

Address overload

http://www.whocares?

Before revealing the winners of our celebrated Christmas quiz, I'd just like to have a quick whinge about the internet. Not the usual stuff that people moan about though, like slow ISPs, expensive tech support or freedom of information. No, what's really annoying me this month is the way uninformed broadcasters and media handle the pronunciation and presentation of web-site URLs.

Not sure what I'm getting at? Okay then: someone at your work, or perhaps a mate in the pub, asks you about a web site. 'Where is it?' they enquire. You reply, 'pcw-dot-co-dot-uk'. No need to mention the three w's and God forbid you start the oral assault course of 'http-colon-back slash-back slash...'. No; we, like many web browsers, assume this intro is always present and simply dispense with it in favour of the really important bit. Yes, I know some sites *don't* start with www, but bear with me.

It's annoying enough when your colleagues literally spell it all out, but what about on the radio and TV? You've almost passed out through sheer boredom by the time they've read out the entire address. While those who know the internet are irritated by the lack of

familiarity shown by broadcasters, it doesn't do those uninitiated into the web any favours either.

I wonder whether a similar situation occurred years ago when telephone numbers first became commonplace for businesses? Perhaps the viewing and listening public wondered what this mysterious string of numbers meant, following the perfectly adequate postal details? I'm sure many of them moaned: 'It'll never catch on'.

And, while we're at it, we all know that web addresses can sound funny, but it's neither big nor clever to mock them in advertising campaigns: straight-talking beer company — you know who you are. Now that's out of my system... er, folder — *ho ho ho!* (you see, computer jokes are just not funny) I can get on to reporting the long-awaited results of our 1998 Christmas quiz (*see the separate panel, below*).

IVOR BUGBEAR

PCW Christmas quiz result

In the January issue we posed 50 fiendishly difficult Christmas Quiz questions. The 'film and TV' section proved particularly tricky: the R2 unit failed due to a bad motivator, not a heavy night out on Christmas Eve, as one of you suggested. One entry correctly named Lore as Commander Data's evil brother but failed to answer *any* of the other 49 questions. Then again, another entrant claimed that one question was ambiguous and hence (he argued) rendered the rest obsolete. Finally, Gromit's Techno Trousers were ex-NASA as opposed to hailing from the Samsung labs, Nick Park's wardrobe or Tesco Metro. However, virtually all of our entrants got almost all of the answers right, which proves just what a brainy bunch you PCW readers are!

Most cunning of all, and winner of a **Canon PowerShot A5** digital camera (*pictured*), was **Martin Stockdale** of Preston, who just fractionally beat Alan Sherratt of Warrington to the star prize. Alan and 19 lucky others get copies of **Encarta 1999 Reference suite**. Congratulations!



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