

The Aspect Diary



There's the ubiquitous Easter chickie! Wouldn't be the Spring edition without him. He still looks bewildered though, no matter which page he finds himself on.

It is, as you've read, our 10th anniversary this year. We're not quite sure how to mark the occasion, but if you have any suggestions let us know. (FYI, we reserve the right to take on board all suggestions regarding free giveaways & then toss them back over the side).

We hope you enjoy the movie quotations quiz inside. We've got other quotation quizzes already lined up for the next 2 editions (we multi-task; in fact a variety of quizzes to take us right up till Xmas 2019 is already done. Yep, we are officially scary). But as far as movie quotations go, we're calling a halt in Autumn this year. Oh there are plenty of quotable lines. Our problem is twofold: (1) the clue can't be a no-brainer (eg. "I'm Spartacus!") & (2) the quote in the answer & its associated film title have to be comparatively short. For example, using the Black Knight's "it's just a flesh wound" from "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" means we'd have to find 44 other quotes & films just to spell it out. We love compiling these quizzes for you, but seriously, give us a break.

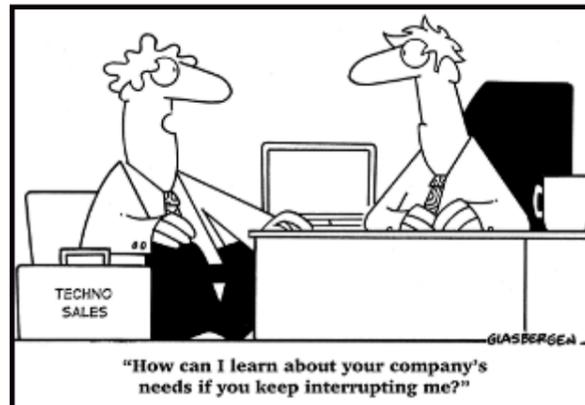
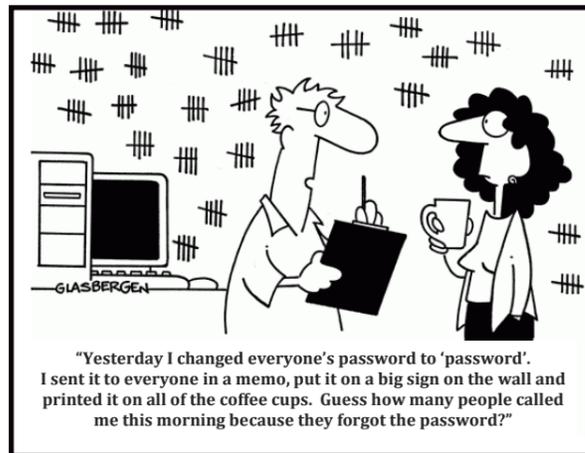
It has been, shall we say, a tad chilly since the last issue. The Beast from the East crashed into Storm Emma & splatted snow all over the UK. We saw that some places in Wales had drifts of anywhere between 9 & 20 feet, but here in Bridgend, we really only had a single no-go day. By the afternoon of day 2, everything was pretty much back to normal ... except in the supermarkets, which, even a week later, still looked like they'd been picked over by locusts.

Had a frustrating conversation with our electricity provider in mid-Mar. Apparently we raised a complaint last July (yes, July. Good to know they get right on it). So long has it been, in fact, we'd no recollection of making it. What did we complain about, we asked? Ah, well before that could be divulged, we had to confirm the business name & address. So we tried. Nope, didn't match their records, so we failed Data Protection & they couldn't discuss our complaint. Seeing as we're shifting providers soon, we explained we really didn't care anymore anyway, but no, evidently once you've complained, it has to get resolved. An admirable attitude, albeit 9 months late. So, staminate then. When pressed, they grudgingly admitted it was our postcode that didn't match. We assured them we knew exactly where we were, thank you & they were welcome to cross-reference the Royal Mail database to prove it. So they did & it confirmed we did indeed know our own postcode. Having now passed Data Protection, we finally found out what it was we'd complained about... That their records were wrong. There's 15 mins of my life I won't get back.

That's your lot for this time, folks. We'll be back with another fun-filled issue in the summer. Well ... we'll be back at least. Let's keep the bar set low.



The Last Laugh



The Aspect Newsletter

Issue 38 - Spring 2018



Your mission :- to celebrate 10 years in business

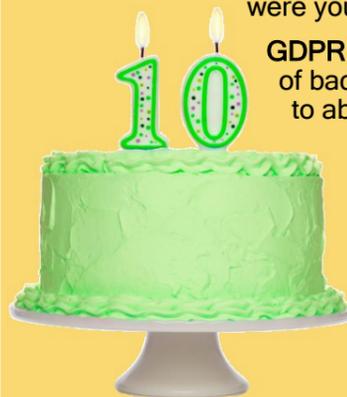
Nailed it! Aspect celebrated its 10th birthday earlier this year.

♪ Happy birthday to-0000-0000 us! ♪

As weight-watching is an almost permanent pastime here, you'll note we're celebrating with a *picture* of a cake. You may each have a calorie-controlled glimpse. Don't say we're not good to you.

This Spring edition arrives with both a warm welcome and abject apologies for the colour scheme. (Where I come from, we would call this 'skyrie', referring to the kinds of colours which reach right into your eyeballs and twist your optic nerve into a balloon dachshund). This edition *also* arrives with the page numbering in the correct order (seriously, someone couldn't have mentioned it before? Four successive issues with the page numbers going 1, 2, 7, 4, 5, 3, 6, 8? Thank you Warren for pointing it out at last, and apologies to everyone. Or were you all having a quiet snigger at our expense?)

GDPR! This is not exactly bad language, more the cause of bad language in others. Like it or loathe it, we all have to abide by it (there are *no* exemptions, so we'd recommend you spend your time getting compliant instead of searching for loopholes). We've compiled an article inside to give you some pointers, albeit somewhat late in the day (G-Day is 25 May). And we'd like to stress that we've drawn up the article because we're helpful, *not* because it's our responsibility!



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Aspect BC FAQs

I've been contacted by a firm that says it can guarantee our website the #1 ranking in Google - should I go for it?

This is a well-known cold calling strategy which in the trade is called **A Lie**. Think about it - they'll make the same promise to everyone and you can't *all* have the top ranking in Google, can you? Unless they're planning to sell you a timeshare in it. And how can they legislate for every possible search term that people might use to find you? No, if they say they'll help improve your rankings, fine, but anyone who guarantees you the top spot is just lying.



Our internet has gone off in the office and the person who usually fixes it isn't here.

We come across this a lot. We'd like to think this is on a par with knowing where the stopcock is in the event of a leak, or the main fuse board if something goes bang. Businesses depend on the internet so much, it's important to know the immediate steps to try and get it back and it's equally important that the knowledge doesn't rest with a single person. Let's face it, by the law of Sod, if it's all going to go horribly wrong, it'll do it when that person isn't there. Now if you're one of our clients (past or present), we'll likely be able to point you to the router, but we would always recommend that several staff are taught where the router is and how to reboot it (speaking of which, yes, it'd be nice if routers came with a nice, clear On/Off button on the top or front, but they don't. If there even *is* a button, it'll be tiddly and hidden in the nether regions of the case). And as we learned previously (just nod, children) **YOU DON'T PRESS THE RESET!!!**

**We'd love to hear your comments and feedback.
Just email:
newsletter@aspectbc.co.uk**

(Recent issues are on the website if you missed them).

So it's goodnight from ISDN ... and goodnight from PSTN???

We advised you in a recent edition that BT will be looking to phase out ISDN lines by 2025. But evidently they're hoping to phase out PSTN (analogue) lines too, which they've kept somewhat quieter.

Now before you start wondering what you're supposed to do without any phone lines (two tins of beans and a string, anyone?) let us elaborate to say that BT would simply like everyone to stop making *calls* across analogue lines. PSTN lines, in themselves, will still exist. What else is your broadband going to sit on?



For most businesses, the shift across to VOIP will be a natural progression and many of you are already there. However, if you have a fax machine, you should consider changing to fax-to-email. There are a number of options open to you in that respect, and we'd be happy to discuss them in more detail.

From the little information we've been able to glean, BT won't (can't?) withdraw the service unless there's a viable alternative in place. But we'll be keeping an ear to the ground as this develops and we'll let you know when we hear anything more.

Windows 7 - it's time to move on

Can we just remind everyone that Windows 7 is end of life now?

Manufacturers haven't been offering it as an option on either laptops or workstations for a long time now, and while we've still been able to acquire the software to custom build PCs, that option is going to be gone imminently.

If your business uses software that won't run with anything but Windows 7, you need to be addressing this *soon*. Either there will come a point when you're going to have to replace one or more of your workstations and you're going to find that Windows 10 is your only option or, even if your machines keep soldiering on, you'll find yourself in the same pickle as the NHS did last year, when a dependence on Windows XP left them with wholesale security vulnerabilities that were exploited in a crushing virus outbreak. Once security patches stop being issued for an operating system, you are at risk.

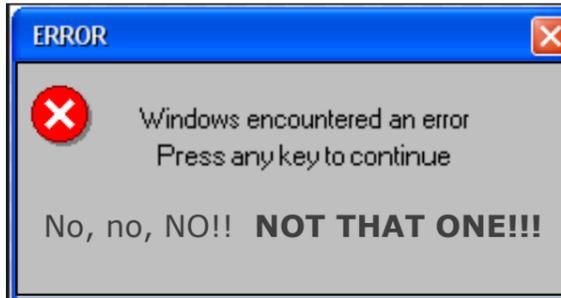
Windows 7 has been a terrific operating system, way better than Win 8 and tons better than Vista (let's not even mention ME. Oh, you thought that was an illness that really dragged you down? You're closer than you know). But unfortunately Microsoft have called time on Windows 7 and like it or not, we have to move on.

Don't put your organisation at risk. Start looking at your options today.



Keeping Aspect up to scratch on Health and Safety

Looks like Vassilly has some competition!



Roll up! Roll up! Get'chore cheap backup service 'ere!

If you have users out and about in the field or working from home using laptops, you may be interested in our **Document Backup** service (or indeed our Backupment Dockup service, as Steve memorably referred to it on one occasion).

For **less than 10p per day per user** (charged monthly) you can have all their documents backed up safely.



If you're interested in finding out more, give us a call.

Do you know where you're going to?

Frequently when we have to direct clients to a particular web page for remote support or to download something, there's confusion as to where they ought to be typing what we tell them. So let's clarify, shall we?

First of all, **what is your web browser?** Often when we ask people which browser they use, they reply "Google". But Google is not a browser. Google is a **search engine**, as are Bing and Yahoo (among others). Your web browser is likely to be eg. Chrome, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Edge, Safari or Firefox (though there are many more). We do grant that it's confusing, because Google own Chrome while Microsoft owns Bing, Edge and Internet Explorer, and the terms can end up becoming interchangeable in people's minds.

But to be clear, **your web browser is what you click on to get on the internet.**

OK, so you've got your web browser loaded up. What now? Well we usually say "at the top of the screen in the address bar, type" but this is where we often lose people. Just where *exactly* at the top of the screen....?

GDP Arrrrrrrgh!



This is indeed the slot where the Jargon Buster usually sits, but we've hijacked it for this issue to skim over something that's not ICT jargon, but will still affect all of you out there. (Yes, we did say 'skim' - a full page article in small print, and we're barely touching the surface).

The new **General Data Protection Regulations** or **GDPR** become law on **25 May**, and though they've been driven by European Law, it makes no difference that we're Brexiting. (There again, at the time of writing, Brexit seems to be going nowhere fast anyway). The regulations take over from the old Data Protection Act and serve to make us a lot more aware of how we store and handle personal information.

We're not going to even attempt to go through the rules here, as we're emphatically not GDPR specialists, and besides, this newsletter is supposed to be fun. (Trust us, GDPR is not). But we still felt we could hardly ignore it, when you probably have people wringing their hands over it and prophesying doom. (Doooooom!!)

We stress again that only you can determine what you need to do to bring your house in order, but if you haven't done anything yet, or think you don't have to, read on....

The regulations relate to the handling of 'personal' information and if you think that doesn't apply to your company because you're trade- or business-to-business-only, well 'fraid not. For one thing, there's those pesky employees on the payroll with their bank details, NI numbers etc, etc. That's personal information. Then there's your clients and suppliers, for whom you undoubtedly have email addresses. Ah, we hear you cry, but we only have a works email address for them. Yes, but if that's eg. *john.doe@hisbiz.co.uk*, that's classed as personal info. Yeah, yeah, we know. It does seem like a stretch, but these days, people use their works email addresses for LinkedIn, Facebook, Amazon, eBay ... And that makes it information that identifies the person. Ergo, personal information. Now if the only address you held for them was eg. *sales@hisbiz.co.uk*, that'd be a whole different kettle of fish. Generic = good, named = bad.

What other personal info might you be harbouring? Well, how about CVs? You recruit, you get lots of people applying, and generally all bar one is unsuccessful. Are you still hanging onto their CVs? All those names, addresses, email details, mobile numbers? The first question you always want to ask with GDPR is:- why do I have this info? If you have no good answer to that, then get rid of it. If there is a good reason you have it, you still need to consider whether there's extraneous stuff held there too. If you have no demonstrably good reason to have a bit of information, it should be gone.

The right to be forgotten - people have a right to know what information you hold on them and can ask to have anything you hold on them deleted, unless you have a viable reason why you shouldn't. For example, if they owe you money, then no, of course you're not going to wave them a cheery bye-bye and wipe out all record of it.



Data security - this is, of course, a biggie, as the fines for allowing personal info to be breached are eye-wateringly humungous, as are the fines for not owning up immediately if it happens. From what we can gather though, businesses are expending a lot of effort on examining where their data is stored, the levels of encryption and so on, and neglecting to consider that perhaps all their staff share one login. That doesn't happen in your business though, does it? Good. And it's not like you all have different passwords but everyone knows everyone else's ...? Whoops. You can lock your data away in the highest room in the tallest tower of a castle inside a moat on top of a mountain with a dragon at the gate, but if you're going to give everyone a map, a key and a dragon-biscuit, it's all just a teeny bit pointless. So yes, OK, of course look at the safety of where you put your data, but think a bit closer to home too.

Marketing - reading the regs, it almost sounds as if you should give up marketing for fear of offending someone, but that'd just be silly. Marketing is how businesses grow and nobody expects you to abandon it. You just need to be a lot more rigorous in who you target. The critical things here are (a) to be able to demonstrate that someone has agreed to receive blurb from you, which does mean - for the avoidance of doubt - that you kind of need written consent, (b) to make it ultra easy for them to opt out at any time and (c) to make damn sure you don't accidentally let them creep back onto a mailing list if they've opted out.

You don't get a certificate of compliance. It is mandatory to be compliant, but it's not like there's an exam. You just need to ensure your procedures and policies will stand up to scrutiny.

Does responsibility for compliance lie with your IT people? Nuh-unh. And we're not just saying that because for many of you, we are your IT people. Compliance is an internal issue, a matter for your legal people, your HR people, your compliance people if you have them. You decide the policies and you decide who should have access to your data. Armed with that, your IT people will help you implement the security to limit access to the right people, but as we said before, we can't make you keep your password secure, or your computer locked when unattended. We can give you the tools. It's your responsibility as a business to use them.



It is a lot to take on board, but try to look on it like Health and Safety for data. We all consider Health and Safety now without a second thought, even though we may never be inspected. We know it's simply right and proper not to be careless about it. These rules will come to be accepted in exactly the same way. Try to remember that they're not there to trip you up. They're there because they're the right thing to do.

Movie quotations quiz!

Much as you've enjoyed guessing years, feedback says you prefer the types of quizzes where you put answers in a grid to spell out something else. So we're back to that. We're going to give you some famous lines from some famous films; you need to put the movie titles in the grid, and the blue squares will spell out another famous quotation and the movie it's from. Words are separated by the bold lines. And we've scattered the clues around randomly to make you work a bit harder.

Answers on the website - follow the link from the newsletter page.

A Here's Johnny!

D Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine.

L I coulda had class. I coulda been a contender. I coulda been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am, let's face it.

C Surely you can't be serious? I am serious ... and don't call me Shirley.

S You're gonna need a bigger boat.

H We deal in lead, friend.

Q Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn.

J You're only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!

M Made it, Ma! Top of the world!

E Go ahead, make my day.

V I'm not bad. I'm just drawn that way.

D Show me the money!

N I'll have what she's having.

T Wax on, wax off.

K I see dead people.

B I love the smell of napalm in the morning.

I Oh, no, it wasn't the airplanes. It was Beauty killed the Beast.

F My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.

U I feel the need ... the need for speed.

R You know how to whistle, don't you Steve? You just put your lips together and blow.

G I'll get you, my pretty, and your little dog too!

Hello to Nikki

We'd like to welcome our new starter, Nikki Power, who joined us on 2 January.

Thanks to Payrolls lady's absence on sick leave early on in February, Nikki had something of a baptism of fire, but handled everything that was thrown her way with good humour and marked common-sense, bless her. She's obviously really good at organising and planning ... which makes her habit of completely unidentifiable lunches all the more surprising. Most days during the cold spell, she brought something from her freezer to reheat for lunch, but since nothing ever boasted a label, every day was a mystery. Vaguely green? Could be broccoli soup. Could be leek and potato. Could be pea. Reddish and lumpy? Could be casserole. Could be curry. Made everybody else's sandwiches look downright mundane by comparison.

We're really pleased with how quickly Nikki's settling in and picking up the peculiarities of our business (and us!)



Nothing makes me feel so old as having to scroll down to find my Year of Birth.



Vassilly's Blog

Tues 2 Jan
Happy 2018 loyal fans!! I am get Echo Dot for Chrissabobs and to begin with, I am full of excites. I am say "Aleksa, make remindings that I am go to cinemabobs on Friday", "Aleksa, I am have much turkey left over, be finding me excites recipes", but she is just say "I'm sorry, I don't understand ... I'm sorry, I don't understand". I think is faulty. ☹



Thurs 18 Jan
Payrolls lady say is special Aspects day today. Uh-oh. This is usually mean I am get extra wet, extra cold, or extra filthy. But she say no, is really special day. Aspects is 10 years old today!! So we are get bonus, yes? Oh. We are get bonus, no.

Thurs 25 Jan
Is Burns Night. I am think this is like bonfire night, because I am get burns that night too, but Payrolls lady say no. She say is about famous Scottish poet and is about eating haggis. She say haggis is small animal that is live in mountains of Scotland. It is only come out when is dark and cold (IT Boss Man is mumble something about all year round) and it is have one leg shorter than rest, so is run in circles. I am point out this is ridiculous. She say yes, is actually offal bits of sheep stuffed into stomach and boiled. Hmmm... so which bits is awful bits??

Fri 16 Feb
I am have Blog break. Payrolls lady is sick and we are all do much work to make coverings. She is come back pasty white with eyes all scrunched up and squinty like mole-rat. Also, she is have no voice and is not able to hear properly.... So, every cloud, eh?

Mon 19 Feb
Earthquake!! We are have earthquake on weekend!!! Secret burrow in back garden is collapse and landlady is not happy. (She is hang out washing and fall in). She is ask why for I am need to be making burrow when she is give me nice room with specials view of industrial estate. I say 'kat's gotta do what 'kat's gotta do. She say 'kat's gotta fill in hole or 'kat's gotta look for new place to live.

Mon 26 Feb
News is full of warnings about Beast that is come from the East, but apparently is not Uncle Fyodor. (Seriously, peoples. Are you see him eat ribs? Is not pretty).

Thurs 1 Mar
IT Boss Man say he is need help with hanging baskets. Is 5 below zero and snowing and he is worry about gardening???? He say no. (Well first he say I am idiot. Then he is say no). These is long baskets for cablemabobs, and he is need extra pair of paws next week for fixing up high at client site. Today, though, we are go home early and Payrolls lady say we are not come in tomorrow. Yaaay! She say we are do remote workings instead. Booo!!

Fri 9 Mar
Payrolls lady is storm into office and is wave big electrics bill. She is ask why for we are use so much electrics. Sergei say is maybe his fault - he say he is have old bones. Payrolls lady say he is have old fur and old teeth too but unless he is plan to wire himself to mains every night like Frankenstein monster, electrics is not make them any younger.

Tues 13 Mar
Lights is flicker off and on all day. Payrolls lady is ask Sergei if he is try to plug himself in again.

Mon 19 Mar
IT Boss Man is arrange trip to Scotland and he is look for volunteers to be spending two days with him. We are all look at Payrolls lady but she say is wrong bit of Scotland for her, and she is spend every day with him already. I am just know is going to be me. Not one time since I am arrive at Aspects am I ever volunteer. I am super carefuls to not make eye contact. Sometimes I am even hide. But whenever they is look for volunteers, they is always find me. I am not want to go to Scotland! What if they are feed me awful bits of sheep?

Tues 20 Mar
I am go to Scotland, loyal fans. Payrolls lady is teach me useful phrasemabobs, like *geezahnpal*¹, *whityizlookinat*² and *wharsmachangethatwisnaeatippal*³.

¹ Could you lend some assistance? / ² I surmise that you have not encountered a meerkat before / ³ I fear you are under a misapprehension as to my generosity)

The Helpdesk of HORROR ...

One final visit to the Chronicles of George, who was - in case you didn't get the Christmas newsletter - the worst IT technician in the history of the world ...



[...] called and said he is receiving an error. When he is reboot his machine

Ah. Note how the cunning deployment of the full stop offers up two alternative scenarios. Does he receive an error *when he reboots his machine?* Or does he receive an error *therefore* he reboots his machine... at which point we have no idea what happens? Or what the error was. Or indeed much of anything else.

cannot display the website

Who can't? Which website? Aaaarghh!

[...] called and said, [...] is having problems printing, he says the firing is saying canceled printings.

Is it? Is it really?

[...] would like to canceled a meeting for 02\06\01 from 12:30am to 1:00pm in the training room

Would that be because no-one wanted to sit through a 12½ hour meeting?

[...] would like her monitor picked up, she doesn't use it anymore

Ahhh grasshopper... it is truly a gift to achieve oneness with the computer.

[...] says her monitor is flickering why she is working on her computer.

OK, you got me. Why is she working on her computer?

[...] called like the full version of microsoft excel

And how does the full version of Excel sound?

[...] is having problem with her fonts being blurry, i changed her settings and that didnt not help

So it didn't *not* help ... but did it fix it?

[...] needs a new monitor

Sure, I'll get right on that since you've obviously done exhaustive diagnosis and got authorisation.

[...] she is having problems connecting to the z drive, she told never i will figure it out on her own.

She's probably right.

[...] says he contrast up all the way and his monitor is still really dark

And what about the *other* button? The one marked 'brightness'?

they needed in the kitchen at 10:00am today

Not 9:58, not 10:03, but 10:00am exactly. If only we knew *what*.

Won't you please, please help me?



In common with many of you out there, I was gifted with a 'flu virus since the last issue and - it being the kind of gift that just kept *on* giving - I was *hors de combat* for a couple of weeks. Latterly, I focussed enough to set an Out of Office, but for the bulk of my time off, let's just say that I wasn't exactly poised, phone in hand, checking my emails continually. At some point each day I did get around to them all, but certainly not as quickly as I usually do.

Which would matter a lot less if many emails didn't contain requests for service calls.

Can I ask again that you please, please, *please*, don't direct service call emails (or requests for updates on service calls) to any one particular person? Or indeed to just Steve and I alone - we do go away together from time to time. (We're married, you know? It's sort of expected of us). **To make sure your service request is immediately seen by someone, please email:**

service@aspectbc.co.uk

Can I just add that I'm grateful for all your good wishes in my absence and on my return. It's nice to be missed, thank you. And to any of you who were also struck down by the dreaded lurgy, I sincerely hope you're all fully recovered too.

Changes to mail filtering

We're going to be rolling out a different email anti-virus and anti-spam filtering service imminently, as the one we used to offer is changing and unfortunately, after assessing it, we don't feel it's for the better.

One rather nice feature of the new service is that it includes an app that lets you see your message queues and quarantines in real time, so no more wondering if a message has got stuck and how to grab it if it is.

Obviously our mail filter clients will automatically get the benefit of this feature, but if you're interested too, give us a call.

