

**Email report – meeting 11/04/2011** (Due to school Easter holidays, this meeting was held at Woodfield Bowls Club)

## 2011 programme:

Because of the changes today, we discussed and agreed a reschedule for the remainder of the year :-

09 May	Photo manipulation - the next stage	Roy Fidler	(Stowupland)
13 Jun	Exploring Skype (bring your laptops)	Wendy Kemp	(Stowupland)
11 Jul	Hints and Tips in 'Word'	Philip Weir	(Stowupland)
08 Aug	T.B.A (depending on demand)		(W Bowls Club)
12 Sep	Introduction to Windows Movie Maker	Peter Dakeyne	(Stowupland)

We identified a need for a session on 'Windows 7', which several members have on their new laptops but nobody can yet claim to be an experienced user. There is plenty of help available on this topic on the net and elsewhere, and I'll try to put something together so that we can use this and compare to members' experiences. Date to be agreed.

*Online Banking.* This also of interest, not the least because some people are wary of potential security issues. Without a dedicated bank account (which was suggested) to look at, this could be a difficult topic to deal with. Perhaps a representative of a bank could be invited to talk to us. John said that, coincidentally he would be visiting his bank that afternoon and would raise the question. (*I'm pleased to say he achieved this objective and has set me up with a contact at Nat West*).

## Agony Corner:

1) How do I create new folders and move pictures and other files around in my computer?

- This question was raised at our 14th February meeting and there's a comprehensive answer in the email dated 21 February. If this has gone astray, attached is a pdf version. This (and all previous notes on our meetings) can now also be accessed via our group page of Stowmarket U3A, <http://u3astowmarket.wordpress.com/groups/stowmarket-u3a-computer-group/>.
- At the May meeting on photo manipulation and at the start of his talk, Roy will demonstrate how to get the pictures from your camera to an appropriate folder on your computer.

2) What are 'zip' files and how do I use them?

- Zipping a file or many files together is a way of making them smaller by 'compression'. Documents, spreadsheets and the like can be compressed a lot, say up to 75% reduction. Pictures as jpgs are already compressed and can only be reduced by 10%-20%. Here is an older article by Microsoft which will give you some background, <http://tinyurl.com/staru3azips>
- This video shows you what and how, <http://youtu.be/e5gRPNOW9AY> (view full screen by clicking bottom right of the video. Close the advert by cross at top RHS of box).
- All versions of Windows have built in zipping tools. Here's a demo for XP (but should be similar for Vista and Windows 7) <http://youtu.be/mq3vdsCux-c>
- Individual files in zipped files can be accessed and extracted without using a special programme. Right click the zip file and then select explore. Follow this short video to see how <http://youtu.be/8s2AQs7C3Tw>
- The defacto zip programme is 'WinZip' which used to be free but is now paid for. If you want more than the Windows version can give, 7-Zip is a free utility which comes highly recommended. Find it at <http://tinyurl.com/staru3a7-zip>.

## PDFs - What they are and how you can use them:

This was our topic for the day, a PowerPoint demonstration (by PD) of all things 'PDF'. In summary.....

- **Portable Document Format** documents, PDFs were developed by Adobe in the early '90s as a universal means of transferring documents between different computers, readable by all, irrespective of the original software used to create them. These were, and in big business still are, created in the programme Adobe Acrobat.
- Due to the popularity of PDFs, Adobe then created a free 'Reader' available to all. As suggested in the name, this makes PDFs readable (but not to any great extent anyway, editable) by anyone.
- If you've ever sent a carefully constructed Word document to a friend only to find that on their PC all the original fonts have come out wrong and the layout looks like a horrific mess, then you'll understand why PDFs are so useful. Manufacturers can distribute cheap, digital versions of printed instruction manuals, safe in the knowledge that anyone with a PDF reader program will be able to view the document exactly as it was initially intended. PDFs can also be useful for brochures, forms, legal documents, ebooks, digital magazines and more. At home, PDFs are great for newsletters, party invites and just about any other type of document that you want to share with others, either online or attached to an email.
- **How to read a PDF.** First of all, you need a PDF 'reader'. Some PCs and Laptops come ready installed with PDF reader software. If not, it is easy to download the free Adobe Reader software. We saw how to download and install from here.... <http://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/?promoid=DAFYK>
- Next we had a couple of examples of how PDFs are used by companies to provide information that can be downloaded from the web. Attached is the PDF from the ComputerActive web site; for practice, see if you can get it yourself from here <http://tinyurl.com/staru3a-CA-PDF-Exercise>
- Whilst the Adobe Reader is the defacto standard, it can be rather hungry in using system resources and sometimes rather slow. There are some leaner alternatives, a very good free one is the Visagesoft, eXpert PDF Reader, <http://www.visagesoft.com/products/pdfreader/> .
- **It is most useful to make your own PDFs.** Adobe Acrobat is too expensive for the domestic user but there are alternatives. If you have MS Office 2010 or the free 'Open Office', these both have built-in converters. For Office 2007 there is a free download. This download allows you to export and save to the PDF format in eight 2007 Microsoft Office programs. It also allows you to send the PDFs as e-mail attachments. Here is the link.... <http://tinyurl.com/259wdd4> .
- For earlier versions of Office or any other program with a print option, there is 'PDF Converter', <http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator/files/> which installs as a 'printer' option in the printer dialogue box. (Make sure when you are installing this programme that you uncheck the 'browser add-on' option)
- **Finally**, we saw how PDFs can be easily made from printed documents using the standard software that comes with every scanner.

## Next meeting, Monday 9th May

We are, of course, back at Stowupland School for this session. **Roy Fidler** will be taking us to the next stage of photo manipulation in PhotoShop Elements. Make sure that you bring a USB stick should you wish to take examples of your work away with you.