# Email report – meeting 08/02/2012 at Stowupland School

In spite of the cold weather we had 10 members present at February's meeting. Apologies were received from Hazel, Andrea, Zena, John, Doris, Valerie, Pam and Harold.

**Agony Corner:**

1) Last month's email-

Most of the issues discussed have been resolved or 'worked around' as the case may be.

- None of the members present had followed the link to download the eLse zip file (Computer Learning Course). Because of its size it was placed in a 'Dropbox' folder. Dropbox was investigated in detail later in the meeting (see below).

2) 'Is financial assistance available to help people who purchase materials for the good of the group?'

- The Stowmarket U3A financial arrangements allow for the purchase of capital equipment, when funds are available, for the benefit of all the members not specific groups. Recent examples are the projector and PA system.
- Consideration should also be given as to the storage of such items (amongst other things, Philip is still having to provide a home for a vast collection of LP records and the equipment to play them on!)
- It falls on the members of individual groups to fund any necessary expenses incurred in running the group. I think the only groups where this is required at the moment are Keep Fit and Country Dancing.
- Historically, the Computer Group did collect a meeting subscription mainly to cover the costs of tea and the hire of the Bowling Club room (since we've had the Stowupland High School facility this has not been necessary).
- These incidentals were more than covered and over time monies accumulated. As a consequence the Treasurer is holding funds in excess of £200 on behalf of the Computer Group . Therefore it should be possible, within reason, to assist with costs incurred on behalf of the Group or any spin off of the Computer Group.

3) 'I keep getting a message "Windows 7 memory is out at line 17..." '

- A search on Google suggests update Adobe Flash Player and Java and/or try a browser other than IE, say Chrome or Firefox. http://tinyurl.com/7uhqav3 , http://tinyurl.com/78bvuen

4) 'On boot up get the message "Vista did not shut down properly.."

- Searches on Google suggest that this could be due to a faulty mother board and/or video card. There does not seem to be an easy software fix so this issue may need to be investigating by a professional computer engineer.

5) 'When browsing the internet, a message pops up saying that "many errors on the PC have been detected, click to remove" or similar....'

- This is a scam we've discussed before and if acted on can result in either rogue software being installed and/or you paying for a completely unnecessary service (and in the process divulging financial details).
- Ignore and close the box. Make sure that in you browser options, 'Pop up Blocker' is activated.

6) 'How can I improve the clarity of type on my screen?'

- Ensure that 'Clear Type' is activated. Right click anywhere on the desktop. Click Properties/Appearance/Effects - tick the box 'Use the following method to smooth edges of screen fonts' and from the drop down menu select 'Clear Type', then OK, Apply, OK.
- If that does not help, it may be that the screen resolution is not at its optimum setting. From the Display Properties box select 'Settings' and move the resolution bar to the maximum on the right. Experiment with this until you achieve the best for the screen and your eyes.

7) 'How can I share files between my lap top and main PC?'

- Dropbox can be used for this (see later) but at home it is much better to set up a home network (WLAN). This is quite straight forward to do but the method can vary slighly depending on the operating systems on your PC, Win 7/Vista?XP and lap top.
- The instructions are too detailed to list here but a good starting point can be by trying the wizard in Windows. Click Start then My Network Places. On the left panel click 'Set up a home or small office network' which will start the wizard. You may be able to complete the task this way, but if not.....
- ..... comprehensive information can be found at http://www.microsoft.com/athome/organization/wirelesssetup.aspx
- You may also be able to get help from your ISP or even the instruction manual which came with your lap top.
- Once you have the home network set up it's easy to share folders and files. On the PC, right click on the selected folder, then properties then sharing. Follow the instructions there. This folder will be viewable on any other computer on the home network.
- If your printer is connected to the PC and you would like it to be used from the lap top as well - go to Start, Control Panel, double click Printers and Faxes. Right click on the default printer (has a tick) then properties, sharing then 'Share this Printer'. Install the printer driver on the lap top and then you PC printer will appear in any printer dialogue on the lap top. Of course the PC will need to be switched on at the time (although if purchasing a new printer, you may decide to get a 'wireless network' one which by passes the PC altogether).

**Tablet Computers. What are they? What can they do? Do I need one?**

**Today's topic** was due to be presented by two people from Hughes Electrics in Stowmarket. In spite of having been arranged last November and discussed many times by email and face to face, I was emailed last weekend and told that the date and time were inconvenient and that nobody would be available to attend. We were all very surprised that a local Company was not prepared to take the opportunity to publicise their services.

Fortunately, Philip and Mike have recently acquired (different) tablets, and we decided that we would be able to work around the issue without the help of a 'professional'!

I fixed up my lap top so that the audience could see close up on the projector from the web cam (with limited success!!)

*Please note, the following is far from comprehensive. For those wishing to learn more, an excellent Magazine published in January by Computer Active, 'Ultimate Guide to iPad & Android' is recommended. Cost £5.99 from large newsagents like Smiths or via the CA website http://tinyurl.com/6qxw3af*

**What are tablet computers?** I described the similarities and differences between tablets, smart phones and PC/ laptops, and went on to explain that tablets have their own operating systems, mainly iOS which powers the iPad (from Apple) and several versions of 'Android' (from Google) mainly for the rest. They are lightweight, have 7-10 inch touch-sensitive screens.

**What can they do?** Most things that a PC can do albeit in a different way. They usually have cameras front and rear, all have WiFi, most GPS (like a sat nav) and some 3G (which requires a SIM much like a mobile phone). They use small programmes called 'Apps', many are free and those that are paid for are usually very cheap.

*Kindle.* I demonstrated this which is NOT a tablet but a dedicated Amazon ebook reader which uses WiFi. It does not have a touch screen and pages are turned by pressing a button on the side. The screen, unlike PCs and tablets, is not backlit (i.e. you can't read it in the dark), and displays in shades of grey. Books can be ordered from Amazon (via the Kindle) and are instantly down loadable (takes just a few seconds). Any Books in your library can be shared on you lap top, PC or (most) tablets. There are many free books (including most of the classics) and some very cheap ones. Popular recent books are usually a little cheaper than the paper back.This site can keep you up to date with all the new free books available http://www.ereaderiq.co.uk/free/

*Asus Eee Transformer, 10.1inch.* Philip demonstrated his new tablet which is unusual in that it includes a docking keyboard so the tablet doubles up as a net book if required. When connected it extends the operating time considerably. He showed us the touch screen in action, how to use some of the ready installed apps and how to surf the net. He explained that he can access his email and described how he can easily access WiFi away from home using the BT Phon

network. He also showed us some books on the tablet, which, unlike the Kindle are displayed in colour, and by touch the pages can turn simulating a real book.

*Blackberry Play Book Tablet 7".* Mike explained that this is available at bargain price from PC World (£160 down from £399) at the moment. He bought it as an alternative to the Kindle for reading books (but it won't, as it stands, support Kindle books. Try http://calibre-ebook.com/ for conversion options). It has its own OS (QNX), forward and rear-facing HD cameras, stereo sound from built-in speakers, and connectivity through Micro USB and Micro HDMI ports. It also sports integrated WLAN technology allowing connection to the internet at any WiFi hotspot, whilst Bluetooth technology provides wireless interaction with enabled devices.

**Do I need one?** We didn't actually get around to asking this question, but there was undoubtedly much interest in this topic amongst the members present. Many thanks to Philip and Mike for standing in at short notice.

The tablet session led us to explore a couple of other options, one for sharing information between devices and the other how to easily control one PC from another...

**Dropbox.** I have already distributed files by Dropbox following previous meetings. Today I showed files and pictures in a Dropbox folder on my lap top which originally resided only on my PC. If either the lap top file or the PC file is altered, this is updated on the other machine, i.e. the file is synchronised on the two machines. This is done by connection through the Drobox servers, thus -- PC>Dropbox>lap top, lap top>Dropbox>PC. Other devices such as tablets share the file in the same way.

I will send you a join up email link to Dropbox shortly. If you already are registered or are not interested, just delete it. If you would like to try the Dropbox method of sharing files then follow the link and sign up -it's free! Getting friends to join up is one way to build up your free allowance.

**Join.me**. We had a lot of fun with this! Join.me is a free to use, no sign up, web site which enables the person initiating it to share their screen with others. My laptop was connected to the wireless network, the others were connected as normal on the pupils' network. I activated 'join.me' from my desktop which brought up a box, orange to share, green to view someone else's screen. Clicking the 'share' arrow brought up a code. The members then entered https://join.me/ in the browser and clicked the green 'join' on the screen (if the page opens on a 'pro' subscription screen, just click the 'more' tab at top RHS and select 'home'. This will bring up the two panels share and join as described). Everyone then entered the code I'd generated into the join box. Within seconds, my screen was displayed on all the others and they could see every folder I accessed.

I then clicked on the RHS mouse icon to pass control to one of the others. It told me that there were 6 in the conference. We then passed control of my lap top around the room (one at a time) until eventually Marian was in charge. From her work station she opened a folder of holiday pictures on my lap top which were the displayed not only on the projector screen but on everyone else's screen as well.

If join.me has been accessed for the first time on a PC, when it is time to finish, clicking 'exit' will install a small programme on your machine and place an access icon on the desk top so you don't have to got to the web site every time. Please note, every new session generates a new code, you cannot use the previous one again.

The potential for this system is enormous. For example if, in the future, we are all snowed in and can't get to the school, I could run a whole session from my machine which you could view from the comfort of your own home!

**Next Meeting:**

Will be on **Wednesday 14th March,** 1.30pm at Stowupland School.

**Sylvia** has kindly offered to chair today's meeting. **Philip** will be doing the presentation in which he will be taking another look at '...All things Google'

On 11th April, **Marian** and **Harry** will be showing us 'How to restore an old photo'.