

**Issue 165**

**1 April 2009**

**ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER  
GROUP**



# **HOT KEY**

**SPRING 2009**



Johnathan & Craig from PC  
Consultants give us a talk  
about Voice Over IP (VOIP)

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# The Isle of Wight Personal computer User Group

## The Isle of Wight PC User GROUP

Welcomes all owners and users of IBM compatible Personal Computers.

It is a group which seeks to exchange ideas and new information.

Our meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at **The Riverside Centre, Newport** from 7.30 to 9.30 pm

*Visitors are welcome. Membership is £6 per annum*

**A charge of £1 is made per meeting, which includes tea or coffee during the break.**

**If you would like to know more about us, you are most welcome to come along to one of our meetings, or you can contact one of our Committee Members listed on page 3.**

The Club Website address is **[www.iwpcug.org](http://www.iwpcug.org)**

We also have an e-group discussion area

Yahoo iwpcusers: **[iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com](mailto:iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com)**

See page 6 for how to join

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
1 April	Google Docs	David Groom
6 May	TBA	
3 June	Findings things on the Internet	Buzz Austin
1 July	TBA	
5 August	Summer BBQ	

See our Website for more information as it becomes available

## ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Chairman :** David Groom

**Vice-Chairman :** Cliff Maidment

**Treasurer :** Phil Rogers

**Secretary :** Susanne Bone

**Membership & Database Secretary :** Ray Boote

**Committee Member :** Roger Skidmore

**HotKey Editor :** Bob Groom

### **Note**

Contact details removed prior to publishing on internet

Suggestions for new events, topics or speakers for talks are always welcome.

Please contact any committee member with your ideas.

If necessary we may be able to find a speaker for your subject.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Firstly welcome to the 1 April edition of HotKey.

It was great to see so many people attending the talk given on VOIP given by Jonathan & Craig last month, it was the largest attendance we have had for some time. It is so more satisfying for the speakers to have a larger audience.

We are trying hard to fill the monthly meeting speakers list, but as this edition of HotKey goes to press some dates are still to be arranged. Details will be announced on the newsgroup and web site when available.

**There is no cover disk this month as I could not think of anything radically different to put on it.**

### Continuation of HotKey / CoverDisk - by David Groom

At the AGM there was quite a discussion on whether HotKey should be continued to be produced, and if so in what form. This led on to the question of whether the coverdisk was also necessary. Reasons for changing the status quo are:

Difficulty in getting articles to put in HotKey  
Time involved in producing HotKey & coverdisk  
Costs involved.

Alternatives such as not producing these at all, only producing a pdf form of HotKey (and thus saving printing costs), and cutting down the frequency of publication were suggested. Included with this issue of HotKey is a short questionnaire, please return to me (address on page 3). It is important to get as much feedback as possible as the future of HotKey & the coverdisk depend on it.

It must be borne in mind that a large proportion of the membership do not attend our monthly meetings and HotKey and the coverdisk are the only means of being in contact with them. So any decision to cease production will not be taken lightly.

## **Favourite Software - PowerDesk File Manager - get your house in order!**

Version 5 Free (1.6Mb):

<http://www.vnunet.com/vnunet/downloads/2128843/powerdesk>

Version 6 Free (15Mb):

<http://www.snapfiles.com/get/powerdeskfree.html>

Version 7 Paid for (60Mb):

[http://www.avanquest.com/USA/pc-utilities/utilities/desktop-tools/PowerDesk\\_Pro\\_7.html](http://www.avanquest.com/USA/pc-utilities/utilities/desktop-tools/PowerDesk_Pro_7.html)

One of the main difficulties I find people have with their computers is basic housekeeping and file management. These skills are greatly hampered by the lack of user-friendliness in Windows Explorer. Much of this problem is addressed in more fully-featured file manager programs, and the best of these I have found to be PowerDesk. PowerDesk has evolved over the years and the neatest usable free version is still version 5 which downloads at a handy 1.6Mb. The full paid-for version is version 7 which is huge at about 60Mb, while the in-between one ( free version 6 ) downloads at 15Mb. Version 5 is a good compromise if you are prepared to forgo the thumbnail viewer.

PowerDesk is a dual pane file manager that can be used as a replacement for Windows Explorer. In addition to the standard file management features such as move, copy, delete, rename etc. it lets you zip / unzip, encrypt and securely delete files. It can remember the last viewed location. The toolbar also provides quick access to all available drives, as well as favourite programs, command prompt and some popular Windows locations. Other features include a file search function (File Finder), customisable view pane layout and ID3 tag editing. PowerDesk 6 (free) includes several additional features that are otherwise disabled but available in the paid version. The most useful paid for feature in version 7 is the image file thumbnail viewer, although built-in FTP comes a close second. I have the paid for version on my main computer, and the free version 5 is the first program I put on any Computability machine.

**Roger Skidmore**

## **FAVOURITE SOFTWARE --STICKIES**

- tack your text notes on to your desktop!

Version 4.5a Free (525Kb):listed on various IWPCUG cover disks but probably no longer generally available.

Version 6.7a Free (978Kb): <http://www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/stickies/versions.html>

There are a number of Post-It Note type programs available out there, but I have always come back to this one. It is so incredibly useful to have a sort of visible text clipboard. Stickies will also call up your browser from a formal web link. I am typing this in a sticky and the <http://> link above will work.

I can add and move about bits of text in multiple stickies as I wish, before finally copy and pasting into Outlook Express or Word or whatever. The other magic thing Stickies does is wipe out any major text formatting and reduce things to just plain text - surprisingly useful at times.

You can store and reshape stickies, and when you close them they are kept for you in the background. There are numerous other options to explore. I use version 4.5a because I can't think of anything better, but I see the program has now moved on to version 6.7a. Always averse to change I haven't tried 6.7a, but who knows what's in store?

**Roger Skidmore**

### **HOW TO JOIN THE E-GROUP**

Send a blank e-mail to: [iwpcug-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:iwpcug-subscribe@yahoo.com)

All members are encouraged to join this e-group (which costs nothing and is private to all club members) in order to keep in touch with events and join in with discussions.

You can also keep in touch by regularly visiting [www.iwpcug.org](http://www.iwpcug.org).

## **MY FAVOURITE HOME PAGE by Roger Skidmore**

<http://www.protopage.com> (add /username when registered)

Protopage is a web page designed to be used as a home page. It is really a way of displaying your favourite favourites in various category boxes. It also has things called "widgets" which you can add if you wish. These can display local weather; your IP address; to-do lists and various other clever things - if you wish even your e-mail headers.

The page can be customised in various ways or left plain and simple. You do of course get an advert bar along the top unless you pay them money - otherwise it is free. Not a major problem and you learn not to notice the adverts!

I find that my forays onto the Internet are mostly limited to well-worn paths so of course these are all on my Protopage, as well as the usual search engine bars.

Another advantage of Protopage is that you can call it up from any other computer (but remember not to allow other computers to remember your password). Of course remember to set it as your home page in Internet options.

## **Summary of the AGM - by David Groom**

The biggest changes resulting from the AGM held in February were changes in the committee. After many years of service, including a spell as Chairman, David Broughton has stepped down from the committee. Bob Groom has stepped down from the position of Treasurer to be replaced by Phil Rodgers. The remainder of the committee remains unchanged.

Membership fees are to remain at £6 per annum

Bob Groom outlined the problems in getting articles for HotKey. This prompted discussion on whether it was necessary to produce HotKey (and the cover disk). See page 4.

This is a very brief summary, the minutes are on the club web site.

## What is “Twitter” - by David Groom

Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read other users' updates known as “tweets”. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length. Updates are displayed on the user's profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends (delivery to everyone being the default). Users can send and receive updates via the Twitter website, SMS (mobile text message), RSS (receive only), or through applications such as Tweetie, Twiterrific, Twitterfon and Feedalizr. The service is free to use over the web, but using SMS may incur phone services provider fees.

Twitter is often described as the 'SMS of Internet' in that the site provides the back-end functionality (via its APIs) to other desktop and web-based applications to send and receive short text messages often obscuring the actual website itself. This extensibility of the service has earned it more popularity than it would have garnered if users would have to visit the site to use the service.

So what does this all means in practice? Having created an account with Twitter I then have my own web page on which I can post messages of up to 140 characters in length. These messages are displayed in chronological order, and can be on any subject – what I am doing or about to do, what I have found interesting etc. People can then view this page to see what I have written.

Twitter users range cover a wide range , some more interesting than others.

<u>User</u>	<u>URL</u>	<u>my comments</u>
Stephen Fry	<a href="http://twitter.com/stephenfry">twitter.com/stephenfry</a>	Very popular
Wightlink Portsmouth	<a href="http://twitter.com/wightlink_por">twitter.com/wightlink_por</a>	Almost pointless
Taste of the Wight	<a href="http://twitter.com/TasteoftheWight">twitter.com/TasteoftheWight</a>	Not sure what this is for
NASA	<a href="http://twitter.com/NASA">twitter.com/NASA</a>	Very good
Number 10	<a href="http://twitter.com/DowningStreet">twitter.com/DowningStreet</a>	
The Conservative party	<a href="http://twitter.com/conservatives">twitter.com/conservatives</a>	

With other social networking sites such as Myspace, and others, is there room for another such as Twitter. I have to admit to not being a great fan of these things, in general they seem to be a great waste of time, but the one advantage of Twitter is that you are limited in length to what you can write, so it may be simpler to use and you may perform updates more frequently.

[ Note the first two paragraphs of this article are licensed under GNU Free Documentation License. They use material from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter> ]



## **RAPIL - a slap in the face for hackers and virus writers**

for full story see <http://www.sophos.com/security/blog/2008/04/1246.html>

[ I would encourage you all to view the link above as there is a short video to accompany the article – David Groom ]

An exciting day in SophosLabs. After long and arduous efforts, we announce our new beta technology offering to defeat the hackers, which we are currently referring to as RAPIL (Recognition and Analysis of Potentially Intruding Lifeforms).

As regular readers to the blog know, the amount of malware being created every month is increasing rapidly. Organized criminal gangs have been driven by money to generate viruses, Trojan horses and spyware to hack into computers. Until today most security companies, including Sophos, have focused their efforts on defeating hackers by detecting the malicious software. SophosLabs is today announcing ground-breaking technology that detects hackers using facial recognition. By identifying and stopping the virus writer, we can stop malware from even being written, tested and released.

Utilizing the webcams built into many modern computers, SophosLabs is able to produce a real-time forensic analysis of a PC user's facial features to determine if they are exhibiting hacker-like characteristics. Current tests have shown that, with a clear background and face void of any obstructions, such as hats, moustaches or glasses RAPIL has a success rate of 97.78%.

If RAPIL identifies that the user sitting in front of the computer is likely to be a hacker, the PC's screen is blanked, keyboard frozen and the first 512 GB of the hard drive encrypted with a user-defined key.

### How it works:

RAPIL runs as a ring zero process with multithreaded access to the signal produced by the system camera, ensuring that it cannot be subverted by rootkits or any other deliberate tampering by the intruder. Thousands of 2D and 3D facial characteristics, including retinal patterns, shape of the philtrum, symmetry of the lips, size of the forehead and facial expression are tested to establish the probability of the user being a hacker. Various existing and newly developed machine learning techniques are used to calculate the probability and match the characteristics of the user with the measurements common for the set of intruders. However, the more faces we test, the greater accuracy RAPIL can achieve.

### Limitations:

When RAPIL queries an image with a clear background and face void of any obstructions, its current success rate is 97.78%. The accuracy rate significantly decreases if the advanced evasion techniques such as facial polymorphism are used by the potential intruder. Facial polymorphism is a technique often used by sophisticated intruders. The face is polymorphic when it is randomly obstructed by an item such as hats,

moustaches or glasses. Facial metamorphism is even more difficult to detect. It occurs when the user changes their facial characteristics for every command run on the system.

## **PRIZE PUZZLE FOR APRIL 2009**

### **PI IN 10 DIGITS**

The puzzle this month is to find a numerical expression that is as close as possible to pi using the numerals 0 to 9 once and once only. You may use any number of the four arithmetic operators (+ - × ÷) plus decimal point, brackets and the square root sign but no other symbols or letters. Oblique stroke can be used for divide. Exponentiation is allowed.

Example:  $(9 + 8 + 5) / 7 + 0 \times (1.2346) = 22 / 7$

$22 / 7$  is too big by 0.00126. Can you do better?

The competitor with the closest approximation is the winner.

Send your answer to me, David Broughton (see page 3 for addresses).  
Closing date: the 6th May 2009.

## **ANSWER TO THE JANUARY 2009 PUZZLE**

This puzzle was to find how many hymn numbers of 1 to 4 digits could be shown with tiles labelled 1,4 ,6 and 7 with the interesting twist that the 6-tile could be shown upside down to represent the number 9.

**The answer is 113.** A list of them appears on the club web site ([www.iwpcug.org/davidbro/puz0901.htm](http://www.iwpcug.org/davidbro/puz0901.htm)).

I received five answers: from John Stafford, Richard Birkill, Susanne Bone, David Groom and Peter Wreford. Not all had the same answer but Richard Birkill was one of those with the correct answer and won the draw for a book token. Susanne Bone used an interesting method using a spread sheet. I can't fathom out how she did it but she did get the correct answer.

**David Broughton.**

## Mobile Broadband – by David Groom

### What is it?

In the bad old days ( 2 years ago!) if you wanted to use the internet away from home you needed the right mobile phone, the right software on your computer, a way to connect the two, and (if my experience was anything to go by) most importantly of all GOOD LUCK.

Things have moved on and there now is dedicated hardware which allows you to do the same, but much more easily. A mobile broadband modem will either be in the form of a USB Stick or a dongle. These devices connect to the same phone network as mobile phones, and use the networks 3G services. 3G technology is made possible by two complimentary technologies HSDPA and HSUPA (high speed download and upload packet access, respectively).

All major mobile networks provide mobile broadband, although the coverage and pricing plans vary greatly.

It is very easy to set up, truly plug and play. First you place the mobile phone SIM card into the device. Then you plug the device into your computer. All the required software is contained within the device itself (so no CD to get lost). The first time you use it the software gets downloaded onto your computer, and you may then need to reboot. After this you click an icon to connect to the service. It really is that easy!

### Coverage

You really do need a 3G signal, otherwise the software drops down to GPRS which has a maximum speed of 236kb/s. Some networks provide coverage maps, others have a postcode checker, but these are board brush tools. As anyone with a mobile phone will know, signal strength can vary wildly from room to room. So I would advise that you use the coverage maps to first narrow down your choice of provider. Then borrow a mobile phone which is on the network you wish to use, and check you can get a decent 3G signal where you want to use it, not only which house, but which specific room.

On the Isle of Wight, Virgin Mobile claims the best coverage, followed by 3 and T-Mobile, whilst Vodaphone's coverage is almost non-existent. (See back cover)

### Speeds

The networks claim high speeds. On its' web site Vodaphone talks of "superfast connection speeds up to 7.2Mbps", with similar claims by T-Mobile. On 3's web site they appear to be more realistic saying "up to 2.8 Mbps even though our network

has a theoretical maximum speed of 3.6 Mbps.... Most people on our HSDPA network can expect a download speed ranging from 0.6 Mbps to 1.6 Mbps". So that's what the networks claim, but what of real life. A number of web sites have broadband speed checkers on them, visiting three different sites I conducted a number of tests both on my normal fixed line broadband service and on a mobile broadband service provided by T-Mobile. The results were variable to say the least. The following is an average of two tests on each service:

<u>Test site</u>	<u>landline</u>	<u>mobile</u>
www.speedtest.net	6,349 kb/s	741 kb/s
broadbandspeedchecker.co.uk.net	4832 kb/s	1,233 kb/s
pcpro.thinkbroadband.com	2,618 kb/s	2,462 kb/s

My current home broadband package is theoretically an 8Mb package, however many people might be on 2Mb. So these speeds approach those sort of speed. Remember, only a few years ago we were used 56 Kb/s modems, so even on worst scenario mobile broadband is more than ten times as fast as that

It is important to note that mobile broadband is a bandwidth sharing service, so you will be sharing the theoretical maximum with other users in the same cell, as the service becomes more popular this is an important consideration.

### Price Plans

There are two broad options; Pay as You Go (PAYG), and a Monthly contract.

On a PAYG contact you generally have to buy the modem for around £30. The cheapest most flexible contracts (from O2 or T-Mobile) start at £2 for each day of use, so are ideal for infrequent users. Monthly contact prices start around £15 per month, and generally the modem here is provided for free.

One issue is the ability to share the internet connection with more than one computer in the household. 3 & T-Mobile supply mobile routers where you plug the USB stick in and then can share a wireless connection.

What of the future? 3 & T-Mobile are currently merging their 3G networks, other networks are expanding their 3G coverage. 3 says it will offer 14.4Mb/s by end of 2010. 4G standards are in the pipeline, these have achieved max 150Mb/s in the lab, with an average of 80Mb/s, and may be rolled out by the end of 2010.

### Conclusion

For those who live too far from an exchange to get a useful broadband signal through their telephone line mobile broadband is worth investigating. For people on the move, or who may operate from one or two fixed locations it might also be worthwhile.

## **Computer File Shredder Basics -by Sam Miller**

A computer file shredder was created for the same purpose as the paper file shredder. The intent is to completely obliterate not only the file, but in the most secure file shredder software, any reference to the file that was shredded is also shredded in the history and in the directory. Many people do not realize that a computer file that is deleted doesn't go away, it still resides on the hard drive or disc--it just doesn't have a name any more, so there is no easy way to access it.

Someone who knows how to search computer files can fairly easily determine where the data is on the drive and recover the information. This works until the data is written over with other files, which may not happen for a long time. Even if the information is over written once, in many cases, the information underneath the top layer can be accessed, using sophisticated equipment.

In essence, what a file shredder does is to overwrite the file. If the material is extremely sensitive, the file may be overwritten 3 times. Then the reference to the file is removed from the directory area, using the same means--overwriting.

If defragmentation is used on the areas in the drive where sensitive information was stored, this will mean that it's even more difficult to use a file shredder and be certain that the information is truly unrecoverable.

Any time sensitive business or personal information is stored in a computer file, there is always the need to use a file shredder if the computer is sold or donated. A recent study found that a large proportion of donated used computers contain personal information and files on the computer, even when the files have been deleted.

Shredding, also known as file wiping is commonly used for reasons of confidentiality. Copyright and trade item piracy is a serious business. Trade espionage relies on being able to steal secrets about the business of a competitor in order to profit from such information. File shredding or file wiping is just one part of the entire security program. Prevention of theft of sensitive documents and electronic files helps stop computer file theft. Making sure sensitive information is stored in encrypted files and

maintaining the security of the encryption key is another important file security effort. If you want to be absolutely positive sensitive information can never be recovered, methods such as destroying the data with acid, or by incinerating the disc can be used. Another method is known as degaussing which is a methods of decreasing or eliminating an unwanted magnetic field. This is accomplished by the use of an electromagnetic coil and was used as a method of protecting military ships against magnetic mines.

In most instances a triple overwriting in order to shred information in a file is overkill for the home computer owner. Overwriting a large file, such as one of 100MB or larger can take a tremendous amount of time, and is not warranted in most cases for the small business person, or individual for home security.

[reprinted from [www.reprint-content.com](http://www.reprint-content.com)]

## **The Importance Of A Registry Cleaner - by A Singh**

With constant usage, the registry gets clogged with useless links and files. In fact the registry is scanned every time there is a requirement for information, and these useless data slow down the process. An effective registry cleaner could help you deal with such a problem.

To understand the importance of a registry cleaner, let us understand how Windows works. Windows has a database that is used to store system information, which is necessary to configure the operating system for the different users that will log on and use the system. It also stores all the information that is needed to configure the hardware and the various programs or applications that will run along with the operating system be it windows 98, XP or any other version of Windows. This information is constantly referenced during the operation of the computer. This is the central registry system of the PC.

Every time we use the PC the registry constantly grows and gets rearranged. Uninstalling programs sometimes leaves abandoned items in the registry. This constant change and growth eventually slows the system down to a crawl. Here is when the Window registry cleaner steps in to do a thorough job of ridding the system of all the redundant data stored therein.

## Choose Your Registry Cleaner

There are many registry cleaners online. One can run a search on any search engine by typing in 'power registry cleaner', 'free registry software cleaner', 'free registry XP cleaner' or just 'registry cleaner'. The results page will display the entire range of cleaners that you could download and install on your system to undertake the highly technical task of registry cleaning. In the earlier days, windows used to store these configuration data in the INI files. The system had to be configured manually every time some new software was installed. The central registry system has automated that task. However it has brought along with it the problem of having to clean the registry of the useless data and information on a regular basis.

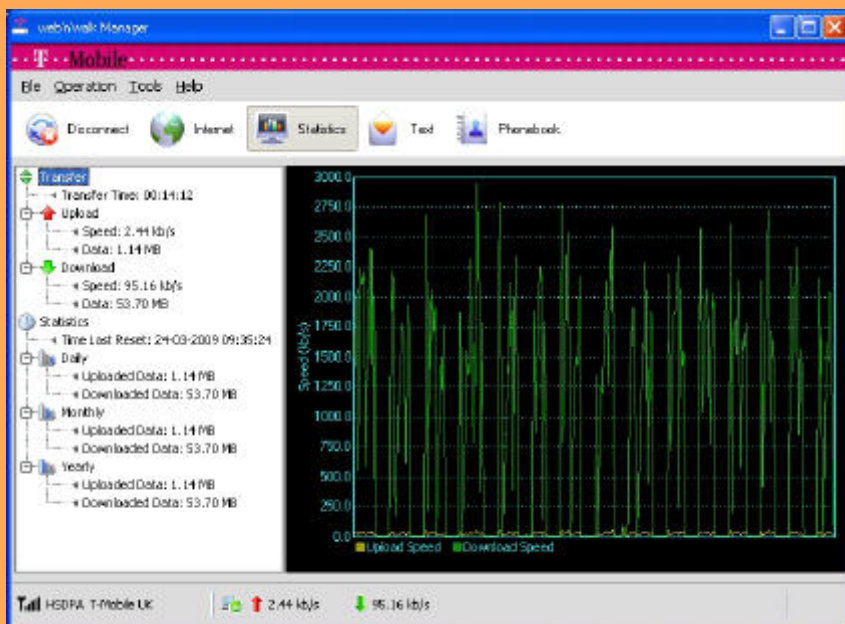
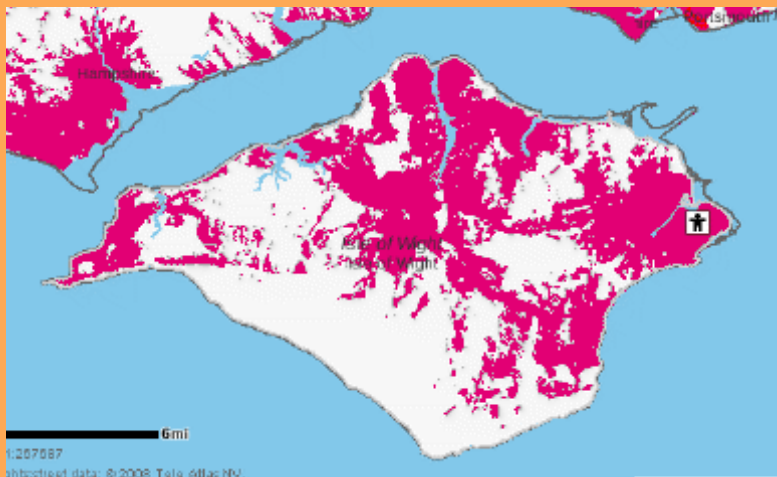
## Not A Manual Task Anymore

Thanks to registry cleaners such as CCleaner, express registry cleaner and the like, the cleaning of the system registry is not a difficult task anymore. Downloading one of these registry cleaners takes no longer than a couple of minutes, depending on your internet connection, and then it takes just a few seconds to install. Using one of these free registry cleaners does not require any technical knowledge at all. It is as easy as counting 123. There are two controls once you download the registry cleaner. One will be 'scan registry' and the other will be 'repair registry'. First you will have to click on 'Scan Registry'. This will scan the registry for all bad links and redundant information. Then the data to be cleaned will be highlighted and you will have to click on 'repair registry' to get rid of these from the system. All these programs should offer the option to backup the registry before you start, if the program doesn't then I would avoid it

It is always advisable to proceed with caution when trying out a new thing. Registry cleaners are not new to the windows environment. However, it is new to many windows users. It is not advisable to mess with the registry yourself. This is a part of the system that even the gurus evade. It is best left up to the registry cleaning software such as registry review cleaner, and their like to take care of this mammoth task. And before you know it your system will be running smoother than ever before.

**[reprinted from [www.reprint-content.com](http://www.reprint-content.com), with some additional content by D Groom]**

## T-Mobile mobile broadband coverage on the Isle of Wight



T-Mobile mobile connection software, showing download speed (green line), and upload speed (yellow line). The screen shot was taken while watching BBC I-Player, and had a peak download rate of 3,000kb/s.

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