Some news stories

by Andy Pepperdine

General

A few news stories were mentioned, although relevant ones are few at the moment.

Next Android release

The next version of Android, named Oreo, from Google is now out, but we'll have to wait for the manufatureres of handsets to catch up. From past experience we can expect devices released this year to be updated in the next 6 months; and last year's models it will take 8 to 12 months. Older devices will probably not be updated at all and it would be better to swap for another one.

Most of the changes will not be visible to the ordinary user, but will improve the life of applications developers, and more clearly separate the google core from suppliers add-ons.

https://arstechnica.co.uk/gadgets/2017/08/android-8-0-oreo-is-official-starts-rollout-out-to-devices/

Data Protection Laws

The UK government has issued a proposal for updated regulations and laws for protecting private data, and placing responsibilities on companies to keep anything they gather safe. The 20 year-old EU regulations are also being upgraded, and it seems that all the UK has done is put into UK law what is proposed for the EU.

The original EU regulations can be found here:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31995L0046:en:HTML

The EU press release for the proposed changes now:
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-16_en.htm

and the story and comment:
http://www.computerweekly.com/feature/What-the-EUs-new-data-protection-laws-mean-for-UK-industry

Firefox add-ons

From Firefox 57 (the current version is 55) many add-ons will no longer work. It depends on the developer of the add-on whether it will be upgraded to the new technology that Mozilla is introducing. In the list of add-ons, those marked "Legacy" will stop working after version 57, due for general release in November 2017.

Details are in the announcement:
https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/firefox-add-technology-modernizing

End of Flash

The reviled Flash from Adobe is being abandoned – this time officially. Many sites have been moving their video streams away from Flash to other forms compatible with HTML5 already, but there is now a concerted effort to abandoned this technology with its long list of security problems, and no more updates are planned after the end of 2020.

Press release: https://blogs.adobe.com/conversations/2017/07/adobe-flash-update.html

Story: https://lwn.net/Articles/728790/

Television software

Some Samsung recent televisions stopped working after a bungled update to the software. This may be a sign of things to come with all sorts of devices. The Internet of Things is one the way.

https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/aug/24/samsung-tv-buyers-furious-after-software-update-leaves-sets-unusable

A bit of trivia

Engineers at the Internet standards body IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force) sometimes issue joke suggestions on 1 April each year. Some of these have reached legendary status like the one from 1990 describing transmission over Avian Carriers, but one in 1998 presciently described a protocol for controlling a coffee pot. Such a device has become a reality. In particular, the jokey proposal gave a value for one of the error codes, that for when trying to brew coffee in a teapot. This has now been accepted into the standards.

Story: https://www.theregister.co.uk/2017/08/14/error_418_im_a_teapot_preserved/

Coffee pot protocol: https://www.rfc-editor.org/rfc/rfc2324.txt

Avian Carriers: https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc1149