

Issue 198

JULY 2017

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP



HOT KEY

SUMMER 2017



James Pilcher, from the Tech Store in Scarrots Lane, Newport, gave us a talk in June about the most common issues people want fixed on their computer.

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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 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

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
5 July	Selling on Ebay	Ron Keeler
2 August	Summer BBQ	
6 September	Security Tweaks and what are the real risks?	Jonathan Burt

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

We have had some new speakers over the last few months, from external sources such as the Library Service, and James from the TechStore, and from our new member Ron Keeler. I'm pleased to say that we now have meetings planned for the next three months, and possible speakers for both October & December.

We will not be at the Riverside Centre in August as it is our summer BBQ, which this year will be at Roger Skidmore's house in Newport, more details on page 11, note the 7:00pm start time.

I'd like to thank the contributors to this months issue, it is nice when we can have our own members helping to fill the pages of this magazine rather than relying too much on external sources.

Our Facebook page now has a total of 37 likes, it would be good to see this increase further.

Lastly those of you that saw me demonstrate Affinity Photo last month may remember I showed how to cut out the background from an image so a new background could be inserted behind it. This technique was used to create the image on the front cover.

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**



It is probably the most popular bulk-emailing program for small groups, with up to 2,000 subscribers completely free. Obviously a lead-in for bigger companies but used by many Island based groups already, including Dimbola Lodge, Quay Arts Centre and West Wight Arts.

After setting up your username and password www.mailchimp.com takes you to a clearly laid out menu structure where the main tabs are laid out (I think) counter-intuitively. If you want to mail your group I would suggest first setting up a trial list including yourself and one or two buddies. Then you create a template. This is their terminology for your main desk-top published email document. The whole thing is done on-line and your document (or "template") is created with drag-and-drop fill-in boxes, very similar to a number of other on-line DTP pages. Always look for the "Next" or "Save and Exit" button hidden away in the bottom right hand corner of the screen.

You can personalise your document by inserting simple code for FirstName etc.

Next you may want to send out your template document. To do this you create a "Campaign" which is (counter-intuitively) the first tab on the screen. To create a campaign you have to select both a list and your saved template - logical enough. You have to name your campaign and you are then presented with the final work. At this point you can make temporary changes - like telling people it's only a test email, etc. - and then the MailChimp finger is poised over the final Send button!

There are other bits to do like setting up your credentials and bits to fill in for each Campaign; there is also extensive help and I find it best to go back to Google and just pose your question referencing MailChimp - you will go straight to the answer.

It does take a little practice to find all the editing opportunities but, heh, we're a computer group.

It's also a good idea to sign up to, say, one of the three MailChimp news lists mentioned above. All MailChimp emails arrive with the opportunity to change your details or to unsubscribe.

I have discovered that Gmail categorizes incoming mail at its own discretion. MailChimp mail may be categorized as "Promotions" in which case it may well be missed by people who have not enabled a view of such a category. This would account for the low "open" rate within our group.

Maybe it is not such a good tool for groups of recipients who are more likely to use such free email clients. I believe the same problem exists with Hotmail. MailChimp being a mostly commercial tool would not find the same resistance within the commercial sector where fewer freebie clients are used.

Roger Skidmore

Mobile Phone Bluetooth Issues

Since moving to Bembridge my mobile phone reception with EE in our house had been dreadful. The only reliable signal I could get was, rather strangely, in the inner corner of the kitchen bent over the cooker! Both neighbours reported similar problems. One was also with EE and is still fed up walking from room to room trying not to get cut off. The other was with Vodafone, and he still has to stand in the street to get a signal. Came the day when our neighbour over the road called in clutching her O2 mobile phone and, upon our request, demonstrated a reasonable signal all over our house. The answer was simple, or so I thought - change to O2.

I had two choices - pay to have my phone 'opened up' and go over to O2, or buy a new O2 phone and keep the old one as a spare. I opted for the latter because I thought it would be less hassle, not much more expensive (for a basic pay-as-you-go phone), had a year's warranty and it came with a

fourteen day return option if I was not entirely satisfied. In truth I was also tempted to link it via Bluetooth to my car audio system. The Ford Fiesta has a Bluetooth Sync system which enables the driver to receive and make hands-free calls and texts. It can even read out incoming texts, a feature I considered would be useful as I receive more texts than calls - and nearly always, it seems, when I am driving.

Ford do warn customers that not all phones work with all Sync features, so I did my homework comparing available O2 phones with Ford's rather non-committal mobile phone comparability website page. My first choice was a Pixi 4 4 Pay as you Go Smartphone for £19.99 which works on an Android system. This was a bit of a gamble as the best advice seemed to be that Android phones usually work ok, though not necessarily if the phone is supplied by a service provider - which mine was. Strange, I thought. But I decided to go ahead anyway as I could always return it, and most other phones had poor reviews or were much more expensive. I bought my phone on the O2 website, and it duly arrived by post.

The phone came with no instructions - par for the course these days - but a search on the internet soon found the instruction booklet, all 57 pages of it. My initial problem was putting some credit on the phone. When I bought it, O2 automatically set up an account for me, so I tried topping up on-line. Here I repeatedly got the message "Oops - something seems to have gone wrong", so I tried dialing 4444, their automated top-up line. This service also repeatedly refused to work and I felt I really needed to speak to someone, so dialed Customer Services. Having asked around, O2 were commended for their customer service, so I thought I would soon sort out the problem. But there was no option to speak to an operator, and the best I could do was to reply to pre-recorded questions. I soon found I did not know certain details, and was then asked if I would be willing to answer a security question. I replied "Yes", and was asked to speak the answer clearly - but they did not give me the question! Quite amazing for a company that deals in communication. In the end I visited the O2 shop in Newport (getting soaked in the pouring rain) where I was told that the sim card first had to be activated by them. Why don't they tell you this when you buy the phone?

After learning the basics the time came to try pairing the phone with my Fiesta. I was a little alarmed when the car produced a six figure number and

the phone reported that it normally expected only four figures, but I tried a couple of times and then they decided to pair. Using my old phone I tried ringing my new phone and, hey presto, the car sound system rang. The address book (contacts list) also transferred over. But when I tried sending a text, no message alert sounded in the car, and no text was received. Upon investigation, the car Sync system reported that “This phone is not compatible with text messages”, and that sinking feeling set in.

Though I still had time to return the phone, I decided to revisit the O2 shop to see if they could help. To get the expertise I required I had to make a booking to see their guru some days later, so a third trip was necessary. I had imagined a visiting Indian fellow would attend to me, but it turned out to be a pleasant, helpful young lady that serves behind the counter several days each week anyway. Her initial feeling was that the phone was just not up to the task, but she tried downloading a Gmail app to the phone which basically updated the phone’s messaging service to see if that might do the trick. We walked round to the car and tried a call, which worked, and then a text, which still did not work. She then had the idea of pairing her top of the range phone with the car to prove that a more expensive model would work. But to her surprise it didn’t. We parted agreeing the only way forward was to approach a Ford dealership to see what they could suggest, but I could see where this might be leading - a nice game of piggy in the middle, with me in the middle.

However, I still believed my phone should work, and on reaching home had the idea of un-pairing and then re-pairing the phone with the car. And amazingly it worked.

Now I have text messages that are read out to me hands free whilst I am driving - so gabbled I can hardly understand a word of them! - and O2 mobile reception on the island which seems inferior to EE’s reception! But never mind - the technology works and I was right to persevere!

So my point is this: the notion that Bluetooth works with Bluetooth may be an oversimplification. Pairing may not be a problem but, as Ford point out, it does not guarantee the two devices can fully share their information.

David A’Bear

Power Failures and Lessons Learned

A month or so ago British Airways computer centre suffered a major problem which, it is claimed, was down to a power surge. Coincidentally the same week in Bembridge we also suffered a series of short power cuts.

Of course as far as many items of electrical equipment go it doesn't actually matter if a power cut is short (maybe a second or so) or longer (a few hours or more). A power failure will lead to the immediate switching off of a computer and, as I hope you all know, that is not a good thing. Computers should never simply be switched off by turning off the power, they need to be closed down properly by the operating system. This allows data (such files you are working on, system files and also possibly the registry files) to be safely written to the hard disks, and also the hard disks to be shutdown safely. For this reason, for many years I have had an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) powering my computers. Essentially this contains a battery which provides power in the event the mains power fails. UPS's also usually regulate the power supply voltage so that power surges do not get through to the computer.

Unfortunately last month, when the mains power failed, it became apparent that my UPS had also failed, and my computers switched off immediately. When the mains power came back on my computer initially refused to boot up. I was very concerned.

I have a confession to make. Although some years ago I purchased a NAS drive to act as the destination for regular backups of my computer, the NAS drive proved faulty, and I hadn't been putting a regular backup system in place. Luckily for me I managed to get my computer to boot up, and immediately copied important files to Dropbox.

Next I went about researching what NAS drive to buy. A Synology DiskStation DS216J seemed to fit the bill, having the right mixture of features at a reasonable price (£160 without any hard disks). Next I had to decide what capacity of storage I wanted, and also what level of RAID protection I would want to use in the NAS. I decided that I wanted RAID1, which would mean that all data stored on the NAS was duplicated on two drives, so if one failed then I could recover data from the other drive. In theory this may be overkill, since the NAS is only backing up my main computer it might be unnecessary to have what is in effect a backup of the backup. Looking at the files I wanted to backup (all documents, images, emails etc) I decided I needed 1TB of storage capacity which, with the RAID1 implementation, meant I needed to purchase two 1TB drives. Orders were placed and within a few days I had a working NAS drive.

Next I had to decide how to perform my backups, further research, and advice from Roger Skidmore, led me towards Acronis True Image.

Although I now had a working backup system in place (which I should of course have had many years ago), I still had not done anything about the initial cause of the problem, the failure of the UPS.

I had hoped the failure was a result of the lead acid battery in the UPS being faulty, as a new battery could be purchased for less than £20 and slotted in (I had had to do this once already in the last ten years). However investigation showed it was not the battery, but the UPS electronics itself which were at fault. I needed a new UPS! My existing UPS was made by Belkin and had served me well, so they were an obvious choice for the replacement, but sadly they no longer make UPS's. APC are a well known brand so they were my next choice, but they did seem to be expensive. Some much cheaper products were available and I was tempted, but various reviews put me off, and so in the end I decided to opt for a UPS from Salicru.

I then needed to decide what capacity UPS I needed, I have 2 computers which tend to be on all the time (my desktop machine running Windows 10, and my development web server running Ubuntu, but I have a third computer I also occasionally use; it would be necessary for the NAS to be powered by the UPS; and of course the router through which all the computers connect to the NAS had to be on the UPS as well. My old Belkin did get a little overloaded on occasions! Luckily the Salicru website had an online calculator, you told it what equipment you wanted to be supported by the UPS and it told you what size UPS was necessary. It appeared I needed around 1500VA, but to be on the safe side I decided to go for the next size up, the 2000VA model. This cost £156 including delivery. Even with all three computers on, and the NAS, and the router, I'm only loading the UPS 50% so I could maybe have got away with a smaller model, though it should be noted I don't currently run the computer monitors through the UPS (my old UPS didn't have enough power to do so) and some rerouting of wires will be needed before I can do so.

I've yet to test things properly as its only been in the last week or so that everything has been delivered. I need to ensure the UPS software will shutdown the computer in the event of power failure. I also need to ensure I can recover data from the backup system.

One other thing I need to do is clone my whole hard drive. As I said earlier I am only backing up to the NAS documents etc, not the programs I use, and not Windows itself. This will be my next project.

David Groom

The Annual Club BBQ on Wednesday 2 August

Please note that Roger Skidmore has kindly agreed to host this years BBQ at his house at 47 Quay street Newport.

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 30 July.

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

David Groom

Buying and Selling on Facebook's Marketplace

Buying and selling online can be a real convenience for individuals. It's a handy way to find bargains, get rid of unwanted items, or buy or sell unusual things without necessarily having to jump in your car. But if you're not careful it can also be a handy way to get scammed.

Craigslist with its online classified ads and eBay with its auctions have long been the market leaders here. But in October 2016 Facebook entered this space with its Marketplace, leveraging its deep social media presence and taking on Craigslist in particular with location- based buying and selling.

You can browse categories such as Home, Entertainment, Clothing & Accessories, Family, Electronics, Hobbies, Vehicles & Bicycles, and Classifieds, specifying a radius or distance from you from 2 to 100 miles. You can also do a search for something in particular.

Combining old and new, Marketplace is also now implementing a feature for sellers to post information about garage sales and for buyers to find garage sales nearby.

Unlike eBay, it doesn't cost anything to sell through Facebook Marketplace. Facebook is just a venue, taking a hands-off approach and using Marketplace to further cement users' loyalty.

Tips for Buyers

Do your research before you buy. Check out what similar items, whether new or used, sell for elsewhere on Marketplace or on Craigslist, eBay, or Amazon. Obviously the pricier the item, the more risk involved and the more important this is.

Sometimes sellers put up an item with a price considerably higher than what you would pay elsewhere. They're just looking for suckers. Other times sellers put up an item for next to nothing just so they don't feel bad about throwing it away. Great deals can be had. So the old saw, "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is," doesn't always apply. But sometimes it does.

This leads to... Don't hesitate to ask sellers questions. Ask why they're selling. If these things aren't already mentioned, ask if the item is new or used, how old it is, and if it has any defects. Negotiate if appropriate.

Check out sellers. Click on sellers' profiles. Do they live nearby? If the item is on a local sale page but the seller doesn't live near you, shop elsewhere. If sellers have Facebook friends with names that sound made-up, shop elsewhere. Do a reverse image search on sellers' profile pictures. If it comes up as someone else, shop elsewhere. Do sellers include in their posts questionable links to items such as quick weight loss pills? If so, shop elsewhere.

Sellers are human, and they sometimes have second thoughts after someone expresses interest. If they up the price after hearing from you, shop elsewhere.

If you're having the item sent to you rather than picking it up in person, paying through PayPal can give you some protection in case it doesn't arrive.

Tips for Sellers

Sellers should do their research as well. Price the item fairly to minimize

potential problems. You shouldn't be using Marketplace to make money from buying items on Amazon.

Be honest with your descriptions. If an item is used, say so, and if it has cosmetic defects, say so. Because Facebook doesn't police Marketplace, some Facebook users do, exposing sellers who use questionable or sleazy tactics.

Post good photos. Show all of an item's sides, if appropriate. If you're selling a brand-name item, include a close-up photo of the label. If it's a nearly new item you bought, used lightly, and decided you didn't need it, include a photo of the receipt. If it's a pricy collectable, consider including a photo of an appraisal letter from a reputable source.

It's generally not a good idea to let the buyer obtain possession of the item by making payments.

Tips for Buyers and Sellers

If you're picking up an item or receiving payment in person, take the same care in meeting that someone would when out on a first date through an online dating service. Most people are safe, but there are always exceptions.

Don't go to someone's house or have them come to yours. Meet in a public place such as a restaurant. If appropriate, have a friend come along. If you do, first run this by your buyer or seller.

Consider meeting in a police station parking lot. Some have "exchange spots" designated just for this purpose so people can meet up safely. Even if yours doesn't, the parking lot will likely have security cameras.

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<https://issuu.com/purchasefamilymag>

Chrome Book Philosophy

Years ago Bill Gates predicted that one day we would all have dumb terminals and all programs would exist on the web. Hah! we all thought - wild speculation. In offices everyone had their own PC and hard disk. But soon they started to be networked together with a single office server. Then we started to notice programs which worked from the web - the first one I found was Avery Label Print. I was so happy to have had my own free copy of this on my own computer, and felt strangely side-lined by this event.

Then came Google Docs and Microsoft Cloud and I felt the ground shifting beneath my feet. I can see the advantages of sharing documents and background updates but not then the security of having the actual programs professionally monitored for security. What if I lost my password? I like having my own stuff, but times are changing.

For me they changed when I recently bought my first ChromeBook (see article on the next page). It rather belatedly convinced me that Bill was right way back then. There is a tide in technological development and I am always the last to see this, but the ChromeBook is just a taste of where things are going.

I could (I now realise) have just loaded Chrome OS onto any old laptop (but would still have been stuck with a chunky beast with no battery charge), so now I know where things are headed. I had a conversation with a telecommunications expert who assured me that cloud based servers are the future (like it or not), especially in terms of security from hackers and malware. It will be like having your own computer constantly monitored by IT and security professionals (despite all the press coverage of recent security problems).

Go with the flow!

Roger Skidmore

DIY Chrome Book Operating System for Old Laptop

I finally got fed up with keeping my "coffee table" laptop up-to-date with everything just for the sake of the odd Internet browsing. I was also becoming increasingly aware of the simple needs of Computability clients - they almost all only want to do "Internet and Email".

So the other day I rashly went out and bought an Acer ChromeBook 14 CB3-431 locally from Currys. I always buy things and then find out about them later. So it was fortunate that this model gets decent reviews. It only does one thing - log into my Gmail account and open up Google Chrome web browser. No virus protection necessary; no updates necessary. So, oh so delightfully basic. But that is all I ever did with my coffee-table laptop anyway.

So what is Chrome OS and can I put it on an ordinary laptop and is it free? Yes and yes. Chrome OS is another flavour of Linux and installation will be slightly familiar to anyone who has installed Linux. For full details see links at the end of this article.

You will need to add the ChromeBook Recovery Utility app to your Google apps in your main PC - this is fairly easy – "add a Google app". With it you download a large installation file (680 Mb) - you do this to your hard disk so that the Recovery App can then create a bootable memory stick (8Gb min) . The idea is to then put this in your laptop and set the laptop to boot from USB. (If it won't, then see the second link below - it will enable you to create a bootable CD which will then allow you to boot from a USB stick.)

Having booted from the USB stick Chrome OS will install itself as memory resident, and as with normal Linux will then offer to install to hard disk (in this case, a tiny icon bottom right hand corner.) Voila! It will ask you to log in with your Gmail account (you may need to create one - go to www.gmail.com). Note - once logged in with the hard disk installation it is very difficult to re-assign the main user. I had to do a re-install for this reason.

Read the TechAdvisor article very carefully - it's all in there.

Roger Skidmore

<http://www.techadvisor.co.uk/how-to/software/how-install-chromeos-on-old-laptop-3636672/>

<https://www.plop.at/en/bootmanager/download.html> – download “Plop” boot manager 5.0.15 (you have to then burn an ISO to CD)



For the first part of our May meeting Ron Keeler talked showed us how to mission plan in a popular computer game



In June David Groom demonstrated some of the photo editing techniques available in Affinity Photo from Serif Software

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