

## Email report – meeting 06/08/2012 at Woodlands Bowls Club

We had 12 members at our meeting at the August meeting; apologies received from Brian James, Pat Hayes, Pam Webb, Val Payton and Irene Turner

### Agony Corner:

We reviewed some items from the last meeting before moving onto new ones.....

#### 1) 'Is 'The Cloud' safe?'

- The idea of Cloud computing is that you can entrust your data and applications to third party providers, which you access over the Internet
- You don't need to install any software other than a web browser to access the services, and as long as you have an Internet connection, you can access your data wherever you are in the world, using an Internet cafe or a friend's PC.
- But, by storing important data online, you are exposing it to a far greater risk than carrying it around in your pocket on a USB memory stick. After all, if you can access it from anywhere at any time, it is possible for a hacker to do that too.
- The hacker only has the possibility of hacking in to your PC to steal data while it is turned on. But these online services run 24/7, so the hacker can try to break into them at their leisure.
- UK users have recently been reporting difficulties logging in to Dropbox. If your only copy of an important report is stored in a Dropbox account which you can't access, then you have a major problem.
- Also, recently there have been a number of other serious data breaches. A noted one, Yahoo, admitted that 400,000 user names and passwords were stolen from their servers.
- Most of these services are free to use - so you shouldn't really complain too much when they don't work or lose your data.
- But, before you sign up to the next online service, you should really think about what data you are asking them to look after for you, and whether you can trust them to do so.
- We concluded that 'Cloud' services are valuable free tools and should not be ignored because of security concerns, but that the best place for your important data is on your home PC, or a USB memory stick that you take good care of. Only by controlling your own machine will you be able to keep an eye on the security, and detect break ins and malware infections if they do occur.

#### 2) 'Join.me' (with which we experimented at an earlier meeting) - further issues.

- Just a reminder that when you first use Join.me, do not be tempted to give your email address and agree to trial the paid for version.
- The free version has all the features we require and no signing up is necessary.
- Just go to <https://join.me> , in the orange 'Share' box click basic then the arrow. *The attached pdf shows all the stages.*
- If you wish to share your screen with someone else, click the arrow in the share box and this will generate a session code number.
- Let the other person know this and they will enter it in the Join box; your screens will now be connected.

#### 3) 'I received a begging letter from a known contact. What should I do?'

- This has been discussed before as well as in our session on Computer and Internet Security. Your friend's email account may have been hacked and the email sent will be from the hacker usually saying something like 'I'm in Timbuktu and had all my money stolen....please send funds'.

- If you are unsure, you can always check with your friend, but DO NOT reply to the email and engage the sender in conversation. Just delete it.

#### 4) The T Mobile pointer.

- At our June session, John showed us his new T Mobile pointer. He makes good use of it when away on caravan holidays.
- Today we had an opportunity to test it out.
- The T-Mobile Pointer, is a device that enables up to 5 Wifi devices (tablet, laptop etc.) to receive a mobile 3G signal; these and the simpler dongles (plugged into one machine) are known as Mifi (My Wifi) devices. The advantage of the pointer over the dongle is that you can position it for the best signal irrespective of where in the vicinity your machine is.
- Full details about the device, which currently sells for £39.99 + £10.00 for a data card, can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/bsaew4e> . PAYGO access costs £2 a day, £7 a week or £15 for 30 days. Similar 'unlocked' devices are available from Amazon and Ebay.
- John set it up and we were quickly able to connect to its Wifi signal on an Asus tablet, and his and Les Selby's laptops but not to my Dell XP lap top.
- On this I got a 'checksum validation' error when I entered the access code. I will try and get an answer to this before the next meeting.

#### 'iTunes & Beyond' - Our topic for the day.

- Very many thanks to Les Selby who travelled from Hadleigh to give us this audio/visual presentation. He told us that, over the years, he had transferred all of his music collection onto the computer , i.e. it's now in digital, mp3, format.
- In his talk he covered a wide range of topics including the equipment that can be used, the connections necessary and the different sources of the original be they LPs, CDs or tape. It is important to note that whilst music tracks can be manipulated and edited to a degree, it is not possible to completely transform, say, an early 20th century recording in to current CD quality.
- Whilst there are other systems he uses iTunes for the storage of his library which, via the net, provides the facility to search for information on any (digital) recording.
- His programme of choice for editing/manipulation is 'Magix Audio Cleaning Lab MX'. This is a, paid for, well established programme which is straight forward and intuitive in use. Have a look at the video on this page <http://www.magix.com/gb/audio-cleaning-lab/detail/> . There are other, free, programmes such as 'Audacity' but this is much more complicated and difficult to learn.

Les finished his talk by giving us a light hearted music quiz which proved that we didn't, actually, know as much about the music of 'our' generation as we thought ! All in all a very enjoyable session.

#### Next Meeting:

Please note for the September meeting we will be back to or normal date and venue. So, the next will meeting will be on **Wednesday 12th September at Stowupland High School, for a 1.30pm start.**

A suggestion has been made that, perhaps, we could have a session on Genealogy and family history. Marian said that there is a Family History group in Hadleigh U3A led by Mr John Wild and he may willing to help. I've since contacted John and he tells me that his and the groups' expertise is almost entirely non-computer and internet based. All their research is done by discussion, correspondence and visits around the country looking at old records. As we are a group devoted to learning about computers and the

internet it would seem, then, that John would not really be able to discuss anything relevant to our interest.

At this stage we do not have any specific topic agreed, so I suggest we look further into **Computer and internet - hints and tips**. I'll prepare some that we may not have covered before and the session will be fully interactive so that everyone can join in and experiment at their own workstation.

Please let me know if there are any topics you would like to be covered in the future or even re-visit anything we have covered over the last couple of years.