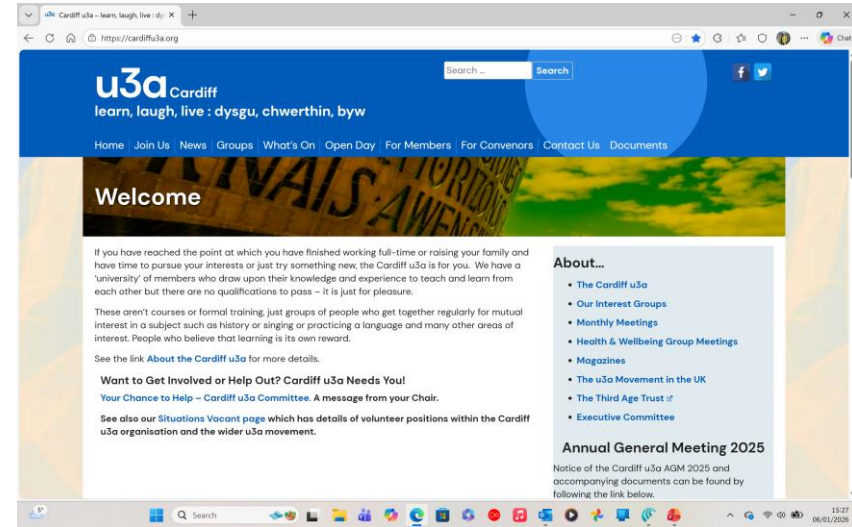


Agenda: 9th April 2026

- News in brief: U3A News
- Buzzword: Phil on Cryptocurrency
- Discussion: Rules of Thumb for Software Updates
- News at length: from the Signal Groups

U3A News in brief

- Does anyone have any ?



Phil's Buzzword

Philip Edwards. Cardiff U3A

Cryptocurrency

Philip Edwards. Cardiff U3A

Cryptocurrency



Why Gift Cards?

To many, "Crypto" sounds like science fiction. However, most of us are already familiar with digital money in the form of **Store Gift Cards**.

By looking at how they are similar—and how they differ—we can peel back the curtain on this new technology in a way that makes sense.

The Similarities

Three ways Crypto acts just like a Gift Card

1. Digital Value

Both cryptocurrency and gift cards hold value electronically. You don't carry physical coins or notes; instead, your balance is stored on a digital network or card chip. You view your current holdings on a screen, allowing you to manage your assets without the need for a traditional physical wallet or heavy change purse.



2. Easy Transferability

Sending Value

Much like handing a gift card to a family member as a present, cryptocurrency can be transferred directly from one digital "wallet" to another.

This peer-to-peer system allows you to send value across distances instantly, removing the need for a middleman or a physical trip to the bank to move funds to loved ones.



3. Accepted for Goods



A Medium of Exchange

Just as a retailer agrees to accept their own gift card in exchange for a product, many modern businesses now accept cryptocurrency as a valid payment method. Whether buying coffee or booking travel, both systems function as a way to trade digital tokens for real-world goods and services that you use every day.

The Differences

Three ways Crypto breaks the mold

1. The Issuer (The 'Boss')



Gift Cards

Issued and controlled by a single company (like Marks & Spencer). They set the rules and expire the balance if they choose.



Cryptocurrency

Decentralized. No central bank or corporation owns it; instead, it is powered by a global community of computers following shared mathematical rules.

2. Scope of Use

Gift cards are typically "closed-loop," meaning they only work at specific stores or brands. You cannot use a supermarket card at a clothing store.

Cryptocurrency is intended to be "open-loop" and borderless, allowing you to send it to anyone, anywhere in the world, without the restrictions of a single company's walls.



3. Value Stability

Price Fluctuations

When you hold a £50 gift card, it remains worth £50 until you spend it. Its purchasing power is predictable and fixed to the currency.

Cryptocurrency prices are highly volatile and change constantly based on market demand. This means your "coin" could be worth significantly more—or less—from one day to the next, making it a riskier asset.



Comparison Summary

Feature	Store Gift Card	Cryptocurrency
Who is in charge?	A specific Retail Company	Decentralized Network
Where to spend?	Specific stores only	Anywhere accepted globally
Value stability	Fixed (e.g. £50 stays £50)	Volatile (Changes constantly)
Physical form?	Usually a plastic card	Completely Digital

James Howells, an IT consultant from Newport

The Mistake: In 2013, while doing a clear-out, James accidentally threw away a laptop hard drive. He had two identical drives in a drawer—one was empty, and the other contained a "wallet" with **7,500 Bitcoins** he had mined (created) back in 2009 when they were worth almost nothing.

The Realization: He didn't realize his mistake for several months. By the time he checked, the hard drive was buried deep within the **Dock Way Orchard landfill site** in Newport.



The Value: At today's prices, those 7,500 Bitcoins would be worth roughly **£400 million to £500 million** (depending on the daily rate).

Bitcoin Mining.

Think of Bitcoin mining as the **digital audit and lottery** system for the network.

Miners use powerful computers to verify a batch of new transactions (a "block"). To prove they've done the work, they compete to solve a complex mathematical puzzle. This process is called **Proof of Work**. The first miner to find the solution gets to add the block to the blockchain—the permanent public ledger.

As a reward for their electricity and hardware costs, the winner receives newly minted Bitcoin. This secures the system without a central bank and strictly controls how new coins enter circulation.





Questions?

The digital world is big, but it's easier when we explore it together.

Thank you for your time!



- £65 on Ebay.
- That would be 0.00129 BTC.

Image Sources



https://media.istockphoto.com/id/1308558939/photo/focus-on-the-card-with-a-15-discount-lots-of-discount-discount-cards.jpg?s=612x612&w=0&k=20&c=Xfd2UuYfqDKa_zK732rYNubDsrkLCYSmIC15LkYK4g4=

Source: www.istockphoto.com



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Source: www.adcb.com



https://static.vecteezy.com/system/resources/previews/055/143/402/non_2x/global-network-of-interconnected-people-digital-world-communication-concept-with-abstract-globe-and-human-icons-png.png

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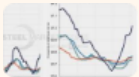
<https://d-central.tech/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Bitcoin-Accepted-Here-Sign-4.png>

Source: d-central.tech



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<https://static.thefabricator.com/a/2024-steel-prices-will-volatility-continue-1702397985.JPG>

Source: www.thefabricator.com

Image Sources



<https://mitylite.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Featured-Image-1.jpg>

Source: mitylite.com

Rules of thumb for software updates

Rules of thumb for software updates

- Times change – do our rules ?
 - When do you brush your teeth in the morning ?



Rules of thumb for technology

- Times change – do our rules ?
- Early TVs caught fire
- Rule of thumb – unplug everything
- Video recorders – rule doesn't work !



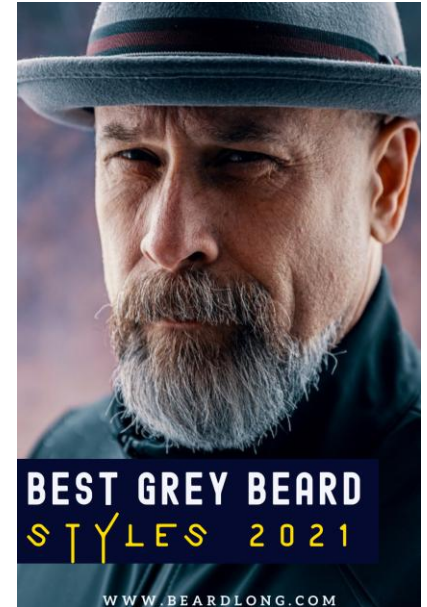
Operating system updates

- Windows 26H1
 - Consumers
 - IT Departments
- Apple
 - IOS 26.3.1 (a)



Are the experts a good guide ?

- Experts worked in IT departments
 - Caution is their watchword – why ?
- Poor quality from suppliers
- Interaction with 3rd party applications
- Connected hardware didn't work



Digital products or consumer products ?

- It just works:
 - Software engineering / total quality management
 - App Store / Play store
 - No connected hardware
- Are you a consumer or a creator ?



Creator ?

- Laptop or PC
 - Specialist applications ?
 - Connected hardware ?
- Caution is the watchword



Consumer ?

- Phone or tablet
 - App store applications ?
 - No connected hardware
- Adopt automatic updates

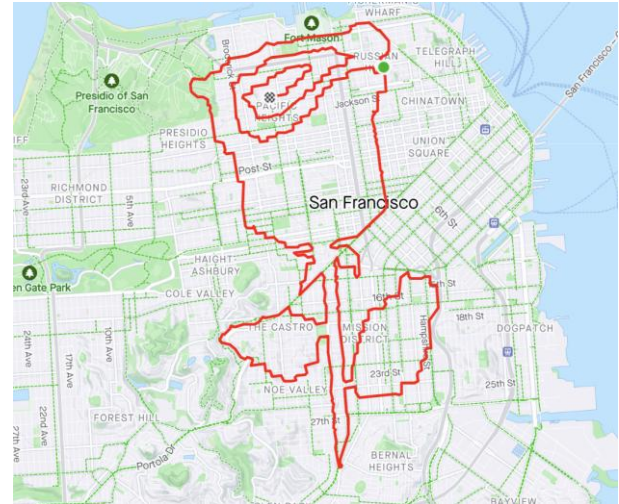


Digital News

- From the Signal Groups – please find on your phone:
 - Digital Matters / News & Updates
 - DM - Scams
 - DM- Apple Pie
 - DM – Easy PC
 - DM – Artificial Intelligence

Digital Matters: News & Updates

- Strava:
 - Not just the French
 - 500 UK personnel publishing their runs on Strava
- WhatsApp privacy checkup video



Digital Matters: News & Updates

- Chloe vs History
- Recommended by Jim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaua5ghidk0>



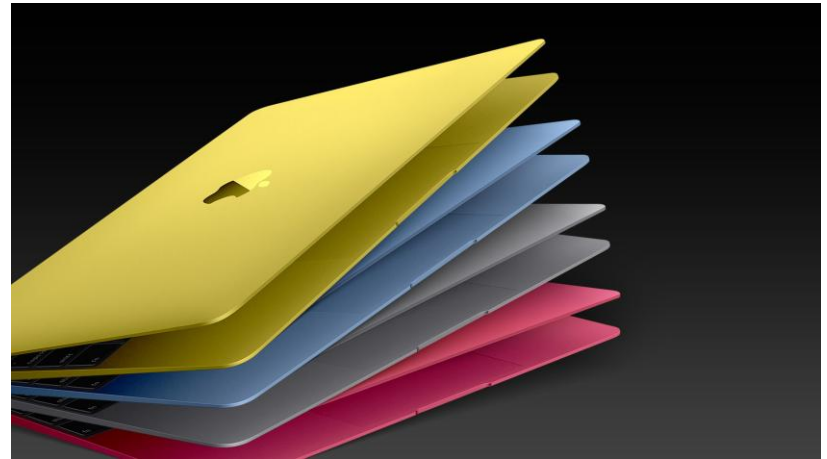
DM: Scams

- Cambodia – scams generate the equivalent of half the national GDP
- Gone Phishing
- UN Global Fraud Summit



DM: Apple Pie 1/2

- iOS updates for older devices
- MacBook Neo launched
- Google testing a Gemini app just for iOS



DM: Apple Pie 2/2

- Spyware alert
- iOS 26.3.1 (a) released
- (a) indicates a Rapid Security Response
- iOS 26.4 update
 - Age verification by credit card



DM: Easy PC

- Windows 11:
- Microsoft is removing Copilot from some Windows apps
- (Less is more 😊)



DM: AI News 1/4

- Perplexity's AI assistant (unhelpfully called Personal Computer) can run on a Mac Mini
- Mac Mini sales have peaked as a result



DM: AI News 2/4

- Free version of Claude now includes:
 - Memory
 - Import history from rival tools
- Google Gemini might allow imports too



DM: AI News 3/4

- Martin Bennell has used an AI coaching tool and broke three British records



DM: AI News 4/4

- Future-proof careers in the Age of AI
 - Evidence-base research



Next meeting: 23rd April

- Presentation: Tom Carpenter on Jailbreaking