

As the only member of the club to have been active since the very first meeting in 2000, I've seen all the changes. And there have been many.

We started without a single computer – now we have 12 desktop computers and 3 laptops with another one soon to be purchased.

We began with only 4 of us as tutors, but now we have over 40.

Windows 98 was the operating system we used, but over the years we've progressed through XP, Vista, Windows 7 and now we've taken a leap to Windows 8. Before the end of the year we'll have Windows 8.1 installed. Already the courses are under preparation for Windows 8.1. Each new version of the operating system has required changes, many of them quite extensive.

Our computers have increased immeasurably in power, while monitors grow bigger with every new purchase.

From tables made from second-hand doors, we have purpose-designed desks and swivel chairs so that everyone can "rotate" when needed.

From the data projector and screen, there is now a massive TV which will display photographs to their best advantage and give sharper displays for other courses which may use it instead of LanSchool which has served us well for a number of years.

Change has been the name of our game since day one. We progressed from ad hoc assistance to members who came in from the street to the Council's computer laboratory beneath the King Street car park – to having structured courses written specifically for our members long, before anything of quality was available elsewhere. We experimented with courses of various durations and found that five weeks seemed optimal for quite a few years, but now there is an increasing demand for courses of two or three weeks. Perhaps we're becoming busier than we were a few years ago. Again we'll try to adapt to give our members what they want from the club.

To find out what we can do to improve the services we offer, a survey has been prepared, and so far over 100 replies have been received. Already there are definite trends becoming apparent with increasing interest in tablet computers being one of them. We already have a course for the iPad but it is obvious that Android and Windows tablets will surely become more popular.

With the establishment of our DigiPals, GeneaPals and WriterPals groups, we've been able to offer something additional for some of our members, so don't be surprised to see a new group of MobilePals armed with their tablet computers. Again it's all about change.

With the increasing popularity of social media, some of our members have expressed interest in learning about FaceBook. This is fine, but we probably also need to consider other options such as Google+, Jump-in, Instagram and Twitter. We'll need to adapt to these new influences.

There will be further and numerous changes needed in the near future with the major companies emphasising cloud-based computing as well as the increasing popularity of mobile devices replacing the traditional desktop. No longer is a phone a simple phone. With the new smart phones, people are carrying computers in their pockets. The same applies to the former MP3 players. Devices such as the iPod now encourage Internet and email access.

Where will it end? Who knows. But one thing is for sure – while ever the members of this club, and in particular, the tutors and committee are prepared to meet the challenges of change, our club will continue to provide outstanding, and in many cases, unique services to our members.

As I've done for many year, I'll express my deep and sincere appreciation to our tutors, because without their dedication we'd have no club.

Thank you all, and I extend my best wishes to my successor, in the role of Education Officer.