizes:** You can transfer up to 10GB of files at one time. That's enough capacity to a large high-definition video.
•**Long-term storage time:** The files you transfer stay on WeTransfer's servers as long as you want. You have only 50GB of storage space, however, which can go quick if you're transferring very large files. Also, the default time files stay online is four weeks; you have to change the expiration date manually for longer storage time.

•**Password protection:** You can set passwords to download the files you send to someone. That way, if someone else gets a hold of the recipient's e-mail with the download link in it, that person can't download the file unless he or she knows the password. Hint: Don't send the password in the e-mail with the download link!

•**Additional personalization:** You can customize the e-mail that is sent to the recipient, as well as have a personalized WeTransfer URL (such as myname.wetransfer.com). You can also customize the backgrounds that appear on your personal WeTransfer site. People downloading files from you, or using your URL to send their own files, will see your custom backgrounds, which is a good opportunity to promote something to them.

Stephen Sutters

After the AGM in February David Groom gave a talk on various "Gadgets" he had purchased recently, including the Dobby drone by Zerotech, a small folding drone capable of taking 4K video.