Notes on meeting 15/06/2018

Unfortunately, once again we had just 8 members in attendance and 6 apologies (all for very good reasons). Currently our total membership stands at 19, about half that we enjoyed in 2013/14.

Nevertheless we had a very interesting and animated meeting.

In lieu of our normal **Agony Corner**, we reviewed all the Q&A's published on the forum page since the last meeting. For ease and clarity, I distributed a printout, *copy following*.

Each item prompted considerable discussion. Of particular interest were:-

- **Malware Bytes**. How to get the Free version and remove the nagging messages to upgrade to the paid version.
- **Setting a permanent drive letter to a particular USB port**. This is very useful, e.g. when using a detachable USB drive for back-ups. This also led onto more discussion about the importance of regular back-up of you data.
- **Windows Defender Exploit Guard.** Designed to minimise the risk of ransom ware by allowing Windows to block anything it doesn't recognise. Again this prompted much discussion about ransom ware in general. I did note, however, that ultimately, for me, this procedure proved to be more trouble that it's worth, frequently interfering with the installation of new programmes and even stopping existing ones running without giving permission. I've now de-activated it!

We continued the meeting with a round table check on our experiences with the latest (April) Windows update. Some had had great problems, e.g. hours and hours to download and install whilst others were able to do the upgrade in under an hour with no on going issues. One of the queries was......

- **How do I check which version of Windows I have?**

  Press the Windows key on the keyboard or click the icon on the task bar > Settings (cog wheel) > Update and Security

  This screen will give a green tick if you are up to date, if not, click the update button and Windows will search for the latest updates, download and install.

  You can also check the history of your updates. The lasted version is **1803** but there have been frequent (usually security) updates since its introduction in April.

We closed the meeting with another 'where do we go from here?' discussion. It was decide that we should have anther meeting in approximately 3 months time.

Suggest we start with **Agony corner** and review forum topics since the last meeting. A question arose about **alternative free versions to Microsoft Office** and as it is some time since we looked at that topic, it's worth a revisit.
I'll kick off by listing the ones I know about, but I'm aware that some of you already use programmes other than MS Office. *It would be quite helpful if you would be able to talk to the group and share your experiences about your particular one.*

Accordingly I've now booked the **Scout Centre for Friday 21st September**, 2.00 to 4.00 pm. *Please let me know whether you will be able to attend or not, so I will be assured that we have sufficient numbers to make it worthwhile.*

Here's a list of Q&As that have arisen on the forum in recent months. Some have been raised directly with me by members, others reflect issues that I've come across and have had to deal with myself.

Q. "My router lights are flashing and I've 'lost' my mouse pointer so can't do anything on my PC. The mouse is wire connected USB".
A. It's highly unlikely that the router/internet connection has caused the mouse to disappear. All routers have some flashing lights at some time which only become relavent if there's an internet problem. Mice can be affected by all sorts of things, e.g. drivers can be corrupted during a Windows update. USB drive access points can also spontaneously stop working. Suggest you move the mouse connection to another USB socket on the PC.
This was successful and the mouse is working successfully.

Q. "When I click on the 'please click for email to Peter Dakeyne' on the Computer group page, nothing happens. What's wrong here?"
A. There are no personal email addresses on our web site but there are several including the Committee officers and mine that are set up to be anonymous, hiding the origin. In this case, when clicked your default email client should open a blank email with this address webmaster@u3astowmarket.org.uk, e.g. in my case this would be Windows Live Mail.
I note you have a Gmail account and unless for other reasons it's been set up, your machine will not identify it as the 'default'.
To do this, open your Gmail account page look at the right hand end of the address bar. You should see a double diamond like icon – hover over this and it says 'This page wants to install a service handler'. Click and a drop down box gives the options Allow, Deny, Ignore. Click the 'Allow' and save. If you now try the link in the web page again, hopefully it will open a new Gmail message addressed to webmaster@u3astowmarket.org.uk.
This was successful.

Q. Follow up to December Agony Corner question: "I have a message to say my Premium trial (of Malware Bytes) expires in 5 days. It says upgrade to avoid losing real time protection. Either I "Upgrade now" or "Activate license". Do I just click on upgrade? Will it still be free?"
A. Answer was – "Just ignore it! The messages are just there to scare you into buying the premium version. The free version will continue to work as normal".
This is correct, but please note that it seems impossible these days to get the free version of Malware bytes without accepting the 30 day trial of the premium, real time protection version. If you wish, however, it is possible to stop these nagging messages altogether.......
Open the Malware Bytes control panel; click Settings; click Account Details; at the bottom, click Deactivate Premium Trial, and all messages go. If you don't do this and accept the nags after 30 day it will tell you that its expired, but you will still be able to scan on demand as normal. Sooner or later you will receive an offer to accept another 30 day trial. It's your choice!

Q. "I want to set up a timed back up to an external USB drive. This needs a specific drive letter to function correctly but it's not always the same. Can I set a permanent drive letter?"
A. Apart from the main C:, Windows assigns drive letters to whatever type of drive is available— floppies, internal hard disks, optical drives, SD cards, and external USB drives. This can be annoying— especially in cases such as above.
It is quite easy to fix however, but be sure to select a drive letter later in the alphabet (say's' onward) that is unlikely to be assigned randomly by Windows. You can find full instructions here… https://tinyurl.com/ya3rye5b

Q. "I've read that in the latest versions of Windows, it's possible to set Windows Defender to block ransomware encrypting valuable files. How do I do this?"

A. In Windows 10 Fall Creators Update, Windows Defender Exploit Guard was released, with a new set of intrusion prevention capabilities. One of its features, Controlled folder access, stops ransomware in its tracks by preventing unauthorized access to important files. Controlled folder access locks down folders, allowing only authorized apps to access files. Unauthorized apps, including ransomware and other malicious executable files, DLLs, and scripts are denied access to folders.

How to enable Controlled folder access – follow this link for detailed instructions, https://tinyurl.com/ycmullaj . (Ignore later instructions relating to 'Group Policy' and 'Powershell')

Update: *Ultimately, this procedure proved to be more trouble that it's worth, frequently interfering with the installation of new programmes and even stopping existing ones running without giving permission. I've now de activated it!*

Q. "The icon for Windows File Explorer has disappeared from the Start menu. How do I get it back?"

A. At times, the File Explorer icon might go missing from the Start menu for no specific reason, forcing you to launch File Explorer using other methods. It's useful to have different methods available to open File explorer so that you can have two or more windows open to enable drag and drop or copy and paste of files to different folders. File Explorer usually can be launched from the Task bar as well as by pressing the Windows key + E.

If the File Explorer is missing from the Start menu in Windows 10, you can easily restore it as follows.

Step 1: Open Settings by clicking its icon in the lower left area of Start menu or simultaneously pressing Windows logo and I keys.

Step 2: Once the Settings is launched, click Personalization, and then click Start.

Step 3: Click Choose which folders appear on Start link. Turn on the option labelled File Explorer to add File Explorer back to the Start menu.

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