



Way back in December 2008 I happened upon a group of students gathered around a computer in gales of laughter. They were watching the now famous 'Charlie Bit My Finger' YouTube video. It made me smile, and I put it in this newsletter for you all to see. Imagine my surprise when on the news recently it said that the video has made its makers over £100,000. I am very tempted to put a video camera on my Christmas list, in the hope that I can capture something equally as funny! *Angela Liddiard*



Is it an amusing YouTube video that has brought a smile to Charlotte and Charlotte's faces? No, it is an Excel spreadsheet! These are the smiles of students who now realise that Excel is not a program to be scared of; it is a powerful business aid which they can master.

### Website of the Month

[www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)

Students on the Intensive course have become very enamoured with this website. Pinterest is an online pinboard: when you find something that interests you on the web you pin it to your virtual mood board, then share it with your friends. You are supposed to be invited to join the site – but there is the option to sign up; you might have to wait a few days to be approved. You can peruse the site without registering.

If I have one complaint about Pinterest it is that I find its Help pages a little lacking. If you agree with me you might find the videos on <http://www.grovo.com/pinterest/what-is-pinterest-useful> to help you to get started.



On behalf of the staff and students at OMBS may I take this opportunity to wish all readers a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Healthy New Year. **Andrea Freeman, Principal.**

### This month's IT Tip

*Are you bored with the look of your Excel spreadsheet? Would you like to portray your own style onto your worksheet – or even use your corporate colours?*

*To change the colour of your gridlines go to the **Microsoft Office button/Excel Options**. Click on **Advanced** in the left hand pane and scroll down to **Display options for this worksheet**. Ensure that there is a tick in the **Show gridlines** box, then click on the downward arrow in the **Gridline colour** box. Make your selection and click **OK**.*

*You might like your worksheet tabs to match your gridlines. Right click on the worksheet tab (where it says, for example, Sheet 1) and select **Tab Color**.*

*The choice of colours may be limited, but it looks a bit more interesting than the traditional black and grey.*

### Phones get even smarter

It was exactly a year ago that I wrote about QR (Quick Response) codes in this newsletter. Back then they were fairly new in the UK and not commonly used. Now they seem to appear on everything, and have become an accepted form of marketing and branding.

You will remember that QR codes are the square barcodes just like the one at the bottom of this newsletter. When you scan the QR code with your smartphone (which must have a barcode reader in it) you are taken to further information regarding that company/product or service. This might be to the company's website, Facebook or Twitter page, You Tube channel, Google+ or Street View.

The downside of QR codes is that you have to position the code correctly in your viewfinder before scanning them. It only needs you to be slightly off centre, or to have a shaky hand and the scan will not work.

Near Field Communication (NFC) is a way of sending digital data from one device to another. Therefore, when a smartphone comes within the range of an NFC tag it can identify the tag, and the phone and the tag can exchange data. This is a little more sophisticated than QR codes because the user only needs to wave their phone in the general direction of the NFC tag, then tap the phone, in order to pick up the information.

Is it safe? Unlike Bluetooth, which has a wide range, NFC tags require you to be very close to them in order to identify them – a matter of centimeters away.

What could it be used for? The opportunities are endless, including:

**Mobile payments:** swipe your phone over the NFC tag by a cash register and you could pay by debit or credit card.

**Checking into places:** swipe your phone over the tag and you could be admitted to a number of venues: hotels, nightclubs, restaurants, theatres, cinemas etc.

**Posters:** swipe the NFC tag and it could open the company's website, contact details, Facebook page etc – giving you more information about the company or product. Or, for example, a poster advertising a film could take you to a trailer for that film, a poster for a book could open up the first few pages or chapter of the book, enticing you to buy.

**Signage:** for example, estate agent's boards outside houses. A prospective buyer could scan the tag and be taken to a virtual tour of the inside of the house, hosted on the agent's website.

**Medicine packs/bottles:** these could have an NFC tag which would show recommended dosage, side effects etc.

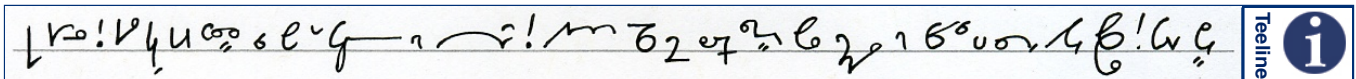
**Medical records:** these can be stored in NFC tags on a bracelet or necklace.

**Keys:** instead of using them, or keypads, or biometrics you could simply use your phone.

**Pet tags:** could contain owners' details, veterinary records etc.

**Official documentation:** in the future this technology might even replace things like your passport and driving licence.

Have you got the technology on your phone for NFC? Perhaps not. Newer smartphones have the software as standard, but for the moment you might need to download the app recommended by your phone manufacturer. In 2012 we will start to see NFC technology built into mobile phones as standard, and then like QR codes, it will really take off.



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