

# The Aspect Diary



Some further notes on our office move:

(1) Even after we'd advised every customer & supplier that we'd moved to Unit 14 so that all deliveries & letters arrived addressed to Unit 14, the postman & carriers still dutifully brought everything to Unit 28. Perhaps we should've moved farther, so as not to confuse them on their normal delivery round.

(2) I took a photo of the old electric meter reading on the day we moved out. No lights on, no computers anymore & it's still ticking over. Hmmmm. Flipped all the fuses to off. Still ticking over. I was starting to worry, till I realised it was set on displaying the time & I was watching the seconds tick past. Look, I was tired that day, OK?

(3) Quite what possessed me to let Steve hang the mirror in the toilet, I can't imagine. In flats, I can see my hairline. In heels, the bridge of my nose. He reckoned he bent down when he fitted it as well. Not far enough, sunshine, not far enough....

As promised in the last newsletter, we have Tweeted. Not a lot, but just to alert our followers to scam emails & other issues. ("Our followers" always sounds arrogant, but hey, even lemmings have followers). There seem to be a lot more of you on Facebook than Twitter though, so we will try to get that alive & kicking again too.

As you'll have seen inside, we've been recruiting since the last issue & it produced a mixed bag, just shy of 200 applicants. There were the extremely good & then there were .... Well, let's just say that considering we stressed how much we needed accuracy & attention to detail, talking about 'finals' and inputting 'dater' on one's CV puts it straight in the "No" pile. Oh & the gentleman who hoped we could offer him a position that would "animate his excitement"? That prompted the creation of a special "Hell, no" pile.

So! How well did we Brits cope with the heatwave in June then...? The roads melted, the trains were on a go-slow in case the tracks buckled, the population had collective sleep deprivation & some poor guardsman passed out during Trooping the Colour (which jolly well carried on & ignored him lying there face-down in the dust. With supreme sangfroid, they didn't even break rank by so much as an inch to accommodate the turning circle of the stretcher). Anyway, at the time of writing, normal summer has been restored & we all know where we stand again (ie. under an umbrella). Typically, we invested in some extra fans which arrived the day the weather broke. Oh well, they'll always do for next year.

Just had an email, ostensibly from a supplier, changing all their bank account details. Except the email address wasn't theirs in any shape or form. So, as you do, we rang to check. It was genuine, but they admitted they'd had hundreds of similar calls from clients who didn't trust the information. So there you are - maybe we ARE all getting smarter when it comes to this sort of thing.

Well that's a wrap for this edition. See you (sometime) in Autumn!

# The Last Laugh

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## Customer Service Department



"No, I'm not angry at you, sir. I'm angry at the random act of fate that directed your call to my extension."



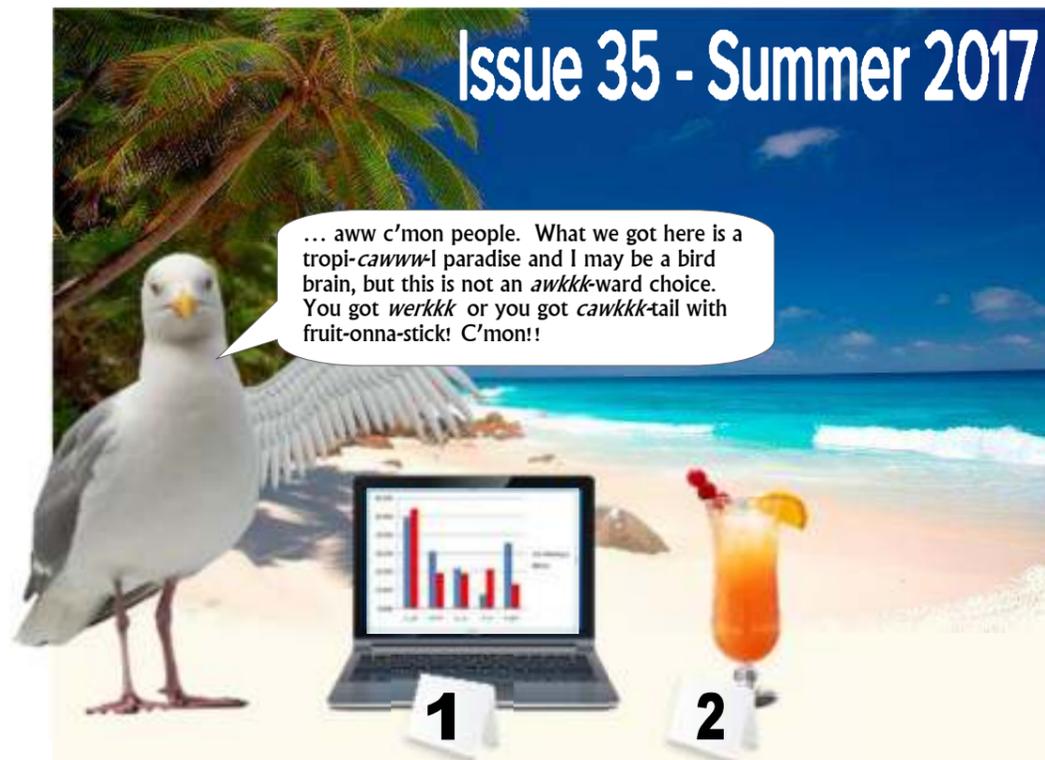
"It keeps me from looking at my phone every two seconds."



"For helpful service, press 1. If you believe that the customer is always right no matter what, press any number you please and see where that gets you."

# The Aspect Newsletter

## Issue 35 - Summer 2017



## If you like Pina Coladas ...

... then take it up with the gull. He's brought you what appears to be a Tequila Sunrise. Oh, and may we offer a word of advice from bitter experience - if you spill that over your laptop keyboard, kiss the whole thing goodbye. The sugars in it gum up *everything*. Well not our *personal* bitter experience, you understand. Our experience in hardware support. (Phew. Good save ....)

So, welcome all and thank you for the feedback on the new website. Everyone agreed it looks much brighter and cleaner, and we've had the requisite amount of abuse over our photos, so we consider that a success all round. No comments on the new newsletter format, which sadly confirms for us that as long as there's a Helpdesk of Horror (or however we choose to title it) and as long as Vassilly is blogging, the rest of it is the written equivalent of muzak. Excuse us while we go and have a quiet cry in the corner now ....

Once again, this issue has a bit of a security bent (no, the liniment we tried last time didn't help). Cyber attacks have been a topic *du jour* lately, so we could hardly not address them now, could we? We're also giving you a master-class in spotting a fake email. All we'll say is, if you thought it was easy, think again.

Away from security issues, we say hello to a new staff member, plus we bombard you with loads of different phone numbers for contacting us. Turns out if you're on an 'inclusive' call package, 0845-numbers are likely *not* included, but luckily for you, if there's one thing we're not short of at Aspect, it's phone numbers.



Wishing you all a happy summer, or, if it turns out that scorching week in June was it, wishing you a happy season-which-cannot-be-categorised .... ☺

## What's inside

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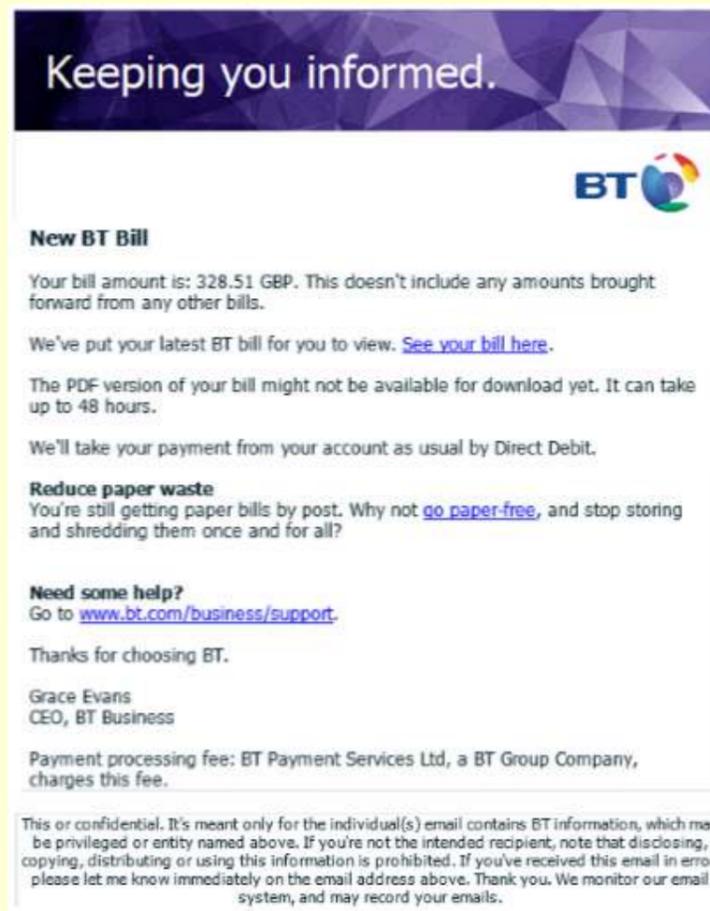
Registered in England & Wales  
Co reg number 6476805

# This email is **FAKE**. But how do you tell?

Just the one FAQ this time, but it's fairly topical.

These 'BT' bill emails popped up a lot recently (subsequently there was a bunch of Vodafone ones, and most recently, nPower too. Seems like they're having a stab at all the utilities). At first glance, they look remarkably genuine. So how do you tell that they're not?

(Well of course, if you're not actually *with* BT (or Vodafone, nPower etc), you would imagine that would be a clue, but we know of so many people who have clicked on emails telling them they had issues with their PayPal accounts .... "but do you even *have* a PayPal account?" "Umm... no.")



Before we start, we want to stress that you're looking for *any* of these pointers, not all of them. They're all just indicators to watch for.

All right then. So, first off, our Mail Protection service caught and quarantined these emails. And even when we released one so we could use it as an example here, it went to Junk Mail. So pretty good indicators there! But then of course, it doesn't 'read' these emails the way we do, so getting the look-and-feel right won't garner it any brownie points.

But OK, say something like this arrives in your mailbox. What are you looking for? Well, let's begin with who sent it. In this case (though you can't see this bit on our screen shot), it was :

[btbusiness@bt.com](mailto:btbusiness@bt.com) <[btbusiness@btconnect.info](mailto:btbusiness@btconnect.info)>

The first of these is the display name, ie. the name it purports to be. The second - in chevrons - is the actual sending address. And they're not the same, not even the same domain name. That's point one.

You should never just click on a link in an email, but it's all right to hover the mouse over it, see where it would *like* to try and send you. On this email, it was here:

```
https://prmintacc-my.sharepoint.com/
personal/estrella_intacc_com_au/_layouts/
15/guestaccess.aspx?
docid=0f88072991f3444cba473223e7bb5b
80d&authkey=afkwa1xifk89ibmkroxaumv
Click to follow link
```

Do you see the slightest mention of BT in there, anywhere? No, nor do we. Point two.

Point three. The grammar. In the main, it's really not bad, better than the average certainly. Likely the scammer has seen the genuine article at some point. There's a minor hiccup on "We've put your latest BT bill for you to view". Put it where? (Did you spot that mistake? Or did you skim right over and past it?) Anyway, if you continue down to the disclaimer at the bottom, well clearly that's where they lost interest in pretending. "This or confidential." Excuse me, what? "It's meant only for the individual(s) email contains BT information, which may be privileged or entity named above." OK, so they're not even trying now. Lots of typical disclaimer-y words, but no actual sense. But who normally reads that far?

Point four. And this was more evident simply because it *was* stopped by Mail Protection. We were sent at least half a dozen of these emails, to generic addresses including our service department. Why would BT address anything about billing *there*? Well the simple answer is, of course, *they* wouldn't. And didn't.

Point five. The amount was *waaaaay* too high for our bills. But then of course, that'd make you click to see the whole bill. No flies on them. (For information, the Vodafone scam emails quoted bill values that would make your eyes pop too. However, they also put a date on their emails - 01/06/2015 - which was another black mark).

But hopefully you can see now just how incredibly switched on you have to be. Honestly, you almost need to read your emails end-to-end as if you were going to be tested on them afterwards, because while there's still a raft of poorly-crafted, diabolically-written scam emails out there, they're the dinosaurs.

**Scams have evolved and they're walking upright now.**



## NHS Cyber Attack Could it happen to you?

Unless you were in a diving bell or in outer space in May, (or you get your news via Donald Trump's tweets) you can't have failed to hear about the cyber attacks that crippled the NHS.

So what lessons should be learned?

Well first off, Windows XP is no longer a secure operating system... Sorry, but this is a lesson that actually needs to be *learned*? Who didn't know? XP hasn't been secure for a long time, not since Microsoft stopped issuing security updates for it. Which is also the time the NHS - and others - should've given serious thought to upgrading ....

Unlike the previous ransomware we've told you about, which arrives on a PC and is essentially stuck there, this new variant can spot the Windows vulnerability on other PCs and jump across to infect those too. This has led to a lot of panic about the Windows vulnerability in question and a general clamour about whether people's machines have been updated to close the loophole. Most machines are set to automatically install critical Windows updates. There again, if you haven't rebooted your machine inside of a year, chances are it hasn't applied any updates in that time. A periodic reboot is essential. Once a week is good.

But what worried us most was the emphasis on "make sure your anti-virus is up-to-date and your machine is patched and you'll be fine". No. This would be missing a hugely important point. These viruses generally arrive in emails and no amount of patching is going to stop them turning up. If you think everything's hunky-dory because you applied some Windows updates, think again.

**You have to be aware of the threat from emails.** All the defences in the world won't stop a careless click, and one careless click is all it takes.

## Careless Clicks Cost.

As one expert put it at the time, there's an ABC to this:

**A**ssume nothing.  
**B**elieve no-one.  
**C**heck everything.



## Can I just interrupt you for a moment ...?

And speaking of highly-publicised IT disasters since the last issue, of course there was also British Airways and the infamous power outage with its estimated £80m price tag.

The fall-out from that one was still going on as we write, but it appears that while BA *had* uninterruptible power supplies (UPS), they got ... um, interrupted. The unconfirmed (at this time) story is that when the outage happened and power was switching over to the backup supply, something went wrong. Instead of switching over, the UPS was overridden, and power went off totally, so there was no controlled handover to the backup systems. And then, to compound the problem, it was turned back *on* in an uncontrolled fashion and sent the whole system into meltdown.

We've often preferred the term "business continuity" rather than *disaster* contingency, but .. well sometimes, you really do have to call a spade a spade.



We had dreadful trouble with a client's ADSL connection in May, but boy, when it came back, it really came back. And then some:

% Time online over this period **100.03%**

Is that even possible??

## Dude! Where's my attachment?!

We had a minor flurry of calls in mid-June from clients who were receiving emails, but minus the attachments. Outlook had blocked them as "potentially unsafe", but some of these were just PDFs. What was going on?

Well, it was a Windows/Office update on 14 June. Any email attachments with '!' in the filename, or ending in a full stop would now be blocked by Outlook.

The exclamation mark may not crop up so much, but be careful of photos, which can affix the date as part of the filename and if it's formatted as eg. dd.mm.yyyy. your filename could easily end in a full stop.



**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).

# Jargon Buster #27 - common acronyms

The Jargon Buster has suffered (enjoyed?) something of a hiatus. Enjoyed, probably. It's not a hiatus hernia. So! It's back! And we thought we'd occupy ourselves this time with some of the common acronyms you all bandy about without knowing what they are. We're coming at this from the assumption you might care. Long shot, granted.

We kick off with **PDF**, as in the file type that we attach to emails, and very often scan to, because it's so beautifully portable. Ha! A beautifully **Portable Document Format**, in fact.

What exactly does the **SIP** in **SIP trunk** mean? Well it stands for **Session Initiation Protocol**. (Bet you're sorry you asked now, aren't you? Oh right. You *didn't* ask. We're just flinging these things at you as they occur to us). If this isn't a term you bandy around, then FYI, SIP trunks are how you make phone calls across the internet instead of over a traditional phone line.

No, we're not going to explain **FYI** ....

Televisions and monitors: **LED** or **LCD**? Is there even a difference? Yes, there is. An **LCD** means **Liquid Crystal Display** and it doesn't produce its own light; it needs additional lighting (you may see references to eg. back-lit or edge-lit). **LED** means **Light-Emitting Diode** and it's a semiconductor that produces light from electricity. They're often used to back-light LCDs, in fact.



Broadband: **ADSL** or **VDSL**? The first is your typical broadband, or **Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line**, doing data transmission over copper telephone lines. OK, so now you also know what the DSL in VDSL stands for. But what's the V? **Very-high-bit-rate**. Bit of a cheat, *non?* Probably thought VHBRDSL would look like the cat had sat on the keyboard. You'll see routers being described as supporting VDSL and that's often taken to mean they support fibre-optic broadband, but in fact VDSL runs over copper wire, same as ADSL. Just faster, hence Superfast Broadband. So what of fibre-optic broadband? Well there's **FTTC** and **FTTP**. The first is **Fibre to the Cabinet**, and means quite literally that fibre is available in those green cabinets on the street. **FTTP**, on the other hand, is **Fibre to the Premises**, and means it's brought specifically to your door, making it a more expensive option, though the speeds can be hugely better.

When you work from home or from a remote office, you often connect back to home base (no, not to *Homebase* - we mean your main office, headquarters, central intelligence (may be pushing it there), whatever you want to call it) ... ANYWAY! You may well connect via **VPN**. This is a **Virtual Private Network** and is a secure way of accessing your office.

So there we are. Some of life's questions answered. But if there's something in particular you'd like to know, just ask. NB. We don't answer medical, philosophical or ethical questions. And we're not too hot on finishing a difficult Sudoku either.

Of course you could always Google. But we're more fun. (Hmmm... there's a new strapline:- Aspect. More fun than Googling).

## ♪ "Hello..? Is it me you're looking for?" ♪

(One of our supplier account managers used to sing this to us whenever we answered the phone, so in case he's reading this - as he is wont to do - mentioning it here doesn't mean we miss it, OK?)

We've always advertised our 0845-number as the best way to get in touch (**08458 277 328** ie. 08458-**ASPECT**) but changes to the ways lots of providers charge mean that it's not always the bargain it used to be. On a normal landline package, it's still charged at local call rates, but if you're on a mobile or on SIP trunks, it wouldn't be unusual for your call package to include all 01-, 02- and 03-numbers, plus UK mobiles. But 08-numbers can attract charges (not 0800 freefone numbers, mind). So here's some of the different numbers you can use to contact us, depending what suits you best or what you find easiest to remember:

**08458 277 328**

**01656 721 208**

**01656 838 138**

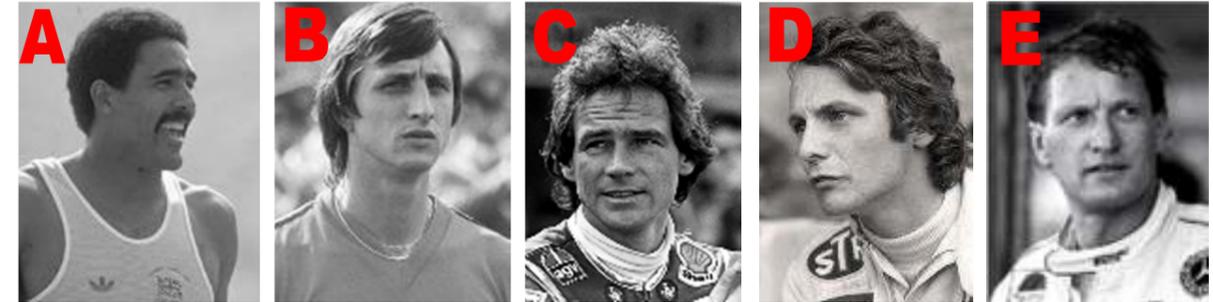


# "This Sporting Life" quiz!

Dearie me. It turns out scientists and inventors were a bit tricky for lots of you too. Gee whiz. You don't like literature, you can't stand geography, we kind of exhausted movies for the time being ... what else is there? Sport! We'll do sport!! All righty then.

Here we have photos of some very famous sportsmen (we'll do women next time), and to level the playing field (sporting reference, geddit?) we've made them all black and white to disguise the era (no disguising some of those hairstyles though). We have given you an additional clue by way of their actual sport. Put their surnames into the grid, and reading down the blue squares will give you the name of one of *the* all-time greats.

Answers on the website, with the link on the newsletter page.



Athletics

Football

Motorcycle Racing

Motor Racing

Downhill Skiing



Cricket

Baseball

Tennis

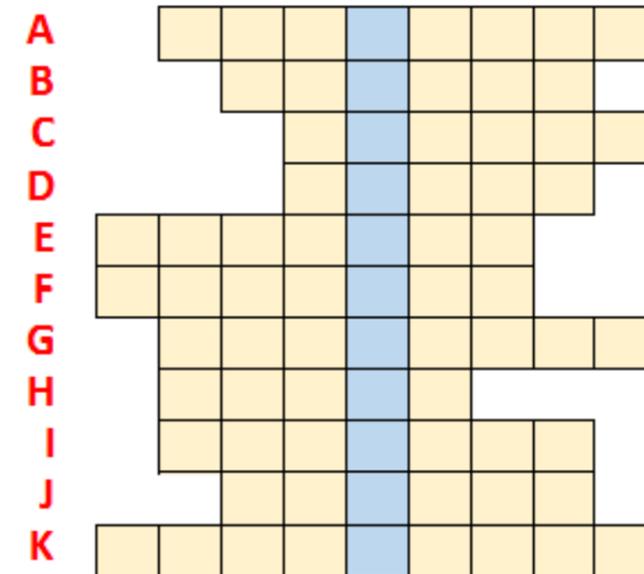
Rugby Union



Golf



Athletics



Arguing with a woman is like reading the Software License agreement.



In the end you have to ignore everything and click "I agree".

SHARED ON IM NOT RIGHT IN THE HEAD.COM

## New to Aspect



We'd like to bid a warm welcome to our new Admin Assistant, **Louise McIntyre**, who joins us on 3 July.

Louise hails from Pyle and has loads of experience in admin roles, including employment many moons ago with a client of ours, so that's been a happy reunion. She's a keen cook, grows a lot of her own produce and has recently fulfilled a long-held ambition to learn horse-riding too. We're delighted to have her joining us.

It does, however, prompt a couple of messages to our clients:

(1) To those of you who typically launch straight into light-hearted insults the moment the phone is answered here:- in future, best make sure you have the correct insultee first.

(2) While it might have been sufficient to begin a phone call with "hello, it's me" previously, Louise might appreciate a little bit more detail, at least initially.

## Vassilly's Blog

Tues 2 May

So we are all moved into new offices! Bogdan say is very cool and I am notice definite draught round tail end too. IT Boss Man say is still little bit of work to do. He say is better if I am go back into office and shut door. I ask if this is make it warmer, but he say no - it is just mean he is not have to listen to me.

Fri 5 May

We are have new chairs!! We are start off full of excites, until Payrolls lady is explain we are have to put them together. Q. How many 'kats is it take to put together chair? A. Three, and chair back is still face backwards. IT Boss Man say is knack to it. Is called having a clue.

Thurs 11 May

We are have busy week of hardwaring. Is many computermabobs on new workshop bench and is all looking very techie and full of impressiveness. But I am point out to IT Boss Man that workbench is very much too high for me. He say he is have something to point out too. Is new sign on door of workshop:



Fri 12 May

IT Boss Man is come out of workshops and everyone is drink coffee what I am make. He is ask why he is not get one. I am make gesture to sign on door. And make different gesture with other paw. Do not be crossing a meerkat, peoples.

Mon 22 May

Payrolls lady is advertise for new admin-type-person. Sergei say he is have great-niece who is look for job, so Payrolls lady is ask if she is good with computermabobs. Sergei say carefully that companies with computermabobs is usually give her big bonus. Eventually, he is admit that bonus is if she is agree not to touch them. Ahhh, is *that* great-niece. Svetlana. Otherwise known as great Meerkovo banking crash of 2010.



Tues 30 May

I am hope we are leave twitchy-nosed rabbit behind, but no - he is move with us! Will be more silly "ahhhh" noises and comments about sweet little whiskers. Grrrr!!

Mon 5 June

Here is question for you, peoples: if we are get month of rain today, why for is it rain last week? Which month's rain is we get?

Tues 6 June

We are do interviewings this week! ... What? Oh. Apparently only Payrolls lady is do interviewings this week. So I am persona non gratin, huh? (... Really? She say this means I am have no cheese on top. Hunh). I say but what if it is turning out that they is not care for meerkats? IT Boss Man is shout across that he is liking them better already.

Fri 9 June

UK is have election yesterday and I am glad that I am not have vote because I am not understanding any of it. Party that is win is have bad result and party that is lose is have good result. Is easier in Kalahari, peoples. Most races is decided by quick bite to back of neck. Biter wins. Bitee loses. Simples. (Ah, you are notice I am still say 'simples'. Yes, sometimes I am forget and talk like immigrant 'kat fresh off boat, but I am here long time now so usually I am speak with perfect Englishisms like Her Majesticness the Queen).

Fri 16 June

♪ *Planes and boats and trains* ... ♪ I am phone around but apparently I am being banned by all of them. OK, so you are remember teensy incident with Ryanair two years ago, yes? Well then I am have very minor incident on P&O ferry last spring, when I am do scene from *Titanic*. No, not one on prow of ship. Is one where she is fall off back of ship and hang over propeller. And they is complain! THEY is complain! I am hang there for three hours, peoples, but are you hear me complain? No. And as for train, well!!! Little sign say in event of emergency to pull cord. I am ask you, what is lack of Kit-Kat in buffet car if not emergency? So is look like is another staycation in Wales. Happy holidays, loyal fans!!!



## The Helpdesk of HORROR ...

These come from the archives of ten to twelve years ago, but somehow we doubt you'd be surprised if we said they were from this year. Users aren't necessarily getting any smarter....



"I have a problem with my printer."  
"Oh, okay. What seems to be the problem?"  
"Well I was messing about with a blowtorch. And now the whole side of the printer is gone."

"This program has stopped working."  
"Okay, you'll need to go to your Task Manager and kill the process."  
"Oh. All right. Who's my Task Manager?"

"Okay then, so down by the clock ...."  
"Where?"  
"The clock. Bottom right corner of the screen."  
"I don't have a clock."  
"Yes you do. Bottom right. The very bottom of the screen."  
"No."  
"Yes."  
"I don't have a clock!"  
"Well if you haven't a clock, what do you have?"  
"I've got something that tells me the time! .... Ohhh, I see. I thought you meant a clock with a face and hands."

"I've scanned this document and I'm trying to email it but it says it's too big."  
[On checking ...] "Well it is a massive file."  
"Yeah, so what are you going to do about it?"  
"We're just your ISP, sir. Maybe you should try lowering the resolution on your scanner so the file is smaller."  
"How do I do that?"  
"Sir, you'd need to speak to your scanner manufacturer. We don't support your scanner."  
"Yeah well it's 10pm and they're not open. What if I came down there and banged on your desks, huh, would you help me then?"  
"Banging on our desks will not help."  
"So you want me to get in my car and drive this document across three states? Is that what you want? I won't get any sleep you know."  
"Perhaps you could post or fax it?"  
"Your internet service doesn't do what it promises!! I should come down there and bang on your desks. Should I? See how high your staplers jump?"  
"We don't have staplers, sir. But thank you for calling. Have a nice night."

"I keep getting taken to this page that asks for my username and password."  
"Did you try entering your username and password?"  
"No, because I know what the problem is. It's because of the static electricity coming from my body, isn't it?"  
"No-ooo, that page has appeared because of the wrong username and password in your connection."  
"No, I don't think so. If I move somewhere where there's less metal objects, this will be fixed, won't it?"  
"It will be *fixed* if you retype your username and password, ma'am."  
"No no no. It's the static electricity in my body causing this. Could you recommend a good town to move to, to stop this?"  
"No, all I can recommend is that you retype your username and password and try to connect again."  
"No. I think I might turn off the computer." [Click]

"Right, let's talk you through getting this account set up. Where it says 'Your Name', type in your name."  
"Uhhh .... what is that? I'm not very good with this computer stuff."  
"... your name?"  
"Yeah, what do I put there? Sorry, you're going to have to go easy on me. Like I said, I'm not computer literate."

"I'd like to cancel my internet subscription please."  
"Oh, well I can do that for you, but can I ask why?"  
"I just don't really use it."  
"No problem, I'll cancel the service now."  
[Next day ...]  
"My username and password aren't working when I try to check my email."  
"Well no, they wouldn't. You asked us to cancel the service."  
"Oh but I only wanted you to turn off my access to web pages. I hardly ever go on the web. But I use my email all the time!"

"I can't get my new printer to work."  
"Did it come with a driver disk? A CD?"  
"Yes, but I couldn't see where to put it in the printer."

"Hi, I've got a problem with my computer ... oh... no, wait, no, it's okay now. I think it was a short in my mouse mat."

"I've been working with networks for years, and I'm a specialist, so don't &!\*\$ with me! I can't connect to the internet, but my settings are all okay. It must be your fault".  
"Well in that case, can you type in 'ipconfig' and tell me your IP address?"  
"What's an IP address? I've never heard of this before."