

# The Aspect Diary



Steve has begun the year in a nostalgia-fest, purchasing & bringing back to life an early DOS PC (if you're not familiar, DOS was what we had before Windows. Yes, before Windows. It is indeed older than Gareth). But armed with his little soldering iron, he's been in 7th heaven. He jokes (oh please let it be a joke) about starting a computing museum but we're not sure anyone would pay to visit. Perhaps he could just have an honesty box, but we worry it'd be full of notes saying "honestly, you're nuts". I did see him eyeing up various bits & pieces for the PC on eBay, so I asked if he'd like some of them as a present. He said nothing would please him more. Well never let it be said I don't listen - I got him nothing.

Feb brought us back-to-back storms, or more like one rehearsal & one making a proper fist of it. Eunice blasted through the southern part of the UK, flattening a couple of lorries on the M4, tearing off roofs & ripping the O2 apart. Possibly as a delayed result of this, we had a client who started having internet issues. The issue was identified as (possibly) a branch hitting the line & causing a short in the circuit. So, all well & good, Open Reach found & fixed it. Except a day later, they issued a bizarrely worded update ... "please be advised your fault is scheduled to go out on 4-Mar-22." Wait, what? They're sending out a new fault? How does that work? You open the box, like Pandora, & mayhem ensues?

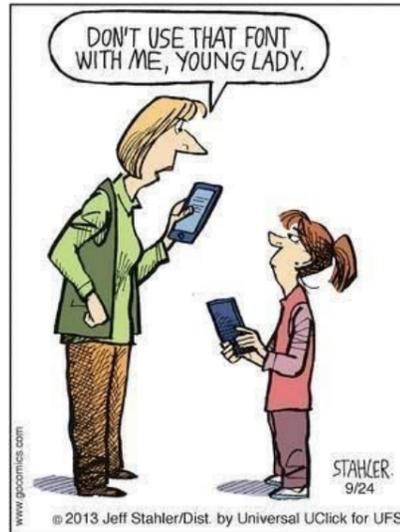
Speaking of boxes, Nikki cleared out the office kitchen cupboard recently. To be fair, apart from tea, coffee & sugar/sweeteners, we don't keep much else in there (or we thought we didn't), but she still managed to root out stuff that was best before Theresa May became PM. Which must mean we actually relocated it from our old office when it was already out of date. Hunh.

Is anybody else fed up with being told that "the current climate" means your call may take longer than usual to be answered? (Oh, & it does. Dear Lord, does it ever). But why should it? Covid cases may be high right now, but after 2 years of doing the hokey-cokey in & out of lockdown, the mechanisms to work from home should already be in place for most businesses. Many support staff we talk to never went back to the office at all when lockdown ended, which is fine, but if that's the business model you've set for yourself, it needs to be as efficient as the old way. If it's not, then do something about it. Don't keep trotting "the current climate" out as a blanket excuse for poor service, as in "oh well, we wish we could do better, but we can't help it." Yes, yes you can. Try harder.

Well that's it for Spring, roll on Summer. And a return to normal holidays? It sounds like destinations are open for business again ... as long as you don't mind spending a significant proportion of your holiday in an airport queue!



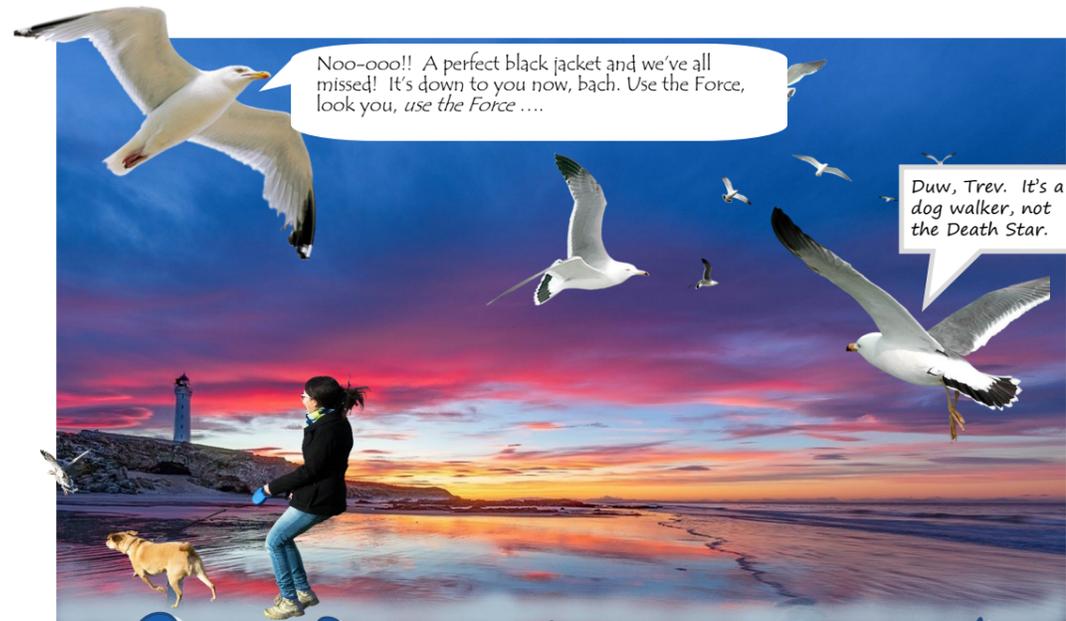
# The Last Laugh



THANK YOU FOR CALLING TECHNICAL SUPPORT. THIS CALL MAY BE MONITORED SO WE CAN PLAY IT BACK AT COMPANY PARTIES FOR LAUGHS.

# The Aspect Newsletter

Issue 54 - Spring 2022



## Spring Forward!

Welcome one, welcome all, to the Spring newsletter, which is a soft pastel blue on-screen, but turned out to be battleship grey when printed. Or as we like to say, WYSINWYG (what you see is not necessarily what you get). At the time of writing, spring has arrived in a flourish of sunshine and daffodils. (It's one of the dangers of ascribing our issues to the respective seasons, as we've put out plenty of summer editions over the years, festooned with parasols, beaches and hammocks, while the actual weather has been throwing monsoons at us, and plenty of golden autumnal editions which should more properly have been grey, grey, grey).

In a moment of seriousness, can we just comment that the last couple of years have been some of the strangest we've ever lived through. First there was Covid and lockdowns, and now as we emerge from that, the cost of living sky-rockets. But just when we might contemplate feeling sorry for ourselves, along comes a war to slap some perspective into us and show us what true desperation looks like.

Nikki is going to be doing the Great North Run in September in aid of the Alzheimer's Society, so if we can point you towards page 6, we'd be really grateful if you could sponsor her or donate. To reiterate, the link is only active from the PDF version of this issue, so you'd need to go to the newsletter page on our website to grab it. (And it never hurts to have a look around while you're on the site, remind yourself of all the things we do!)

Once again, in my unpaid capacity as advocate for the Scottish Tourist Board, I bring you the above picture of one of the beaches in my home town of Lossiemouth. I would like to say the seagulls were optional, but they're kind of not. They definitely don't have Welsh accents though.



## What's inside

One man's junk ... You really need to check your spam quarantine	2
WiFi !!!!! There's no point having WiFi rage	2
She's off & running! Nikki's heading North	6
Helpful computer issue reporting Oh gosh no, it's not to help you	7
Is it safe? Going to Win11 may seem like a step forward, but is it?	7
It's good to talk So tell us all about it	7

Regular Features	
ABC FAQs	2
Aspect quiz - Bibbity-bobbity-boo	3
Vassilly's Blog	4
Helpdesk of Horror	5
Jargon Buster	6
The Aspect Diary	8
The Last Laugh	8



### Aspect Business Communications Ltd

Unit 14 Brynmynyn Business Centre  
St Theodore's Way  
Brynmynyn Industrial Estate  
BRIDGEND  
CF32 9TZ

Tel 08458 277 328  
Email enquiries@aspectbc.co.uk  
www.aspectbc.co.uk

Registered in England & Wales  
Co reg number 6476805

# AspectBC FAQs

## I've had a Windows update and it's changed my default browser to Edge. How do I set it back to Chrome?

Down on the bar at the bottom of the screen, next to the Start button, is a white box with a magnifying glass and 'Type here to search' written in it. In there, type **default apps** - you probably don't even need to hit Enter, as it'll be searching as you type. Open it up when it finds it, and down towards the bottom (they're alphabetical), you'll see **Web browser**. Choose Chrome.



Similarly, if you receive an email from someone with a link to an email address, and clicking on it brings up the Mail program instead of Outlook, that same default apps page is where you tell it to use Outlook for mail.

## How do I get rid of that news/weather pop-up? It's never telling me the weather for where I am anyway!

True. At the moment of writing this, mine says 'snow' when it's clear blue skies outside. Apparently it thinks I'm in Scarborough. Choose a clear bit of the task bar (the long black bar along the bottom of the screen - but if you have two screens, make sure you pick the screen that gets the notifications). Right-click with your mouse and on the resulting menu, near the top, it says **News and interests**. There are various options, but just **Turn off** is easiest.



## I'm trying to Copy and Paste, but when I click Paste, nothing appears.

It happens. Google Maps used to be particularly awkward about letting you paste postcodes into it. There's an alternative, though, which is to use **Ctrl-C** and **Ctrl-V** as your copy and paste respectively. So highlight whatever you want to copy, do **Ctrl-C** and then wherever you want it to go, do **Ctrl-V** there. (It is 'C' for Copy, yes, but while you'd very much expect it to be 'P' for Paste, unfortunately Ctrl-P is the shortcut for Printing, so you've got 'V' instead.)



**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).

# The Spam Quarantine is not a dustbin

We may have mentioned this before, but when you get a quarantine report from your spam filter, you are supposed to look at it.

The filter's job is not to work out what you might not want to see, or to decide what's important. It will side-line any emails it thinks are suspect, or spam, but it doesn't *read* them. It assesses them based on all kinds of complicated algorithms (see this edition's Jargon Buster). So if your mate sends you an email with a link to a totally hilarious video on some obscure website, don't be surprised if it gets stopped. The filter doesn't know your mate, it doesn't know your sense of humour, and to it, links that go to strange places just look very dodgy.



Remember as well that just because invoices from John Smith & Co have arrived punctually every month for years, it doesn't mean that they can't suddenly get caught. Those complicated algorithms change continually to keep trying to beat the spammers and a tightening of a rule somewhere could mean your commonly-received mail falls foul. Added to which, your oh-so-trusted sender might change mail systems and forget to change their SPF record (this states where 'genuine' mail for that sender should originate). In that case, the filter will quite rightly call foul. So if the filter does start quarantining mail from a sender it didn't have a problem with previously, it's worth asking us to check why.

## Wiiii-Fiiii !!!!



From time to time, we get calls from customers about their internet dropping out, but when we examine the logs, there's no evidence of any drops. This is because the internet service *isn't* dropping out. It's the WiFi that's the problem.

WiFi is convenient, no doubt about it, but it's not always the best option. Most people are on Wireless N, which gives speeds of 'up to' 300mbps, but you never get this maximum speed and it's very easy to saturate it with just a few users. Meanwhile the newer, faster Wireless 'AC' doesn't have the same range or penetration through walls.

In a dense housing or industrial estate, you'll find the available channels are being shared with your neighbours, again reducing the speed. And then there's interference to worry about (we're looking at you, microwave!)

Some of these problems, you might not even notice on streaming services, and a delay of a second or two loading a webpage shouldn't bother you unless you're Mr Impatient. But other services that go over the internet, like phone calls and secure VPN links, need good, reliable network connections, and for that, wired is *always* best.

We first featured this way back in 2012, but it's still relevant!

## Computer Problem Self-report Form

- Describe your problem:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Now, describe your problem accurately:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Speculate wildly about the cause of the problem:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Problem Severity:  
A. Minor \_\_\_  
B. Minor \_\_\_  
C. Minor \_\_\_  
D. Trivial \_\_\_
- Nature of the problem:  
A. Locked Up \_\_\_  
B. Frozen \_\_\_  
C. Hung \_\_\_  
D. Shot \_\_\_
- Is your computer plugged in? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Is it turned on? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Have you tried to fix it yourself? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Have you made it worse? Yes \_\_\_
- Have you read the manual? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Are you sure you've read the manual? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Are you absolutely certain you've read the manual? No \_\_\_
- Do you think you understood it? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- If 'Yes' then why can't you fix the problem yourself?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What were you doing with your computer at the time the problem occurred?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If 'nothing' explain why you were logged in.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Are you sure you aren't imagining the problem? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Do you have any independent witnesses of the problem? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Can't you do something else, instead of bothering me? Yes \_\_\_



# Win 11 - should I upgrade my PC?

No.

There, sorted!

Seriously though, you'll all be getting regular prompts from your PC now, suggesting you upgrade to Win 11.

Until you've researched this properly, our advice is to say no.

Just because the machine itself is capable, it doesn't mean everything you run on it is compatible with Win 11. Check with the manufacturers of the software you use - is your version compatible? Is there a newer version you can go to that is, and if so, can your PC run that? Be especially careful if you run bespoke software.

Bottom line, it's always best to do some planning before an upgrade.

One other bit of guidance, as to whether you even *can* upgrade ..... if your processor is an Intel 7th-generation or older, you can't. You can check by pressing the Windows and Pause keys together. Under **Device Specifications**, you'll see your processor listed, eg:

Intel(R) Core(TM) i3-8100 CPU @ 3.60GHz 3.60 GHz

... and the bit you're interested in is underlined in red above. This one starts with an '8' so it's 8th-generation. You may have 9th, 10th or 11th. Or ... you may not. Anything beginning with a '7' or less will be a no-go for Windows 11. So you have till October 2025 to make other arrangements.



## Tell us about it, tell us everything you feel

We ask this in pretty much every edition, it seems, but let's trot it out one more time ...

When you email in a ticket, please be precise. Please don't just say "I can't print" or even worse, "I have a problem with my PC". If you want a doctor to help you, you wouldn't get away with saying "I don't feel well", and we depend on symptoms just as much as they do.





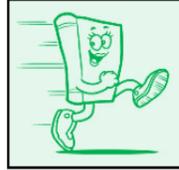
# Run, Nikki, run!



So what's Nikki's latest challenge?

Well, she's signed up to take part in the Great North Run on 11 September, and will be running to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society. We have to say, for someone who only took up running a little over two years ago, she's really gone from strength to strength.

If you'd like to sponsor her, or simply donate, click on the picture →



(Well no, obviously if you're reading this in the hard-copy version, you can't click on the picture. You'll need to go to our newsletter page on the website and grab the PDF version).

By the way, this is the gentle nudge; the strong-arm tactics will come in the next issue (well, she does go to the gym every day).

## Jargon Buster #39 - Heuristic email scanning



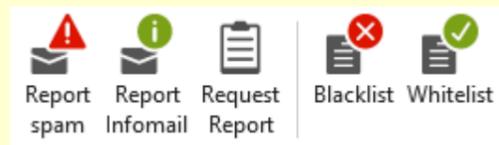
We understand you're ready to scoot straight past any article with a heading like that, but you may find it interesting. (We said 'may'. We're not promising).

BTW, this ties in with our article on Page 2 on the virtues of actually reading your spam quarantine reports.

We're often asked by users why some emails that are clearly spam get delivered while others which are clearly not, get quarantined. Well it comes down to your definition of 'clearly'. See, you read the emails. Spam filters do not. We think the Hornetsecurity system gets it right the majority of the time, but if you're wondering exactly how it decides, well it does ... yes, you guessed it, heuristic scanning. By which we mean, it looks at the characteristics of an email, not the content. Which IP address did it come from? Is that IP associated with spammers? What format does the email take? Is it typical of a phishing-type email? It's looking for patterns that show it might be similar to other dodgy emails it's aware of.

To repeat an analogy we used with one of our clients, it's like you looking at the Mona Lisa compared to the spam filter looking at it. You'd see the smile, the strange eyebrows, the lighting, the colour of her gown, the brush strokes .... etc etc. The spam filter examines it like a computer would, according to a series of algorithms. It might analyse the pigments, the depth of the paint, age of the canvas and so on, and compare it with other similar paintings it knows about. Seriously, it wouldn't even know it was a painting of a woman. The spam filter would undoubtedly fail Art Appreciation 1.0.1.

If the filter does get it wrong, it's actually very helpful to feed back to the filter provider that it made the wrong judgement. It will actively 'learn' from that. To that end, Hornetsecurity have an Outlook Add-On, which pops some extra buttons on your Outlook toolbar:



**Report spam** will let you notify them that an email that landed in your mailbox should've been stopped. (For information, **Request Report** would let you pull down a quarantine report on demand). If you're interested in having these buttons added to your toolbar, let us know.

# Bibbity-bobbity-boo Quiz!

What, you may well ask, is a bibbity-bobbity-boo quiz? Well each clue comprises two pictures. Put them together and what have you got? Not bibbity-bobbity-boo, no, but that is where the quiz gets its name. You get a common phrase, that's what. For example:-



Easy-peasy, huh? Well let's see how you get on. Some are simple, some less so, and one - we're reliably informed by our quiz guinea-pigs - is a proper head-scratcher. Answers on the website - follow the link from the newsletter page.

	A	B	C	D
1				
2		$A = \frac{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}{\sin(\psi + \theta)}$ 1		
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

I sympathise with my computer. I go to sleep after 25 minutes of inactivity too.

Unix is very user-friendly. It's just picky about who its friends are.

One day, a Mechanical Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Chemical Engineer and Computer Engineer were driving down the street in the same car. All of a sudden, the car broke down.

The Mechanical Engineer said, "I think a rod broke."

The Chemical Engineer said, "the way it sputtered at the end, I don't think it's getting gas."

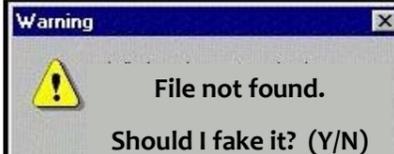
The Electrical Engineer said, "I think there was a spark and something is wrong with the electrical system."

All three turned to the Computer Engineer and said, "What do you think?"

The Computer Engineer said, "I think we should all get out and get back in."

Contrary to popular belief, Wikipedia has fewer factual errors than traditional printed encyclopaedias.

Source: Wikipedia



If the pen is mightier than the sword, and a picture paints a thousand words ... how dangerous is a fax?

## Vassilly's Blog

Tues 4 Jan

Greetings and happy 2022, loyal fans! Aspects is being laid low with Covids over Christmas. Is only Payrolls lady and IT Boss Man that is escape. Well, among the human-peoples. Us 'kats is mostly OK, except for Sergei, who is total hyper-chondriac anyway - what he is not catch, he is imagine.

Tues 25 Jan

Has been quiet month for me. Till now. Aspects is have big wireless installation to do. I am not know where. Somewhere in England. I am not see because I am sleep in van. Peoples, we are start at 6 of the clocks! Is long day, and I am spend much of it hoisted on end of fork lift. I am not very happy. 'Kats is happier in tunnels. What? OK, yes, we is famous for standing sentry, but that is just on top of anthill maybe. Or David Attenborough.

Thurs 3 Feb

IT Boss Man is decide is time that Bogdan is do more at Aspects, so he is start training programme for him. I am ask if is possible that I can do more than I do now. IT Boss Man say is not likely I could do less. So is this mean I am get training? He say is no point casting seeds on rocky ground. So .... am I get training or not? He say maybe is best I go home and think about my future with Aspects. Whoo-hoo! Early finishings!

Fri 4 Feb

So IT Boss Man is ask if I am consider my future with Aspects. I am! I think is going to be full of excites, and I am expect two promotions. Maybe three if he is retire. Oh peoples, I think he is being amazed at my enthusings! He is struck dumb! He is struck dumb for quite long time, so eventually I am quietly sidle away. We is talk about promotions another day.

Thurs 17 Feb

Super scary Storm Eunice is come tomorrow. Payrolls lady is tell us 'kats to stay home. She say is going to be enough stuff flying around without furry ballistic missiles. I am tell her I am want to go to Porthcawl and watch waves. She say this is action worthy of Darwin Award. Oooh, I am never get award before! She is tell me to Google it. D-a-r-w-i-n-a-w-a .... Oh.

Wed 23 Feb

IT Boss Man is have Covid. Payrolls lady say he is quite miserable ... is comment I could make, but I will not. I am offer to step up to plate, but Payrolls lady say plate is safer if I am stay away from it.

Thurs 3 Mar

IT Boss Man is finally clear of Covid. Payrolls lady say she is only Aspects person who is never have it. (She is pretty scary so maybe it is afraid to come close).

Wed 23 Mar

I am being busy-busy with cablemabobs and Telecommmmms Boss Man say I am do much good work. He say, as reward, I am get day away from cablemabobs to spend with IT Boss Man. (This is reward??) Ohhhhh, I see, is big joke because IT Boss Man is head out on job at 5am. I am tell IT Boss Man I am not think much of reward. He say is cruel and unusual punishment for him too. But he is remind me I am say I am want to do more. Well yes, but at 5am's, all I am want to do is more sleepings!

Mon 28 Mar

Mask no more!!! Rules is change so I am able to share whiskers with world again! Seriously loyal fans - look at that handsome face at top of page. Is crime to keep it covered up, no? Sergei say he is want to keep mask. Good! In old days before mask, Bogdan and me is play game to see how many meals we is identify in Sergei's whiskers. Record is 6 days-worth. Blech! Payrolls lady say is cruel to poke funs at old peoples. Ah, but is not like I am do it thoughtlessly. I am try poking funs at young peoples, and I am discover they is able to chase you and when they is catch you, they is give you big thumpings. So I am have scientific evidences that old peoples is better.



# The Helpdesk of HORROR ...

Another year, another crop of stories ....



"We can't access anything! No email, Teams, internet .. anything! We can't get on the network!"  
"OK, bottom right hand corner near the clock ...?"  
"I've got a red cross. Everybody has."  
"OK, let me login to the local network .... Right, no-one's on the network. I think something's got unplugged. Can you walk back into the network closet and check the connection for me please?"  
"Where's that?"  
"Back hallway, third door on the right, I think?"  
"Oh! You mean in the *old* building! We moved over the weekend."  
"Excuse me, what?"  
"Yeah, we moved. We left all the complicated computer-looking stuff and wires at the old building. It looked really complicated and we didn't want to mess anything up."

"Yes, can you help? I can't print."  
"How are you trying to print?"  
"The print button for the software, but it's not working."  
"Try File and Print?"  
"No, that's not working either."  
"OK, try Ctrl-P"  
"Tried that too."  
"This is weird. Are there any errors on the printer?"  
"Hang on .... Yes, it says 'Load Paper' "  
"I'm going to say that's related. Put some paper in and let's see what happens."  
"Yeah, it's printing .... Oooh, it's printing a *lot*!"  
"It will do that."

"Can you help? I can't login."  
"Well it's still on the default settings, so username is manager and password is manager."  
"No, that's not working."  
"Is the caps lock on maybe?"  
"I'm not dumb, I checked that first."  
*[cue several hours of testing, uninstalling and reinstalling on that PC, on another PC ....]*  
"Hang on, are there two 'A's in 'manager'? Oh hey, I'm in! Thanks!"  
*[click]*

"OK, rather than me show you what to do with this software, best if you do the steps yourself under my instruction - you'll learn it more easily."  
"No, I'll understand just by watching you. I'm a fast learner!"  
"Don't you even want to take notes then?"  
"No no, I'll be fine."  
*[Hour and a half later, after repeatedly asking "OK so far?" and getting an affirmative ....]*  
"Could you write all that down for me on paper? I don't have my glasses with me and I wasn't able to see anything on the screen. And everything you were saying seemed difficult, so I didn't really pay attention."

"My internet isn't working! You need to fix it now!!"  
".... It looks like your account has been suspended for non-payment. You have had several warning notifications."  
"Listen, you fix this now! I'm the customer, I pay your wages!"  
"Mmmm, and yet, for six months, you haven't."

"OK, now remember your password is case-sensitive."  
"No, that's not working."  
"I haven't told you the password yet."  
"Oh! I thought you meant the password *was* 'case-sensitive' ."

"My WiFi keeps dropping out."  
".... Everything looks correct, but I am seeing some signs of interference. Something's broadcasting quite a strong 5G signal on the same frequency as your router. Have you bought any new wireless devices lately?"  
"No, but my neighbours have just had the vaccine."  
"What's that got to do with anything?"  
"Well obviously the 5G tracking chip in the shot is interfering with my WiFi!"

"Is email internet?"  
"I'm sorry."  
"Is email on the internet? I have no internet but I want my email."  
"Yes, I'm afraid you do need internet to get your email. Let's see what's happening. Can you open up Internet Explorer for me please? It's the blue letter E on your desktop."  
"You mean I have to start writing letters again? I don't have any pens. I just want my email! Please send me my email!"  
"OK, can you look at your router, little box with green or maybe red lights?"  
"Lights and boxes, lights and boxes! Just get my email for me!"  
"All right, what's on your screen right now?"  
"It's been the same thing for hours. Just black, with moving stars."  
"Ah. Can you move your mouse for me please?"  
"My email!!!!"