

HOT KEY

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

MONTHLY JOURNAL

Issue 121 - December 2001



George Wilson, Ray Boote, Mark Worrall and John Moxon at the "New Products" meeting at Riverside

Our recent guest speaker, Mark Worrall, gave a very comprehensive talk on the latest products on the market, which included various aspects of hardware and software. Mark explained his involvement at Island Computers, where he is employed in the workshop, solving customer's problems and then went on to give his opinion of Windows XP and Windows 2000 (which is his favoured operating system and the one used at Island Computers). Mark also informed our members about AMD XP processors being superior to the latest Intel Pentium 4 processors and discussed various topics such as the latest memory, including DDR/RAM and that hard drives are becoming cheaper and bigger. The smallest hard drive available at present is 20Gb but for an extra £10, one can purchase a 30Gb hard drive. Our members then fielded questions about various topics pertaining to their own particular hardware, which Mark was happy to answer. Thanks Mark for an interesting evening, which appeared to be appreciated by all those present.

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FUTURE MEETINGS

5th December	Internet Evening	Dennis Linzmaier
19th December	Christmas Party	Riverside Centre
2nd January	MEETING CANCELLED	
16th January	PDA's (Personal Digital Asst.) <i>Members are invited to bring along a PDA of their own for the meeting to discuss and examine.</i>	Dennis Linzmaier
6th February	A.G.M. followed by Questions and Answers	
20th February	Linux Update	Bob Groom
6th March	Corel Draw and Knockout <i>(To be held in the Main Function Hall)</i>	Ian Capon
20th March	Building a Computer	Dennis Parkes
3rd April	Net Meetings & Instant Message Systems	Dennis Linzmaier
17th April	Spreadsheets	David Broughton
1st May	World Wide Disability E-Mail Groups	Pat Davidson



Steve France of CompuWight, at the recent Computer Show at Riverside Centre

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP – COMMITTEE MEMBERS**Honorary President:**

Sir Norman Echlin,

Chairman:

Dennis Linzmaier,

Vice Chairman:

David Broughton,

Treasurer:

Bob Groom,

Secretary:**Vacant**

(For the purpose of the constitution David Broughton (see above) will act as Secretary)

Membership Secretary/Meetings Reception Assistant:

John Atkin,

Refreshments:

Dorothy Woollerton,

Hot Key Editor:

Brian Sexton,

New Members Co-ordinator:

Dennis Lambeth,

Committee Member:

Cliff Maidment,

Disability Resources Co-ordinator:

Helen Edom,



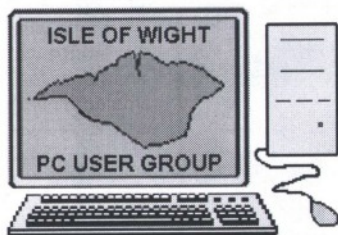
A very happy Christmas to you all.

Well, as you can imagine it has been an uphill grind producing the Show Hot Key and at one stage I didn't think I would make the deadline. However, after working day and night, the Show edition made it in time to the Riverside Centre. I would like to thank personally, John Atkin, Dennis Lambeth, Denny Linzmaier and especially Bob Groom who did all the stapling in the collating of the Hot Key. Thanks guys for giving up your Saturday afternoon.

As David Broughton has mentioned in his article on page 10, it was disappointing to find that only 386 Hot Key newsletters were required but as David has mentioned the circumstances did not prevail for us and lessons have been learned.

Now that the festive season is upon us, I thought you might be interested in seeing what is available for your Christmas shopping, whether it be for buying for relations and friends or treating yourself to a nice piece of hardware or software. You will find the offerings on pages 8, 9 and 11. Also bear in mind when shopping for a hard drive that you can purchase a Maxtor DiamondMax hard drive with a capacity of 160GB, although a more realistic size would be 40GB or 60GB. These drives now have transfer rates up to 133MB/sec.

In view of the fact that our members are not making the effort to provide suitable articles for the monthly Hot Key, I have decided to reduce the number of pages to twelve, instead of the usual sixteen. This will take place from the next issue (122) for January 2002. I have found that the producing of the monthly newsletter to be a drain on my time and labour and without the help of our members it is a hard and lonely occupation. I wish to thank David Broughton, Roger Skidmore, Bob Groom, Rosemary West and Denny Linzmaier for their articles in the past and hope that I can depend upon them for future input to keep "Hot Key" in circulation.



The Isle of Wight PC User Group

welcomes all owners and users of
IBM Compatible Personal Computers.

It is a group which seeks to exchange ideas
and seek new information.

Our meetings are informal **on the first and
third Wednesdays of each month at The
Riverside Centre, Newport, 7.30 - 9.30 pm.**

The first Wednesday has usually a formal
talk whilst the third Wednesday is more
informal, geared to the new user and aims
to help out members with specific problems.

Membership is £12 per year.

Visitors are welcome.

This journal, "HOTKEY", is produced every
month.

If you would like to know more about us,
either come along to one of our meetings or
contact one of our Committee Members on
one of the numbers on page 3.

off the mark

by Mark Parisi

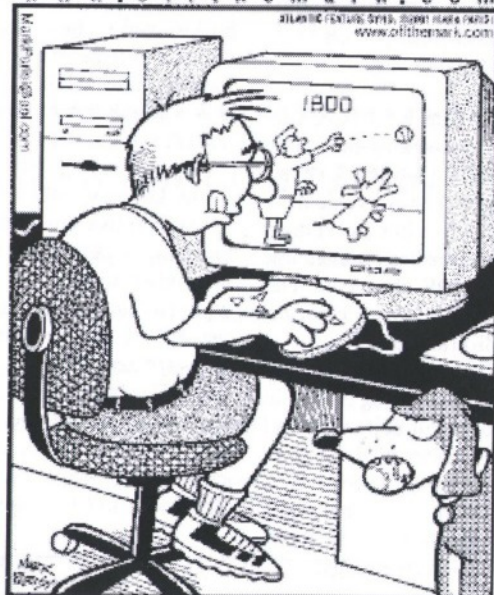
www.offthemark.com



off the mark

by Mark Parisi

www.offthemark.com



How I Back up my Hard Disk by Roger Skidmore



Even since the demise of DOS I have had a problem backing up my hard disk and Windows system files. All the backup up programmes around seem to rely on Windows being operational, so what happens when everything has crashed and you can't get anywhere at all? When I was running Win 3.11 I had a tape backup which could be run either from within Win 3.11 or from DOS - I always ran it from DOS for this same reason.

Now that my hard disk contains almost a staggering 2Gb of programmes and data it becomes impractical to back up to CD, and I don't know if I can put everything back from a Zip drive using bootable floppy or what. I suspect there may be a problem backing up 32bit files with long filenames from a DOS floppy. I find it all very confusing.

So this is the way that I do it: I have two hard disks and copy my working hard disk in its entirety to my backup hard disk. What they call a "no-brainer". For convenience I have my two physical drives in two caddies, and they are both configured as "master" on primary and secondary IDE channels. The roles of "slave" are taken by my CD writer and my LS120 (120Mb) floptical.

The copying process is done using Xcopy in a DOS window. Xcopy will copy files and directories and has a number of parameters which need setting. The exact syntax is....
`xcopy C:\. D: /s/e/r/c/h` where the parameters s,e,r,c,h are needed to copy everything, ignoring various warnings!

(The xcopy help screen will tell you exactly what they mean - enter `xcopy /?`). For non-DOS people C:\. means everything on drive C: and D: would be the drive name of your second physical hard disk.

What makes the whole process really easy is the Explorer-type programme called PowerDesk. This is available from:-

<http://www.ontrack.com/software>

and the downloadable file is called **PD4free.exe**. It fits on a floppy disk so is fairly quick to download and good to give to your friends. Once you use this programme you will never use Explorer again! The principal use in the context of this article is that there is a one-click DOS window into which you can type your xcopy instructions and then watch the copy process in the normal Explorer type window. Type "exit" to exit the DOS window.

The whole copying process for about 2Gb of everything is about 20 minutes. When I've finished I actually remove my backup hard disk in its caddy, write the date on it and put it somewhere safe. Occasionally I replace it as Drive C: just to validate the backup and so far it has always worked. If you leave it permanently in place, all you have to do to validate it, is to swap the hard disk connections over (provided your CMOS settings are for HDD autodetect).

I only know one other person who backs up his system like this, but when hard disks are so cheap I cannot see the point of doing it any other way. The LS120 I mentioned earlier is for data backup only and for that I use PKZIP compression and a DOS batch file - (remember batch files?), and copying large files between home and work. LS120s are largely out of favour now because you can use CD writers instead, but can you copy a complex set of data files and directories to CD writer using a batch file?

rogerskid@lineone.net



OUR CHRISTMAS PARTY

is on

Wednesday 19th December at The Riverside Centre at 7.30pm.

All are cordially invited to attend our special, annual get together.
Please bring a few eats and some drink to help make the party a success.

Join in the computer games and quizzes and if you have any contribution to make,
please inform Dennis Linzmaier, who is organising the event.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

As usual at this time of the year, we have to remind some of our members to
renew their membership for 2002.

Please forward your cheque, payable to IWPCUG, for £12 to:-

John Atkin, The Membership Secretary, IWPCUG,
2 Westview, Hulverstone, Newport, IOW, PO30 4EH. Telephone - 740036

You may add the name of other person(s) as Associate Members who live at the
same address (Associate Members do not pay a subscription) or an organisation
that you will represent.

LAWS OF COMPUTING

- By the time a program has been completely debugged it is obsolete.
- Programs will expand to take up all available memory.
- Computers always crash the day before you do a backup
- Printers go faulty ten minutes prior to an important meeting
- If Murphy had used a computer, his law would probably have been lost when the machine crashed.

TOP WINDOWS UTILITIES



Bigfix

BigFix is a nifty utility aimed at anyone who wants their PC to deal automatically with bugs, configuration conflicts, security holes and other operating system glitches. Using its Relevance Engine, BigFix checks the web daily for updates that affect software installed on your computer. Using special messages known as Fixlets it alerts you to problems that can usually be fixed with a single click. **www.bigfix.com** — Free

Checkit 7.0

Checkit (formerly WinCheckit) has been around for some time and has now become an entire range of utility suites. It deals with configuration and operating system problems and internet connection difficulties. Checkit 7.0 runs tests on processor, memory, drives, I/O ports and video display. It can also speed up system performances and protect against crashes. **www.checkit.com** — £29.95

Norton Ghost 2002

Norton Ghost is a popular utility for backup task and disk cloning (transferring the contents of one hard drive to a CD or another drive). When a disk image is created - and the latest version supports all variants of Windows - it can be restored quickly and easily.

www.symantec.co.uk — £34

Partition Magic 7.0

Partitioning a hard drive to house multiple operating systems, organise data or maximise inefficient FAT clusters is tricky. Partition Magic uses a simple Explorer-style interface that enables you to create and resize partitions, move them around, fix common errors and change file system types. **www.powerquest.com** — £45

SiSoft Sandra 2001

Sandra can be used to test hardware devices such as your processor, memory, multimedia devices and network connections. Once tests have been run on the hardware, Sandra produces comprehensive reports that you can then use to maximise performance.



PowerDesk 4.0

PowerDesk enables you to move swiftly between folders and directories, compress and encrypt files and view various files in the viewer pane. The Pro version integrates a size manager that shows where your hard drive is cluttered.

www.ontrack.com/powerdesk — Basic version is free; Pro version is \$19.95

Spam Buster

An extremely valuable online utility, Spam Buster lists 15,000 spammers and can be configured to include addresses of many more to zap unwanted messages before you even download them. Spam Buster can be used with up to 12 mailboxes and also provides tools for reporting abuse. The free version is supported with adverts but you can remove these adverts by registering for \$19.95.

www.contactplus.com — Free

WebFerret 3.5

Unlike another search engine, Google, which is restricted to one search engine (however good), WebFerret 3.5 looks for information at a number of popular search engines. Again, the free version is supported with adverts but you can turn off the banner ads by registering at a cost of \$26.

www.ferretsoft.com — Free

Norton CleanSweep 2002

Like Uninstaller, CleanSweep 2001 can remove unwanted programs quickly and safely. With its user-friendly wizards and simple interface, it's an easy way to tidy up your hard drive.

www.symantec.com — £25

Download Accelerator Plus

Speedbit claims its freeware software can speed up downloads by up to 300 percent. Scepticism aside, Download Accelerator Plus certainly simplifies control over the process, including scheduling, pausing and resuming broken connections.

www.speedbit.com — Free



Report on the Annual Show, 2001

After sending out over 50 letters and e-mails with many follow-up telephone calls, only ten companies could be persuaded to hire stands at the show this year. Most excuses for not coming were the market situation, which is on the decline, and staff shortages to man a stand on a Sunday. It was tough going, and the main hall looked a little empty.

It wasn't much better for the public, despite an excellent banner across the High Street in Newport, a half-page advertising feature in the County Press, adverts in many local magazines and a telephone interview with Radio Solent. The banner, incidentally, was commented upon by the fire service (who are responsible for erecting it) as very well made compared with some they have to deal with, thanks to Rosemary West and her husband.

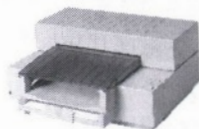
The number of adults through the door was 306 (at one pound each) compared with a target of 500 and a hoped-for 1000. We had 1000 special editions of Hot Key printed which took up a lot of time, effort and expensive ink! Thanks go to Brian Sexton for all his hard work on producing this and his helpers who collated and stapled them all together. The Hot Key adverts brought in £115 but did not cover the cost of production. The weather was wet and drizzly on that day and this could have deterred many people from venturing out.

The first prize in the raffle was a top-of-the-range multimedia computer and printer with DVD drive and Disney DVD, altogether worth £800, supplied to us at cost by Dennis Parkes of DP Computers. Despite many willing helpers the raffle tickets only brought in £268. So we aimed too high here as well.

The Internet connection was arranged and planned well in advance to operate from the Workshop; the cable to the telephone line was delivered on time and all seemed to be in order. But the line was not a direct outside line but was connected to the Riverside switchboard and there was no one who knew how to switch the outside line through. But thanks to Denny and his friends, some rapid changes of location saved the day with the main telephone line from the reception fed through to the Hunnyhill Room.

The final financial figures have not yet been worked out but I suspect there will be a small loss. There are other gains, however. We already have five new members and more may be forthcoming from the publicity given out in the special edition of Hot Key. And the club has certainly made itself known more to Island residents through the advertising. Although many aspects of the Show this year have not worked out as planned, most of the commercial exhibitors went away pleased, judging from the comments I have received and the goodies being carried out through the door by the public!

-- David Broughton, Show Organiser.



HARD DRIVES

Maxtor ATA 100 - 40Gb - £63 (£74.03)

Seagate ATA 100 - 40Gb - ££69 (£81.08)

MOTHERBOARDS -EpoX EP-8KHA (Supports Athlon CPUs up to 1.4GHz) -£109 (£128)
-MSI K7T2 MS-6380 (Supports Athlon CPUs up to 1.4GHz) - £85 (£100)

INKJET PRINTERS

Hewlett-Packard Deskjet 840C - £64 (£75)

Epson Stylus Photo 790 - £98 (£105)

SCANNERS

Umax Astra 5400 - £72 (£85)

Hewlett-Packard Scanjet 5400C - £120 (£141)

DIGITAL CAMERAS

Kodak DX3600 Zoom - £236 (£277)

Fujifilm Finepix 2300 - £238 (£280)

WEBCAM - Logitech QuickCam Pro 3000 - £49 (£58)

MONITORS

Taxan ValueVision 17" (1710) - £145 (£170)

CTX EX710F 17" - £159 (£186)

CD-R/Ws — Acer CRW 1208A - £70 (£82)

Yamaha 2200E - £128 (£150)

INPUT DEVICES — Logitech Cordless Wheel Mouse - £25 (£29)
Microsoft Wheel Mouse Optical - £15 (£18)

GRAPHICS CARDS — VideoLogic Vivid! XS - £76 (£89)
Hercules 3D Prophet 3500 - £99 (£116)

SOUND CARDS — Creative Sound Blaster Live Player 5.1 - £59 (£69)
VideoLogic SonicFury - £65 (£76)

SPEAKER SETS — Creative SoundWorks Digital - £51 (£60)
Creative DTT 2200 - £72 (£85)

HANDHELDS — Psion Revo Plus - £226 (£267)
Compaq iPAQ H3630 - £309 (£363)
HP Jornada 545 - £295 (£347)

SCANNER

Increase Scanner Results with Black

Have you ever had problems with scanning thin paper or irregular-sized pictures? Thin paper is hard to scan as the light from the scanner can go through the paper, creating a useless scan. Irregular-sized pictures are hard to scan, as it is nearly impossible to get the dimension settings correctly configured with most scanner software. You usually end up scanning part of the glass, resulting in off-white colours that can take time to remove. One suggested trick is to place a piece of black construction paper, or a black folder, behind the scanned image. This way, due to the light absorption, thin paper usually scans better. For irregular sized images, instead of getting the glass colour around the image, you just get the solid colour black, which is much easier to remove.

CD PLAYER PLAY-LISTS

Most people use the CD player the easy way - they pop a CD into the computer and it plays the CD from start to finish. Suppose, though, that you don't like a particular song on a CD. You may like track 15 so much that you want to hear it twice in a row. Or, suppose you want to hear track 6 first, then track 1? If so, after starting the CD player with a CD in the drive, stop the playback. Choose "Disc", then "Edit Play List". From here, you can rearrange how the tracks will be played on the current CD.

Internet Basics

Internet Basics - Looking for Someone?

The Internet is a great place to find old family and friends - if you know where to look. Two websites you should check out if you need to find an old colleague are **WhoWhere** at <http://www.whowhere.com>, and **Bigfoot** at <http://www.bigfoot.com>. These sites give you a variety of ways to search for people on and off the Internet, and just might help you find someone you haven't talked to in years

Always, Always Scan Downloads!

Before you start downloading files from the Internet, first get a virus scanner. Second, get in a habit of always scanning downloaded programs from the Internet before executing them. If possible, get your web browser to automatically scan programs after they are downloaded. It's always best to be safe.



Adventures in Computing Freeing System Resources

Sometimes you get a warning from Windows that your system resources are low and your initial reaction is that "I've got plenty of memory and hard disk space. What's going on?" Unfortunately, this somewhat cryptic message has very little to do with RAM and hard drive space. It refers to small areas of Windows memory that are used to keep track of open windows and other objects on the screen, like fonts, list boxes, timers, menus and so forth.

I learned far more about this subject than I wanted to recently, when my system kept collapsing because the system resources kept disappearing. The **Microsoft Website** (<http://support.microsoft.com/>) has surprisingly little on the topic but a search in newsgroups and another at **Google** (<http://www.google.com/>) yielded the information I needed.

I was surprised though to find an astonishing amount of misinformation as well. Far too many references, on supposedly well informed sites, referred to system resources as RAM and recommended closing applications to free up more RAM. While closing applications can help system resources, the problem is not with RAM.

What causes the problem? When Windows is running, what you see and do is built from a collection of objects that together make up the Windows experience. All these objects have to be tracked; their location in memory, their status (open, checked, maximised, etc.), their menus and much more; so they can be displayed when necessary, closed or restored without trampling over anything else in your Windows session.

Why you have a problem? The point here is that this space is limited and everything you run on the computer uses some of it. When your system slows to a crawl, the odds are that you have a system resources problem.

Check out your programs. Open a program and check the resources and as you open more windows in the program, keep checking the resources. You may be surprised at how much of your system is used.

Problems in Windows itself. Bear in mind that system resources are not always freed up when a program is closed, due to apparently sloppy programming practices in Windows. Items stay available after the program is closed and the resources used by that item are not freed.



PRIZE PUZZLE CORNER
DECEMBER 2001
 by David Broughton



A cube has six faces. Imagine that you have six different coloured paints and you must paint each face of the cube with a different colour. How many differently coloured cubes could you make? Note that two cubes are not different if one of them can be orientated in some way to match the other on all six faces.

Please send your answer to me, David Broughton (see page 3 for details), to arrive by Wednesday, 2nd January 2002.

Answer to the October Puzzle about Cutting the Cake.

Without any cuts there is one piece of cake. A single cut makes two pieces. Provided all the next cuts do not cut an existing intersection of two other cuts, but cuts all existing cuts, each extra cut adds one plus the number of cuts already made. So the second cut, for example, adds two more pieces of cake making a total of four. The third cut adds three more pieces, and so on. The n th cut adds n more pieces. (You can always cut all the existing cuts if you make them in the right places.) So it is just a matter of adding up the numbers from 1 to 10 plus an extra one for the uncut cake. The average of the numbers 1 to 10 is $11/2 = 5.5$ and there are ten numbers so the sum of the numbers from 1 to 10 is 55. Plus one for the original cake makes 56. 56 is the right answer.

Two people got it right: Rosemary West and Peter Greenhalgh. Rosemary won the draw and a £5 book token. Other entrants who failed to get the right answer but had a go were Molly Mills with 36, Dorothy Woollerton with 40 and Peter Woollerton with 36. As these are all lower than the correct answer perhaps they did not make their cuts in the right places. Pity about all those crumbs!

-- David Broughton <http://www.ddina.demon.co.uk/>

PDA TALK

On 16th January, 2002

If any member has a PDA in the form of a Palmtop or Handheld PC, would you please bring the device to the meeting, as we wish to have as many PDA's on display for our members to view the various devices

Dennis Linzmaier will be talking about the latest palmtops and handheld PCs and would like to demonstrate as many as there are available amongst our members.



Microsoft says that closing a program before it has a chance to completely start up can strand resources and reduce the level of free system resources.

If you're finding that you have regular problems with low system resources, first check the programs that are always running, then check the programs you use regularly.

Internet browsers are notorious for using and not freeing system resources but you might find that one browser works better than others. You can also try out replacements for your programs. For example, Pegasus Email might leave more free resources than Eudora Email or Outlook Express and may offer better features in the bargain.

Our thanks to Tom Anderson for the extracts from an article originally published in Sacra Blue, the official magazine of the Sacramento PC Users Group.
Contact Tom Anderson via email at tom.anderson@sacpcug.org



Dennis Linzmaier at the On-line Internet Stand at the Computer Show at Riverside Centre

MEMBERS NOTICE BOARD

**This Board is FREE to members
Please use it!**



FOR SALE

HARDWARE

**Iomega Zip100
Parallel Port Drive**
(with software and manual
plus 2 extra zip disks)

£30

Contact:-
The Editor
Tel. 562569

FOR SALE

**AGFA SCANNER
SNAPSCAN 1212 USB**

Flatbed Scanner

(with CD and Windows 98 driver)
and Software
including
Corel Print House Magic
Page Keeper
Caere OCR Software

£30

Contact:
Editor - 562569

FOR SALE

HARDWARE

**PREMIER
EXTERNAL MODEM**

56k/V90

(with CD and Windows98 driver)

£20

Contact:-
The Editor
Tel. 562569

CALIBRE COMPUTING-inkjet cartridges (Free delivery)

They have moved to: 1st Floor, Forest Road Garage,
Forest Road, Newport, PO30 5QJ
Tel: 08707 700 637
www.calibrecomputing.co.uk
sales@calibrecomputing.co.uk

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