

## Notes on meeting 14/05/2014

Thank you very much to Ann Williams for standing in for me at May's meeting.

### Agony Corner:

1) 'I have a photograph that needs editing. What programme should I use?'

- Free photo editing programs Picasa and Gimp were mentioned. Picasa has some good editing tools but does not have a 'clone' facility. Gimp is an excellent photo editor having most of the features of Photoshop but is rather too complicated for the casual user.
- As mentioned at a previous meeting, there is an excellent free online editor, Pixlr, which functions in a very similar way to Photoshop Elements (which we use at the school). There is no need to install anything on your PC, just go to <http://pixlr.com/editor/>, find the picture you wish to edit and off you go.

2) Migrating XP to Windows 8.1

- Several members have made the move to Windows 8.1, the consensus being that, once the newness has been overcome, it was easy to use and very fast. Some have it on new machines, others have a new install on older machines with much improvement in speed.
- Most ex XP users find the Metro Tile screen unpalatable (especially when not using a touch screen) but the update to Win 8.1 makes it easier to configure to boot directly to a standard 'desktop' screen. Also, have a look at 'Classic Shell', a free programme which can add the XP/Win 7 'Start' button and with all the usual access to 'Programs' plus the ability to make many improvements to 'Explorer'....  
<http://www.classicshell.net/>
- One final suggestion. If you are wedded to XP and wish to keep on using it in your current PC with all the programmes you are familiar with, you could consider disconnecting it completely from the internet and use a Tablet for web surfing and emails (Tesco Hudle and the Amazon Kindle Fire are inexpensive and well regarded).
- Finally, Computer Active have now made their XP survival guide available as a complete pdf. Download and save from here.. <http://tinyurl.com/o23gw4y>

3) 'In spite of my best efforts in defragmentation, removing redundant programmes/files and scanning for viruses, my Win 7 64-bit computer is still extremely slow'.

- The Windows operating systems are notorious for accumulating 'junk' which clutters up and slows down the PC.
- If actions taken so far have had no effect, it may be that there is some malware using up resources. Malware Bytes Antimalware (<https://www.malwarebytes.org/free/>) and CCleaner have been suggested previously and are widely recommended on the net (but some users report that CCleaner can cause problems itself, particular care needed with registry cleaning).
- Windows 7 has a built-in utility 'Disc Clean up' which is also worth trying. Microsoft instructions, here <http://tinyurl.com/ofltsm7>
- Recent issues of Computer Active have covered the topic of De-cluttering/Speeding up your PC in some detail.
- If all else fails (and it may!) you could consider a clean re-install of Windows. Back up all your data files (pictures, documents etc) to an external hard disc and also make copies of your 'Download' folder in case there are programmes there you may want to reinstall. Detach this from the PC then reinstall the operating system from the original disc (making sure you have the serial number first!). Reconnect the external drive and copy back onto the PC. Reinstall any required programmes from the original discs or the saved downloads folder.

4) Problems with AVG . Repeat of March meeting query.....'I was concerned when I found out that I was using a 'trial' version of AVG when I thought that I was on the 'Free' one?'

- Easily done! AVG make it difficult to correctly install the free version and instead lures you to the trial of the paid version then nag you to buy when this expires.

- Just make sure which boxes you are ticking when downloading/installing the software. Ignore the long list of benefits of the paid version, the free one is more than adequate for the home user.
- Several of our members have found Avast to be a more user friendly free antivirus programme.
- Windows 8.1 users find that the installed 'Defender' answers all their needs

5) 'I get a lot of 'pop up 'advertising when surfing the web. How do I deal with it?'

- Getting excessive numbers of pop-ups can be caused by several different things.
- A common cause can be that you've inadvertently installed a 'PuP' (Potentially unwanted Programme) which has hijacked your browser. Please see item 2 on the email for the 12th March 2014 meeting for full details of how to deal with this.
- The latest Chrome browser and Internet Explorer 11 block pop-ups by default, see <http://tinyurl.com/mwbwtsz> (Chrome) and <http://tinyurl.com/nmzbf2n> (IE) for details.
- There may be occasions when you do need to see a pop-up on a legitimate site. The above links describe how to allow these.
- It may be that other malicious software has installed itself on your machine, so make sure you do regular checks using the Malware Bytes Antimalware tool mentioned many times previously, <https://www.malwarebytes.org/>

6) 'I have two email Gmail addresses, one of which can't be accessed from my desktop although it's ok on phone and laptop. This is a problem if I want to print one because I can't connect my printer to the laptop'.

- Gmail problem solved by help at the meeting during the GCF Learfree session (below).
- Laptop/Printer issue: This solved by making sure to boot up the laptop before switching on the printer – all works correctly now. It's always worth while trying out different boot up sequences when trying to connect remote devices.

#### **Topic for the day:**

I'd previously circulated details of a free learning site, gcflearnfree and this was the basis of the session. Using the web site as a launch pad, members selected individual topics and helped each other through their problems which proved to be a very good use of the time.

#### **Next meeting 11/06/2014**

I've spoken to Ann and she agrees with me that it would be very worthwhile repeating May's topic. Reproduced below is the information set out in my last email...

"We have briefly looked in the past at a learning web site, 'gcflearnfree' and seen that it is extremely comprehensive and clutter free source of information for people of all levels of computer literacy, so I thought it worthwhile that, as a group, we could go further into it.

Here are the main pages that show all that's available.....

<http://www.gcflearnfree.org/topics>

<http://www.gcflearnfree.org/computers/computerbasics>

Please have a browse and pick out one or two that are of interest to you and/or the group and then, at the meeting, these can be explored together (if we wished, there's actually more than enough here to sustain us for several meetings!)"