

The Aspect Diary



We begin this issue on the weekend when the Govt chose to send a siren alarm to everyone's mobiles. (In the event, some people got 3 messages, some people didn't get any & the Welsh version was apparently spelled wrong. Personally, I was expecting something more strident - it was kind of underwhelming, didn't you think?)

Anyone else bewildered by Amazon's driver tracking? We began tracking a recent package when it was 4 stops away (about 2 miles). Then 1 stop away. Happy days. Then suddenly, it had "more drops to make". Not a specified number more, just more. At which point, it seemed to sit at a local park for an hour, before hovering around our estate for the best part of 2 hours, finally coming to rest in the road behind us. Then it all went grey & we had an email saying he'd attempted delivery but didn't want to leave it unattended. Well we wouldn't have wanted it left unattended in the road behind us either, but actually delivering it would've been an acceptable alternative, you know?

Speaking of going round in circles to no conclusion, we had to make a purchase recently of a product we don't do very often. So apparently we had to complete an online training course & exam first. Sigh. We logged in, went to the training page, had to login a 2nd time ... only to be told our account didn't exist. Well it did a moment ago! Can one phone for help? Good heavens no. Got to raise a support ticket online. OK, let's do that then. Ah, but no, you have to register separately for the support portal. Did that, had an email back saying we were successfully registered, tried to login to the support portal... & guess what, we don't exist. And repeat, ad nauseum (emphasis on the nausea).

As you'll probably have seen, the media's been reporting at length on the AI gurus who say they're regretting their life's work. They now fear the artificial intelligence they developed will one day wipe us out. It makes the cartoon opposite seem apposite (see what we did there?)

If you think of a vintage car, what do you think of? A Model-T? Well Steve continues to dabble in restoring old PCs in his spare (!!!) time. A recent part he bought turned up with the Customs label describing it as "power supply for vintage PC". This is a model he regularly worked on early in his career! Don't half make you feel old.

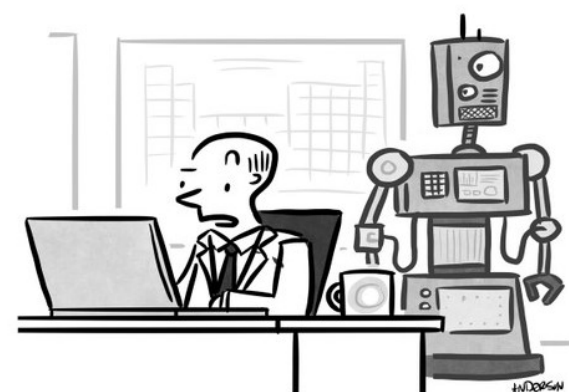
So, a little bit later than expected, we sign off on this summer edition. The weather may catch up at some point, but it's still infinitely better than the inferno that is the Mediterranean at the moment.

See you in the autumn!

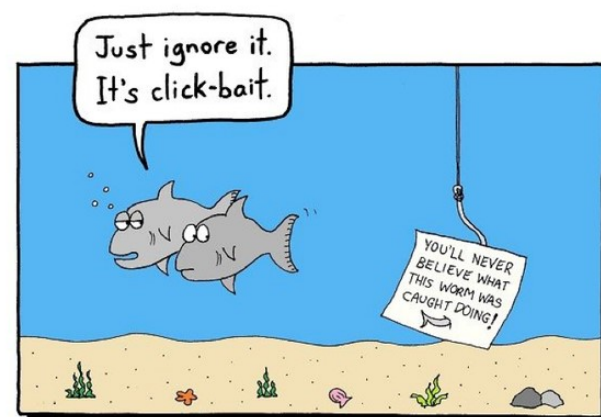
The Last Laugh



"Live each moment. Practice being mindful. Be present in... Hold on, I have to take this."



"Hey, what's this 'uprising' on the calendar for Friday?"



The Aspect Newsletter

Issue 59 - Summer 2023

What's inside

Don't be caught out Do you know where you're @ ?	2
Don't let your domain fall into a black hole Planning is key	6
Backing up the Cloud No, not TO the Cloud.	6
What's the deal? Not necessarily what you think it is	7
Are you ready to move on from Windows 10? It's wise to start preparing.	7
Rebooting a router Make it easy on yourself	7



The Dog Days of Summer

It's the Summer edition! And do you know what we love about the Summer edition? There's no definite deadline! Summer lasts *months*! (Well the *season* does. The weather meh). As you can tell, we felt a bit bad about slapping Easter references all over the Spring edition and then failing to get it sent out in time. And Christmas is a whole other thorny problem. We *like* Summer and Autumn.

For information, we do actually have enough in reserve to fill an entire newsletter. The only problem is that what we're holding in reserve are jokes, cartoons and quizzes, and we can't fill the newsletter with those. (Can we?.....(hold on, we're checking now) No-o-ooo, we've just had it confirmed, we can't. We are obliged to include what Vassilly calls boring techmabobs. Sorry).

Following on from our instruction in the last newsletter on how to produce emojis, we had a bit of a spate of them littering our incoming emails. Don't get us wrong, we're thrilled you've learned a new trick, but while a well-placed wink can soften the tone of an email, we're not quite sure what a rasher of bacon and a hotdog are meant to contribute. But well done you anyway. If you feel you're not achieving your emoji quota, then try our quiz - famous people depicted as a series of emoji clues.

You may notice there's no Jargon Buster this time around. We feel like we've exhausted most of the jargon that (a) you may have come across and (b) won't bore you senseless, so we're going to drop that feature for a bit. Of course if there's anything you'd *like* explained, just ask.

So until next time, we wish you happy (and safe!) holidays .

Regular Features

ABC FAQs	2
Aspect quiz - Famous people as emojis	3
Vassilly's Blog	4
Helpdesk of Horror	5
The Aspect Diary	8
The Last Laugh	8



Aspect Business Communications Ltd

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

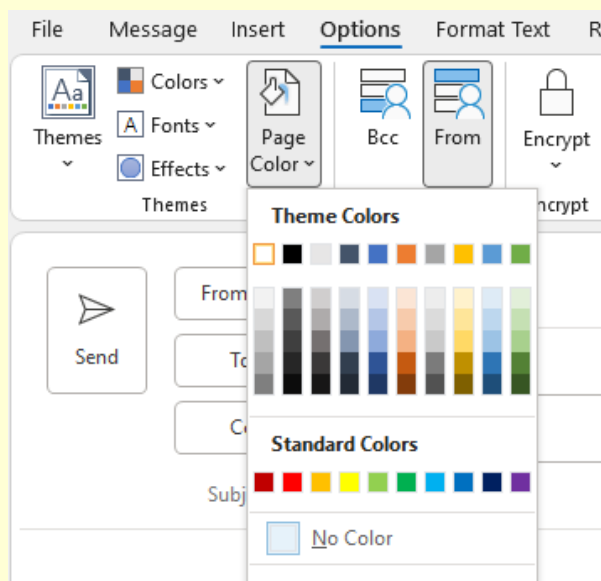
Tel 0333 305 7552
Email enquiries@aspectbc.co.uk
www.aspectbc.co.uk

Registered in England & Wales
Co reg number 6476805

AspectBC FAQs

I've had an email from someone and it has a dark grey background - I'm replying to it, but I can hardly read what I've written!

Yes, the quarantine reports from Hornetsecurity are prime examples of that. If you want to engage in a conversation about it, you end up writing back and fore in black on dark grey - it's practically invisible ink. But never fear! You can change the page colour. With the cursor in the main message section (so not on the To: or Subject: or any of that stuff up the top), click on **Options** from the main menu, then **Page Color**, and from the drop-down palette, choose the white one:-



I'm trying to remember an email address - it'd auto-complete if I knew how it starts, but I can't remember!

Outlook can be quite forgiving. It doesn't always work, but you could try typing any part of their name and see what's offered up as options. Even if you know their email address is firstname@..., and you've forgotten their first name, you can try typing their surname. Outlook will often make the association. Sometimes - but more rarely - even a bit of their domain name will work. Or of course, you could make a point of saving your contacts in your Outlook Contacts



Carry on - don't lose your domain @

A couple of our clients have had their domain names expire on them lately (that's the bit after the '@' sign in the email address). Without it, no email got through and their websites were down. The irony is that when the users needed help in getting up and running again, the host companies insisted on verifying who they were before helping. Fair enough, but by sending a verification code by email? Hello - no email, remember?? So it can all be a bit of a pantomime to sort out.

Anyway, a few recommendations we'd make to avoid being caught out:

- Make sure you're aware of who hosts your domain. They will email to remind you when it's due for renewal, but it's so easy to dismiss an email as spam unless you recognise who's sending it. Wouldn't hurt to have a note of when it's due for renewal too, so the emails aren't unexpected (you can find that out at lookup.icann.org/en - just about all the information is redacted, but you will see the expiry/renewal date). If you do let it lapse, you'll get a month's grace, then everything will just stop. And if you don't sort it out, after a period of time the domain will go on the open market again for anyone to buy.
- Billing is usually via credit/debit card, so when you get a new one, make sure the host company is on your list of places you need to update.
- A frequent problem with this sort of renewal is where it's in the name of someone who no longer works for you. Maybe you still get email for them, but maybe you decided there was nothing worth worrying about anymore and ditched them. It's easy to overlook your domain hosting as you likely only get an email about it every two years when it rolls round for renewal. We'd tend to recommend using a generic email address as the one that they communicate with, say accounts@ or finance@ - something that will always be in use, no matter who comes and goes.



**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).

Deal or No Deal?



You're no doubt being inundated with offers to change your phone system ahead of the Great Analogue Switch Off. We readily admit that Aspect is one of those who would like to have that business. But much as we do want your business, we accept we can't win 'em all. What really gets our goat, however, is when we see you getting less than a fair deal wherever you've chosen to go.

Prime example - we find ourselves up against a competitor. They're twice the price that we are. So the client - you - goes to said competitor, points out they're twice the price, and suddenly the competitor not only matches our price, they beat it. And you congratulate yourself on some canny negotiation and sign with the competitor. *Why would you do that?!* Until they were challenged on it, they were clearly happy to rip you off to the tune of double the real cost.

Second example - the long contractual tie-in. This is often accompanied by the 'free' handset offer. Except, see, they're not free, are they? You're tied in to a contract for five years, and all that nice extra revenue is actually paying for your handsets. And then some.

So it pays to do your homework. Get a number of quotations. Get some recommendations from other businesses that you know.

Remember, being expensive isn't reassuring. You're buying a phone system, not a vat of Stella Artois.

Planning to get rid of Windows 10

You may have given no thought to this at all, but we'd advise you to start.

Support for Windows 10 is being withdrawn in October 2025. That may seem like a long way away, but if it turns out you need to make quite a lot of changes, then common sense dictates you'll want to spread the costs. As with any of these end-of-life announcements by Microsoft, it's not something you can ignore - once support is withdrawn for a product, there are no further security updates, and that makes them a vulnerability on your network.

So what do you need to do?

On each of your computers, press the Windows key and the Pause key together. That will bring up a screen with the specification of the machine. You need to look at the **Processor**, under **Device Specification**....

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

... specifically, the first digits of the processor as shown, which refers to its generation. 8th-generation or later is fine, you can upgrade to Windows 11. Anything earlier is not upgradeable, and you'll need to plan to replace the machine.

Even if you don't read any other bit of the newsletter, please read this.

When there's an issue with your broadband, you're going to be asked to reboot your broadband router. That's always the first thing you're advised to do.

So can we make life easy for you? (And us!)

DO NOT PRESS ANY BUTTONS.

Just pull the mains lead out and push it back in after a count of 10. (Or longer, if you're advised to).

Your router may have an on/off switch, but many don't, and the button you end up discovering will actually factory-reset the router and lose all its configuration settings. So don't even go looking for a button. Just pull the plug.

Transferring your domain into a Black Hole?

Following on from page 2, where we explained the trouble you can have when *losing* your domain, another issue that's cropped up lately is when *transferring* a domain goes wrong!

It's easy to transfer a domain to a different host, and people do it for all kinds of reasons. Consolidation, price, whatever. But it needs to be planned

Every host company has its own 'tag' and it attaches it to every one of its domains to announce to the internet "we host this". Moving a domain just means getting that tag changed to reflect the new host company, and that's pretty simple to do. What is less well-advised is that changing the tag just moves the domain. It doesn't bring any of its associated records - or **DNS** - across with it. These records will tell the world at large lots of things about your domain and if those records aren't present any more, you're now in a black hole. Emails won't arrive, because mail servers will say, OK, I've got some mail for sales@johndoe.com, let's go look at the DNS records for johndoe.com and see where I need to route it.... uhhh, I don't know, there's nothing there to tell me. When people type in www.johndoe.com in the expectation of reaching your website, there should be a record that says "this website lives at this IP address, take me there". No record? Your website is unavailable.

So if you're going to move your domain, make sure you take a screenshot of all the DNS records first, or note them down so you can re-enter them.



Backing up your Cloud files

To clarify, we're not talking about backing up your files to the Cloud. You may well do that, but that means you've got the files locally and a backup copy in the Cloud. And that's great, but what you need to remember is that the Cloud is just someone else's server, so if you're saving files *directly* to the Cloud (via Sharepoint or OneDrive, say) where would backups of those go? You might assume they're backed up automatically, but that's not necessarily so and it's certainly not wise to assume it is.

The biggest provider of online file sharing and storage is probably Microsoft. They do employ several methods to ensure your data is safe, such as retention policies for previous versions of files as well as proper backups for some services. But the backup is controlled by Microsoft, so you'd need to approach them if you wanted something restored. And not all the policies are available across the board to every user, it depends on your licensing.

However, there are third party backup products that will offer a centralised backup and restore interface for all areas of Microsoft 365 servers, Exchange mailboxes, Sharepoint libraries, OneDrive and Teams. With these, you can selectively backup and restore the data of your choice, all from a simple interface, usually for a relatively cheap, per-user monthly cost.

We think the message about the importance of backing up has generally got across to people, but you can't think of the Cloud as some kind of secure vault in the sky.

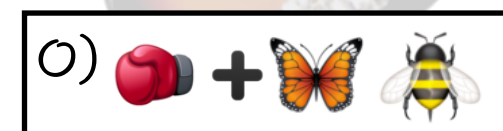
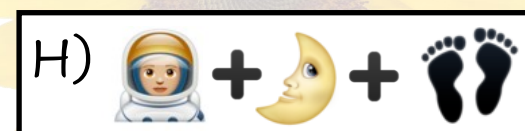
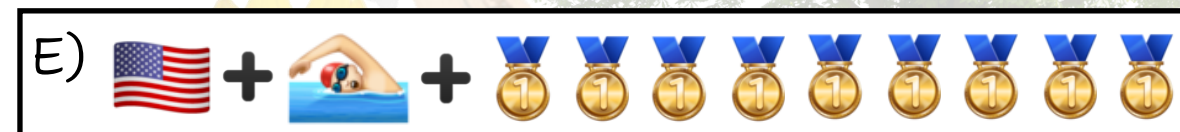
If you want more information, please give us a call.

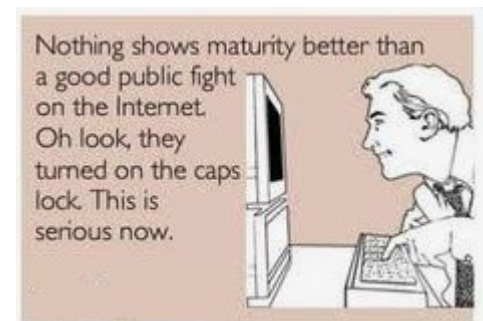
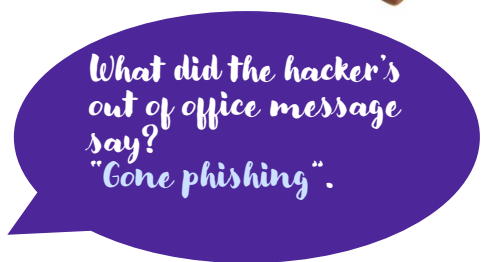


Famous People as Emojis Quiz

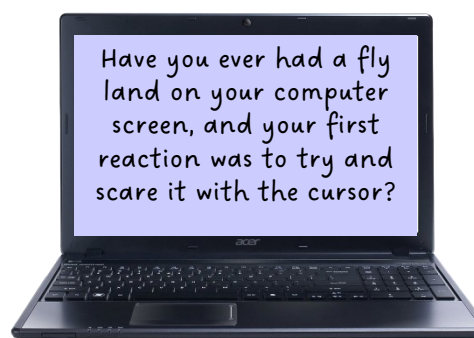
We got the idea for this quiz from one that's regularly featured on *Richard Osman's House of Games*. Below are clues to a number of famous people, using only emojis. Can you guess who they are? (You may have to employ some lateral thinking here and there, as sometimes the emoji we'd have liked just doesn't exist. We have at least used WhatsApp emojis, so a bit more visual clarity compared to Android ones).

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





- TECH SUPPORT CHECKLIST**
BEFORE YOU BOTHER ME
- Is it plugged in?
 - Is it turned on?
 - Are you sure?
 - Seriously, go check.



Vassilly's Blog

Tues 18 Apr

Sun is shine and I am have spring in tail, loyal fans. Payrolls lady say maybe is best I sign off now while going is good. Ha! Imagine kerfuffles if there is being no Blog! Peoples would be left with boring techmabobs! Disasters!

Mon 24 Apr

Is winter again, so I am look forward instead to double Bank Holidaymabobs. We are get normal one, and one for Coronationing. I am not understanding Coronationing - I am think this is to make him King, but no, he is already King. So what is it being for? I am also hear it is cost millions? Payrolls lady is explain this is when they is stick crown on his head and people is shout 'hurrah'. Ahhh. I am understand now why is so expensive. They is pay everyone to shout 'hurrah', yes? Can I go?

Wed 10 May

Is all happening, peoples! Coronationings, and now Eurovisions! Meerkovo is not have entry this year. OK, is true, Meerkovo is not have entry any year, ever. Songs in Meerkovo is big on nose flutes and singer hitting own head with stick. Apparently "this is not suit contest". Huh. I am watch Eurovisions for many years, peoples, and I reckon it is suit it to a big fat T. (What? Bogdan say we is not allowed to say 'fat' anymore? We is have to say large? So what, I am need to be asking for full-large milk? Yeesh).

Thurs 25 May

Another Bank Holidaymabob coming up! Whoo-hoo! But first, I am have to go 'oop north with IT Boss Man. We is start at stupid o'clocks and he is breathe cold germs over me all the way. I am not happy 'kat. On way home, I am already getting scratchy throat. I am try subtle coughings to show IT Boss Man I am poorly 'kat, but he is just say that if it is hairball, please be spitting it out window.

Fri 26 May

Aaaaa-tchooooo! Ohhhh, I is not well, loyal fans. Nose is runny, whiskers is limp and I am have much coughings. And is holiday weekend coming up! Is not fair!

Tues 6 Jun

Payrolls lady is have to do training course today, so she is suggest we is watch together. She say two heads is better than one. She is play video twice, and then ask if I am being ready for exam. Exam?! What exam?! I am think she is just want company!! I am not watch any of it! She is mumble that two heads is only better than one if one head is not Vassilly's. She is pass exam anyways! What is she complain about?

Tues 13 Jun

Pffffff! Is so hot. Also, Payrolls lady say we is overdue for appraisals, so she is schedule for early July. Uh-oh.

Tues 11 Jul

I am scrape through appraisal, but only just. Is really hard! She is ask questions about career path (is that one behind office?) and "personal development". She is ask how I am feel I respond to criticism. I say "with surprise". She say I am workshy and a cereal complainer (oh come on! Nobody is like it when Frosties is go soggy). Am I have any good points?? She say I am quite cute when I am fall asleep in chair after lunch. Grrrr.

Wed 26 Jul

Yes, I know there is being big gaps in Blog. I am busy 'kat! But is time for holidaymabobs! Now I am just have to try to find place that is not raining or on fire....

Thurs 27 Jul

I am tell colleagues I am decide to stay at home and do fun things in Bridgend instead. (Why is they all laugh?) So tomorrow I am go to see Barbie movie. I think maybe I am get rollerblades like Ken and learn to skate, yes? Payrolls lady say only if I am consider fun thing to do in Bridgend is sitting in A&E for eight hours with broken ankle.



The Helpdesk of HORROR ...

There ain't no cure for the summertime support blues!



"OK, your phone is activated now. Let's try making a call. Dial a number and hit 'Send' to see if it goes through."
"No, it's not working."
[Cue 15 minutes of this ...]
"Look, what number are you dialling?"
"Twelve."

"I don't remember the answer to my security questions."
"That's fine. Just type anything in the answer boxes three times, and it'll email you a password change request."
"You want me to type what?"
"Gibberish. It doesn't matter. I just want you to get past the security questions."
"Oh, OK. How do you spell 'gibberish'?"

"Sometimes our printer runs out of paper. What can we do about that?"

"My laptop won't turn on."
"It isn't charged. You have to charge it."
"I've been charging it for three hours."
"With what? Your charger isn't plugged into the laptop."
"I've been charging it with my iPhone."

"I keep getting locked out of my account. It says my password is wrong."
"And you're definitely spelling it right?"
"Well yeah, it's my mother's maiden name wait a minute, is there an 'N' in it? I can't remember. How do you spell my mother's maiden name?"
"How should I know?!"

"The video doesn't work and my presentation is in five minutes!!"
"OK, no problem. What exactly is happening?"
"I double-click the video file and all I get is a black screen! No picture and no sound!"
"Did you press 'play'?"
"Oh, there it goes. Thanks!"

"Can you pull the plug out of the socket for me?"
"It's screwed in. I can't unplug it!"
"Do you have a screwdriver?"
"No."
"Do you have a butter knife you could use?"
"Look, we're not fancy like that. We don't have a knife exclusively for butter!"

"Right, so once I apply this fix, it'll wipe all your data. Do you have it backed up?"

"Yes."
"You're sure? There's no going back once I press this button."
"Yes, it's all in the clouds."
"..... OK, it's done."
"Thanks. Now, where's my data?"
"You'll need to retrieve that from your cloud storage."
"What do you mean?"
"You said it was backed up to the cloud?"
"Yes, so get it back for me."
"You'll need to do that. I don't have access to it."
"But I don't know how to do that."
"Just go to the cloud storage site and login with your credentials."
"But I can't remember them."
"Don't you have them written down somewhere?"
"Yes, on my laptop!"
"The laptop we just wiped?"
"Yes. Will that be a problem?"

"Stop, stop, stop! What did you just do?"
"What? When?"
"With the mouse."
"What? The right-click?"
"I had no idea you could do that."
"What did you think the other button was for?"
"I don't know. I just assumed it was ornamental or something."

"OK, that credit has been applied to your account."
"I don't see it on my bill."
"Oh, if you're logged in, then -"
"No, none of that 'logged in' nonsense. I'm looking at the bill you mailed to me and I can't see the credit!"
"Well the reason you can't see the credit to your account on your bill is because you're holding a piece of paper."
"I don't see what that has to do with anything!"

"I need a password reset please."
"OK, I'll just need you to answer your security question ... one second ... right, here we are. What is baby daddy's name?"
"How am I supposed to know that?"

"Right, hit 'Continue', then hit 'Next', 'Skip', 'No' and then we're good."
"I don't see a 'we're good' button."