

Woes of wireless working

Outside the sun was scorching; inside the office the air conditioning had failed us once again.

Neither location was conducive to concentration. So I thought of a canny, home-based workplan that involved hiding from the heat wherever possible and emerging in the cool of the early mornings and late evenings to plough through my occupational chores.

Laptop under my arm I retired to the end of the garden and began tapping away. Great, I thought. I've cracked it. This is the life. And my mind went spinning off on flights of fantasy about working whenever and wherever I want, preferably from some sunny Greek isle or rural British retreat.

Hah! How foolish of me. As soon as I tried to connect wirelessly to the desktop PC to check my email and file my copy with the editor, I realised my folly. Mobile devices are great but mobile communications are yet to be all they promise.

Wireless ways of working have been the subject of almost as much hype as third-generation telephony, probably for broadly similar reasons. Vast sums have gone into the development of

the technologies that enable it and those footing the bill are damned if they don't ensure we appreciate it.

But if I can't connect to my own wireless network from a distance of a few metres, it makes no difference whether I can transfer data at a zillion megabits per second or whatever the latest version of Wi-Fi promises.

In the interests of research, my techie neighbour and I retired to the local pub garden which, handily, is in line of sight of his house and no more than 60 metres distant. Again, no joy.

And there I was confronted by yet another form of mobile communication: picture messaging. All summer complete strangers have been coming up to me, brandishing these premium-price gadgets and begging me to get my

oh-so-cute dog to pose so they can show off the grainy snap to other friends who've bought into the 3G hype.

It leaves me cold but at least it works, unlike my wireless attempts at staying in touch. Never mind. Better get the drinks in. It's far too hot to work anyway. ■

Rosemary Haworth

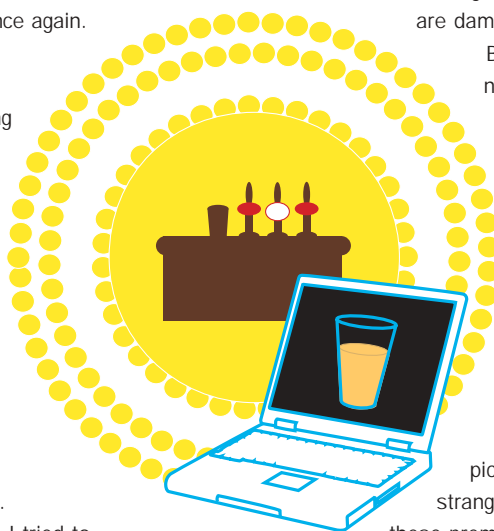


ILLUSTRATION: SARAH AULD

next month

100th issue special



The way we were

We review technological changes that have occurred throughout *PC Advisor's* first 100 issues, raising a glass to some and having a laugh at others.

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