Email Report, Meeting 13/02/2013

Agony Corner:

After briefly discussing last month's Agony Corner topics we moved on...

1) 'How do I get my 'own' email address?'

- A personalised email address is very useful to have, not least when changing ISP providers.
- The simplest way is, of course, to sign up for one of the free online services such as Gmail, Hotmail or Yahoo Mail. This will give you an in the cloud email address of your choice, eg fredbloggs@gmail.com . You can choose whatever you like (if it's available) before the @ but are stuck with the domain that follows it.
- A more personal way is to purchase your own domain. This gives you the right to set up a website of your own and create your own personalised email addresses. For example, I have registered four domain names, many years ago dakeyne.com and dakeyne.co.uk, and more recently u3astowmarket.org.uk and u3asuffolknetwork.org.uk. To create an email address you can put whatever you like followed by @ before the domain name, eg info@fredbloggs.co.uk .
- It's very easy to set this up and needn't be expensive, just a few pounds per year depending on what you want and what's available. Two very clear and useful sites I've used are http://www.123-reg.co.uk/ and https://easily.co.uk/index.php . Just put your name (or whatever else you wish, eg 'fredbloggs') into the search box and you will be given a selection of any available domains. Just follow the instructions to register your own domain (you don't have to set up a web site!).
- After registering, you will have your own account and dashboard to administer your domain and email addresses.

2) For those of you who have tablets, I recently set up our PC and Laptop in such a way that they can be accessed and controlled from ASUS tablet...

- These details are for the ASUS table but other brands will undoubtedly have similar software (check your manual) or may even work with the ASUS soft ware.
- It's necessary first to set up a suite of programmes on the PC, in the ASUS case this is 'EEPad PC Suite' which can be downloaded and installed on the PC. (For those who expressed an interest, I've put copies of these installation files into Dropbox and sent them the link.) During installation you will need to register with a programme called 'Splash 2'.
- Next, find the Splash 2 app in the App store on the tablet and install it. Just enter the log on details as created on the PC and an App link will appear on the desk top. Opening this should (provided you're on the same wireless network) show links to all the computers you've set up with the software.
- Clicking this takes you to the desk top of your PC (provided it's switched on!) and you are in full control.
- The big advantage is that you can edit files (in Word or Excel) and pictures or anything else on the PC using the PC's software on that machine , not the 3rd rate programmes usually available on a tablet.
- We have, of course, visited this kind of topic before. Remember the fun we had with https://join.me/ !

3) 'My eyesight is not very good. When, for example, typing emails I have to increase the font size and type in bold to see what I'm doing before reducing again to send. Similarly when looking at web pages, even when I zoom to increase the size there is still insufficient contrast to see things clearly.'

- As far as I know, it isn't possible in any email programme to zoom in, but to avoid having to do things twice, why not type your email in Word at the correct size and font and zoom in (Ctrl and mouse scroll wheel is one way) to a viewable size then copy and paste into the blank email.
- Re clarity of web pages, Marian made a good suggestion following on an experience she'd had that morning. There was text in a pdf which was difficult to read so she opened it in PhotoShop and adjusted the contrast and brightness until it was perfectly legible.....
- I've since checked this out with different web pages and it works very well. When on such a page, hit 'Print Screen' then paste into any photo manipulation programme (it doesn't have to be PhotoShop), zoom to the size you want then increase contrast and perhaps decrease brightness until you arrive at the clarity required.

- In the event, both of these procedures may not be necessary. For Windows 7, have a look at these Microsoft pages http://tinyurl.com/ba7obp3 for the magnifier and http://tinyurl.com/bfavgkk for dealing with many accessibility problems. I've tried the magnifier in XP (Start/All Programs, Accessories, Magnifier) which also works well.
- So when typing emails, these can be prepared in normal font and the magnifier shows them in whatever size and clarity required.

4) 'I have hand held scanner (Skypix) which is very useful but the instructions are in Chinese'.

- We discussed this in detail. Normally it's possible to find an English manual by on line search, but this had been tried to no avail.
- Google translate had been tried but again this and other translation services failed to work. I repeated both these measures after the meeting but again failed to make any headway.
- I did find, however, an advertising video which more or less explains all the functions of Skypix. Have a look at it here http://tinyurl.com/beywmet

5) ' Is anybody familiar with 'Small Basic'?'

- Nobody in the room was familiar with this concept although one or two had tried 'Basic' programming in the past, and given up!
- I've looked around and found that Small Basic is a Microsoft initiative to introduce children (or anyone) into the fundamentals of programming. From their FAQ *'Small Basic is intended for beginners that want to learn programming. In our internal trials we've had success with kids between the ages of 10 and 16. However, it's not limited to just kids; even adults that had an inclination to programming have found Small Basic very helpful in taking that first step.'*
- Have a look at the introductory page http://tinyurl.com/yjblg43

6) 'Recently when sending emails to an organisation I've received a rejected notice. I wondered if this had anything to do with me making a complaint? Subsequent contact with an individual in that organisation suggested that they had all actually been received'.

- As discussed before, there are many reasons why emails are rejected or may seem to have been rejected.
- It's always important to read carefully and try and analyse the 'rejection' message.
- It may be the case, as I've experienced, that when an email is sent to an organisation it may land on several people's desk. If that individual doesn't like the look of it in preview or think it's not their department they might reject it with a 'Not Read' message sent to you. Often somebody else will pick it up and respond.

'A new user's experience of Windows 8', our topic for the day.

Many thanks to **Frank Lewis** for bravely standing up and giving his informative introduction to Widows 8 as installed on his new laptop. Although Windows 8 has touch screen capabilities built in, Frank's machine is purely keyboard controlled, which is how he prefers it!

- He initially opened with the 'Metro' screen and a multitude of icons (some animated). These can be moved around or removed as required.
- Clicking on one, brought up the familiar Windows 7 Desktop which is the one he mainly uses.
- He explained that whilst he was still learning, he had eventually discovered how to do the basics like emails, pictures and surfing the web. He is very impressed with how fast it is compared to XP and explained how he could now watch BBC iPlayer with television quality.
- He noted, however, that Windows 8 was not as intuitive as XP and Win 7, and it could be quite hard to discover how to do some things.
- He'd had some issues with antivirus software and discovered that Win 8 does not support Microsoft Security Essentials but has ready installed 'Windows Defender'. As he didn't think that this gave sufficient protection he has gone back to AGV + Malware Bytes + Spybot. (*It's worth noting that Microsoft claim that Windows Defender performs all these functions. Check it out here http://tinyurl.com/bebvp3s P.*)

A straw poll of members at the end showed that few, if any, were ready yet to take Windows 8 on board and preferred to stick with XP or Win 7 until Win 8 was more established. We thought that it may well be worth revisiting this topic later in the year. In the meantime I've discovered a YouTube video which claims to be 'The Missing Windows 8 Instructional Video', check it out here, http://tinyurl.com/bdqaq23 , it's well worth sitting through!

Next Meeting:-

The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 13th March, 2013**, 1.30pm at Stowupland High School.

Topic for the day:-

I will be giving **'A behind the scenes look at www.u3astowmarket.org.uk, and an introduction to Wordpress'.**

I first set up our web site in September 2007 and, following the success of Wendy's http://wendywhitecat.wordpress.com/ decided to use Wordpress as it's basis. I hope to demonstrate how useful this free 'blogging' tool is (and in the process explain the difference between a 'blog' and a 'page' in Wordpress). Hopefully this session may encourage you to set up your own wordpress web site.

Future topics:-

For **May**, Clive has kindly offered to talk to the group about **'Dragon Naturally Speaking'**, not as an expert, but as someone still finding their way into it!

We do not yet have a topic for **April**. One member asked for help in making a booklet (correctly) using Microsoft Publisher - if anyone could take up this challenge, it would be most helpful. Similarly, any other suggestions or requests to revisit earlier topics would be appreciated.