

Issue 186

JULY 2014

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP



HOT KEY

SUMMER 2014

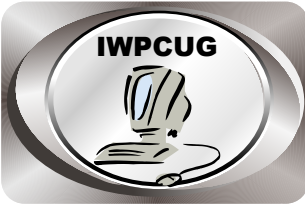


At our June meeting Sean Coulson gave
us an introduction to the virtual exhibition
web site software developed by
PC Consultants

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The Isle of Wight Personal Computer User Group

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@yahoo.co.uk**.

See page 15 for how to join.



FUTURE MEETINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
2 July	The Motherboard and BIOS	Mike Parsons
6 August	Summer BBQ	Bob Groom
3 September	TBA & EGM	

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman : David Groom

Treasurer : Soren Johanson

Secretary : Susanne Bone

Membership and Database Secretary : Roger Skidmore

Committee Member : Steve Sutters

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

It was a little disappointing to see such a low turnout for last months meeting. The number of our members in attendance at meetings had been relatively static for a while, but has dropped over the last two meetings. Hopefully this is just a temporary “blip”.

You will note the continued reliance on articles from the USA to fill the pages of HotKey. Once again I would ask members if there is anything they might consider writing about. I'm sure a page or two written by someone we know would be of interest to members.

I now need to make an apology, in the last edition of Hotkey we inserted a notice of an EGM to be held at the May meeting. Everyone then forgot to hold the EGM. This has now been rescheduled for the September meeting.

Lastly I extend a warm welcome to you and your other halves to join us for the summer BBQ next month. Note this has an earlier than usual start time of 7:00pm.

David Groom

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

There's a Word for It

Microsoft Word has been the standard bearer for word processors since it pulled ahead of WordPerfect in the 1990s. Other word processors are measured in large part by their Word compatibility -- the ability to read and write to the Word DOCX and DOC formats.

The recent release of Microsoft Office for Apple's iPad marks a new chapter for Word. It's a shift away from the centrality of the Microsoft Windows operating system in Microsoft's marketing efforts and a recognition of the popularity of non-PC devices such as tablets and smartphones.

Office for iPad is only available through another trend in computer software, subscriptions. Despite Microsoft's website including a link for you to "Buy Office 365 now," in actuality you're only leasing it to use for a limited period of time. The cost of one year's use of Office 365 Home is \$99.99, with other pricing plans also available.

Subscriptions are a way for software makers to maximize revenue, often at the chagrin of users. In the past, once you paid for a computer program, it was yours to use as long as you liked. With subscriptions, your use is being more tightly controlled.

Office is a big cash cow for Microsoft. According to Microsoft's latest quarterly numbers, its revenue was \$20.4 billion and net income \$5.7 billion. These figures are down 0.4 percent and 6.6 percent from the previous year, but they're down less than the 9.8 percent drop in PC shipments in 2013, according to a recent report by IDC.

Microsoft's good fortune is a result in part of the success of the subscription-based Office 365. Revenue from Office 365 doubled from the previous year, with it now having 4.4 million subscribers.

Office for iPad is also off to a good start. Microsoft announced 27 million downloads during the first six weeks. Microsoft is using a "freemium" model with Office for iPad. Users can download a crippled version for free, one that lets you only view Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents. If you want to create or edit documents, you have to pay.

Despite Microsoft's centrality, Word isn't the only word processing game in town. Office's biggest commercial competitor is Corel WordPerfect Office, though its market share is tiny in comparison. Still, Corel followed Microsoft's iPad move by

including support for the iPad in the latest WordPerfect Office, in its case through a WordPerfect iPad app that users can download from the Apple App Store.

Microsoft's aggressively embracing the subscription pricing model has opened the door further to free and low-cost word processing and office software. The two most popular options here are LibreOffice(www.libreoffice.org) and Google Docs (docs.google.com). LibreOffice is free for all users, Google Docs for most users.

LibreOffice is traditional software that you load from your computer's hard disk, except you install it by downloading from the Internet instead of copying from CDs. LibreOffice is "open-source" software, meaning that anybody with the programming skills can share in its development.

Google Docs is "cloud" software that you can access only through your web browser when connected to the Internet. It's free for individual and educational users, with fees for business users starting at \$5 per month.

The biggest negatives with both LibreOffice and Google Docs is their less than 100 percent Microsoft Office compatibility. More advanced features such as tables, styles, macros, links, change tracking, and comments are most likely to cause problems.

Some organizations require not only employees but also contractors to use only Word and other Office products in order to avoid problems. It's part of the culture. Attitudes about Office today are similar to past attitudes about IBM, for whom the motto "You can't go wrong with IBM" existed in the minds of information technology managers.

To some users, requiring everybody to use Office is the equivalent, in past years, of requiring everybody to use particular brand of typewriter or pen.

Some people do report formatting headaches when dealing with documents created with different programs. Others report that, if they're careful, using Word competitors causes no problems.

The most frequently given advice, if you're using a Word competitor and want to minimize the problems for those accessing your files using Word, is save files in the DOC format that was the default of Word 97-2003 rather than the newer DOCX format.

But the bottom line is that the customer is always right. Using Word and other Office products, for better or worse, sometimes just needs to be chalked up as the cost of doing business.

Reid Goldsborough - contact details are on page 9.

Extraordinary General Meeting

The reason for this EGM was given in the last issue of HotKey, but I'm afraid we forgot to proceed with the EGM at our May Meeting.

Notice of Extraordinary General Meeting

An Extraordinary meeting of the Isle of Wight PC Users group will take place at the Riverside Centre, Newport on 6 September 2014 at 7:30pm to conduct the following business:

A) Proposed Changes to The Constitution

1) Clause 10 -

Remove the first bullet point:

"•Receive reports and the minutes of the previous AGM"

and insert :

"•Consider any outstanding matters arising from the minutes of the previous AGM"

"•Receive reports"

2) Rule 13 -

Insert "Minutes of an AGM, and of any EGM, shall be approved by the members within nine weeks of that general meeting, provided that a draft copy of the said minutes shall have been displayed on the Club's Website for not less than fourteen days, together with an invitation for any member to submit proposals for amendment of the minutes to the Secretary or any other member of the Committee. However if the only item discussed at an EGM is the approval of a previous General Meetings' minutes, then the approval of that EGM's minutes by the members is not required."

B) Assuming that the proposed Changes to the Constitution above are agreed the second item on the Agenda will be:

Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 5th February 2014

Operating Systems In Battle

The recent announcement of the next operating system for Apple's Macs draws attention to the state of computer operating systems today. Apple's OS X 10.10 ("Yosemite") is scheduled to be available as a free upgrade in fall 2014.

Yosemite is just the latest foray by operating system developers to gain market share by providing users with better features, more security safeguards, and greater ease of use. Many of Yosemite's new features are focused on making it easier to share information among Macs and Apple's portable devices.

The legendary devotion of Mac users, the innovation of Apple's portable devices, and Apple's aggressive product placement in movies and TV shows sometimes obscures the nature of the computer world.

You might think it's an Apple world out there. But the reality is that for every one Mac desktop or laptop computer in use today, there are twelve Windows computers, and this kind of relationship has existed for many years. In the workplace in particular, as well as in the market as a whole, it's a Windows world.

According to the latest numbers from the web analytics firm Net Applications (www.netapplications.com), the usage market share of Windows PCs is 91.1 percent. This breaks down into 50.1 percent for Windows 7, 25.3 percent for Windows XP, 6.4 percent for Windows 8.1, 6.3 percent for Windows 8.0, 2.9 percent for Windows Vista, 0.08 percent for Windows NT, and 0.03 percent for Windows 2000.

In comparison, the market share for Mac OS X is just 7.4 percent. This breaks down into 4.2 percent for OS X 10.9, 1.1 percent for OS X 10.6, 1.0 percent for OS X 10.8, 0.9 percent for OS X 10.7, 0.2 percent for OS X 10.5, and 0.05 percent for OS X 10.4.

Behind the Mac is Linux with a market share of 1.6 percent.

The reason for the disparity in market share between Windows PCs and Macs can be distilled into one word: cost. When buying a Mac, it can cost two to three times more than for the equivalent Windows PC. For many users, particularly home users and those in the educational market, this cost difference can be justified. For the vast majority of businesses, it can't.

Windows PC makers such as Hewlett-Packard, Dell, and Acer make their money by selling a large volume of units at relatively low markup per unit. Apple makes its money by selling a relatively smaller volume of units at a higher markup per unit.

One interesting, but expected, trend with Windows PCs is the move away from the long-popular Windows XP operating system, released back in October 2001. On April 8, 2014, Microsoft discontinued support for it, meaning the company is no longer providing security updates to users. Windows XP's usage fell 2.4 percent from March to May 2014.

Another interesting Windows trend is the continued popularity of Windows 7. From March to May 2014, its usage actually jumped 1.3 percent, despite the availability of Windows 8 since October 2012. Businesses in large numbers are still choosing the older operating system, Windows 7, rather than Windows 8 with its tablet-like default interface.

If you have an older PC running the now discontinued Windows XP, and you don't want to connect to the Internet now there are no longer security updates, one option is to switch to the Linux operating system. This move is typically recommended only for more advanced users.

Linux is "open source" software, meaning anyone with the programming skills can contribute to its development, and it's available for free or low cost. The most popular Linux distributions, according to DistroWatch (www.distrowatch.com), are Mint (www.linuxmint.com), Ubuntu (www.ubuntu.com), and Debian (www.debian.org).

Apple remains the darling of many users because of the polished design and ease of use of its products. It has always courted the business world, but now, with its portable devices, it's going after business users more aggressively. Along with upgrading OS X, its operating system for computers, Apple is also upgrading iOS, its operating system for iPads and iPhones.

Among the new features are those designed to make it easier for IT departments to manage Apple's portable devices, preventing them, for instance, from having to set up each device individually. The upgrade will also improve security and make it easier for users to store data from an iPad or iPhone on a company's own servers in addition to Apple's iCloud.

In the future, one interesting question is whether Microsoft will return Windows to a PC operating system rather than keeping the current tablet interface.

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.

WIN XP Updates

I have noticed that Windows has issued a June update which I believe is to do with the Heartbleed bug. But there are additional updates available which are designed for ATM's and Point of Sale machines which still use XP. It has been found that there is a way to fool Microsoft's update servers into believing a consumer version of XP is in fact an ATM or Point of Sale machine and that it should continue delivering security updates to protect your system. There are various articles on the web which can best be found by Googling something like "Win XP ATM Registry Update Fix".

Having explained what is available they offer a registry tweak which can be applied by double-clicking on a user-created text file ending in .reg

The suggestion is to save the following three lines of source code (or plain text, to you and me) as something like win_atm_update.reg and double-click to add it to the registry:

```
Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00
[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\WPA\PosReady]
"Installed"=dword:00000001
```

It should be noted that Microsoft have said : "The security updates that could be installed are intended for Windows Embedded and Windows Server 2003 customers and do not fully protect Windows XP customers. Windows XP customers also run a significant risk of functionality issues with their machines if they install these updates, as they are not tested against Windows XP."

Roger Skidmore

The Annual Club BBQ on Wednesday 6 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 4 August.

As usual the invite is extend to members' wives / husbands / etc.

David Groom

Windows 8.1 – 3 months on

I wrote in the last issue about my experience of moving to Windows 8.1 from XP. I've now been using Windows 8.1 for 3 months, and thought it worth summarising my experience so far.

Firstly I have to make a correction to what I wrote in my last article. I had said that Macromedia Dreamweaver would not run on the standard version of Windows 8 and it needed the Windows 8 Pro, this is not the case and I can use Dreamweaver on the standard version on Windows 8.

I've been very surprised how painless the transition has been. In part this is due to the two service packs which Microsoft have released (The first of these upgraded Windows 8 to Windows 8.1, the second was an update to Windows 8.1 in April of this year). I can recommend reading <http://winsupersite.com/windows-8/windows-81-update-1-review> for a review of the latest update.

I switch on the computer and get to the lock screen (I could if I want remove the need for a password in which case this screen would not appear) enter my password and I get straight to the desktop (after the Windows updates this is now the default behaviour on a desktop machine). I have a taskbar on the desktop with icons for my favourite programs, and the desktop has more icons to programs I regularly use, but not often enough to pin to the task bar. I hardly ever see the “Start Screen” with the square tiles for Metro Apps, and I never use any Metro Apps. To be honest I've really forgotten they are there.

So in day to day use Windows 8.1 functions pretty much like Windows 7 did. You also have to remember that I was moving straight from windows XP up to Windows 8.1. Considering I was moving from away an environment in which I had become familiar for 13 years I've found things relatively easy. Its nice to be able to use the most recent version of Internet Explorer (web pages tend to display much better). Libre Office, Firefox, my image editing programs, and web design programs all work as expected, and I have a familiar desktop and taskbar to look at. I do know that some users have found problems getting some of their programs to run on Windows 8.1, but this is not something I have experienced.

One of the nice things I found is the inbuilt speech recognition program which is allowing me to dictate the current paragraph with very few errors. I only had to undertake a short 3 minute tutorial in order that it recognised my voice correctly. No doubt in part this is helped by the fact that I'm using a fast processor and have a lot of RAM available. Maybe now I'll get round to sending longer emails to family and friends abroad.

So what problems have I found. Firstly I do still miss the start button, though not enough to install one of the add on programs which would get it back!. Secondly I cant get the software for my uninterruptable power supply (UPS) to always recognise that the UPS is connected. The UPS connects via a serial port, and this is an add-on card to my motherboard. I haven't tried to investigate the problem, it's an annoyance rather than a critical issue.

My other problem is the email program Windows Live Mail. To be fair, Windows Live Mail is a nice program, in many ways superior to Outlook Express which I had been using for years. In fact, Roger Skidmore was surprised when I said I had issues with it. Its also true that I only find one aspect of the program a problem – its the amount of space needed on the left hand of the screen to display all the folders I use! Since I have many email accounts, and I subscribe to quite a few mailings lists, I have many separate folders and use message rules to automatically place incoming mail into the appropriate folder. The problem is that Windows Live Mail needs more vertical space to display these folders than Outlook Express did, and hence I have to scroll down the screen to see them all, which makes a quick check for incoming mail more tedious. In fairness for most users this won't be a problem as they won't have so many folders to display.

It's a pity that Microsoft were not able to release Windows 8.1 (including its update) as the initial version of Windows 8, as I am sure that had it done so a lot of the original criticism of the software would not have occurred. As it is, the initial bad publicity surrounding Windows 8 still lasts and this is unfortunate.

And lastly some more good news. It would appear that Microsoft is planning to re-introduce a proper start button with a link to programs etc. There is no news yet on when this will appear, whether it will be as an update to Windows 8, or in the next edition of the OS (Windows 9).

David Groom

High Dynamic Range Images

A few months ago Vic Shears gave us a talk on using the Luminance HDR program to create High Dynamic Range (HDR) images. HDR images can represent a greater range of luminance levels found in real-world scenes this is often achieved by capturing and then combining different exposures of the same subject matter It was a very interesting talk, and as the program is free I decided to give it a try. I didn't have much time (or a tripod) so my original images are not the best, but they and the resulting HDR image can be seen on the back cover.

David Groom

New Domain Name Extensions

We are all familiar by now with domain names which end in .COM , .CO.UK and we may as well have seen less used ones like .ORG and .TV. These domain name suffixes are known in the internet industry as Top Level Domains (TLDs). In the early days of the internet there were just seven TLDs (.org, .com, .net, .int, .mil, .eu, .gov). These these were soon followed by country code TLDs based on the standard two country codes, giving us amongst many other the .uk (United Kingdom), .fr (France), .de (Germany) and .tv (Tuvalu – though this domain is now widely used for television companies). In 2001 some new generic TLDs were added into the system (.aero, .biz, .coop, .info, .museum, .name, .pro). And every now and then a few more generic TLDs (gTLD') were added in.

However, starting in late 2013, and continuing through 2014 and into 2015, the existing two dozen or so gTLDs will be expanded into hundreds, if not thousands.

For instance gTLDs such as .agency, .bargain .computer, .dating, .house, .menu, .zone are among the 130 or so new gTLDs released so far. In the near future .accountants, .dad, .lawyer, .photography will be among the many other gTLDs available to register.

So what does all this mean for you? Well if you are just a “user” of the internet then you should start to see these domain names using these new extensions coming into use. The unfamiliarity of these new gTLDs may cause some concern as to whether these are legitimate sites, or just some new method of scam. In general I would say don't worry, its not some form of scam, these will be real domain names. However with so many potential new domain names becoming available, some with similar looking names to existing web sites, there will I believe be an increased possibility of people setting up bogus sites aiming to look like existing genuine sites.

If you are a business and already have a domain name and a web site, then you should consider whether you need to purchase one of the new gTLDs. For instance should the accountancy practice Wellers who currently have the domain name wellersaccountants.co.uk apply for wellers.accountants when it becomes available? It probably would be a good idea to do so, just to protect their brand. However a more difficult scenario arises in advising those looking for their first web site? Should they use one of the new gTLDs as the primary address, or one of the more familiar existing TLDs? We don't yet know what how Google may treat web sites using these new gTLDs when determining search ranking.

David Groom

Adventures with 2 photo printers and the great ink swindle

My rant for this Hotkey is the high cost of inkjet cartridges and my quest to get good quality reasonably priced photos.

A few years ago I was given an Epson 6 ink photo printer. The photo prints were superb but I wasted about a third of the ink doing print head cleans then had excellent photos for about a third of the ink before one of the colours would run out and I would have to buy another cartridge as it did not have separate tanks. About one third of the ink would be left in the tanks. After not using the printer for some months the printer jets clogged up badly so I tried to clean them with cotton buds which clogged them up for good because of the fibres from the cotton (according to Debbie Lane), so I threw it away.

About a month ago I took some wedding photos and thought it would be fun to print them out. A friend was selling an Epson Stylus photo P50 which had 6 separate ink tanks and excellent reviews but had not been used for a year. Nearly passed out when I found out the cost of genuine Epson cartridges (cheapest @ £42 on Ebay). I had heard of several reports of compatible inks not giving faithful colours so the search was on for good quality compatibles. My favourite type of reviews is when several products are compared with each other. The only comparative review I could find was a 2007 article from Trusted Reviews

<http://www.trustedreviews.com/opinions/the-inkjet-investigation>

This compared Cartridge World, InkTecShop, JetTec and StinkyInk compats with a variety of printers and paper types. I found it complicated figuring out from the test results but overall for my printer I reckoned Cartridge World did best. At £37 for a set too expensive though. Second came JetTec and I found a supplier that gave about double the capacity of genuine Epson inks for £17.50 for a set. Express inks told me that after legal wrangling JetTec were forced to reduce the capacity of these cartridges to the same as Epsoms (7.4 ml) so I was lucky to get the last of the high cap. compats. Great service and advice from this supplier.

<http://www.expressinkcartridges.co.uk>

I did not want to waste any more ink with cleaning cycles so injected cleaning fluid into the print heads with a plastic syringe and tubing bought from Hursts of Newport. Possibly a risky business. See below.

<http://www.efillink.com/Support/HowToUnclogPrintHeads.html>

I also filled the old tanks with cleaning fluid and tried a print head clean. The printer showed 2 its own tanks as not being recognised or empty and would not work at all even for maintenance tasks. I then put in the new ink tanks. All 6 were shown as incompatible AAAAAAAAAAh! After advice from expressinkcartridges. Was told to put all the original cartridges in and replace them with new ones one at a time. This did not work either. Nor did unplugging the printer and cleaning the cartridge contacts. Still 2 tanks were shown as empty (they were not) and unrecognised (even with the genuine Epson inks). Another call to the supplier and he sent replacements for the 2 problem cartridges.

After the printer was left unplugged overnight I had one last go at getting it to work before I replaced the 2 inks. The machine magically came to life and printed a perfect test page! I was surprised and mightily relieved. Then swapped all the old inks with the new ones one at a time and after going through the routine maintenance now get superb prints. Perhaps the printer needed to be left off for several hours for the cartridge memory to erase.

More photos are viewed on screens these days helped by the cost of cheaper and bigger monitors, TV's, tablets etc. but I think there will always be a place for the simple and convenient joy of handing round a photo album and they don't need plugging in.

If any members would like a talk on any aspect of photography please let me know.

Stephen Sutters

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**

See page 12 for an explanation of these images

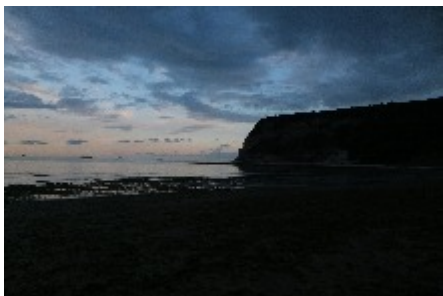
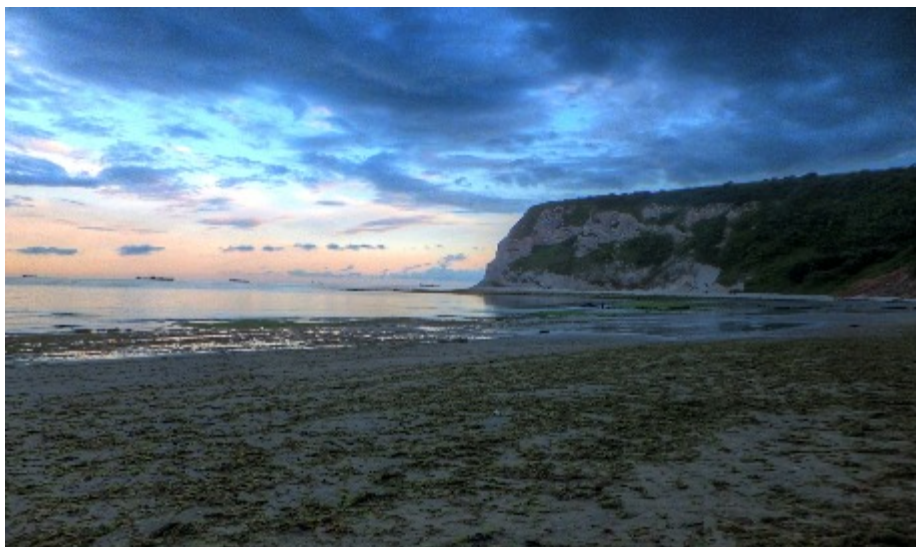


Image from camera - underexposed by 2 stops to bring out sky detail



Image from camera -overexposed by 2 stops to bring out cliff details

Using the Luminance HDR program the following image was achieved



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