

# The Aspect Diary



There must be an unwritten rule amongst hotels that they watch the weather forecast & time sending out their Xmas brochures to coincide with the hottest day of the year. We know you have to book early to avoid disappointment & all that, but who wants to look at holly & baubles when it's 34° outside?

Well you're all gradually shifting over to Win 10 ahead of the Jan deadline, so thanks for heeding the call & acting on it. The last of us at Aspect have also embraced Win 10 (yeah, OK, we embraced it with as much fervour as we would a small child with a runny nose & jammy fingers. But the point is, we did it). Anyway, a very busy time all round as a result & several more months of it to come probably.

We had a new card reader from the bank in July. It came with an instruction booklet, complete with pretty pictures. The slot at the top, it informed us helpfully, is where the card goes. The little LED window? That's the LED display. Remarkably, the blue button labelled 'Identify' is the identify button, while the green button marked 'Enter' is the Enter button. The keys with numbers on them are, get this, the number keys. Really, if you need that level of instruction to use the thing, you probably shouldn't be entrusted with a bank account.

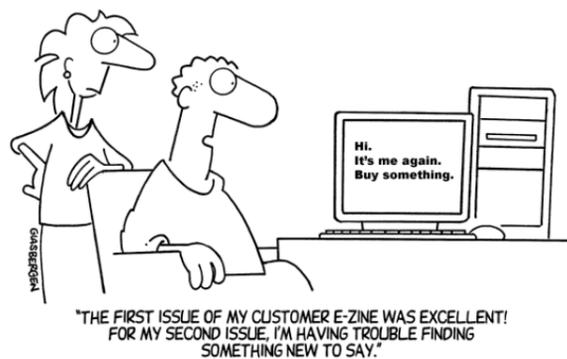
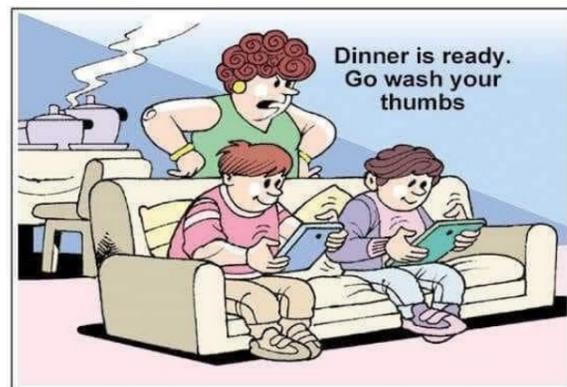
We've been setting up an online backup for a client, who doesn't have the best broadband in the world. In order to set it up, we have to create a baseline copy of the data to begin with, a process called seeding. We opted to try & grab the data remotely & like many such operations, the copy was kind enough to offer a time estimate of how long it might take. Did we mention their broadband was poor? Uh-huh. The time estimate was 3 years... So we went to site to do it instead.

In signing up for a vendor certification program, we had to do the usual - choose a password & choose a security question. You know the drill, what's your favourite pet's name / favourite historical character / first school you attended blah blah blah. Or, in this instance, we could also choose "what is your favourite security question?" Who the bleep has a favourite security question???! (We fondly remember (!) being asked by our former bank, many moons ago, to answer our security question. "Fine", we said, "go ahead & ask it". But no. That was way too simple. They refused to ask the question, saying we were just supposed to give the answer. To a question we no longer knew. Now THAT's security).

Speaking of weird suggestions, we were trying to search for 15.6" screen laptops on a not-terribly-searchable website recently & wanted to weed out all the other sizes of laptops. So we stuck '15.6' in the search. The response? "Did you mean 11.7?". And then what, my fingers got lost on their way to the keys? Out of curiosity & knowing they don't even sell 11.7" laptops, we put 11.7 in the search. It asked if we meant 1007. We tried 1007. Did we mean 1000? Why keep suggesting things that don't exist???

And that's it for Autumn. See you - whisper it - at Xmas.

# The Last Laugh



# The Aspect Newsletter

Issue 44 - Autumn 2019



## Searching high and low ...

Talking of locating keys, we notice that an awful lot of PC keyboards nowadays seem to come with equally-sized Shift keys, which means that something on the original layout had to give way. And it's the backslash. It's flown over to the right-hand side of the keyboard to take up residence beside the newly-shrunk Enter key. Which is a bit of a bu\*\*er when you're trying to tell users where to find it whilst looking at your own keyboard which might be, shall we say, of a somewhat older vintage. (If Frank the Flamingo could see the keyboard I retired only a week or so ago, he would have been utterly flummoxed. The S was a distant memory, worn blank long ago. I also had only the bottom of an E, the top of a T, plus random bits of R, A, D and C).

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Aspect newsletter. It's all busy-busy-busy here with the imminent demise of Windows 7, plus we have a new engineer on board, as Gareth joined us back in July. Apologies that this newsletter is, as a result of our general busy-ness, a bit later than it would normally be. We're also aware that it doesn't leave a lot of time to put a Christmas edition together, but we thrive on challenges. (We don't really; we panic, but this sounds better).

This newsletter has been brought to you courtesy of Publisher 2016 in conjunction with a lot of swearing. (You may notice that the implementation of *all* new software brings out the worst in my vocabulary. I accept this may say more about me than the software). A-n-y-w-a-y, the best feature of the old Publisher was the live preview - want to change a colour / a font / picture contrast? Just hover over it and it'll show you how it looks on your document. It was great. So, being as it was so great, big surprise, they took the feature away. Now if you want to know what something might look like if it was changed, you have to actually change it. And then change it back if you didn't like it. And then try something else. Thus far, we haven't spotted any good features that have been added; just the one they got rid of.

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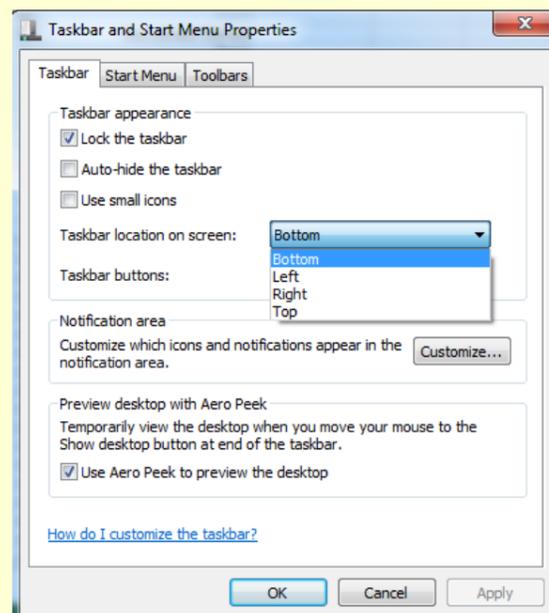
# Aspect BC FAQs

**Help! I know there's an OK button on the screen I'm looking at, but I can't get at it. It's down behind the taskbar and I can't drag the window up any farther to get it clear.**

There's a few things you could do (if you operate with two screens, for example, you could drag the window onto the screen that doesn't have a taskbar), but let's do it this way instead:

Do **Windows+R** (ie. press one of the Windows keys either side of the space bar and the R key together).

In the search box that pops up, type **hide toolbar** - you don't need to hit Enter. In fact, by the time you've typed **hide**, the option you want should've already appeared above - it's **Auto-hide the taskbar**. Choose that.



You'll get the option to shift the taskbar somewhere other than the bottom of the screen - pick a location, any location, choose **Apply**, then **OK**.

Do what you need to do without the hindrance of the taskbar, then repeat the process to put the taskbar back to its original position.

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

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

## I can't see clearly now, my menu's gone ...



Continuing with the notion (left) that you can't always get at bits of your screen because of awkwardly-positioned bars, we should mention that there is a bug in Windows 10 which some

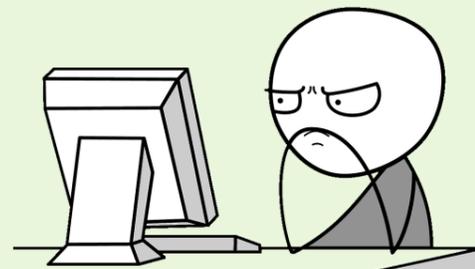
of you using dual monitors have already noticed. A band of colour (white, blue, maybe black) appears at the top of one of your screens, effectively obliterating the top menu, the minimise and close buttons, possibly even the address bar if the page in question is displaying a web page.

Online forums are chock-a-block with complaints on this theme, and though some of the suggested fixes work some of the time, there doesn't appear to be one that works all of the time. One that you can try is the video driver reset:- press **Windows + Ctrl + Shift + B** (not a combination you're likely to hit by accident, let's be fair). Your screen will go blank for a second and you'll hear a beep. Or not, if you have no speakers or they're muted.

You may feel that after hounding you all to upgrade to Windows 10, it's perhaps a little unfair to be telling you about bugs in it now. All software has bugs, unfortunately, but since Windows 10 will now be around forever, there will at least be no lack of opportunity for them to fix it.

## Have you tried turning it off and on again?

Yes, it's a cliché. But there is a reason why support trot it out time after time. Very often, it works.



There are all sorts of repair utilities built into software packages and operating systems, but before you embark on any of them, it's always worth just shutting the machine down and turning it back on. For many of you, it may be the only reboot your machine has had in months.

Specifically, if you've got problems accessing emails, we'd always recommend a reboot in the first instance.

## Handle with (excessive) care

Kudos to one of our suppliers for an utterly unbelievable bit of packaging. Ordered? Three laptop bags. Delivered? Three large boxes. One bag in each, plus a lot of packing paper to stop it shifting in transit. (Because laptop bags are so fragile, after all).  
Words.  
Fail.  
Us.



**I'm from tech support. I'm here to delete your cookies**



## Faith, hope and clarity ... but the greatest of these is clarity.

We came across this prime Helpdesk of Horror candidate online, except it was rather too long for the proper *HoH* page. But it was so reminiscent of so many calls we've endured over the years, we had to include it. This, we should mention, is the abridged version!

"My computer doesn't work."

"Okay, we'll take a look and see what's going on. What's happening on the screen?"

"It doesn't work."

"So, it's not coming on?"

"Well, no, it doesn't work."

"So, no lights at all?"

"Well, no, the lights are on."

"So, it has power."

"I guess. But it doesn't work."

"Is there anything on the screen?"

"No, it doesn't work."

"So, you have a completely black screen?"

"Well, no, but it doesn't work."

(My patience fading...)

"What, exactly, does the screen look like?"

"Well, it's white."

"So, you have a blank, white screen? Did this happen when you turned the computer on? Or were you working on something?"

"No, I wasn't doing anything. It just stopped working."

"So you couldn't log in."

"Well, no. I put my name thing in and password."

"So, you *could* log in."

"I guess, but it doesn't work."

"So, you logged in and the screen went white."

"Well, no. I had the blue screen with the icons first."

"So, you were on the desktop, and *then* everything went white?"

"Well, no, I was doing documentation."

"(Sigh) So, you were in [Documentation Software] and the program stopped working?"

"Well, no."

"Look, is there *anything* on the screen?"

"Well, no. Not really."

"Not *really*? So there *is* something on the screen?"

"Well, yes, but *not* my documentation."

"Just read me everything on the screen from top to bottom."

"It says, 'Login Expired.'"

"So you need a password update?"

"Well, yes. *Because it's not working.*"

"Okay. Your new password is [password]. You can log back in."

"Oh! It's working again! I guess it fixed itself!" \*click\*

Having experienced our own comparable epic some years back:-

"It isn't doing!"

"What isn't it doing?"

"The thing it usually does. It isn't doing!"

"What thing?!"

"You know! The thing!!!"

... a-a-a-and repeat, ad nauseum ...

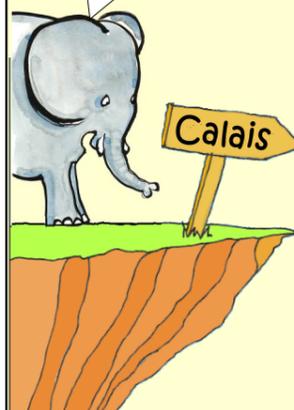
... it's evident that some people were standing behind the door when the gift of clarity was being handed out.

# Jargon Buster #33 - SIP Trunks

Lots of you already make your phone calls via SIP trunks, but do you know what they are? (Fine, you don't actually care, but we have to fill this section with something, so just pipe down and let us pontificate).

**SIP** stands for **Session Initiation Protocol**. (You may well shake your heads at the number of acronyms we use in our industry, but what choice do we have? Who wants to tangle their teeth around this kind of nonsense every day?)

So-ooo, you're saying my trunk doesn't go over the channel, but the channel goes over my trunk? No, I just don't get it ....



Basically a SIP trunk is how you connect from your phone system to the public telephone network. Because while you may make your calls over the internet, whether you're ringing London, Hull or Ulan Bator, it's still the main phone network that routes the call to its destination.

So why are there **SIP Channels** and **SIP Trunks**? Aren't they the same? Well no, although the terms do (wrongly) get used interchangeably. Each phone call, in or out, requires a SIP channel. The more concurrent calls you want your business to be able to handle, the more channels you need. All those channels travel along SIP trunks. What you actually *pay* for is the number of channels. Generally speaking, businesses won't have one SIP channel per person. If you look around your own business at any given moment, it's unlikely every single person is on a call. Facebook? Possibly. A call, no. So you make a guess at how many concurrent calls you're likely to have and you opt for a corresponding number of SIP channels. One of the beauties of SIP is that you can easily change as circumstances dictate. Got a busy spell coming up? Chuck a few extra channels on for a few months. When the frantic spell is past? Remove them again.

## Fake email alert

We've been seeing some fake emails lately where a PDF attachment doesn't actually open a PDF document, but takes you to One Drive instead. Trying to open the document *there*, it asks for usernames and passwords. No-o-ooooo!!!

To be clear, if a PDF isn't a PDF, that's a red flag. If it carries you off to One Drive, major red flag. Asking for your username and password? That's the entire box of red flags waving in a Category 5 hurricane.

Similarly, if an email that looks fine on the face of it carries an attachment which asks you to enable the content, this points to something being awry.

The emails we saw were a result of an email account being hacked, so the email address, format of the email and signature were perfect. The purpose of the hack appears to have been to gather usernames and passwords to continue hacking, but it could just as easily have been to spread a virus.

We can only stress again - if anything seems 'off' about an email, **stop immediately**. If the sender is - apparently - someone you know, *phone* them on a number you *know* is theirs. Do not reply to the email to check with them.

Be careful out there.

## Will your server be unsupported come January?

We've been making a bit of a thing lately about getting Windows 7 machines replaced by / upgraded to Windows 10. (No! Really?)

But please don't forget to consider your file servers. **Anything earlier than Server 2012 will also be unsupported** - and therefore vulnerable - from January 2020. It isn't enough to have addressed the workstations. The servers are probably even *more* important, when you think that they're likely directly internet-facing, because of handling emails for example.

We know it's a big consideration. Replacing the file server will most likely be the single most significant cost in the whole exercise (well, depending how many PCs you have to change out), and if you have more than one affected server, we can see that it's a daunting prospect. But please don't ignore it. It isn't going to go away.

Talk to us. You know we'll never sell you the Rolls Royce of file servers when you only need a Ford Focus. Let's find a solution that keeps you safe.

# Island Hopping Quiz!

For those of you who visited furrin shores in the summer, we thought we'd extend that holiday feeling just a little bit longer, by bringing some of those shores to mind. To whit - islands. Can you identify them without any points of reference?

Pictured below are two sets of outlines of islands and island groups (not to scale). Put their names in the grids and the first letters will spell out two other islands. Simple, no? We suspect "no", so as this is quite a difficult quiz, we're giving you the second and last letters of each to help you. Aren't we good?

**A** **B** **C** **D** **E**

A	a			n						
B	u									a
C	a									r
D	n					a				
E	n									a
F	r			e						
G	z								s	



**1** **2** **3** **4** **5**

1	u		a							
2	n									y
3	h									s
4	h					s				
5	c								d	

# New engineer

We bid a warm welcome to Gareth Tucker, who joined us as an IT Support Engineer in July.

Gareth hails from Swansea, cooks a mean Chicken Tikka Masala so he tells us, and is very into his music (he even sings in the office, but it's OK - we're working to cure him of that). He had the full summer festival experience this year; you know, the one where you have to hang onto your tent for dear life whilst cultivating interesting mould spores between the damp layers of your clothes.

He's also teaching himself to play guitar, thinks horses' eyes are weird (you'd have to ask him about it), drinks his coffee at the consistency of rocket fuel and has a twin brother who bears no resemblance to him whatsoever (we're not just talking non-identical; we mean Arnold Schwarzenegger / Danny DeVito type Twins).

We would ordinarily share a photo of Gareth with you at this point, but we left it till the last minute to try and procure one and, as bad luck would have it, he was taken poorly right at the point when this newsletter really needed to go out. Lifting anything from his Facebook account seemed creepy, so we'll leave it till he's fully recovered.

## Changes to ADSL contract periods

Due to changes imposed by the ISP (Internet Service Provider) whose services we resell, we're no longer able to offer any broadband services on anything less than an initial minimum 12 month contract. That's always been the case for FTTC connections, but we used to be able to offer ordinary ADSL month-on-month.

We know this will come as a bit of a blow to those of you working on short-term projects or in temporary accommodation, although unless you already had a working phone line that could be used, you were always going to have to commit to a minimum of 12 months on the line itself.

## Vassilly's Blog

Fri 19 July

I am want to have day off today, but Payrolls lady is say no. She say is not enough notice. I say I am not know till last night that forecast for today is for thunderbolts and lightning. She is ask if this is very very frightening. Ha. Ha. Ha. No, but it is make fur stand on end and I am look like I am do two cycles in tumble dryer. She say she is short on laughs lately, so I am have to stay so she can see this.



Tues 23 July

Too ... hot ... can't ... breathe ... Payrolls lady is stand me in front of fan and crank up to full speed. Whiskers is knotted at back of head but I am not feel any cooler.

Thurs 25 July

Peoples, Bridgend is sweatier than armpit of sentry 'kat in midday Kalahari sun. I am too 'zausted to type ....

Tues 6 Aug

Ahhhhh. Normal service is being resumed, loyal fans. Is proper Welsh summer with sunshines and rains and windiness, all at same time! I am back to usual self. I am think Payrolls lady is mumble something about pity, but she say she is just think out loud about petty cash. Hmmmm. Anyways, I am full of excites to have spring in tail again, so I am go with new engineer Gareth to join Telecommmms Boss Man on big job at film studios.

Wed 7 Aug

Okay, so we are have *leetle* diplomatic incident yesterday. Could happen to anyone. Well, anyone who is ankle height. And maybe little bit excitable. So, there I am, doing job, minding own business, and studio man who is talk to Gareth is nod at me and say "what kind of demon is that?" .... We-e-ell, is turn out they is film series where every human is have a *daemon* and these daemons is animals. Oh, how we are all laugh about it afterwards!! Okay, studio man is make bit of fuss about the blood, but dab of antiseptics and a sticky plaster and he is good as new. Limp is not even slow him down very much. Still, is no call for him to ask if I am rabid. I am little bit cross, yes. (I am tell Bogdan later that at first, I think I am never being so insulted, but he is point out I am work with Payrolls lady long time so is probably not even in top ten).

Tues 27 Aug

Telecommmms Boss Man is being very unwell. Payrolls lady say he is have new monia? I say I am never hear of old monia. She say I am taking the P out of it, but I am tell her I would never. I am offer to go visit but she say the poor man is already suffer enough.

Thurs 29 Aug

Telecommmms Boss Man is bit better now & is out of hospital, so this is good.

Tues 3 Sept

IT Boss Man is ask me to go to place called Ditch Ling with him. Is because I am invaluable member of team, no? Apparently no. Is because is very early start and getting cross with me is help him stay awake. Hmpf.

Tues 10 Sept

Today, IT Boss Man is take me to Red Ditch. More Ditches!! I am not understand why is he always think of me when someone is say Ditch, so I am look it up on Wikipedias. .... It say it is "small to moderate depression". Ahhhh. OK, Payrolls lady is often accuse me of causing this.

Fri 13 Sept

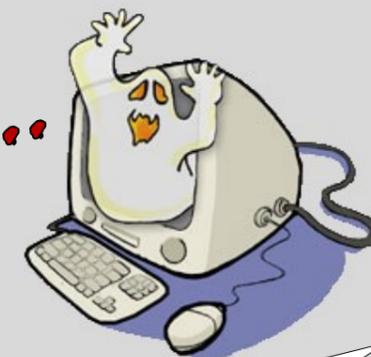
Is Friday 13th. I am not like Friday 13ths. Bad luck things is happen today. Payrolls lady is mutter that bad luck things is happen to me every day, but she is agree not to send me out in case my bad lucks are being contagious again. I am think wind is pick up outside, but she say no - what I am hear is collective sigh of relief from clients.

Thurs 19 Sept

IT Boss Man is away for Stag Weekend in Benidorm. I am ask what is this Stag Weekend? Peoples are explain it is chance for fun time, for being silly and letting hair down .... I am have to ask - these people, they are *know* IT Boss Man, yes?

# The Helpdesk of HORROR ...

Still more from the wacky world of Support. And while these are the singles making the Hit Parade this time, check out the EP on page 7 (if you're of an age to understand such terminology).



"Look, can you tell me step by step how you go about printing, because I'm not understanding this."

"I open the document, I do File, Print, wait for it to finish loading, then I unplug the printer cable from my PC, carry it across the room while holding the ends up so the data doesn't spill out, and then I plug it into the printer, and it prints."

[dumbfounded] "And you reckon this works?"  
"It did yesterday."

"My computer won't turn on. I press the power button and nothing happens."

"All right. Is the computer plugged in?"

"Yes."

"And what is it plugged into?"

"You need to ask that?"

"Hey, we had one guy trying to plug his PC into his toaster."

"It's plugged into a power block."

"And what is that plugged into?"

"... Itself. Sorry."

"Go ahead and open a folder now."  
"I opened a web page, what now?"  
"No, I need you to open a folder, not a web page."  
"What's a folder?"

"Please remember your password has to be at least eight characters long, and it must have three of these four in it:- an uppercase, a lowercase, a number or a special character."  
[typing and mumbling] "OK, there you go."

"Umm, no, if you typed what I heard you say you were typing, then that was only uppercase and lowercase. We still need either a number or a special character."  
"But I made it DonaldDuck. Donald Duck is a special character!"  
"No, he really isn't."

"Help! Our printer won't stop printing! It's going through tons of paper!!"

"OK, which computer is it connected to? Has the print queue been cleared?"

"I'm not sure. It might be PCI, but we've stopped it for the moment."

"That's OK, I'll connect now. You say you've stopped the printer - have you unplugged it?"

"No, we've put a spoon in it."

"Sorry, you've put a what in it?"

"A spoon! We jammed it in the front. The paper isn't moving now. Was that bad?"

"Well it's not great ...."

"I can't connect to the internet."

"OK, let's take a look at it .... [two mins later] .. Right it should be fixed now."

"Yes, it is. But I want a credit for the time it wasn't working."

"What, for two minutes??"

"No, it hasn't worked for two months. I want a credit for two months."

"Did you report it two months ago?"

"No. What difference does that make?"

# Your broadband is NOT about to be cut off!

There's rarely a day goes by that either we, or one of you, doesn't get a phone call advising that the broadband is about to be cut off. The original phone calls used to say your *BT broadband*, but they've evolved a little, or perhaps have just tumbled to the fact that not everyone gets their broadband from BT and so fewer people were falling for it. So now they say that your *ISP* is turning off your broadband. Or, in a new twist - and we especially admire the imagination behind this one - that your broadband connection had been corrupted by a foreign power. Eeek.

Can we just reiterate:- **THESE ARE SCAMS**. The caller / recorded message will tell you that if you want to argue the point, you should press a particular option. Don't bother. It won't do you any good and will just connect you to a nice premium rate number probably.

Just put the phone down and get on with your life.

