The Aspect Diary

We've been recruiting again. You may choose to read that sentence in a happy-clappy voice, or to imbue it with the knell of doom that would be closer to the manner in which we wrote it. You'll gather we haven't found the right person yet - anyone know a support engineer who fancies a move?? We're lovely people to work for, truly, just rather exacting in our requirements.

Leaving aside our lack of success so far, the exercise has reinforced our suspicion that 50% of a candidate's CV content is utterly wasted on us. Mission statement? Don't care. Hobbies & interests? Unless you have a seriously creepy hobby that we might be grateful to have a heads-up about, what you get up to in your spare time is your business. Education? Long as you've got some, we're good. We know people take a long time to craft their CVs (well most do. What some others were thinking when they put theirs together, we have no idea. Certainly didn't seem to be attracting an employer). But anyway, for roles like these, I'm afraid we just jump straight to the work experience. Once we've established you're worth looking at, only then might we worry if you're a closet line dancer.

In amongst the recent round of candidates seeking our approval (& failing to find it) were the person proudly citing experience of Office 360 (it's 365), the person who used to be Class Reprehensive & the person who, with no experience or qualifications for the job whatsoever, said he was seeking a salary up to £109,999 ... Aren't we all, dear. Aren't we all.

Moving on

Steve & I attended a seminar in Cardiff at the end of April, run by our biggest supplier, Ingram Micro, with participation from Microsoft. It was all really interesting, but the highlight of the evening was the magician who entertained us through dinner & far beyond. Michael Gee is one of those close-contact magicians, like Dynamo, who does magic tricks & mind reading right in front of you & you have no clue how. Everyone there spent the night goggling in disbelief. (Take it from us - picking the card you chose out of a pack is impressive. Tapping the top of the deck with a spoon & having the card leap out from the middle of the deck & shoot across the table is something else again).

GDPR arrived with us amid an absolute avalanche of ultra-last-minute consent emails. And as we commented on the front page, did we see a resulting fall in unsolicited emails after 25 May? Yeah, right. If we were of a mind to, we could tear strips off all these people for ignoring the rules, but frankly who's got the time or the energy? And that's assuming they're the kind of sender who might actually give a hoot: - "Hope this email finds in you good healthy. We need serious business with your esteemed company". (Oh & trust us - there is no email so inane or self-evidently fake that someone, somewhere won't click on it. Strangely, they always say they didn't, though, so perhaps it's the mice that declared UDI).

And that's your lot folks. Enjoy your holidays (those of you who are having them) & if any surplus Toblerone should fall into your Duty Free bags, we'll give it a good home. Briefly.

The Last Laugh



"My smartphone helps me be a lot more productive. Especially when I turn it off."





After all our online chats,



"I was never much of a high-tech person, so I was suprised when they uploaded me to a cloud!

AS DECT NOWS DECEMBER 2018



Hello? ... is it me you're looking for...?

... because the message we're trying to get across is:- always make sure you're dealing with the genuine article. People will try any angle, pretend to be anything, to get you to do things you shouldn't or divulge information you shouldn't. Don't let them make a monkey out of you. Speaking of which, we understand those callers from 'Microsoft' are back, poised to panic you into letting them on your PC. A variation on the theme is a caller from 'BT Connect' offering the same scam. They have names like Kevin and Stuart, but accents that imply those names would come as a surprise to their mothers. Perhaps they just liked the Minions...

Welcome to the Summer edition of the newsletter, once again serving as the demarcation between the Spring and Autumn editions. Let's face it, if left to the weather, we can never be 100% sure you'll notice it's summer, though it's boding well so far (well it was till we sent this to print, then it poured ^(a)).

As we find ourselves post-25 May, you'll undoubtedly have all your Data Generally Protected now, yes? Of course you do. And did we all notice a massive drop-off in spam levels after the 25th? Pffft! No of course we didn't. ("Consent? We don' need no stinkin' consent!") We were contacted by a number of companies who wanted to justify why they had eg. our company bank details and VAT number, which was sweet, but not strictly necessary under the auspices of GDPR (personal information, anyone??) But hey, at least the whole exercise concentrated people's minds and if they went a bit

overboard, well, better that than not bothering at all. But since GDPR and security generally are subjects that're going to run and run, we've got some more suggestions and products to tell you about inside.

Happy holidays everyone!

What's inside

I'm currently out of the office Are you? Are you really?	2
Secure emails Managing the info you send has never been so important. Luckily we can help.	2
Keeping your mail account secure Rules of best practice	4
Filtering spam How <i>do</i> they do it?	5
Domain scams Don't pay just because the email says so	6
Who ate my disk? Finding the culprit behind missing disk space.	7
The cycle of Win 10 and the end of Win 7. Seriously. For good. You've got a deadline. D-Day (month?) is Jan 2020.	7
When remote links fail Who you gonna call?	7

Regular Features	
ABC FAQs	2
Quiz page	3
Vassilly's Blog	4
Helpdesk of Horror	5
Jargon Buster	6
The Aspect Diary	8
The Last Laugh	8

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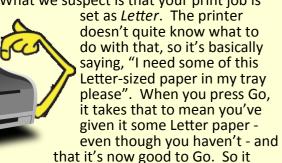
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Why do I have to press the 'Go' button on the printer to make my print job come

This sounds very much like a paper size issue. Printers are geared around A4 paper (or A3 if you have an A3 printer). They like A4 paper. As long as you send them a print job that's for one of those nice

standard sizes of paper, they're happy. Mhat we suspect is that your print job is



You need to go into the Page Setup on your document and check the Paper Size. Make sure it's set to A4 before you print.

My machine is frozen - I can't even turn

When a computer (or server even) is completely unresponsive like this, turning it off is the only option. But you can't just stab the power button the way you would to turn it on. You need to press and hold it until the machine goes off (five seconds or so, usually). Remember this is always the choice of last resort though.

I was typing an email, and all these little letters and numbers appeared on my menu - what happened?

Alt key, that's all. It **Key Tips** menu. which



gives each menu option a shortcut character. For example, Options is 'P' and if you press 'P' while the Key Tips are showing, it'll take you to the Options ribbon toolbar. Alternatively, click anywhere in the body of the email to make them go away.



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).

Automatic replies

It's that time of year when you gleefully declare to anyone emailing you that you're livin' da vida loca on a beach somewhere. Well OK, perhaps you just say you're Out of Office. Same thing. But you do *check* what yours says when you set it, don't you? So if you go away in July, yours doesn't say that you're away till 20 March? Because while that'll look like you're off to circumnavigate the globe several times over, it more likely just means you didn't change the dates from the last time you were away.

Remember as well that the Out of Office will only set if you also include a message to go to any internal senders. Never mind that there's only a handful of you in the company and you could' scarcely fail to notice your colleague earmarking their slot on the holiday calendar and printing off their boarding passes; you still need to cover both the internal and external bases.

Please also remember - as we say every year - the automatic reply will only go ONCE to each sender. So many times, people test that it's working by sending themselves an email, but not content with believing that, they send more periodically to make sure it's still working, and of course they don't get a reply anymore and decide

Oh, and if you don't preset the start and stop dates, do make sure to turn Automatic Replies off when you get back. It's confusing to have someone email you and be told when you reply that they're not actually there.

Email encryption



We know you have all your GDPR processes in place by now (just nod, OK?) but we'd like to mention a secure

emailing system that might be of interest, especially if you're in the financial sector.

Called **Cirius Deliveryslip**, it gives you the option to send an email securely, and with that option comes a lot of control: who can read it, whether they can forward it etc. The recipient can only read such emails from you by responding to an invitation to set up an account. Once their account is set up during the first correspondence, you'll be able to communicate securely with that person from then on.

Licensed per user, per month, Cirius Deliveryslip is an excellent way to securely send emails and files. Let us know if you'd like to hear more.

Where has all the disk space gone?

We've had a number of clients complaining that the disk space on their computer has dwindled away to nothing. Now if you're saving videos or other enormous graphics files, then you might expect that to happen. But if you're not, and moreover if you actually save pretty much everything to the server and not your PC at all well then, what's eating all the space?

Our money would be on your temporary files. But if they're temporary, you ask, why are they still there? It's a fair point. They ought to get cleared out automatically, but very often they're not.

So where do they come from in the first place? Windows and other software applications will create these files ahead of a installation or update. Then, if it goes wrong, it can roll itself back using these files, no harm done. But if the update goes OK, it doesn't need these files and they can be deleted. The software *ought* to do that itself, but as we said, more and more often these days, that's not happening. Windows 10, particularly, creates loads of temp files for its software updates and never seems to get rid of them. They accumulate at a rate of knots and before you know it, you can have hundreds of gigabytes of space just wasted.

All righty then, if it's down to you to do a manual clear up, where do you go to find the files? They live in C:\windows\temp and to be honest, anything you find in there can go. Even better, Windows has a built-in utility to do it. Click on the Start button, and in the search box, type Disk Cleanup and press Return. It'll do some assessing and tell you how much space it reckons it can recover for you, and if you OK it, it'll do just that.

You may be wondering why your server's disk space doesn't disappear in the same way, but the fact is, it does. There's just generally more of it so it takes longer to feel the impact. We'd recommend you let us tidy up the server though. In most cases, we'll already be monitoring your server and we'll know when disk space is getting critical.



Will Windows 10 be the end of Windows?

You may have read that there will be no new versions of Windows after Windows 10. So what does that mean, exactly? That what we have now will never change?

Well no, of course not. Microsoft will continue to develop and update Windows. But in terms of version 11, 12 etc coming along? No, you won't be seeing those.

So how will it work?

When Microsoft say there will be no new version, they mean you're not going to see another complete overhaul, such as the sea change from XP to Win 7, or Win 7 to 10. What you're going to get are twice-yearly updates. And as long as you're within a couple of revisions of the current one, your software is supported. Please note that if a major security flaw is spotted though, that'll be updated immediately; they're not going to wait until the next natural update point.

Now before you panic and think this means that instead of having a complete revamp every few years, you now get them *twice* a year, it's not like that. What you'll get are differential updates. That means there will be some tweaks and improvements, but only the files affected will be updated. These are smaller, incremental changes. Nothing to discombobulate you.

Do you have to accept the updates as they come along? No, you don't. As we said though, if you fall too far behind, you'll find your software unsupported.

Speaking of which

We did mention in the last issue that **Windows 7** is end of life now. But the date you need to keep in mind is **January 2020**. That's when <u>all</u> support for it stops. Goodbye security updates, hello vulnerability. Don't leave it to the last minute to upgrade your systems. Please, start thinking about it now.

Jan 2020

Remote connection not working?

For preference, when we're setting users up with remote access to their office PCs, we'll do it via a secure Windows VPN connection. We test it from here, all hunky-dory, then they go home to try it ... and it doesn't work. Or they'll be away on business and it suddenly won't work.

What's going on?

Well we can't say with absolute certainty for every case, but one of the most common reasons for the connection not working is that VPN pass -through isn't allowed on your router. Simply put, the firewall in the router won't let you make that kind of connection. For consumer routers, it's not at all unusual to come across this.

Talk to your internet service provider, ask them if the router they've given you has VPN pass-through enabled. It may be they can simply enable it, or it may mean they need to provide you with a different router.

If you're in a hotel or away on a cruise ship, your options may understandably be more limited, but talk to the staff anyway and explain that you want to make a VPN connection back to your office. They may be able to help.



Jargon Buster #29 - Domain Renewals

After one of our clients accidentally lost their domain name when it expired unnoticed, it's made us think that maybe a few words of advice are in order, so please move your seatbacks to the upright position and pay attention to this safety announcement oh and if anyone's unsure what their domain name is, well, it's that bit of your email address after the '@' sign, assuming you're not using a Hotmail address or similar. If you are, you can recline your seat and go back to sleep. (Only joking. We'll ring you up and test you).

OK, so you own a domain name. But 'own' is a deceptive word. It's more like you rent it, and at some point, you either pay to keep owning it, or you lose it. The typical registration period is two years, but it could be one year, five years, or more. What happens when you're coming up to renewal time depends who you're registered with, and the type of domain you have. Irrespective of both of those, at least one email reminder will be sent out prior to the domain renewing / expiring.

So here's the first thing you need to find out. Whose email address was used to register the domain? Because if it's someone who's since left the company, you need to make sure that you either change the registered email address - if you're able to (it's not always easy to do) - or you make sure that person's emails still go to someone.

Secondly, is the domain actually registered to *you* at all? Maybe your web design company took care of it all, maybe your IT support company. But you need to *know*. If it's allowed to expire, it's *your* website that will go down and *your* emails that will stop turning up.

Post-GDPR, we admit both of the above can be tricky. We can point you to sites that will give you information about your domain (see ** below), but with the clamp-down on Data Protection, they're not going to tell you an awful lot.

Moving on for now:- thirdly, what's the procedure on renewal? Some hosting companies automatically renew domains unless you actively say you don't want to. They'll use whatever credit/debit card is held on file. (So that's another thing - make sure you update any card details when yours expires). Other hosting companies take the opposite view: they will let domains *expire* automatically unless you actively say you want to keep them.

Next, be aware of the difference between **domain hosting** and **web hosting**. We've had a couple of clients who have renewed their web hosting, and subsequently ignored all the emails about domain hosting renewals, thinking they'd already done it. Web hosting is exactly what it says: you're paying for the space your website takes up on the hosting server. Renewing or paying for that has nothing to do with the renewal of your domain name.

So what if you don't renew, either deliberately or accidentally? Well if you have a .co.uk domain name, the good news is that the controlling agency for domain names, Nominet, will try their damnedest to track you down and make sure you really don't want it anymore. Granted, once the renewal date has come and gone, your domain will stop working if it hasn't been renewed, but Nominet will not release it into the marketplace for anyone else to grab until they have exhausted all attempts to contact you. With other domain names, eg. .com, it's very much you snooze, you lose. And if you do lose, then unless you're quick and/or lucky, someone else may snap it up. At that point, you can try appealing to Nominet. It's a slow process, but they can force someone to surrender a domain name, if they decide they have no legitimate claim to it. But if you own something like a .com, then remember that it's an internationally-used suffix. If you happen to trade as joebloggs.com, then if a Joe Bloggs in America manages to snap up your domain name, he can make a good case for keeping it.

- ** To gather what information you can about your domain:-
- If your domain name is .com, .net, .biz or .org, go to https://www.internic.net/whois.html
 - type in your domain name and click Submit. It will tell you who your domain is registered with (the Registrar), and when it's due to expire. Make a diary note, for your own information.
- If you have a .co.uk, .org.uk, .me.uk or .co domain, go to www.nominet.uk/whois enter
 your domain name and again, make a note of the Registrar and the expiry date when
 the results come back.

Finally, console yourselves with the fact that even Google famously managed to accidentally let their own *google.com* domain lapse. An ex-employee of theirs bought it for \$12. He wasn't allowed to own it for *long*, but still

... but who DO you pay?

As a sidebar to the above (or more precisely a bottom-bar, except that just sounds uncomfortable), be wary of random emails inviting you to renew your domain name. Make sure you know exactly who *ought* to be contacting you (ie. your Registrar) and when.

We've seen many official-looking emails inviting domain owners to pay renewal fees, but (a) they're not coming from the right organisation and therefore don't even host your domain and (b) they generally quote early renewal dates, in the hopes of getting your money before you get contacted by the real host company and realise you've been suckered. To cover themselves, these emails will say things like "it's time to send in your registration and save" ... "this notice is not an invoice, it's a courtesy reminder" but the whole thing is still put together to look as if you ought to be paying them money.

As we said above, post-GDPR, most of the contact information these scammers need has already been redacted from the online records but unfortunately many collected what they needed ahead of time.

More movie quotations quizi

Yes, you really do prefer to fill in grids, don't you? And you love movies. We have a winner. Oh, not in the sense of giving prizes. Tuh! Please! So here we go again - famous lines from famous films; 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 the clues are strewn about with no regard for alphabetical - or indeed any - order.

Answers on the website - follow the link from the newsletter page. ■ He's not the Messiah, he's a very naughty boy. L Well, what if there is **S** Let's put it on. ▲ Shaken, not stirred. Put what on? no tomorrow? There The last suit you'll wasn't one today. Q I'm gonna make him ever wear. The point is, ladies an offer he can't refuse. and gentlemen, that Mrs Robinson, greed, for lack of a you're trying to M Roads? Where we're better word, is good. seduce me! going, we don't need roads. D We're on a mission from God. • Infamy, infamy - they've all got it in for me! N A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice chianti. R Snakes. Why'd it have to be snakes? C Momma said life is like a box of chocolates. you never know what you're gonna get. D Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room. **G** They may take away our lives, but H If you let my they'll never take daughter go now, B Carpe diem. Seize the day, boys. F... Father to a our freedom! that'll be the end of Make your lives extraordinary. murdered son, it. I will not look for husband to a you, I will not murdered wife. pursue you. But if J I guess it comes down to a And I will have my you don't, I will look simple choice: Get busy living, or vengeance, in this for you, I will find I'm the king of get busy dying. life or the next. you, and I will kill the world! you.

Hosted Exchange Security

Following some issues we've encountered with a client lately, we'd like to offer some quick rules of good practice (for administrators particularly) when using hosted Microsoft Exchange.

First thing to consider is how beautifully accessible hosted applications are. You can access your account from anywhere. But that also puts an onus on you to keep all your devices secure. Works computer, home computer, laptop, smartphone ... anything you may have used to access your account becomes a potential vulnerability. So keep your anti-virus up to date and scan for malware regularly.

Secondly, when you set up a hosted Exchange account, you get an administrator login (the username will end .onmicrosoft.com) and while it's tempting to use your own email address and just make yourself an administrator, we'd advise against it. As we've mentioned in previous articles, it isn't difficult to determine people's email addresses. Often they're explicitly spelled out on company websites. But the onmicrosoft one isn't nearly as easy to guess, so you're adding a level of security right

We do understand how difficult it is to maintain different passwords for everything; we're all in the same boat. But using the same one for everything is like having one key for your house, office, car and safety deposit box. Lose control of it and everything is open to the thief. Similarly, for any of these types of administrative portals, we advise you don't tick the box for Remember Me. It's a bad idea on any portable or shared device.



Vassilly's Blog

Wed 4 April

I am not go to Scotland yet, loyal fans, but today I am go little bit oop north with IT Boss Man. I am think he is want me along for scintillating conversings on long journey but he say no. (Well, he is give me hard stare. Is same thing). He is want me to crawl through duct space between buildings to see if is clear!! I am think I am more than 'katual labour. (Hard stare). Am I not valued member of Aspects team now? (Hard stare).

Thurs 19 April

Is crazy-busy at Aspects. This is like normal busy, but with added GDPRs hoo-ha. Is all hands and paws on decks. Luckily today is also

full of summeryness, so we are bright-eyed, bushy-tailed and mustard keen. Even IT Boss Man. (Hard stare).

I am hope for promotings because Aspects is recruiting for support engineer. But Payrolls lady is say no. She say I am lacking specific thing for suitableness. I am ask what. She say 'everything'. For one, she say I am have difficult accent. (... mumble ..., mumble... pot ... kettle...)

Two weeks of no bloggings! I am full of sorryness loyal fans, but I am not have time to put paw to keyboard!! I am shin up so many ladder and crawl through so many pipe, I think I am stuck in game of Mousetrap.

I am sulk. Tomorrow is big royal wedding, and everyone say wedding party is all about diversuf... diversiff ... about peoples of all types. But am I get to take part? No! I am have you know I am make excellent page!! (Payrolls lady is mutter that I am not even make interesting footnote).

Is GDPRs day. Is also pay day. I am email Payrolls lady with my overtimes for month, but she say I am not have consents to be sending emailings to her! What?! She say (1) she is not interested in looking at my overtimes, (2) they is dubious services she is not want to give good money for, and (3) they is mostly fibbings anyways. Therefore they is come under unsolicited marketings, so instead of pay me, she is fine me £100!!!

Sergei is have big birthday today. He is 65, so adios Sergei!! We are have cakes and balloons and are have whip round to buy present. I am wave bye-bye with lump in throat (is maybe mistake to swallow half doughnut at once).

What the ...? Sergei is here again. He is decide he is not want to retire. Hunh. Then I am decide I am want whip round money back.

Is start of footballing World Cup. Meerkovo is not qualify. Again. But we are launch bid to host in 2034! Is half dozen fireworks left over from Millenniumumumum celebrations we can be using for opening ceremonies, and if smallest peoples is agree to stand at front, ground at Meerkovo High School is hold maybe 300 peoples. 350 if some is not mind standing in car park.

Time to be thinking about holidaymabobs. Since I am on no-fly list forever, maybe I am just stay in Wales and watch footballs. Anyways, Aspects colleagues say is going to be good summer in Wales. (Is this mean it is rain every other day instead of every day???) But okey-dokeys. If I am stay in Wales, then I am do Welsh things in the summer. I am announce that I am do barbecueings and I am invite all Aspects peoples!! Telecommmmms Boss Man is ask what they is need to bring. Payroll lady suggest they is bring clothes that is not labelled 'keep away from fire'. Bogdan is pause in typings and ask how many L's is in salmonella. Duh. I am not even serve fish.

Happy holidays loyal fans!!

The Helpdesk of HORROR

We confess we were getting worried. Our traditional source of stories had pretty much dried up and you know we won't ever stoop to embarrassing our clients with 'true' stories. But never fear! We've found another story source so we're good for a little while.

"Your anti-virus software has augrantined one of my emails!"

"It must have contained a virus then." "But I need that email!"

"Well you'll have to get in touch with the sender, ask him to clean his computer of viruses and re-send it." "You don't understand. I need this email NOW! Can't you just turn off the anti-virus long enough for me to get this email?"

"My phone turned itself off and won't turn back on again." "Have you tried turning the device off and back on again?" "If I could do that, we wouldn't be having this conversation."

"OK, let's try a reset on

your tablet. Press the

sleep/wake button and

the home button at the

holding them till you see

the [Brand] logo. Then

same time, and keep

let go."

"Yes, hello, I need some help with how to use this new phone.'

from?" "Yes. I just need to know how to

"....?? "

"OK..." ... [Bang! Crash!! Tinkle!] ... "Sir...??"

"Well I've let go like you told me, but now I've broken my tablet."

".... The one you're calling me

make calls on it."

"Hello, you're through to [ISP]." "Uhh., Hi. See, I met this man on the internet..."

"And...?" "I wondered if you could give me his number."

"My mouse isn't working." "Oh, OK, I'll bring along another one."

"Can you stop that annoving red light shining in my eyes too?"

".... ah, I think you might have your mouse upside down."

"Do you think my router might be leaking? "I'm sorry, what?" "Someone told me when

routers get old, they can start leaking gigabytes, and it's really unhealthy for us."

"Uhhh.... no."

"All right then, I've set you up with a temporary password. It's 'Password' with a capital P."

".... Umm, what was that again?"

"'Password', with a capital P." "It's not working ... capital P?"

"Yes, make sure the P in 'Password' is capitalised."

"I know what a capital letter is. But when I type 'PasswordwithacapitalP', I get an error."

"This booking software isn't working." "What's the problem?"

"I'm trying to change the departure date, but it doesn't let me do it." "What date are you trying to set?" "30 February."

"Hello, I can't login to my PC."

"Right, it looks like it's trying to login as the last tech who worked on it. You need to click the 'switch user' button."

"Yes, that's what he said, but it doesn't work." "Really?"

"No. There's two squares. One says [Technician] and the other says 'Login as other user."

"That's right. You want to login as other user."

"But I'm not 'other user'. I'm ME!"

The Good(mail), the Bad(mail), and the Ugly

Since we've moved our clients to slightly more aggressive spam filters in the last quarter, with more emails being quarantined than perhaps users were accustomed to, we've been asked just exactly how the filters work.

The first thing to understand is that spam filters don't 'read' an email the way a human would, so eg. if I write A5pect, your eyes will read Aspect, but a computer wouldn't (never buy a computer a personalised number plate. You'd be wasting your money). So don't expect a computer to recognise all the variations that can let naughty words through. No, we are not giving examples.

The fundamental thing, though, is that the filters assign every email a spam score. The higher the score, the more likely it'll be quarantined. We've already discovered several things that go towards a higher score, such as embedded links to web pages, spreadsheet or Word attachments, and sending addresses from 'free' accounts (Gmail, Hotmail etc) with content discussing financial details. Where these kinds of emails are the lifeblood of a business, we've had to try and get customised filtering policies built to suit, but it's still not an exact science. A custom policy will force lower scores against these particular criteria, but it's not to say that something else in an email won't bump the score up again.

Getting the email to flow smoothly for you, especially in the early days of a changeover like this, is very much a matter of tweaking whitelists, blacklists and policies till they work as you want them to. The filters need to be taught, so be patient if you can. Or at least fashion your cur5!ng and 5wear1ng into socially acceptable forms.