

The Computer Club

Providing Computing Assistance for All

InfoBytes



Issue 24 -Aug 2001

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Adrian's Ramblings

Believe it or not it is time for another newsletter – to me it seems like only last week that Gwen was pestering me for articles, but apparently it was 3 months ago – doesn't time fly!



So here we are again, back in my Ramblings, as normal I don't know quite where these are going to take me, I just sit at the keyboard and wait to see what comes out – normally something does. The articles I have produced (or will produce – at the moment I haven't finished them) are varied again this month, so hopefully there will be something for everyone. If I have time I will have included an article on web based email for those with this type of account – I say if I have time because I have written the article once this week (finished it on Tues 17th July), went into Hotmail yesterday to be astounded by a completely new layout – looks very different to the one before, with some new features, so will have to do the article again – wonderful.

On a different note, you will have noticed that I still haven't made any changes to the club website, and in fact it has been unavailable on a few occasions while the hosts have had server trouble (we can't do much about that). I have been made aware recently of new legislation for educational establishments regarding web pages, and their accessibility for people with disabilities – although the club does not come into the legislation, I think it would be good for us to try to follow it wherever possible (after all our slogan says “Providing computing assistance for all”), so the pages are in limbo while I try to redesign them for this – not an easy task, particularly when you have to think about partially sighted/blind using browsers that read the page content (in the normal American

accent – but actually very impressive, I may try to set up a quick demo at a meeting). The underlying thought is that the internet is an information medium rather than purely a visual one. I intend to keep a check on everything I do for this, so will put something together for the newsletter when it is finished.

Think I had better stop there – not sure how much room I am being allocated for the Ramblings, and could probably keep going forever!

See you next time.

Adrian

YOUR FAVOURITE WEBSITE

This new addition to our newsletter is a slot where members recommend a website that they find interesting and why. This one is recommended by Adrian and - I agree with him – it's great fun.

The address is <http://www.helldesk.org.uk>

The following is an excerpt from the site.

"Colouring by Numbers"

Helpdesk: Technical Support, how can I help you?

End User: Oh, hi there. I was wondering... how do I print a page from the company Intranet?

Helpdesk: Just click the 'Print' button on the toolbar, it's shaped like a little printer.

End User: That's great, thanks. Bye.

(The user rings off. A couple of minutes pass by, then the `phone rings again)

End User: Hello again. That page from the Intranet has printed off, but it's in black and white!

Helpdesk: (Thinks) Erm... yes, but isn't your printer a black and white only printer?

End User: Erm... yes...?

Now give us your favourite.

DIARY DATES

Yes, what you've all been waiting for, the updated list of meetings and subjects for this year - and the dates for next (assuming you don't decide to close the club at the AGM!). Those marked H/O will be "Hand's on" sessions. The list is not set in stone, if there is anything you would like to see, please let me know.



10th August

Word Processing stage 2 - H/O

14th September

Annual General Meeting- PLEASE TRY TO ATTEND IF POSSIBLE

12th October

Making Music on the PC - Midi and beyond (change to previously advertised)

9th November

Desktop Publishing - H/O

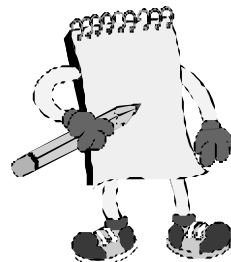
14th December

General/Christmas Party

And for next year, the meeting dates will be...

11th January, 8th February, 8th March, 12th April, 10th May,
14th June, 12th July, 9th August, 13th September,
11th October, 8th November, 13th December

As normal, the June and December meetings will be on the "General" theme, and the September meeting will be the AGM. As yet I have no idea of what next year's meetings will contain, so please tell me what you want



Adrian



Gwen's Corner

Summer is with us once again. A real, sunny summer too, for a change. (Well, it was when I wrote this!) Much too nice to be stuck inside on the old computer. This is the weather to be out in the garden. My husband and I spent a very pleasant day recently in a local village that had opened its gardens to the public. I was rather amazed to find that the majority had one thing in common. They all had a string of CD's shimmering above the cabbages, peas and lettuces. They obviously make very good bird scarers and actually look quite attractive, reflecting all the colours of the rainbow as they gently twirl above the greenery. Another garden had used one as a centre weight on a home made set of wind chimes.

I'm sure all of us have received these unwanted CD's through the post from Internet servers and other advertising companies, as well as any failed CD's you may have lurking about. Have you ever considered to what other uses they may be put? They could be turned into very stylish drinks coasters, or small, but shiny Frisbees. How about sticking them on the wall as an unusual mirror? If you were really clever you could use one as a face of a clock. And as festive decorations at Christmas their possibilities are endless.

I should be interested to hear of any other uses these versatile little CD's have been put to. Or other unwanted computer equipment, come to that. I've yet to see any floppy discs used in an imaginative way. Maybe, being square and black, it's just because they are not so attractive as CD's. Or maybe I just haven't been looking in the right places. Perhaps we should run a competition for the most imaginative use for unwanted computer hardware, (or should that be software?) I look forward to some interesting suggestions, so get e-mailing now.

In the meantime I shall turn my back on my computer and relax in the garden with a long, cool drink, my glass resting on a stylish CD coaster - of course.

Gwen

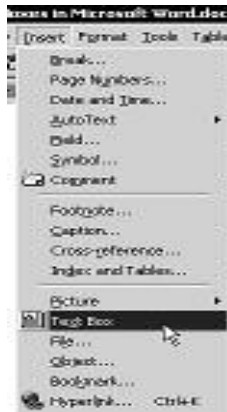


Using Text Boxes in Microsoft Word

You probably think that you know almost all there is to know about using Word (or, if you are honest, think that you know nothing, and so Word surprises you on a regular basis). However, very few people seem to have managed to get their heads around the idea of using text boxes – these are a wonderful way of presenting information, but have one or two interesting problems all of their own!

a. Creating a text box.

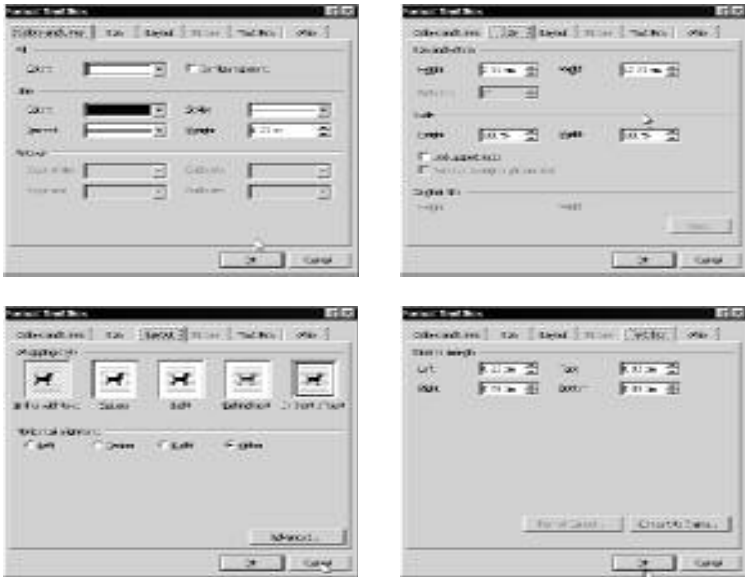
1. This is the really easy part – to make your text box you need to have Word open, and a document ready for editing (either a new document or an existing one). To make the text box, click the page in the place you want the box, and then go to the Insert menu (on the toolbar which should be at the top of the page), and click the “Text box” option on the list.



2. At this point your cursor will change from the normal text cursor (I shaped) to a “cross hair” cursor (+ shaped), use this while holding down the left mouse button to draw an appropriately sized text box (can be resized later). When you are happy, release the mouse button and the box will be created.

This is a text box – the border is optional!

Now is a good time to mention that Word treats a text box as if it was an image – so you can have it floating over text, or with text flowing all around it, if you so wish – an effect often used in magazines or newspapers to draw your attention to a particular item. To set these options, click in the box, and then RIGHT click with the mouse on the shaded border – a menu will appear by the mouse cursor, select the “Format Text Box” option from this, and the formatting menu will appear, with the following pages:



As you can see, you have a lot of ways to “tweak” the box once it has been created.

3. And there you have it – your text box is created. Just choose your font/colour etc, and away you go!
4. Before getting carried away with your new found skill, there’s just a few things to remember – see below.

b. Working with text boxes

Text boxes are wonderful tools when creating long documents, as they provide a way of visually separating text. However, you will probably need to know at least some of the following skills to get on well with them.

1. Setting the borders/indents.

This may sound trivial, but it can cause a great deal of trouble. When you create a text box it almost always uses the formatting of the preceding paragraph, and while everything looks fine on the page normally, as soon as you put text into your box you get bedlam!

The solution is quite simple. Click in the box, and then select all of the text (either using Edit>Select All, or by pressing [ctrl]+[a]). Now go to Format>Paragraph, and you will see a menu similar to the following:



Set these to suit your document – though it is always worth ensuring that the Indentation is set to 0cm for both the Left and Right sides (it is sometimes possible for this to be set with a negative indent, which means that you text disappears off the edges of the box).

2. Linking to other boxes

Why would you need to link to another box – just wait until you have a text box continuing over a page, and you will soon find out!

Luckily this is also easy to solve. Start with the box you have already created, and now produce another box where you want the text to continue. Click into the first box, then again



THE COMPUTRESS

I read recently an article by a lady who complained that all her troublesome computer's faults are typically male. I've been wondering lately if her masculine misbehavior might be induced to engage in online intercourse with my own computer so that they could work off their frustrations on each other. You see, my computer is undoubtedly female.

She is moody, broody, petulant and spiteful. She gives me no warning as to where my fingers should not roam but should my tentative exploration unintentionally tickle her inhibitions she storms off into some utterly irrelevant region before freezing as solid as a glacier. While her sulk lasts, no blandishments or flattery or abject apology can prevail. You can prod the iceblock until you get chilblains but you will get no response until it suits my lady. She has turned her back on you and *I* can only assume she is gossiping with "Modam".

Unless you pronounce Modam's name as if she were an honored customer entering an exclusive millinery department she won't admit that you are there. She often works with Catty, my computer, but fortunately for me, they frequently disagree and Catty has to forget her sulk to wail,

"I can't make contact with Modam."

So then, for a moment, I've got contact with a computer again. Even an irritable old man like me is better than nobody at all to moan at. I ask Catty if she is feeling unwell. No answer. I know that Catty has an extensive knowledge of all her inner organs, digestive, communicative or reproductive and will natter on endlessly about them but only to a woman. When Alison, my daughter in law pays us a visit they yammer on together like the proverbial old dears over the garden wall. And when Alison has finished buttering her up the old box even smiles at me. For a little while Catty will allow me to talk to someone else--but she still makes it as difficult as she wants to. Could this be a hint of jealousy? Well, what do you think?

About a month ago I sent a message to a lady to congratulate her on coming on-line. It didn't go through. The mistake I had made in her address was so infinitesimal that only a nit-picking female could have found fault with it but I said "Sorry Catty", (the kindest words I've spoken to her in six months) and cancelled the message. I tried

to erase it several times, in several ways, according to several people's practical suggestions. Nothing worked.

Then it became apparent that Catty had taken offence. She refused to tell me why, of course, but refused equally adamantly to allow me to forget that I had tried to send an innocent message to a lady. Now, as if to remind me of my infidelity, every time I ask her if there is any Email in the box Catty erects a huge grey tombstone across the centre of the screen effectively blocking out the necessary information. The inscription tells me that I tried to send a message to a lady and that it cannot be sent. Of course it doesn't tell me why, it just adds some algebraical expressions that are probably the dimensions of the cell in which Catty would like to confine her. Or me.

Yes, I can get rid of the obstruction, temporarily, but how do I know what went on behind that big grey slab? Did she block up the line as well? Catty can be very devious when she tries.

Then there's Modam. I had my difficulties with her when she refused to work. Just closed her eyes and played dead. I felt sure there was nothing wrong with her intestines all tightly locked away in that impregnable chastity box so I decided to try a little psychology. I talked to her without the usual exasperated invective and caressed her gently, all the way from her armour-plated mysteries to her passionless plugs. Suddenly as I fondled and stroked her limp leads with sensitive fingertips she beamed at me. Two of her ruby red eyes lit up and yes, she was willing to work again. She still requires a little titillation now and again, but she is female after all.

I wonder if Catty would appreciate similar attention? I suppose I could give her a pretty background picture instead of Shepton Mallet Prison or introduce her to the paintbox to make up her mournful visage. I might even begin by changing her name and no longer threatening to boot her up. You never know with females, it might even work.

Missing Toy.

Handy Hint

Save yourself time by copying or moving several files at the same time. Press the **Ctrl** key and, keeping it pressed down, click on each of the files or folders. Release **Ctrl** key and copy as usual.

Puzzle Time



Answers to the puzzle questions in the last newsletter.

1. This is an 11+ type of question. A young child would solve it by counting the letters -

One Two Three Four Five Six Seven
and so the next few must be Eight Nine Ten, etc.
that is, E N T E , etc.

2. This is a trick, of course. The extra ball is a red herring and so are the four bags - there's only one! So also is the "average probability" With two balls in the bag, the possibilities are BB, BW, WB, WW and so the chances of drawing a black ball are 1 in 2.

Surprise, surprise !!!

3. The simplest way of solving this is to use a Venn diagram. If you've never heard of them, go on to the next section. If you have, draw a large circle to represent the 36 guests. Inside that, draw smaller intersecting circles to represent the different language - speakers. Write the appropriate numbers in the various sections, eg. where the French and English circles cross, write "6". Make sure that there is a section where all three smaller circles intersect, for the 3-language-speakers. If you now inspect the sections, it is easy to work out the numbers of one language-speakers and the non-language-speakers. This takes longer to describe than to do it !!

It is possible to solve the problem by jiggling with the numbers but the simplest method is to write down the numbers 1 to 36 to represent the guests. Then write the letter "F" under the numbers 1 to 16 - 16 French speakers.

Write the letter "E" under the numbers 1 and 2, and also the letter "G" under 1 and 2 - 2 speak all three languages.

Also, write "E" under numbers 3 to 6 - these 4 also speak F and E (Total 6).

That leaves a further 8 English speakers. Put "E" under numbers 17 to 24.

Put "G" under number 7 - three speak F and G - and under 17 to 19 (E + G - 5 in all).

That leaves a further 6 German speakers (2 + 1 + 3 out of 12), so write "G" under numbers 25 to 30.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18
 F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F
 E E E E E E E E E E E E E E E E
 G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G

19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36
 E E E E E E E E E E E E E E E E
 G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G G

Now, add them up to check for mistakes !

F numbers 1 to 16,

E numbers 1 to 6, 17 to 24 - $6 + 8 = 14$,

G numbers 1, 2, 7, 17 to 19, 25 to 30 - $1 + 1 + 1 + 3 + 6 = 12$.

FE numbers 1 to 6,

FG numbers 1, 2, 7 - 3 in all,

EG numbers 1, 2, 17 to 19 - 5 in all.

FEG numbers 1, 2.

Hence,

(a) those speaking one language are numbers 8 to 16, 20 to 24, 25 to 30 -
 $9 + 5 + 6 = 20$.

(b) Those speaking no language are numbers 31 to 36, ie. 6.

How many of you got the answers right?

Some New Puzzles

1. A _____ FG J L
 _____ B C D E H I K



Put the remaining letters of the alphabet above or below the line as you think.

2. A rich man once gave 50p to every boy in his home town and 30p to every girl (Sex discrimination!). All the girls accepted the money but 40% of the boys refused it. If there were 2000 children altogether (not necessarily equal numbers of boys and girls), how much money did the man pay out?

3. A very old puzzle involving pouring from containers.

Three jugs have capacities of 8 pints, 5 pints and 3 pints respectively.

The 8-pint jug is full of water and the other two are empty.

How can you arrange to have 4 pints in each of the two large jugs?

Derick Alliban

Answers as usual in the next Newsletter

Sharing Text between Word Documents



There is sometimes a need to share text between 2 different documents – sometimes it is possible to just copy and paste, but if there is a lot of text to be shared, in different places, then ensuring that everything has been updated can be very hard!

Word offers several ways around this, some are easy (as shown here) others more complicated involving mail merging etc. Let's see the easy way!

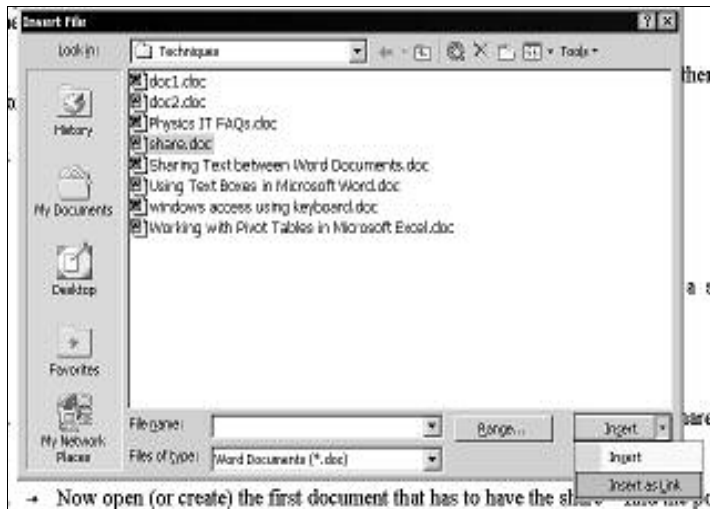
1. For this to work we need at least 3 documents:
 - a) *share.doc* – contains the text etc to be shared.
 - b) *doc1.doc* – the first document
 - c) *doc2.doc* – the second document

If more than one piece of text needs to be shared it is best to create a separate *share.doc* for each one, or things can get confusing!

It is also possible to have more than two documents the text is going into.

2. First you need to create all of the documents containing the text to be shared, give them names that will be easy to refer to in future.
3. Now open (or create) the first document that has to have the share – find the point that needs to have the shared text inserted and
 - i) Go to Inser
 - ii) Select File
 - iii) Find the file containing the text and click it ONCE to select it

- iv) In the bottom of the window, use the drop down box where it says “Insert” to change the setting to “Insert as Link”



The text will now be inserted into the document, but linked to the original, so if the original text is changed it is reflected in this document as well! If you click the shared text it will appear shaded to show it is linked – RIGHT click and you can force it to update the link from the saved file.

4. Repeat steps as many times as necessary for all the shared text in each document.

Adrian.

GENDER BENDER

PC MUST be Feminine because:

The native language they use to communicate with each other is incomprehensible to anyone else!!!



Tony Seager

Here is another excerpt from that web site -
<http://www.helldesk.org.uk>

"Yesterday"

(to the Tune of "Yesterday", by the Beatles)

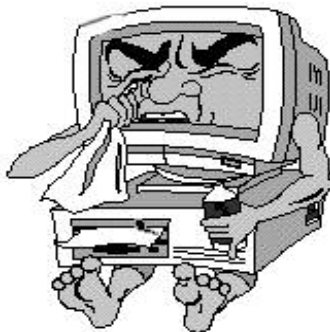
Yesterday,
All those backups seemed a waste of pay.
Now my database has gone away.
Oh I believe in yesterday.

Suddenly,
There's not half the files there used to be,
And there's a milestone hanging over me
The system crashed so suddenly.

I pushed something wrong.
What it was I could not say.

Now my data's gone
and I long for yesterday-ay-ay-ay.

Yesterday,
The need for back-ups seemed so far away.
I thought my data was all here to stay,
Now I believe in yesterday.



Internet Topology



Over the last few months I have had several questions from club members asking how the internet is organised, and how it works. It seems that there is a great deal of confusion about this! This should give a quick introduction, and hopefully explain some of the internet's more bizarre tendencies – including explaining why all internet access in the UK is affected by how much is being used in America.

Much more information than is given below can be found from many sources – just search the internet!

All images below are taken from websites around the world – notably from the Netsight JANET site at

<http://bristol.netsight.ja.net/start.php/backbone/geo>.

Start by quickly looking at the history of the internet:

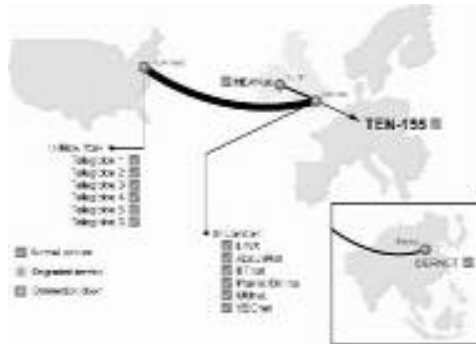
The first useful point is that networking computers on a large scale was a military invention, designed to allow data to be shared between installations, with many interconnections, so that if one site was destroyed communications could be maintained.

The internet as we know it can be traced back to a series of discussions held in 1962, this was for a “galactic network” whereby there would be a string of computers globally, all interconnected to allow anyone to access data and programs stored on them. Much work followed and the first section (or *node* to use internet terminology) of the ARPANET was set up in September 1969 at UCLA in America. By the end of 1969 a total of 4 host computers had been added to the network!

Throughout the 1970's the network was added to, and new technologies entered the plans. By 1980 there was a change in the way computers were designed, with more widespread use of workstations and LANs (local area networks) for business and educational sites. Gradually since this time the number of connected computers has increased, with the main *backbone* being increased along with it. There are a number of companies working to keep the main backbone active and growing – but no governing body, so it is impossible to say how many computers are using the internet today.

So that's how the internet got going! But, how does it work

at the view below should explain why surfing the internet is easier before America starts it's business (and why it's sometimes quicker for things to go via Japan!):



Communications on the internet generally follow a simple route – the quickest – rather than the shortest. The route will vary every time as different internet nodes handle different amounts of traffic. Hence it is sometimes quicker for an e-mail to be sent along a faster link (even if it means going several times around the world!) than an individual segment between adjacent nodes.

I will just show the picture below – this shows quantities of internet communication in Europe during October 2000



If you have any more questions about the internet, let me know!

Adrian

For our final contribution to this newsletter we leave the subject of computers for a minute to tell you:-



How To Give A Cat A Pill

- 1) Pick cat up and cradle it in the crook of your left arm as if holding a baby. Position right forefinger and thumb on either side of cat's mouth and gently apply pressure to cheeks while holding pill in right hand. As cat opens mouth, pop pill into mouth. Allow cat to close mouth and swallow.
- 2) Retrieve pill from floor and cat from behind sofa. Cradle cat in left arm and repeat process.
- 3) Retrieve cat from bedroom, and throw soggy pill away.
- 4) Take new pill from foil wrap, cradle cat in left arm, holding rear paws tightly with left hand. Force jaws open and push pill to back of mouth with right forefinger. Hold mouth shut for a count of ten.
- 5) Retrieve pill from goldfish bowl and cat from top of wardrobe. Call partner from garden.
- 6) Kneel on floor with cat wedged firmly between knees, hold front and rear paws. Ignore low growls emitted by cat. Get spouse to hold head firmly with one hand while forcing wooden ruler into mouth. Drop pill down ruler and rub cat's throat vigorously.
- 7) Retrieve cat from curtain rail, get another pill from foil wrap. Make note to buy new ruler and repair curtains. Carefully sweep shattered figurines and vases from hearth and set to one side for gluing later.
- 8) Wrap cat in large towel and get partner to lie on cat with head just visible from below armpit. Put pill in end of drinking straw, force mouth open with pencil and blow down drinking straw.
- 9) Check label to make sure pill not harmful to humans, drink a beer to take taste away. Apply Band-Aid to partner's forearm and remove blood from carpet with cold water and soap.
- 10) Retrieve cat from neighbour's shed. Get another pill. Open another beer. Place cat in cupboard, and close door onto neck, to leave head showing. Force mouth open with dessert spoon. Flick

pill down throat with elastic band.

11) Fetch screwdriver from garage and put cupboard door back on hinges. Drink beer. Fetch bottle of scotch. Pour shot, drink. Apply cold compress to cheek and check records for date of last tetanus shot. Apply whisky compress to cheek to disinfect. Toss back another shot. Throw T-shirt away and fetch new one from bedroom.

12) Call fire department to retrieve the F@#%!%G cat from tree across the road. Apologise to neighbour who crashed into fence while swerving to avoid cat. Take last pill from foil wrap.

13) Tie the little bastard's front paws to rear paws with garden twine and bind tightly to leg of dining table, find heavy duty pruning gloves from shed. Push pill into mouth followed by large piece of steak fillet. Be rough about it. Hold head vertically and pour 2 pints of water down throat to wash pill down.

14) Consume remainder of scotch. Get partner to drive you to A&E, sit quietly while doctor stitches fingers and forearm and remove pill remnants from right eye. Call furniture shop on way home to order new table.

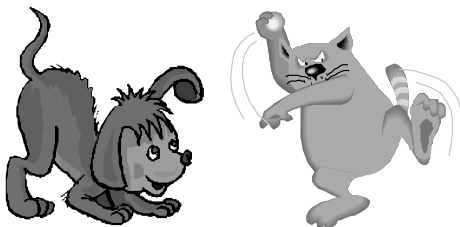
15) Arrange for RSPCA to collect mutant cat from hell and call local pet shop to see if they have any hamsters

~

How to give a dog a pill.

1. Wrap it in bacon.

Margot Whitcombe



For Sale or Wanted

There are no items offered in this section this month.

If you have anything you wish to sell or happen to be looking for please fill in the form on the opposite page and hand it to either myself or Adrian.

Items for Sale/Wanted

If you have an item for sale/wanted, please fill in the section below (or write the same information on a separate piece of paper) and send it to me, or hand it to me at a meeting .

Name:

Telephone:

E-mail:

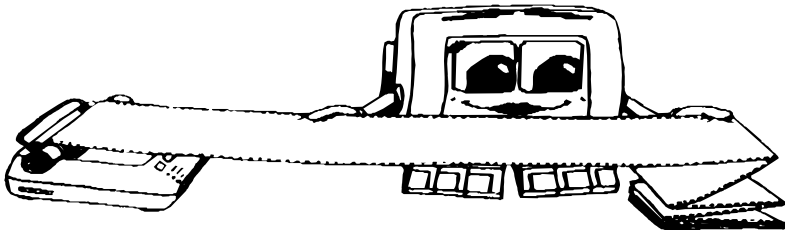
Is the item for sale, or wanted (please delete)?:

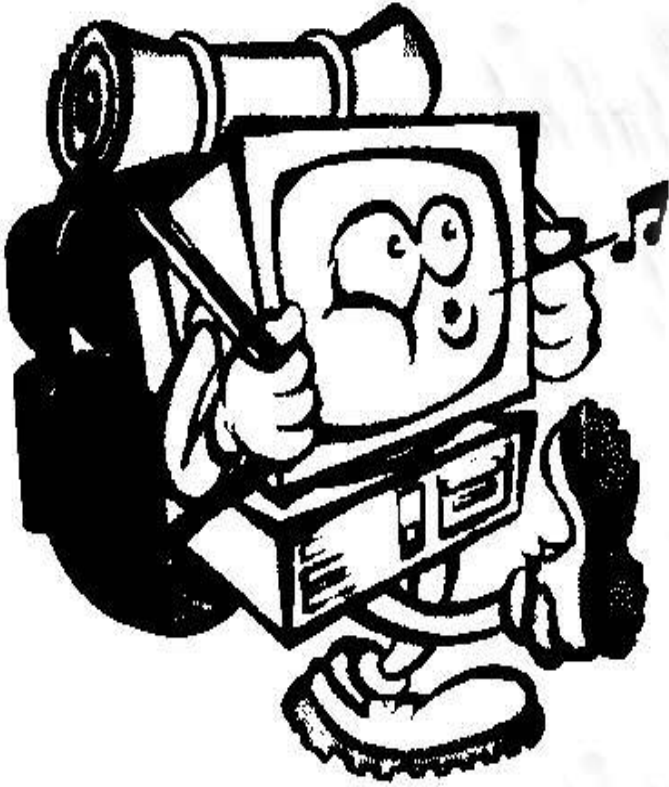
FOR SALE / WANTED

Description:

Price wanted/Willing to pay: £ _____

Date: _____





Happy Holidays