

# The Aspect Diary



We begin with a quick hark back to our Xmas party. As we (ie. Vassilly) mentioned, there was a casino. Whoever amassed the most value in chips at the end got a trophy. Well as it turned out, that was Gareth, the Blackjack Fiend, on 4,600. Unfortunately, he was a late runner & they'd already awarded the trophy to someone else on 3,000. Considering they'd publicly awarded the trophy amid applause & all that, the croupiers rightly felt that it possibly wouldn't be in the spirit of Xmas to go ask for it back. So Gareth had to be content in the quiet knowledge that he'd won. All the same ... he wuz robbed.

We started the year up against the conundrum that is Steve's handwriting. 2 Jan, he'd scooted off to site & accidentally left behind the product codes he needed, which he'd jotted down on a piece of paper. "Type them up & email them to me", he says. Yeah. Right. So we start with a 6. Or maybe a G. Then there's something that might be a 4 or a K that fell over. Then 2 .... or equally possibly Z. Then an M, definitely an M, followed by something that might be a U with a funny tail or perhaps a W that he lost interest in halfway through. Yeesh. The Enigma coding machine had nothing on him.

Speaking of not being able to make head nor tail of what's in front of us, the portal for our anti-virus software started defaulting to Spanish in Jan, for no good reason that anyone could determine. Did we know that the Spanish for password was contraseña? No, but since we knew where the login boxes were positioned, it wasn't rocket science. Ditto a Captcha labelled 'no soy un robot'. Beyond that, it was a bit of a struggle. Sí, lo era!

We have a new management team looking after us at one of our suppliers. "At your disposal 24/5" ... mmmm, just doesn't have the same ring to it, does it?

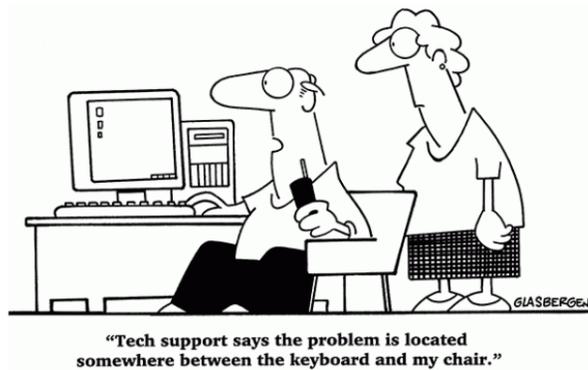
A letter turned up recently - brown envelope (never a good omen), addressed to the Directors, the header "Supreme Court" in bold visible in the window .... Gulp. Yeah, it was unsolicited blurb on a seminar on employee relations following a Supreme Court ruling on tribunals. Great. Thanks for that. I'll just pull my heart back up out of my stomach, eh?

We sign off as we opened on page 1, with an acknowledgement of the trying times we all face. We're lucky that we're able to work from home to a great degree & we've tried to assist as many of you as we can to do the same, but we know it's not a viable option for everyone. Those of you in the hospitality & leisure industry have been particularly hard hit & we feel for you. We hope that you're all able to weather the storm & that you'll all be with us on the other side of this. Albeit possibly 2 metres away still.

Our very best to you & yours. Keep well & keep safe.



# The Last Laugh



# The Aspect Newsletter

Issue 46 - Spring 2020

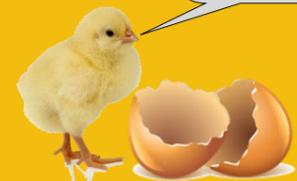


A golden welcome, one and all, to a new year, a new decade and to the 46th edition of the Aspect newsletter. And to the strangest version of Britain any of us have ever seen.

We've truncated the newsletter a bit, in order to get it issued and let you all know we're thinking of you. At the time of writing, it's looking like this issue will be online only - no point in posting it to your offices if you're not there. Coronavirus has hit everyone, whether they've contracted it, know someone who has, or not. We've certainly had a pretty stressful time trying to get people geared up to work from home in a very short time window. It would be so much easier if coronavirus had a very distinct symptom, like maybe your right eyelid could twitch to the beat of *Night Fever* or something. That would help enormously to distinguish it from the normal colds and flu. Like everyone else, we've been following the ever-changing medical advice, which - in the rush to post it online - has often resulted in some bizarre headlines. We spotted in mid-March that those displaying symptoms must consent to having their nose and throat swapped. Whether this meant with another person, or swapping your nose for your throat and vice versa wasn't made clear.

Know that we're still here to support you, we're just not making on-site visits. And please, can we take this opportunity to thank our clients for their patience and pragmatism through all this. We did see it mooted online that the crisis had brought out the best in 75% of us, the idiotic in 20% of us and the utterly moronic in 5%. Heartfelt thanks to all of our clients for being in the 75%.

Stay safe. Stay home. And wash your hands!!



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Ye-e-es, sorry, you need to self-isolate. Can you go back in?

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# AspectBC FAQs

## Why can't I get this machine to accept my password? I know I'm typing it correctly!!

If your password has any numbers in it, then we would always, always recommend you use the numbers above the QWERTY keys rather than the numeric keypad. Reason is that if the Num Lock isn't depressed (woe is it!), then you're not getting numbers from the numeric keypad, just left, right, up, down, Home, End etc. But since you can't see what's being typed, you don't know they're not coming out. Use the numbers above the QWERTY keys - you can depend on them.



## The latest Windows update has broken my PC!!

It happens, sadly. You let Windows update overnight, come in next day and find that odd bits and pieces don't work anymore. It's really, *really* annoying.

The only real recourse is to roll your PC back to a point before the update. So click on the [Windows](#) symbol (bottom left corner) and then on the cog wheel just above it (for [Settings](#)). From the resulting menu, choose [Update & Security](#) (bottom row, in the middle). And from the left-hand menu on the next screen, choose [Recovery](#). And you can opt to have your machine go back to before the update. As long as you do it within 10 days of the offending update having been applied. Emphasis on 'offending'.

Tempting though it might be not to apply Windows updates because of their regrettable tendency to break things, it's not an option, folks. Even though Windows 10 is the last operating system there's going to be, it still brings out major updates twice a year. Fall too far behind, and Microsoft won't be supporting the version you're running. It'll be like Windows 7 all over again.



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

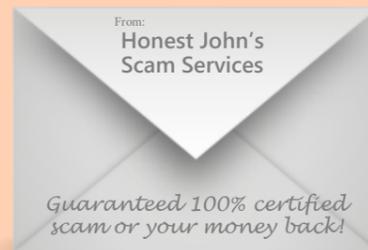
(Recent issues are on the website if you missed them).

## Trust me - I'm a low-down, lying scammer

We noted a new entry in the Scam Email panoply in January. The general gist of it wasn't anything particularly new - an attached 'remittance' in dollars (several thousand of them, allegedly). But what we really liked was the text at the beginning, highlighted lest you should overlook it...

“ [This message came from a trusted source. Attachment and links are safe]”

Yeah.  
No.



## Leesten Verree Carefully, I shall say Zis only wance

(For those of you who've never seen 'Allo 'Allo, that will make no sense whatsoever).

Those of you using our Email anti-spam/anti-virus protection will be used to receiving a number of Spam Digests each day, showing emails that have landed in quarantine.

Can we just stress that an email that gets itself quarantined **will only appear in the very next Digest report** that comes out. It'll stay in the actual quarantine for two weeks, so if you think you've missed something, you can ask us, or your own administrator, to go look for it. But as for the Digests ... you will see it only once. (Or only wance. And good moaning to you).

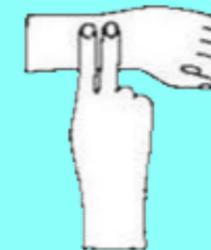
Of course if, some days later, you still happen to *have* the Digest report it appeared in, you can still release it from there.

So, rule of thumb:

- Any email will only be in one Digest report.
- Two weeks, and it'll be gone from the overall quarantine too.

There's a temptation to think of the Digests as a list of the junk that's come your way and assume there'll be nothing worth looking at in there. **But you do need to look.** Not everything gets categorised correctly.

## “ Yes, hi, I've got a computer problem. Uh-huh. Three words. First word, two syllables ... first syllable, sounds like ...”



All right, no, it's not quite that bad, but we really could do with having to do a bit less guesswork sometimes on the old support tickets.

If you've rung in with your issue, obviously it gives us the opportunity to engage in a dialogue, so we can quiz you for more information. But when you email, all we get is what you tell us. And "my PC isn't working", for example, doesn't give us a whole lot to go on. Can we also just say, we especially like "my PC isn't working - I've gone into a meeting but I've left it on for you" because while we appreciate getting free rein on the machine, it would've been nice to be able to engage with you to find out what's actually *wrong*. After all, "isn't working" could mean we aren't going to be able to connect to it anyway, or it could mean it fails to do something specifically and without knowing what it is you're trying to do and can't, we're at a bit of a loss.

So if we could just ask, please:-

- What, *exactly*, doesn't work?
- What were you doing when the problem happened? (This isn't us trying to put the blame on you. It might be important what program you'd just launched, or that you'd just send a print job. Or - for example - if you were away from your desk and came back to find an issue, then we might be looking at something happening when the PC goes into hibernation).
- Give us error messages, if you've got them.
- Give us screenshots of the problem (they don't say a picture paints a thousand words for nothing).
- Is the problem yours alone, or are any of your colleagues affected?

All information helps. Computers aren't the easiest things to diagnose, unfortunately. Even when it seems they're being helpful and giving you an error code as they crash on you for the umpteenth time, sod's law says it'll be one of those codes that, when you look it up, says "*we-e-e-ll* now, it could be this. *Or-rrrr*, it could be this. There again, it could also be this. Or this. Ooooh, might even be this...."

## Going ... going ... not quite gone?

At the risk of moving on to a topic that you won't much care about right now ... have we all got rid of our Windows 7 machines and 2008 / SBS 2011 servers? Come on, show of hands (washed hands only, please).... you there, trying to hide at the back.. yes, *you* - have you sorted yourself out yet?

If you run software that won't work with Win10 then we do understand your predicament (especially if a new purchase or rewrite will be horrifically expensive), but it is something you really need to address. And as soon as you can., present extenuating circumstances permitting.

If you are truly stuck for the moment, then can we strongly recommend that a Windows 7 machine is never used to access your online banking, nor for email if at all possible? The more you can isolate Win7 machines from the internet and therefore from any potential attack, the better.

That doesn't mean you've got a workaround to avoid upgrading. Windows 7 is a definite security vulnerability, and there's no question it will be actively targeted by all manner of attackers. We saw what happened to the NHS systems still using Windows XP (and what odds would you take that they still *are* using it?) If you can't wholly dispense with Win7 in the short term, then you need to work a lot smarter till you're able to upgrade.



Yes, we know keyboards don't have to be ditched - it's poetic licence, OK?

# Jargon Buster #34 - Monitor Ports

With so many people opting to run dual monitors (or even triple!) these days, we find ourselves doing a lot of matching between the ports available on users' PCs and the ports that come on their monitors. Sometimes, if we're being especially cruel, we challenge clients to tell us what kind of connectors they've got. Would you know just looking at them??

Well first up, we have **VGA**. That's the traditional analogue connector and looks like this at the PC end:



(At the risk of embarking on an explanation we're really not sure we want to get into, this is the **female** connector. The **male** end has the pins. Birds and bees, people, c'mon, don't make us draw you a picture ...)

Moving on to the digital connectors, we've got **HDMI** next:



It's often actually labelled 'HDMI' (and you may well say 'duh' but helpful labelling on computers is far from a foregone conclusion).

Another type of digital connector is **DVI**:



... although there is an analogue version of it too, but instead of having that little 'minus' sign at the end of the connector, the analogue one has a 'plus' sign with squares in each segment, like this:



Finally, we have DisplayPort:



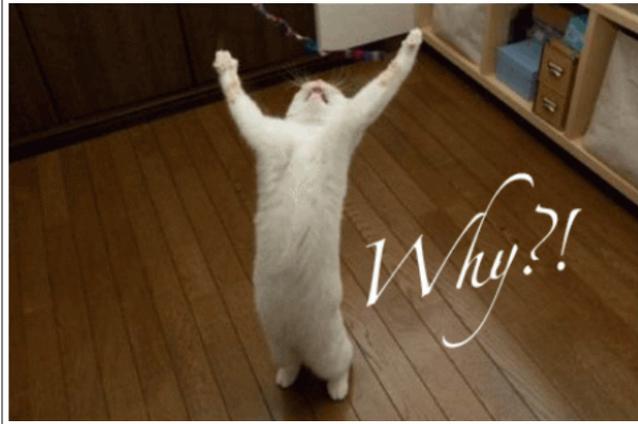
... and Mini DisplayPort ...:



... both of which are much beloved by Dell. A DisplayPort cable can look awfully like an HDMI cable, but DisplayPort only has that cutaway on the one corner.

# ".. and the Dumb Rethink of the Year Award goes to ..."

We notice that a recent MS Office update has changed the Outlook ribbon bar when you're creating appointments. Where the Save & Close button used to be, they have decided instead to put .... the Delete button.



# ///pickle.casual.blocks

Yes, indeed.

We're a bit late to the party on this one, but if you're not aware of this app, it's called **What 3 Words**. Some bright spark divided the world into 57 trillion squares, 10 feet by 10 feet, and assigned them all three random words. Turns out they only needed about 40,000 words to cover every square too.

With the app on your phone, if you ever get lost, need help and don't know where you are, giving the emergency services the three words for your location will let them pinpoint you easily and quickly. The emergency services in England and Wales have been signed up to it since October of last year.

We notice that hotels and the like are also providing their three words on their website directions, since Sat Nav and postcodes can't be relied on to get you to the doorstep. And apparently the Mercedes A-Class has had it built-in since 2018.

(Not terrifically pleased to find that two of the words for my home are Short Lush - yes, seriously - but it seems a clever idea in principle).



# The name is Quiz. Aspect Quiz ...

Bond is back!! Yes, we've got a new 007 film this year (just not sure when we might see it), so we thought we'd mark the occasion. Below we're giving you some clues to various Bond films, namely the **character** names for one of the **Bond girls** (excuse the non-PC reference), **the villain**, plus the **singer(s)** of the theme song. Almost the entire back catalogue is here, but we'll tell you right now

that we did refrain from using one particular film .... When the baddie's name is Auric Goldfinger, it's not a great leap to the film title now, is it? Put the movie titles in the grid, and the blue squares will spell out another Bond movie (we haven't given lines to delineate any of the words, so remember where you need 'The' or 'A' in the titles!) As we're wont to do, we've scattered the clues around the page so you feel like you've had more of a brain workout.

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

A crossword puzzle grid with a vertical blue column in the center. The grid is surrounded by clues in film strip frames:

- G** Séverine, Raoul Silva, Adele
- N** Kissy Suzuki, Ernst Stavro Blofeld, Nancy Sinatra
- I** May Day, Max Zorin, Duran Duran
- S** Tatiana Romanova, Donald Grant, Matt Monro
- A** Madeleine Swann, Ernst Stavro Blofeld, Sam Smith
- H** Solitaire, Dr Kananga, Wings
- F** Vesper Lynd, Le Chiffre, Chris Cornell
- K** Xenia Onatopp, Alec Trevelyan, Tina Turner
- R** Kara Milovy, Brad Whitaker, A-Ha
- E** Holly Goodhead, Hugo Drax, Shirley Bassey
- J** Tiffany Case, Ernst Stavro Blofeld, Shirley Bassey
- C** Wai Lin, Elliott Carver, Sheryl Crow
- M** Pam Bouvier, Franz Sanchez, Gladys Knight
- D** Anya Amasova, Karl Stromberg, Carly Simon
- B** Jinx Johnson, Gustav Graves, Madonna
- L** Strawberry Fields, Dominic Greene, Alicia Keys & Jack White
- Q** Penelope Smallbone, Kamal Khan, Rita Coolidge
- P** Melina Havelock, Aris Kristatos, Sheena Easton
- O** Domino Derval, Emilio Largo, Tom Jones

# Vassilly's Blog

Thurs 2 Jan

New Year's greetings loyal fans! I am not say 'happy' because apparently Aspects peoples is make unilateral declaration of Dry January. Now I am not big drinker (I am prefer many small ones) but I am say to Payrolls lady, what if I am have personality change? What if it is make me grumpy and uncooperative? Well?? She say she is waiting for bit where I change.

Fri 3 Jan

Engineer Gareth is fall off wagon already. Meanwhiles, Nikki is ask if I am want to put name down for 5k. I am sign up speedy-quick, and then I am tell her what I am plan to spend it on. She say no, is not to win it. Is to run it. No!!!! Nononononononono!!!!!! I am beg to be un-signed, but she say is too late. Peoples, I am *never* run. Bus can pull away without me, zebra crossing man can go red - I am not care. She say is OK - we are start slow and build up. But I am want to start slow, get slower and then nap.

Tues 7 Jan

Ohhhhhhhhh. We are have first training session last night. Nikki say we are run for one minute, so I am think OK, I can do this. And I am! I am do it! Go me!! I am pick up towel and head off, but she say no, now we are walk for minute and a half, then run for minute, then walk, and so on for 20 minutes. I am shake sweat out of ears, because, ha ha, I am think she is say 20 minutes.... What? No!! Is cruel and unusual punishment! Nikki say is not unusual. OK, then is cruel and boring punishment!

Mon 20 Jan

Only Nikki is still stick to Dry January, so big cheers for her. Payrolls lady and IT Boss Man is now do Damp January. They is try wines with no alcohols but they is all so disgusting, they say is need real thing to take taste away. Me, I am drink to keep strength up (Nikki is have me exercise for half hour now!!) Sergei is open new bottle of Sanatogen wine on weekend, but he say is only for helping him sleep. (Peoples, I am maybe suggest that 'kat who is fall asleep while pushing Henry Hoover round office is not need help).

Fri 31 Jan

Last day of Dry January and Nikki is stick with it all the way!

Mon 10 Feb

Big storm!! Ciara is come yesterday and I am stay indoors or else I am be like Flying Monkey. (Except they is ugly, and I am good looking 'kat).

Wed 12 Feb

Someone is ask if I am being scared of coronavirus. I am say little bit, yes, but why are they ask? They say because I am wear face mask on head. I am not understand. Is not face mask. Is my *hat*. What is wrong with peoples that they is not tell difference?

Mon 17 Feb

Now is Storm Dennis, peoples!! Payrolls lady say she is tropical storm once. I am ask if there is ever being a Vassilly that is wreak havoc? She say yes - for eight long years now.

Wed 18 Mar

News is all about coronavirus. I am suggest to Payrolls lady that I am maybe do work from home. She say she is not see any evidence I am ever do work in the office. I am do much reading on subject and it seems 'kats is not get coronavirus. Hmm. I am announce that maybe is better if peoples is go home and 'kats is run Aspect. After very big pause, Payrolls lady say she is take suggestion on board, is give it due consideration and is throw it back over the side.

Mon 23 Mar

Payrolls lady is decide to send me home after all. I am ask if I am to work from home? She say no. She say I am scary enough when I am supervised. I say maybe I am offer to help vulnerable neighbours instead. This is good thing, no? So is uncalled for that IT Boss Man say this is bring whole new terror to old age.

So here I am, loyal fans, with a shortened blog, which is sound painful. Bogdan is suggest maybe I am do video log from home. Vassilly's Vlog. Hmm. It is have certain ring to it, yes? (Payrolls lady is compare it to knell of Doom). No, I think I am stick with Blog and I will be keeping careful diary of the excites in my life to be sharing with you when things is normal again.

**Be safe, loyal fans, and remember to wash paws !!!**



# The Helpdesk of HORROR ...

And still they come ....



"OK, so I've emailed you the new password. I've put it in bold."  
"Oh. Do I have to enter it in bold?"

"How can I help you?"  
"The system is running really slow today. Can you do something?"  
"Let's take a look ..." [after a few minutes] ...  
"it seems to be pretty normal to me. Are you saying it usually runs faster than this?"  
"No, not really ..."

"Yeah, I need some black and white ink?"

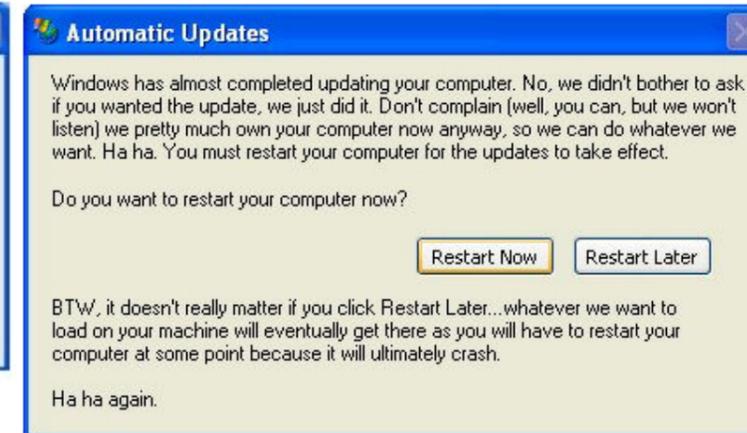
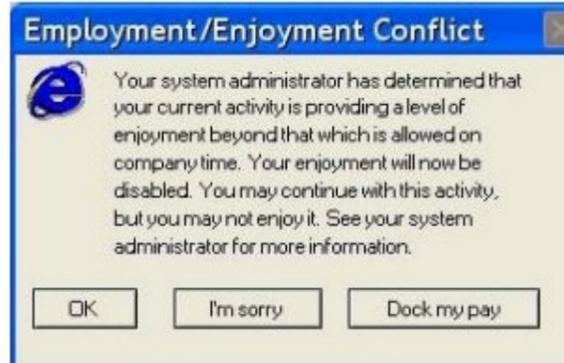
"Yes, hello, my PC isn't working."  
[... after many minutes of troubleshooting...]  
"I think we'll have to have it in. Can you unplug the power cable and bring it over?"  
[... an hour later ...]  
"Oh hi. Ummm.... okaaaaay, that's the power cord."

"Can you help me? My son's put a password on my computer."  
"And he's forgotten what it is?"  
"No, he just won't tell me because I grounded him."

"I've got this little exclamation mark inside a yellow triangle."  
"OK, and where are you seeing that?"  
"On my computer!"

"Our printer is making a noise. Could you come out and take a look?"  
"It probably just needs cleaning. We'd charge you £100 to come out, but it isn't that hard to do. You could probably Google it and do it yourself."  
"Really? Does your boss know you discourage business?"  
"Oh yeah. It was his idea. He says we make more money going out after customers have tried fixing their own stuff."

"Yes hello, I've spilled water on my laptop?"  
"Oh, that's not good."  
"Well I did what my friend said and put it in the freezer ..."  
"Excuse me?"  
"... because then the water would go solid and I could chip it out, but I think the ice has sort of swelled up under the keyboard. It's bowed out a bit. What should I do?"  
"...???? ..."



## Be smart. Be cynical. Be safe.

Besides urging you all to take care of yourselves personally, can we also stress the need to take care of your security too? We wish it were otherwise, but sadly situations like these bring out the scammers in force. So be prepared for calls telling you that your broadband is being cut off, that your machine is infected blah, blah, blah. They know people are dependent on technology right now so they're playing on your fears that you'll lose your links to the outside world. Keep a cool head and use the same common sense and cynicism you'd apply at any other time.