

It's been a busy few weeks for trade conferences and training seminars. I write this as I return from the PC Retail event at the Emirates Stadium in London (where incidentally no time had been wasted in digging up the pitch ready for re-laying). Lots of products and services were on display, and some of the upcoming trends highlighted were 'smart home' and virtual reality products, and the fact that more people are now shopping on their smart phone or tablet.

With that in mind, I will also mention the DVLA plan to introduce a digital driving licence which will essentially be a photo card on your smart phone. This will be stored in the same place as tickets and other official documents, i.e. the Wallet app on your iPhone or Android device.

What an essential item the smart phone has become. As I travelled to London with Hull trains, my M-ticket was on there, which I just showed to the ticket inspector on-board and at the exit at Kings Cross. I used the Underground app to check my onward connection, and then Google Maps to guide me on foot to my final destination. Oh and there's even WiFi on large parts of the Underground system now courtesy of Virgin Media.

➤ *Staff on the Underground have apparently nicknamed the automated voice on their trains 'Sonya'. Because after a while it gets on ya nerves.*

For those of you that subscribe to voucher deals online (and why not it's free), like vouchercloud for instance. You may have noticed that if you allowed notifications, and the fact that your smart phone is 'location aware' you will receive offers tailored to where you are at the time. In other words if you go past a pub or restaurant that has an offer on meals, you will immediately get an alert on your screen. Could be handy!



Now the serious subject of computer security. Recently I attended the annual Eset conference where we were brought up to date on all the latest and emerging threats. The nastiest of these is a new version of ransomware called 'Jigsaw' – hence the unpleasant character pictured here. This is where your computer is infected and all your files are encrypted and a lock screen appears with a countdown and the threat that you have 72 hours to pay a ransom in order to get a code to release all your files. The really twisted bit of this strain is that for every hour that passes 100 of your files will be deleted, and if you try and escape by turning it off 1,000 of your files will be deleted.

As harsh as it may seem, the best advice however is not to pay the ransom, because your money will most likely disappear and no code will be forthcoming. Or even worse your credit card will be scammed or sold on. The moral of this sorry tale is twofold – have a good recent back up of all your data and ensure you have a good security product installed. Free anti virus products cannot really be relied upon now. The old adage holds true 'you get what you pay for'. Now here comes the sales pitch; is your security worth around 75p per week? Well that's what a year of Eset Smart Security will cost you, and why we have so many safe and happy customers who rely on, and always renew their cover.

In the IT business we're always talking about data. Security of data, preventing data loss, backing up important data. But often when I talk to home users they say 'ah well I don't keep much stuff on my computer'. Let's hold that thought for a moment. Data really means files and folders, or in other words **anything saved on your device that's important to you.** Most people have photos, it may be a few, or it may be thousands, either way they may be irreplaceable. Music - you may have built up a library, and maybe you don't have the CDs

anymore. And what about family history, that could be the most valuable of all, think of all the hours of work you put in, and old documents and photos you collected. If you use an email program like Live Mail or Outlook, you may have hundreds of emails stored, not to mention your address book. Then there all the letters you've ever written or saved from attachments. All of a sudden I'm sure you'll agree, that adds up to quite a lot of stuff, and losing it may not cost you financially, but it could be, well - very stressful!

We glibly use terms like saved and stored but what do we mean and where is it exactly. The answer is that it's stored electro-magnetically onto the hard drive inside your computer, which is a mechanical device that spins at a dazzling 7200 rpm on a PC. So you see with that volatile mix, things can go wrong.

Everyone likes a bit of free advice, so this month as well as this article which I hope you will find helpful, I am putting together a free guide in plain English on my website expanding on some of the subjects mentioned above. Plus, some answers to often asked questions like: 'Why does my computer start and then stop at a black screen? Why does my Windows10 start button not work and I can't get emails?' And not least 'Why isn't my internet working?'

So just go to www.rdmcomputers.co.uk/news and you will see a link to the this and the previous two articles, plus the free guide.

Also will be updating the blog on my website regularly with any news items worthy of mention....and if you don't know what a blog is, I'll explain that in the above mentioned free guide. And for those on Twitter you can find me @rdmcomputers1

 **Wondering when I'd get to Windows 10?** Well here it is folks. The latest news is that there's going to be an anniversary update, and remember the free upgrade offer ends on July 29. They will be bringing in some new tweaks and features. One of the minor tweaks is 'chaseable news items'. This is to fix an annoyance I think should have been addressed at the outset. Have you ever seen a story on the start menu News App, clicked on it only to find you have trawl through about three pages of news to find that one item? Well that should be a thing of the past. Other new features are being added, so for an up to date run down go to: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/upcoming-features>

Lastly, you have probably gathered that we take security very seriously, so if need advice on changing or buying anti virus, or if you think you may have been the victim of a scam, just call us for advice.

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