

Issue 215

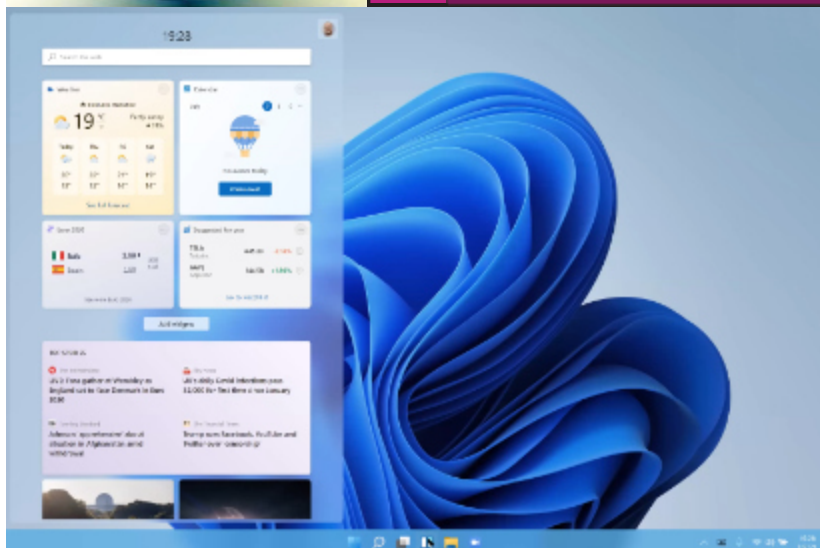
AUTUMN 2021

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER
GROUP



HOT KEY

October 2021

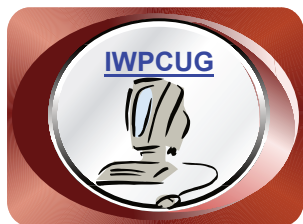


At our July Meeting Daniel Buttery gave us an early preview of the look and some of the features expected to be in the forthcoming release of Windows 11.

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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 from 7.00 to 9.00 pm. Until further notice these will be held online via Zoom.

Visitors are always welcome.

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

Groups.io: <https://groups.io/g/iwpcug>

Details of how to join are on page 4.



FUTURE MEETINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
6 October	IT and its implications for us all	Jonathan Burt
3 November	Digital Tools for Family History Research	Mike Hoar
1 December	Christmas Meeting	

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE

Chairman : David Groom

Secretary : Susanne Bone

Treasurer : Mike Hoar

Membership and Database Secretary : Roger Skidmore

Committee Member : Steve Sutters

Treasury Supervisor : Phil Rogers

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

First of all a thank you to one of our newer members, Daniel Buttery for stepping in at very short notice and giving us a presentation at our July meeting.

We now have meetings planned until the end of the year, but the recent Facebook outage is a reminder that so many things are dependent on technology working, and these things are often outside our control. We found this out ourselves in September when our planned speaker was unable to give his talk due to problems with his ISP. However, as so often happens, we managed to fill the time with a general online discussion between those members who did attend.

For personal reasons I've not been able to devote as much time as I would have liked to the IWPCUG over the last few months, and so we have not moved forward on any decisions about moving back to meeting in person rather than via Zoom.

Once again I'd like to remind members that contributions to HotKey are always welcomed, so that we get a range of contributors rather than relying upon the same small pool. If you are unsure you have anything worthwhile to contribute then always drop me an email beforehand.

David Groom

Joining the Email Discussion Group

Send an email to: iwpcug+subscribe@groups.io, you will receive a confirmation email, follow the instructions in that email, and then wait for your approval request to be approved by one of the moderators.

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

R & D for the Internet of Things

BSE/PCC – ‘TechHub’

Have you ever thought of a simple electronic idea but no resource whatsoever to develop it?

Well, a project we are developing between PC Consultants (PCC) and our sister company in Bulgaria Black Sea Enterprises (BSE) may well be of interest.

Jointly we are setting up a ‘TechHub’ Ltd. whereby budding developers can request to join; we will initially be conducting a vetting process to sort the wheat from the chaff as reinventing the wheel is not something we wish to aspire to.

We will be charging a small annual fee for each successful client in order to fund a fuller review and outline a further suggested course of action. All associates of the ‘Techhub’ will sign NDA’s with us, thus giving a certain amount of tenure to the creator as to IPR etc.

IOT / Device



Copyright Tech Target

We are predominantly focusing the ‘TechHub’ concept around the ‘internet of things’ (IOT) with a backbone of reputable electronic design engineers based in Bulgaria who are fully onboard and can be easily approached and will assist in developing ideas.

Examples: www.bisersystems.com <http://mikrosistemi.com/>

Obviously, some pump priming funding will be needed, however the research and development costs in Bulgaria are several times less than that of the UK and EEC and as such provide a service platform that can be easily leveraged as well as very affordable. In certain cases, ‘TechHub’ may look to assist by finding sources of capital to assist the process, all of which will have negotiable cost implications that can be examined at the time.

Manufacturing

Once proven the ‘device’ needs to be able to scale up in production terms, so as to be that of a marketable product quantity. Here again we have in Bulgaria several well established small and independent companies that can offer not only quality build but at incredibly good price breaks.

Examples: <https://abrites.com/>

Marketing

Our joint experience of marketing within the UK and EEC over the past 30 + years allows for the ‘TechHub’ to offer not only guidance but ways to achieve the necessary finance, either through investors or alternative sources.

Additional facets

The ‘TechHub’ will also be providing opportunities and assistance for business owners in both UK and Bulgaria to benefit from the services being offered and developed.

- Market Research
- Marketing Analysis
- Training
- Technical Consulting
- UK and EEC – Grants
- Seminars and Conferences

Summary

PCC and BSE have for many years been developing business ‘tie ups’ and forging relations with a multitude of wonderful small and medium sized

enterprises across the EEC. and beyond. We now wish to leverage the potential and create a vehicle that acts as a bridge, giving opportunity to ideas that previously would have died a death purely because there was no assistance there for them.

If you have any ideas or comments please contact
sean.colson@pcconsultants.co.uk

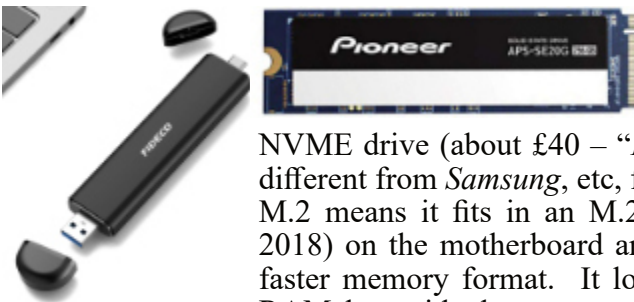
Sean Colson – PC Consultants

Parted Magic

My go-faster computer uses an SSD hard drive and I use **Acronis True Image** to clone it from time to time. I believe you can use Macrium Reflect to do the same, and the home version of this program is free.

I wondered if I could make my go-faster computer even faster if I cloned my SSD to an M.2 format NVME SSD (which is, of course, inconveniently mounted internally - I use externally accessible SSD drive caddies).

The current edition of PCPro (Issue 324 October 2021) has an excellent article on upgrading your laptop, in which the author uses **Macrium Reflect** to clone the existing hard drive to an NVME drive mounted in a "Fideco" USB stick-caddy ([pcpro.link/324fideco](https://www.pcpro.co.uk/324fideco)). This hardware seemed to be what I needed.



So, off I dashed and purchased a Fideco caddy (about £22) and a 256Gb Pioneer M.2 format NVME drive (about £40 – “Pioneer”, a good name but different from *Samsung*, etc, for identification purposes). M.2 means it fits in an M.2 socket (see HotKey July 2018) on the motherboard and NVME is the super-go-faster memory format. It looks like a normal stick of RAM but with the contacts all on one end. Yes, the

Fideco caddy plugs into a USB socket on the computer and yes, the computer sees it.

But this leaves me with a quandary - I then no longer need yet another SSD

clone, and does my go-faster computer actually need to go any faster?
Answer - "No" to both. And how would I wipe my excess SSD clone of all that private data?

Mechanical hard disks need special disk wiping software - typically "DBAN" - which writes multiple zero's to existing data tracks to prevent forensic examination of residual magnetic traces. SSD's write data to individual locations. The drives look the same to the operating system but actually operate differently inside.

These days the easiest and regrettably most practical way of wiping a mechanical hard drive is to drill a hole through a 3.5" drive or simply smash a 2.5" drive with a hammer. Not so with an SSD since the data is contained on those black flash memory chips inside.

I have recently discovered "Parted Magic" (<https://partedmagic.com/>) which at the moment sells for \$11 but is shortly going to become monthly licenced software. I have found it widely recommended. PMagic downloads as a Linux distribution, so is a nearly 2Gb ISO file. You therefore have to burn it to DVD, or to USB using Rufus. You then have to use the DVD or USB as a boot medium just as you would any other Linux distribution disc. Takes at least 5 minutes to load but you do get a very nice looking Linux graphical interface.

This provides you with a comprehensive set of open source hard disk utilities, plus Secure Erase and other things. Secure Erase will work through an SSD resetting all the memory units to zero. Job done.

This article is long enough, but it will take you in the right direction. PMagic is a Linux installation to rival Universal Boot Disk and I leave it to you to investigate. Before using Secure Erase do visit the PartedMagic website for much useful help. I have so far tested it on an old 80Gb conventional HDD and a 128Gb SSD - and it seemed to do what it says on the tin.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parted_Magic

Roger Skidmore

Macrium Reflect Free

The current edition of PCPro (Issue 324 October 2021) has an excellent article on upgrading your laptop, in which the author uses **Macrium Reflect** (<https://www.macrium.com/reflectfree>) to clone the existing hard drive to an NVME drive mounted in a "Fideco" USB stick-caddy (pcpro.link/324fideco).

Following on from my Parted Magic article (see pages 7 & 8) I further investigated Macrium Reflect. Like much software it comes in different versions, but the free one is really free. They ask for your email address, but then so does everyone else. Macrium strike me as a pretty genuine company.

You follow the instructions and download a fairly comfortable installation routine. Once installed you can use the program direct or create your own bootable CD or save an ISO file which you can then burn to USB using the Rufus tool. Note – both the CD and the USB take forever to load.

Why would you want to clone your hard disk? To backup your main hard drive – there's no backup like a cloned drive which is exactly the same as the one you've got. Until you add a bit more data or another program.



How would you clone your hard disk? I use a hard disk caddy such as the Startech offering here. This caddy sits in a 3.5" floppy drive space, yet takes two full 2.5" SSD's. It connects via two USB cables and separate power connectors.

I keep my main hard drive in one and use the other for the cloned copy, which I test and then hide away when the job is done.

Normally I use Acronis True Image (paid for) but am becoming increasingly impressed by Macrium Reflect after reading the PCPro article and test driving it.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macrium Reflect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macrium_Reflect)

Roger Skidmore

This Person Does Not Exist

Before you read any further I would like to turn to the back cover, and look at the two “photos” of the man and the lady. Did you notice anything odd looking about these two? No - well neither did I. But depending on your point of view there is something very scary, or very amazing, about these two images. The two images are not of real people, they were created by artificial intelligence using the web site <https://thispersondoesnotexist.com/>

In December 2018, Nvidia researchers distributed a preprint with accompanying software introducing StyleGAN, a GAN for producing an unlimited number of (often convincing) portraits of fake human faces. StyleGAN was able to run on Nvidia's commodity GPU processors.

In February 2019, Uber engineer Phillip Wang used the software to create the web site *This Person Does Not Exist*. Each time the page is refreshed, the algorithm renders portraits of completely fake people. It is from this web site that I obtained the two images on the back cover. There are similar web sites generating fake images of cats, horses, and artwork, the links to these can be found if you wait a few seconds on the *This Person Does Not Exist* web site.

To see how good you are at spotting these fake images go to the web site www.whichfaceisreal.com which asks you to pick which of two images is of a real person.

David Groom

TalkTalk to WightFibre

I have now been with WightFibre for 6 months and it's going well. Always liked the concept of joining WF as it is an Island firm but the their cheapest deal was always about £10 more a month than TalkTalk. When my last contract with TT ran out WF's full fibre (50 Mb upload and download) deal with anytime UK calls had come down to £30.35p which was only about a pound dearer than TT. Also TT charges 20p per call for last caller display (1471) which sounds like a rip off to me and 2p per call for their standard voicemail (1571) So I switched to WF.

Found the hardest part of changing providers is dealing with emails. Took hours transferring emails, contacts and notifying everyone (including utilities banks etc). Gmail was generally recommended as a good free provider and it

has a useful tool for transferring emails en masse. A good time to delete all unnecessary ones. A friend said my TT. Email account would be deleted the day my contract ended but TT said it would remain for 2 years before I had to pay to carry the service on. I didn't want to chance it so sorted emails out before the contract ended. Still have my TT. email account so that is generous of TT.

Can't say I've noticed any difference with the download of TT (around 35mb/s) versus WF's (50mb/s) or the upload of TT (around 10 mb/s) versus WF's less than advertised 25mb/s + with my everyday tasks (like web page surfing, watching youtube and going to Zoom meetings). My pc is getting rather old now as it only has a dual core 3Ghz processor with 8 Gb of DDR2 ram so I don't know if I upgraded to a faster pc I would notice the difference. Communication is a lot better with WF though. I get through to someone in seconds rather than minutes with TT and they speak well pronounced English rather than foreign call centre English which has varied from good to having to say 'can you say that again'. Also I have always been able to connect to the internet so far with WF whereas the connection has been lost several times a year with TT for from hours to days.

It is important to haggle with TT for the best deal. To start with TT offered me a fast fibre connection with anytime UK phone calls for £37 a month. After I told them I did not need such a fast connection and trying to get them to give me a good deal they dropped the price to just under £30. Not enough of a price drop to stop me swapping to WF. A few days after I had agreed to transfer to WF TT's special deals department rang me and offered an 18 month contract with the same service I had been getting for £20 a month. Had I known I was going to get this offer I would have stayed with them but I did not want to mess WF about so stayed with WF. My mums contract with TT was about to end and WF's cable was months away from getting installed in Bembridge. She was happy with TT so I rang them and asked for the same contract I had been offered for £20 a month and they agreed. This is an amazingly cheap deal and I reckon was offered to us because we are light users of the internet. If we were forever streaming 4K videos it would have been a different matter. Anyway we are both happy with our broadband providers and I'm getting speeds I would have dreamed about years ago!

Stephen Sutters

Bob Groom - Obituary



It's hard to know where to start when summarising Dad and his life, but I guess the first thing I must talk about is his interest in and love of electronics, something which was to form such a fundamental part not only of his working life but also of his hobbies.

In the 1930's the General Post Office also ran the telephone network, which was where Dad's father worked. It's probably from our grandfather that dad inherited his interest in electrical systems and electronics.

This interest started at an early age when Dad would help some of the residents in the area with problems on their old crystal radio sets.

Dad was employed full time for a short while at a large company called Standard Telephone and Cables. But in 1952 he had a change of direction. He was working part time at a TV shop repairing and installing TV sets. Television broadcasts were then limited to two hours in the evening. The need became apparent for another signal source for TV repairmen. He devised a pattern generator for their own use and it soon seemed there was a need in the market for such a product. Together with another employee from the TV shop Dad formed a partnership to manufacture these generators. These early products were so popular that at one stage there was a 36 week waiting time for delivery on them.

The business had started in the loft in my grandparents house, before moving to a shed and then later to larger premises. The company he subsequently formed was called Telequipment and it ended up manufacturing and designing low-cost oscilloscopes for the testing of electrical and electronic equipment. I will turn to Dads' own words for how this came about.

We got into the oscilloscope manufacturing business largely by accident. We'd taken a booth at the then biggest radio and television exposition in the UK. A few days before the show we decided we were lacking enough gear to fill the booth. So we included a simple home made 'scope we'd built for our own use (we couldn't afford to buy one), put it into a box, made up a type number - and we were in the 'scope business.

Export sales accounted for a substantial part of the business, and the need to find, and then meet with, international distributors gave Dad the opportunity to travel widely. I remember Dad saying that the first times he visited the USA the aircraft had to stop in Greenland for refuelling.

Whilst he was in the USA he learnt to fly light aircraft, and later converted this to a UK Private Pilots Licence, though Mum asked him to stop flying once us boys were born.

By 1967 the Telequipment employed 300 people, and was the largest oscilloscope manufacturer in the UK. It's interesting to note that some of these oscilloscopes are still sold on Ebay in working condition, some 50 or more years after they were first produced.

In 1977, after 25 years, Dad left Telequipment, and together with some of his ex co-directors, purchased a printed circuit board manufacturing company in Luton. Dad also purchased an interest in a boatyard in Bembridge.

Dad finally retired from business in the late 1980's. He continued his love of electronics however, and up until a few years ago would continually disappear into his workroom to build, or modify, some piece of equipment.

Dad was a very practical man and could turn his hand to most plumbing, electrical and decorating work, plus car maintenance. He had included in the construction of the garage of our house in London an inspection pit to make working on the undersides of cars easier.

He had started to build a large wooden sailing yacht in the front garden of the house in Mill Hill, making everything from scratch. Though, probably as a result of finding himself with three young sons, the boat was never finished.

One of my earliest memories is of Dad rowing me out to the sailing boat he had moored off of Seaview. He continued to own yachts well into his 80's. Dad very much enjoyed being out on the water.

Dad's early training having been as a mechanical engineer he had an obvious love of making things. He had many radio-controlled models which

combined this love of making things and his love of electronics. Many of the models of motor boats were designed from scratch.

He also liked to invent things, in the 1970's he designed a bilge pump which had no moving parts.

He had an interest in amateur radio, and joined the local radio club, making a number of long term friends. He wanted to learn Morse Code to pass the amateur radio exam, and learned to program microprocessors so he could build a device to generate Morse Code, as there was nothing similar available to buy at the time.

In the late 1980's Dad started to use computers. One of the computing projects of which he was most proud occurred in the early 1990's. He had been approached by the Rev Kenneth Parsons to see if it would be possible to get a computer to print the characters used by the language of the Miao people, an ethnic group in southern China, and I assisted Dad with the development of a collection of programs to allow this obscure Chinese dialect to be typed on a computer.

In the 1990's Dad had joined the Isle of Wight PC User Group club, subsequently becoming Treasurer and then editor of the quarterly magazine. He gave a number of talks each year to the group, and contributed many articles to the clubs magazine.

He loved flowers growing in the garden, particularly the roses, and had a lifelong love of dogs. Until a few years ago he would regularly complete the Daily Telegraph cryptic crossword and when all our family got together at Christmas and played Scrabble he would be almost unbeatable.

Photography was another of his lifelong passions, some of my earliest memories are being in our bathroom in London watching Dad develop his own films and then print them.

David Groom

The above is an abbreviated version of the obituary given at my fathers funeral service, Roger has asked that I make the full version available online, it can be seen at www.iwpcug.org/docs/BobGroom.pdf

Video Editors

Occasionally I have to edit and produce some videos, partly because I do this infrequently, and partly because I don't like spending money if I have to, I want to use programs which I can get for free.

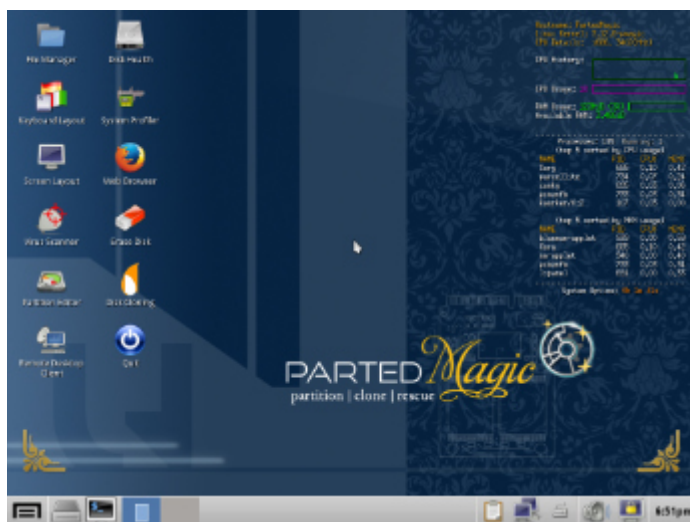
My video editor of choice for a number of years has been **OpenShot**, (www.openshot.org) available for free for Windows, Linux & Mac. It does all you need in a basic video editor, allowing the import and editing of multiple video tracks, an exhaustive selection of transitions to apply between video scenes, the import of separate audio tracks and images, and the addition of titles. It has a fairly easy to understand interface, and a reasonable help manual, and has recently been updated to its latest version.

In the April edition of HotKey I wrote about a new editor called Olive, (www.olivevideoeditor.org), but at the time of writing that article I had not used it. I now have used Olive version 0.1 (just once!) and can report that its capabilities are very similar to OpenShot. There are only four transitions available, but this should be enough for most simple videos. Initial impressions were that it was more responsive than OpenShot. It seemed easier to select which portion of a timeline you wanted to export to the final video. There is however much less help available on how to use it. Considering that this is, according to the web site, 'technically alpha software' I was impressed, and version 0.2 offers more features. It is possible that more exhaustive testing will show up issues which I have not yet identified.

Neither of these two programs allows much in the way of audio editing, and I found it necessary to use Audacity (www.audacityteam.org) to create an audio file for import into the video projects.

Another program which may be worth investigating is DaVinci Resolve (www.iwpcug.org/url/DaVinci). This appears to be an incredibly powerful and sophisticated piece of software, in fact it appears to be professional standard, and I find it amazing that it is available for free. As might be expected, it seems to be fairly resource hungry and my relatively old computer struggles with it. Also it has a much steeper learning curve, which I have struggled with. I hope to experiment with it more, and will update you when I do. In the meantime I can recommend either of the two programs at the start of this article.

David Groom



The Parted Magic Interface - see pages 7 & 8.



See page 10 for an explanation of these “photos”.

We try to publish HOTKEY quarterly in April, July, October and January
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