Samuel Gordon-Stewart: This is Samuel's Persiflage Episode #8 for September 2006.

(Music)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yes, indeed it is. It's September, but only just. Welcome, this is Episode 8 of Samuel's Persiflage. I'm Samuel Gordon-Stewart. I hope I find you well, and I hope you can stick around, because we've got quite a show coming up today.

We've got world-renowned technology broadcaster Leo Laporte coming up. He'll be taking up most of the show, I think. Plenty to talk about there. He's coming on to talk with us about Windows Vista, the next version of Windows, as well as competing Operating Systems, and also to talk about podcasting. He's doing a lot of pioneering work in the field of podcasting. He's got a very successful podcast network going, which I'm sure many of you have heard of, the TWiT.TV network, with the flagship "This Week in Tech" podcast. There's a lot he's done there, a lot he is doing, and certainly well worth a chat there.

We've also got a little bit of feedback; not as much as usual. It's very sparse pickings in the Listener Feedback this month, in fact; but there is some there. podcast@samuelgordonstewart.com is the email address.

There's a Thought for the Month, and, well, we've also got a Persiflage Puzzle. So I hope you've got your pen and paper handy.

We might … might see about drawing out a Persiflage Puzzle, I think. This month, it's two words. The first word has five letters -- (noise) … oh. That … well, that was a bit loud, paper hitting a microphone there (laughing). Not good when that happens. So we'll try to avoid that, I think (laughing).

Five letters in the first word; only one letter in the second word. You'd think that would be a giveaway, but it's not a vowel. I'm giving you -- I'm giving you clues now. That's not good (laughing). All right, so five letters in the first word, one letter in the second word.

So we'll draw out five letters this time round out of the hat. And the first letter there, it's the letter 'G' for Goat. It ain't in there. Sorry, it ain't in there, so we'll try another one. It's 'W' for William. It's also not in there. Two letters that are not in there. Let's try for another one there. And it is … it's the letter 'Y' for Yellow, and it's in there. It's the fifth letter, so the last letter of the first word. I'll draw out another letter, and it's the letter 'P' for Peter. 'Fraid it's not in there. So let's go for the fifth and final letter in this round, 'Z' for Zebra. You're probably not surprised if I tell you it's not in there.

So we've got one letter in there so far, but … yeah, all right. I'll give you some more letters a little bit later on, and then maybe you'll be able to work out just what the Persiflage Puzzle is this month.

(Music)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: A couple months ago in Episode 6 of Samuel's Persiflage, we spoke with Pia Waugh, one of the organisers of Australia's Premier Linux Conference, Linux.Conf.Au. That was all well and good, but there's plenty happening outside of the open-source world, and for most people, the next version of Windows Vista is probably going to be at the top of their priority list. Joining me on the line all the way from sunny San Francisco is one of the most well-known and probably most well-respected technology broadcasters on the planet, Mr. Leo Laporte.

Leo, welcome.

Leo Laporte: Hi, Samuel. I'm a master at persiflage, so I'm ready for you.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: That's good.

Leo Laporte: (Laughing.)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Am I right? Is it nice and warm and sunny where you are?

(00:04:59)

Leo Laporte: Well, let's see. It's a little chilly. It's in the 70s right now. But, you know, we're heading into our winter; so we're starting to get the beginnings of fall weather.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: All right. Well, it's about 40 degrees Fahrenheit where I am.

Leo Laporte: Oh, wow.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: It's freezing!

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah.

Leo Laporte: Now, but summer's on its way, right?

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah, summer's coming. It's just … we had a -- a bit of a hot streak, and now it's gone cold again.

Leo Laporte: Yeah.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: So let's … for those of you who so -- I've completely lost it.

Leo Laporte: (Laughing.)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: For those of the listeners who don't know who you are, perhaps you could give us a little bit of a brief rundown of -- of where you're coming from.

Leo Laporte: Well, Down Under, I'm probably best known as the host of Call For Help, which is a hour-long, tech call-in show we do on the "How To" network. We actually do that in Canada, where it airs. I for six years did that show and another show called The Screen Savers in the States on a 24-hour tech channel called TechTV. It was a somewhat popular channel. I mean, among -- among geeks, it was a very popular channel, and it went off the air a couple of years ago. Ever since, those of us who worked on TechTV have found other jobs, obviously; but we -- we kinda' stay in touch, and we … we do a number of podcasts. I have a whole network of podcasts --

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: -- 13 now at last count, although I'm losing track of 'em --

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: 13!

Leo Laporte: -- at TWiT.TV. The … the network is This Week in Tech, and that's the big show, which we do every Sunday; but there's a -- there are a few other shows, on security and on the Internet and on open source. We do a show called Floss Weekly with Chris DiBona, who is the Open-Source Manager for Goggle, and he has a -- he's been around in open source for a long time. He used to work at SourceForge and OSDN and -- and Slashdot, and so he's got a great list of people. We've been having a lot of fun talking to them.

And so it's -- it's great for me. I even do a biotech podcast now. Podcasting's been really a wonderful boom for me.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah. Well, we'll talk a bit about the -- the TWiT Network a little bit later on, because in many ways, the work you're doing there is -- is pioneering for the field of podcasting. So, we will come back to that.

But when -- you mentioned The Screen Savers, that's …

Leo Laporte: Yeah.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: … that's where I first encountered you, actually, not that I --

Leo Laporte: We did it very briefly in Australia, unfortunately (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: I never actually saw it air in Australia. I was -- actually saw a video of you and Patrick Norton demonstrating the SmoothWall firewall.

Leo Laporte: Is that how you found out about SmoothWall?

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: No, that … that's … well, actually, it was one of the ways, because that was when I was sort of looking at various open-source routers.

Leo Laporte: Uh-huh.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: So, yeah, that -- that was a good intro.

Leo Laporte: Yeah, Patrick was … he was a big fan of SmoothWall, and still is and promotes it all the time. And, yeah, I think (laughing) … you know, our claim to fame on TechTV was, we were very likely the first and probably last television network ever to air a live Linux install. We (laughing) … we did a lot of stuff like that.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah (laughing).

Leo Laporte: And -- and I don't know if anybody'll ever do that again; but, boy, it sure was fun.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah. There … there's all sorts of videos floating around the web of stuff TechTV did live.

Leo Laporte: Yeah. If you do a -- if you do a … a … a search on YouTube for "TechTV", one word, you'll find a bunch of clips. You'll get a pretty good idea of what we were doing.

It -- it was exciting. I mean, we were doing it live. We -- The Screen Savers and Call For Help were daily live, hour-long shows. And that was so much fun. It's the one thing you don't get out of podcasting is -- is that sense of live immediacy, and, boy, that was neat.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm. Must have taken a lot of preparation, too.

Leo Laporte: Oh, yeah, big staff. I mean, one of the advantages of doing podcasting is, here I am, a one-man show, doing almost as much programming per week -- actually, now it's probably slightly more programming per week -- all by myself; and -- and that took hundreds of people, of course, and millions of dollars. But, you know, it cost, I think, US $100 million a year to run TechTV.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Ouch.

Leo Laporte: Yeah, and that's one of the reasons it's no longer (laughing) -- it's not around any more (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: It was a pretty expensive undertaking (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah (laughing). All right. Well, we'll move on to Windows Vista. Now, that's the next version of Windows -- of the Windows Operating System, the successor to Windows XP, and you've been …you're going to present a few talks on it, and so you probably are the right person to talk to about it. There's a … a few security concerns floating about with it. There's also concerns about the release date being pushed back yet again. What … well, do you think it will be pushed back again or ...

Leo Laporte: Not -- not now, no. In fact, I think it's very solid right now. The Release Candidate 1 is out in wide distribution. Microsoft last week distributed Release Candidate 2. Well, there's two branches; but what -- what looks to be probably very close to their ready-to-manufacture release. That's the one, the Gold Disk that goes to the printers, and … and once you've done that, you're committed. That will be Release 1.

(00:10:06)

We're doing -- we just started a Windows podcast, Windows Weekly with Paul Thurrott, who is really the expert, not my -- far more than I. And he says his sources inside Microsoft say that October 15th will be the date Windows will be done, and they will start shipping it. Now, you won't be able to get it. You'll be able -- business customers will be able to get it towards the end of the year, and end users will be able to get it in January. But I'm also told that machines that are purchased after some date in October, I -- I think the early part of October, will come with a coupon for Windows Vista. So we're very close to the actual release of it. I think the jokes that we've made for years about the slipping release dates of Windows Vista finally can come to an end (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: And we can apply them to the version of Windows after that.

Leo Laporte: That's right (laughing). And that will undoubtedly slip forever; but, you know, we'll see.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: hm. One of the -- the main criticisms of Windows Vista is that it's in many ways a resource hog with … especially with the Aero Glass interface. Now, it doesn't have to have the Aero Glass interface, which is sort of the -- the really high-end version of it; but do you think that people are going to be tempted to upgrade to it, even if it's not going to deliver them the -- the new interface?

Leo Laporte: Yeah, everybody will, because everybody's concerned about security. There will be other new features; it's not merely the interface. In fact, I don't even really like the interface. It's a little bit too cotton candy for me; however, I like something a little more understated (laughing). But, you know, you can change it back, of course. You can change it to anything you want. I don't think Aero Glass is the reason to go to Vista; the reason to go to Vista is improved security.

There is a new … you know, overall, there's going to be a new interface on all of Microsoft's products. They're doing it in Office 2007, as well. You know, there's new ribbon toolbar, which eliminates menus. And so, you know, people are gonna' want that, and that's more than cosmetics. It's really a new way of using applications, one I haven't really cottoned to yet; but I understand that those who have forced themselves to use it have -- are pretty happy with it.

I -- I think that people will want to upgrade. I know -- you know, I know many people won't be able to upgrade. I mean, if you really … a reason not to -- everybody will want to. A reason not to would be if you don't have a gigabyte of ram. If you don't have a -- a fast processor, two gigahertz or better processor, it just won't be useable. I mean, it's not … you know, you have to have a good video card to use the Aero Glass; but … but even if you don't turn on Aero Glass, the thing will be slow if you don't have a lot of memory and a -- and a fast processor.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm. And you did mention security. There's Microsoft, have been working very hard to improve the security of Windows, which is something we've all wanted for a very long time; but there's also a few security issues. Not -- not so long ago, there were issues raised about the new network stack.

Leo Laporte: Yeah, we did a podcast, "Vista's Virgin Stack" with Steve Gibson, who does the security podcast for TWiT. A lot of what Microsoft did with Vista was rewrite from scratch. Vista is based on Windows Server 2003, which is the newest, you know, or latest release of Windows.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: And -- and much of it has been rewritten, including the stack, the network stack. And, you know, on the one hand, you'd say, "Well, good, because the old one was pretty bad" (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: But on the other hand, the old one had been banged on for a long time, and so over time, you know, it had been fixed, and a lot of the bad flaws in the old stack were -- were patched. And in fact, it's pretty good now.

You start from scratch, you run the risk of introducing a whole new set of un- -- you know, unpatched flaws. And furthermore -- and this was the real concern -- a report came out from Symantec a couple of months ago, in which they looked at the stack in a Beta version -- and, remember, these are Beta versions.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: We're not looking at the release version. But they looked at the stack in the Beta version, and they found bugs in it, flaws, holes in it that had been patched years ago, you know, in Windows 98. So it does make one wonder, "Who's writing this, and aren't they learning the lessons of the past?" I'm sure it will be more reliable, more robust, by the time it ships; but it is always a -- it's always a concern when you -- when you write something that important from scratch. You … you know, unless you were extraordinarily careful, and maybe even using newer tools to prevent things like buffer overruns --

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: -- you know, you're likely to run into a whole new set of exploits and flaws.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Do you think we're going to see a -- a lot of people, especially corporations, not upgrading to Vista until at least Security -- Service Pack 1's out?

Leo Laporte: Well, for a lot of reasons, there's a -- you know, there's a -- a training curve. Microsoft's beating the drum right now to say, "Oh, no, you'll find it's easy to use. You won't have that big training curve." But any time you've got a new Operating System, corporations are always very slow to roll it out. The people who really care the most about Windows Vista shipping are the computer manufacturers …

(00:15:008)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: … because the truth is, people don't … the -- the vast majority of users don't upgrade Windows; they upgrade their PC, and it comes with the new version of Windows. It's -- it's really the easiest and best way to do it. So a lot of people wait to buy a new computer if there is a new version on the horizon. That's probably going on right now. We've seen sales drop off. Business is certainly going to wait. I mean, when Windows XP came out, it took several years before it was widely adopted in business, and still a great many businesses use Windows 2000. Really, the only stick carrot can --

stick Microsoft can use to get people to upgrade to Windows, a new version of Windows, is by end-of- -- end-of-lifing the old version and stopping support of it. So -- and that's what they've done with Windows 95 and 98 and they're soon to do with Windows 2000. You know, then business really does -- they don't wanna' …. they don't wanna' have an Operating System that's no longer supported, so then they really do have to move.

So, you know, as important as Vista is, and there hasn't been a new release of Windows in five years, it's (clears throat) … it's always something business is slow to move to. They really want to see it. They'll do -- you know, and that's why they're releasing it now in December for business. They want business to have as much time as possible to evaluate it, to try it out, to get comfortable with it, before the actual ship date.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart : Hm. And of course, it's -- as you said, it's been five years since the last version of Windows was released; so other Operating Systems -- for example, Mac and Linux -- have had an awfully large amount of time to -- to work on their own Operating Systems and, especially in the case of Linux, really get them ready for desktop users. Do you think that these Operating Systems are going to make any dent in Vista's market?

Leo Laporte: Absolutely. I think in some ways, they already are. I mean, Microsoft has -- has taken so long to get this out; they've had such a rotten time with security. These other Operating Systems, as you say, are better; they're newer; they're more robust. I see even end users, even novice end users, considering Linux as a choice, and I certainly tell everybody who listens -- I do a radio show in Los Angeles that -- and we just answer questions about technology, and I tell anybody who calls who's buying a home computer, "Buy" -- you know, "Buy an Apple (laughing), buy a Mac, because you don't want to have to become a security expert," and that's really how it is right now if you buy a -- a Windows machine.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm. Of course, with -- with the Mac, Apple certainly managed to, I suppose, rejuvenate their -- their brand name to some extent with the iPod. Up until the iPod. There're a lot of people who saw the Apple Mac as "that computer that sort of was running back in the mid-'90s, but sort of tailed off and no one heard of it since"; but now with the iPod, people have said, "Well, Apple are actually doing something, the Mac looks pretty good. Maybe it's worth a shot."

Leo Laporte: A lot of geeks have moved to Mac, because, really, OS 10 -- remember, OS 10 is much newer than Windows.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart : Hm.

Leo Laporte: It's running on BSD, which is a very robust, well-known, stable Unix using a Mach kernel, which is a very good kernel. It has a lot of advantages, frankly, over -- over any other machine. I mean, in effect, you get a commercial Operating System with a lot of slick features on top of a -- a -- a true Unix. You know, somebody like me, I -- I live in the command line on the OS 10 and love it. I think a lot of geeks moved to OS 10.

Now, there's an interesting movement away from OS 10. People like Cory Doctorow, who are really thought leaders in the free software and, you know, anti-DRM movement, Cory is a long-time Mac user. He's a science-fiction writer, worked at the EFF for a long time, really smart guy. He and a number of others I've seen are saying, "You know, we're not going to use Apple. It's just not right to use any closed-source Operating System, particularly as we move closer and closer to a day and age where copy protection, digital-rights management, is built into the Operating System." They believe politically that the right thing to do is to use an open Operating System with no copy protection, no rights management, built into it.

And I have to say, I agree with 'em. And it's -- but it's gonna' be hard (laughing). You're gonna' have to pry my Mac outta' my fingers, 'cause I -- I'm just … I love the Macintosh Operating System. And, you know, to me, it combines the best of both worlds; but I -- but I have to agree with Cory, especially as we start watching Apple, you know, really get -- move closer and closer into relationships with record companies and movie companies. There's a lot of pressure on Apple to build copy protection into the Operating System, to make it a part of the Operating System.

That's what's happening here in the States is, there's … all the content creators, Hollywood, the record labels, are pushing our United States Congress to legislate a broadcast flag, which is essentially to mandate in all hardware capable of playing back digital content -- which is, of course, every computer made -- hardware copy protection, a way for the content creator to flip a switch, in effect, in the -- in the device, saying, "This can't be copied." And … but by doing that, you're really giving Hollywood and the record labels the right to reach their long arm into your machine and tell you what you can do with it.

(00:20:34)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: And I -- I agree with Cory that that's … that's not the right way to go. Now, that's not law yet. I imagine it will be law at some point, and I don't know what the state of the law is in Australia, although because of WIPO -- the World Intellectual Property Organization, a UN-chartered organization that's essentially controlled by the record companies and the movie companies -- I think that this will be kind of the law of the globe eventually. They're -- they're -- they're every … virtually every Government is doing what it can to be compliant with the WIPO Treaties, and that means broadcast flag and DRM everywhere.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: Bad thing. Bad thing for users.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah. DRM, I think … there is a -- the copyright laws here, they seem to be being relaxed a tiny bit; but the way I look at it, what they're doing is that they make it sound like you can copy more stuff than … than you actually can, and then really what they're saying is, "Well, you can copy this TV show, you can watch it a few times, but then it's gone." And, really, that's just more Digital Rights Management.

Leo Laporte: That's DRM.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah.

Leo Laporte: Absolutely. Well, you know, I don't want anybody to reach their arm into my computer and delete a file on my computer, and that's effectively what they're doing.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: It's none of their business. I -- if I've purchased something, I own it, I should be able to do whatever I want with it short of, you know, pirating it, giving it away, stealing their content -- but if I own it and it's on my machine, I should be able to burn it to a DVD, I should be able to watch it on any device I have without restriction. I've paid for it!

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: But, of course, the content companies don't like that idea. They -- they … really, everybody -- software, content, everybody -- wants you to rent your content and your software.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: They -- they don't want you to own it. They want to reserve the right to take it away from you, and I'm just not into rental.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah, yeah. I suppose that's one of the things, though, that does hold Linux back in some ways is that there are all of these closed formats, such as … I mean, even the MP3 format is a closed format to some extent; that if -- if -- it's not included with Linux. People start it. They try to open a file. They can't open it, and they blame Linux for it, and --

Leo Laporte: Right.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: -- it's back at Square 1. So, there's a hole right there.

Leo Laporte: Well, we have Linux to thank, really, for the fact that you can copy a DVD. If it weren't for "DVD Jon", Jon Johansson, wanting to create a DVD player for Linux, we wouldn't have DeCSS. Because he had to figure out how the encryption worked in order to make a DVD player for Linux, he had to reverse-engineer it. I think

you can say that   in a lot of cases, that the reason that these technologies have been cracked and   reverse-engineered and defeated is so that they can work on Linux.

You know, I still think we need to have an open-source, free operating soft- -- I don't think Operating Systems should be owned by a company. I think that's akin to having the … the highways owned by a company. They belong to everybody; they're important to commerce; they're important to, you know, the free and easy exchange of information. Operating Systems by all rights really shouldn't belong to anybody.

I think programs can. That's fine, and you can make the choice between whether you want a commercial program or an open-source program. I wouldn't use commercial encryption (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: I wouldn't use … I'd be very careful about, you know, using commercial programs that, you know, relying on your -- your privacy or security from commercial programs, because you have no way of auditing them. But certainly the Operating Systems should be open and free. And, you know, as much as I believe that -- and I do use Linux, but I also use Windows, and I use Mac -- and I have to say that my full-time, you know, Operating System, the one I turn to when I want to get work done, is still a Macintosh.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: But I think that the time is -- time is running out for Apple. I -- I -- they … they've opened some of it, you know. I mean, much of the underlying Operating System is open; but I suspect as they get under pressure, more and more pressure from content creators, you'll see less and less of that. And that's when people are gonna' have to make a choice. They're gonna' finally have to sit down and say, "Well, am I willing to sacrifice a little ease of use for freedom"?

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Uh-huh.

Leo Laporte: … "to -- to do what I want?" and they'll have to make that decision. I … I encourage people to use Linux whenever they can.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm. So what are you using at the moment?

Leo Laporte: Well, sitting right in front of me right now is a Mac Pro, which is the latest Macintosh. It's dual Xeon chips, and so it's quad processor. I have a 30" screen, Apple screen. Right next to that is a Windows machine still running XP. I … I'm not yet ready to install Vista on a work machine, on a production machine. I just don't think it's quite there yet. It will be soon, and probably when I run Vista, I'll run it in a virtual machine on a Mac --

(00:25:20)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: -- most likely. And then, you know, I have an Asterisk box in the corner, which I actually haven't really started to use; but that's a Linux … as you probably know, a Linux phone system. And I run Linux in virtual machines. I like Ubuntu a lot. That's kinda' become my -- for a long time, I was a SUSE guy; before that, Mandrake, now Mandriva. But I've become an Ubuntu guy. So that's kinda' -- that's kinda' my … as I said, I have to use all three.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yep.

Leo Laporte: Day-to-day, though, you know, I mean, the machine that this -- this -- the screen that is centered in front of me on my desk is a Mac.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Fair enough. All right. Well, we might as well move on to the TWiT.TV Network. Now, as you mentioned earlier, TechTV closed, folded, well, whatever you want to call it, and you stayed in contact with a lot of your friends from … from there. And, really, that's how … that's how it all started, isn't it?

Leo Laporte: Yeah. It's kind of neat. I mean, one of the things that happens with geeks -- and I (laughing) … you know, it's one of the reasons that podcasts even exist, is -- is, we like to talk to each other. We like to -- you know, when I worked at TechTV, I would go downstairs to the lab. We had a very nice lab with a lot of equipment and new stuff in all the time and five or six people full-time just reviewing stuff, and … now, that, boy, that was a nice resource (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: I'd go down there and say, "What's new? Show me the latest. What do you think about this?" We'd -- we'd get together all the time as -- as journalists do and say, "Hm. So what's your take on this?" and -- because no one person can cover all of tech.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: No.

Leo Laporte: Especially in the last ten years, it's just exploded; but we all wanna' know what's going on. We're on the -- you know, on the -- when you -- when you talk to a tech journalist, when you see them talking to one, one of the first things that they ask is, "So, what have you seen? What's new? What's hot? What's exciting?" (laughing.) We're all trying to find out what's the next new next thing.

So we always kinda' did that while we were working together, and when we stopped working together, I think we missed it quite a bit and … and, in fact, got to -- would get together from time to time, either on the phone or in person. We were spread out all over

the, you know, west coast of California; but we'd -- we'd -- we'd try to get together and talk about this stuff.

At one point, we did right after Mac World Expo in 2005 and -- in early, you know, January 2005, and I recorded the conversation. And it really was not a formal radio conversation and it -- or interview in any sense; it was just us gassing. It was just us talking about what was going on. But I put it on the website, and people loved it! And I thought, "Wow. Hm. That's interesting."

And of course, one of the things that happened after TechTV went out of business is, we got a lot of … every day, I still meet people. Here it is, two years -- more than two years later -- I still every day meet somebody who says, "Ah, I miss TechTV. I miss The Screen Savers. Boy, we loved having that." For six years -- and a lot of these people grew up with it, you know, started watching as teenagers and now are in the business -- for six years, there was somewhere you could go every night and kind of be, first of all, affirmed in your geekiness; that it was okay to be geeky; that we were geeky, too; and here we are in a big TV show talking about stuff, and not as most networks now do, talking down to people -- not dumbing it down, but really talking about it as geeks talk to one another. Ah, that was, I think for a lot of people, that was an eye-opener. That was great. There'd never been anything before like it. And so every time I meet people, they say, "We miss that. There's nothing like it now."

And so, you know, I -- I realise, and everybody who ever worked at TechTV knows in their heart of hearts, that there's a large number of people who want this stuff, who are very interested in this stuff. So, you know, we weren't gonna' spend a hundred million dollars a year putting another cable channel together; we decided, "Well, just let's try it as a podcasting, as a podcast." As you know, podcasting's cheap. It's very easy, especially for what I do, which is all audio.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: It's --

Leo Laporte: Some of them --

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: It's cheap except for the bandwidth, but you don't have to worry about bandwidth (laughing).

Leo Laporte: Bandwidth can be expensive. We don't pay for our bandwidth, although, you know, there are ways to do it. Libsyn at Libsyn.com, it's US $30 a month for unlimited bandwidth. There are more and more of these springing up. I don't think bandwidth has to stop anybody. The equipment certainly is cheap. Really, the only expense is your time and effort and how much you want to put into it; and some people put a lot, and some people don't.

And -- and -- now -- now, Kevin Rose, who also worked on The Screen Savers, does video. His … his company, Revision3.com, is really starting to turn into a television channel. I think of myself almost as a -- now a radio station with 13 shows. And we --

and -- and -- you know, and because it's a podcast, not only is it cheap and easy to do; you can also be even geekier than we were on TV, even narrower. You can aim at a niche, and I think that's great. I mean, people want that kind of information.

(00:30:03)

There are certainly a lot of technically literate people in the world, and that number is growing very rapidly. In the next generation, it'll be -- it'll probably approach 100%. And those people need this information. It's happening very quickly. I can't think of an -- an -- an area where the -- the rate of change is as fast. They need the information, they wanna' be … but at the same time, you know, as many as we are, we're still in clumps, you know, alone. And, you know, there are user groups, and there are places you can gather; but unless you live in an urban area where there are a lot of other geeks and you know where they hang out, you're -- you're kinda' doing it by yourself. So it's really reaff- -- reaffirming to have somebody doing this kinda' stuff, you can listen to it. I think podcasts for any niche, and it's (laughing) -- you know, for golf, for knitting and for technology are a real boom.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm. So why do you think it really took off the way it did? I mean, it started with just This Week in Tech, which at first, having listened to some of the -- the really early episodes, you really didn't get the impression that this was going to be anything more than a few people having a chat once a week. And now, it's grown into, as you said,   13 podcasts. Do you --

Leo Laporte: Well, it's demand (laughing). I'm just responding to demand. And I -- you know, they're so easy, I can't stop. It's like chips; I can't stop eating them (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: You know, they're (laughing) -- I -- you know, I -- every day I come in, and I have an idea. And the thing is, it's so easy. The barrier entry is so easy. There's no -- there's no … especially now I have all the equipment, I -- you know, I -- I can crank these things out. And so I have an idea to do a podcast, I do it.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah.

Leo Laporte: The latest -- the latest two are Windows Weekly, as I mentioned, which is going to focus on Vista. That's much needed. I mean, and we didn't have a Windows podcast. My goodness, how could that be? And then it happened that, you know, we're on -- on This Week in Tech, which is kind of a -- a conversation roundtable about the week's news, we frequently cover legal issues, as we just have, Samuel, you know.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: And so I thought, "Boy, you know" … in fact, I think I said it out loud, which was my mistake. "Boy, we really should have a legal podcast with actual attorneys

who know this stuff talking about it." I said it, and the next day I got hundreds of emails from attorneys, saying, "I'll do it!" (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: So I -- I … one of them was very compelling, a woman I had known for years, Denise Howell, who is a very well-known legal blogger, attorney, an expert in IP, Intellectual Property law, and former Counsel with Electronic Frontier Foundation and had -- and knows everybody; has a -- has a great voice. And I -- and she said, "You know, I'd -- I'd love to host this, and I will do all the work. I'll put it together. I'll edit it." And … and I said, "Okay, Denise!" (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: And so she's gone out and pretty much duplicated my equipment setup. She's -- she's lined up great people. In fact, the first one has Hank Berry, who was the guy who … the -- the Counsel, the Legal Counsel, for Napster. I mean, this guy is really an interesting fellow. This … he's on the panel, but it's a -- a number of different people. He's now a partner at Hummer Winblad, which is one of the … actually, I guess he's been at Hummer for a while. He's a former CEO of Napster, but he's been at Hummer for ... for about six or seven years. They are a venture fund that specializes in software, and they're great. So Hank knows everything and … and is really gonna' be a great panelist. That'll be the first episode, which, depending on when this comes out, will either be out already or out soon.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Well, I'm going to try and get this out before the end of September, because I try to do ... I try to do one episode of Samuel's Persiflage each month. That varies, depending on -- on my workload. But I'll try and get it out before the end of the month (laughing); but I'm just thinking that it's starting to look like it's going to be the not-quite-September edition.

Leo Laporte: (Laughing.) Well, it'll be a race between This Week in Law and Samuel's Persiflage. We'll see who comes out first.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm. I suppose another thing with the -- the TWiT Network is that being the -- the big names that a lot of the people involved are, yourself included, of course, you've had this opportunity to -- to really take it where … take podcasting where others haven't been able to. You've been able to attract advertising. I mean --

Leo Laporte: Yeah.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: -- people like me, who have a couple hundred listeners a month, wouldn't even consider advertising, because no one would be interested in advertising to 200 people a month. But to the same extent, you have … I don't know, what is it? … hundreds of thousands of listeners each week.

Leo Laporte: Right. Right.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: And it's just --

Leo Laporte: Many of them in Australia, too --

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: -- thanks to the TV show, so that's good.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah.

Leo Laporte: You know, it's funny, because I don't get credit for international listeners. Here's what's happening, Samuel. I think ultimately many podcasts, even small ones like yours, will have advertising, because advertisers are looking for an efficient way to spend their dollar. Right now when they buy network television, they're kind of spreading it everywhere; and if you are looking for a specific audience, boy, well, you can't get more specific, more targeted, than a podcast.

(00:35:10)

So I do think advertisers are gonna' get there; but we're in very early stages here. In fact, this -- this example of, well, you know, we go to ad agencies is, they don't … they've never been able to buy a medium that is international.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: They've only been able to buy, at best, a national advertisement. So even these -- these international companies like Dell, they don't … they have no accounting system for buying a global medium (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing).

Leo Laporte: So they say, "Well, you know, I'm glad you have" -- you know, more than 25% of our audience is international, is outside the U.S. They say, "We're glad you have that. We're glad they're listening. We know they'll probably buy some computers from us; but we ain't gonna' pay you for 'em, 'cause we don't have any way to account it" (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: -- and -- and that. So we're in a very, very … we're convincing people now that podcasting is for real, and I think it's gonna' take a while; but I think you'll be surprised. I think in a few years, there will be ways to do this. Advertisers, they might not buy an individual pod- -- podcast with a hundred people; but what they'll do is to go agencies that aggregate podcasts.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: And they'll say, "I have a very specific target. I want males 18 to 25 in this income bracket with this education level who are in, you know, likely to watch this TV show," for instance.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: And an agency will, having done its research and aggregated hundreds, maybe thousands of podcasts together, be able to deliver exactly what they want. And -- and -- and it's a very exciting model, because it means that even a podcast with 200 people will have it. I -- I think you might be surprised. You'll have -- you'll have advertising.

The -- the agency we use is Pod- -- it's called Podtrac at Podtrac.com, and that's exactly their model. I think -- I've worked with them since they first started. In fact, when they first called, I said, "Look, I'm not gonna' take advertising. I've already decided that; however, I'll talk to you, because I think this is important that you do it right and understand the needs of podcasters." So I … I -- I've worked really closely with them over -- over a year, getting them to understand what podcasters care about and helping them refine this business model. I think they have a fantastic business model.

And they're just one. I mean, you know, just as you might not have thought that a blog could make any money, thanks to Goggle AdSense and -- and technologies like that, now suddenly a blog can make money. I think even better with a podcast. A podcast is a natural medium.

Now, many podcasters will say, "Well, I don't wanna' take ads." You don't have to take ads. In fact, we -- we ask for donations, and we thought for a long time we'd be able to support the network. In fact, for a long time, we were able to support the network on donations. But as we grow and I have more contributors, I don't feel it … I -- you know, right now, all the contributors are donating their services. I just don't feel like I can continue to, you know, ask them to --

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: -- to work for free, and I'm not really -- I work, you know, 40, 50, 60 hours a week on -- on these podcasts, and I -- I'm working for free. I can afford to do that, I have a real job; but, you know, ultimately I'd like to get paid, too. So …

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: … donations were never enough to do that. They were enough to make sure we had bandwidth, web hosting, rent, equipment -- you know, all the day-to-day

expenses. We never lost any money. I never had to take money out of my wallet to pay for this. But at the same time, it was never enough money to pay us.

So, you know, I think we need to move to the next step. Now, we'll probably still take donations, because … for a couple of reasons. One is, advertising comes and goes; the bills do not.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: And so I ask people to -- for a recurring $2 US donation, which is a very -- I think a very small donation -- you know, a cup of coffee a -- a month …

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: … considering the value that they get out of it. And that consistent month-in/month-out stream -- trickle, maybe (laughing) -- of money is -- is -- means that I can -- I can sign a lease, I can get a T1 line, I can agree to do stuff over a few years that I -- I wouldn't be able to do if I didn't know I had a consistent stream of income.

So I think donations are important. And there's a second reason. It ties the listener to the podcast.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: It -- it -- if -- if something is absolutely free, you know that you … if you just look at yourself and how you treat things, if it's absolutely free, you don't value it. Even if you pay a buck for it, you value it more than if it's free. So I think it's important to kind of get people to contribute, because it means they're participating.

There's a third reason, as I -- I really want to. I don't, you know … you know how I feel about privacy. There's those -- that -- those addresses, I don't even know 'em. They are locked up. But I think ultimately what we would really like to do is be able to offer people who are donors coupon codes, access to stuff that they wouldn't get otherwise. We do already have a forum that's a private forum for donors only; and because it's for donors only, the level of conversation is much better in there. I mean, there's -- it's -- it's -- it's really a great place to be, 'cause (laughing) … you know, it's funny. If you pay two bucks a month, there's just something about it that those people are more committed.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

(00:39:55)

Leo Laporte: I -- you know, and so that's another way to monetise a podcast, too, because I can say to an advertiser, "Look, I want a coupon code. I love your product. I know that the people who -- we call 'em the TWiT Army, the people who've donated, would love your product. Why don't we give 'em 15% off?" And … and I … I've

already started this process, and there are a number of adver- -- advertisers who will say, "That's great," and I say, you know, "And what I'd like is five bucks for every sale you make, because, you know, in effect, it's advertising." And they're -- they're perfectly willing to do that.

So that's another way to monetise, Samuel, and it's something that a small podcast can absolutely do. Say, "Look, we thank you for your donation. We appreciate your donation, and to reward you, we'd like to give you a coupon code." I think that's another way that you can monetize and make everybody happy. So I think there's a lot of … it's -- you have to remember, this is a brand-new medium.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: We can't use the same techniques that the old media have used. We have to try new things. Advertising right now is very much old media.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm. And as you said, it is a new medium, and if you watch the -- the mainstream media, especially television news bulletins, you can see that they're starting to get a little bit concerned about all of this, all of the citizen journalism, because I know that here in Australia, two of the main commercial networks, Channel 7 and Channel 9, both of them have it there during each of their news bulletins, this message saying, "If you're on the scene of a news story, get out your mobile phone and send us the pictures."

Leo Laporte: Right.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: And they're recognizing that -- that people are there on the scene. They want to report it themselves, but they don't want to have you doing it on the Internet; they'd rather you go through the traditional means.

Leo Laporte: Well, guess what (laughing)?

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing).

Leo Laporte: We're gonna' -- we're gonna' -- we're gonna' start doing it ourselves. I see no reason at all to give away that stuff, and I think people --

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: You know, people initially go, "Oh, that's neat," you know, "They want my picture." But, believe me. I -- mainstream media is … I don't think they're gonna' go away; but they are very much threatened by this, and rightly so, because ultimately there is going to be a much broader range of media out there because of user-generated content. I think you're gonna' see a lot of it.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: It's very exciting. I … I -- you know, this -- podcasts are a perfect example. I think ultimately we -- we could threaten broadcast radio. And -- and I know that with the -- the broad variety of video that's being produced now, and -- and -- and it's getting better and better in quality, it's going to -- in the long run, it's going to threaten television and cable networks. People are … my kids don't go home and watch TV; they go home and watch YouTube.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: I think they are a -- a -- a harbinger of what's to come.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: That takes me to another side issue, completely off topic; but I suppose you've probably played with both You- -- YouTube and Google Video. Which one do you prefer out of the two?

Leo Laporte: I like YouTube, because it's very easy. The quality seems a little bit better. There seems to be more interesting stuff on there.

You know, Call For Help, our TV show, is available in the U.S. on Goggle Video for 99 cents, and that's something YouTube doesn't offer. There's another company called Revver that's like YouTube, but shares its revenue with the broadcaster; and some people have made a considerable amount of money on Revver.

So, you know, I think YouTube is really great. I watch a lot of stuff on YouTube. I think one of the things that YouTube did that was very smart is, they allowed people to link, you know, the videos into their blogs.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: So you'll see -- you know, these -- these videos will spread around much more quickly than they do at Goggle Video's. YouTube just seems more fun to me; but that's right now, you know.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: Six months, ask me again, everything'll be different.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah, I -- I well just last night, for the first time went and played with YouTube and Google Video, and overall I was more impressed with YouTube. There was a … a couple of reasons. They're … as you said, the quality was better. I thought the -- the Flash player that you can embed on the web pages was of slightly higher quality, and uploading was just so much simpler, because rather than having Google's bouncing logo flashing around, you had an actual status bar.

Leo Laporte: Right.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: And, I mean, if you sit there and watch the Google logo bouncing about for a while, you think, "It's stopped working now, hasn't it?"

Leo Laporte: (Laughing.) Yeah, right. Yeah, they're -- yeah, these are little things, which can be fixed easily.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: But I do think … I -- and I -- and I do think things will change. I think the -- the real bottom line is, this stuff is here. It's -- it's -- it's happening, and it's so exciting. I just really think we're … we're in -- we're just in a very exciting era …

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: … especially not just for content creators, like you and me; not for -- that's just   for people who want to make their own podcasts, but for -- for people who watch podcasts …

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yeah.

Leo Laporte: … you know, or -- or watch content or -- or consume content. It's -- it's a brave, new world.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm. I could go on talking to you all day; but in the email I sent you originally, I asked you for 20 minutes of your time, you've donated 40 minutes to me.

Leo Laporte: (Laughing.)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: So, Leo, thank you very much for coming onto the show.

(00:45:00)

Leo Laporte: I -- I -- I talk a lot (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: You just wind me up, and I keep going. Maybe that's the secret to all the podcasts.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: How -- how do KFI, your station in LA, how do they handle that when you've got a certain amount of ad breaks that you have to do and --

Leo Laporte: They yell at me (laughing).

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: (Laughing.)

Leo Laporte: They're very kind, but they yell at me. They say, "Break! Break!" And I … and I have to, I'm often late to my breaks, so …

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Hm.

Leo Laporte: … I have a bad habit.

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Yep (laughing). All right, Leo. Thank you very much for coming --

Leo Laporte: Hey, my --

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: -- onto Samuel's Persiflage.

Leo Laporte: My pleasure. Thank you very much. It's been great talking to you, Samuel.

(Music)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Persiflage Puzzle time. That sounds like a good idea. I think it's been 40 minutes or so since we last updated the Persiflage Puzzle, so dig around, find that bit of paper you've hidden in the last 40 minutes, and we'll … we'll have a look and see what's in the -- where did I put the puzzle paper? Oh, there it is.

Alrighty, then. Let's … I think we might draw five letters out and see how we go. So, there we go. It's a 'B' for Bob. And it's in there. It's the first letter of the first word. So there you go. That's … that's a bit of a start. Let's go for the next letter now, and we've got 'T' for Tank. I can't see that one in there. So let's have a look for another letter now, and it is the letter 'E' for Egg. That one's in there, so that's good. It's the fourth letter of the first word. Let's have a look at the letter 'S' for Samuel. 'S' for Samuel, it's a good letter; but it's not in there. And one more letter. Oh. Okay, well, that's probably going to give this away now. It's an 'O' for Orange. It's the second letter of the first word. I think that's just about done it. I'll give you a few minutes to think about that. We'll have the answer a little bit later on.

(Electronic Noises and Music)

Voiceover: Samuel's Persiflage Listener Feedback: Send your emails to podcast@samuelgordonstewart.com.

(Music)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Samuel's Persiflage Listener Feedback time now is … well, why am I telling you that when you've just heard it in the intro? I really don't know. I'm probably going mental (laughing). So as you've already heard,

podcast@samuelgordonstewart.com is the email address. Text or audio, it's fine. Of course, you can also send audio feedback to me via the good people at odeo.com. Just go to the Samuel's Persiflage website, and click on the Send Spoken Feedback link or whatever it is. There's a button there that says something along those lines. Send Me A Voice Message, I think it says. You'll see it.

All right. Well, there's not much in here this month, I'm afraid; so this probably won't take very long at all.

Lenny sends in an email. He says: "I'd like to subscribe to Samuel's Persiflage in iTunes rather than just downloading it each month. I've downloaded iTunes, but what do I do now?" Good question, Lenny. If you have a look … I'm glad you've downloaded iTunes, because it's going to make this answer much, much quicker for me. If you have a look on the Samuel's Persiflage page, there's a … a link on there, which says iTunes Subscribe Link or something to that effect. If you click on that, that'll open up iTunes. And then on that page, you'll see a list of the episodes, and you'll also see a Subscribe button. Hit that, and iTunes will deliver Samuel's Persiflage to you every time I release it, all by magic … . although I do have one person who for some reason iTunes just isn't updating them; so I don't know what's happening there, but I think he's got an older version of iTunes, which I … oh, I don't know; but it doesn't really matter (laughing). I'm getting sidetracked.

Mike Welsh from Canberra's Talk Radio 2CC has sent in a song, which he's actually been playing quite a lot on … on his show. He does the Drive Show for 2CC, and, well, it's a …it's a song that I don't think people from outside Australia are really going to understand; but he's been good enough to send it in, so I think we might play it.

(00:50:08)

(Start Song)

He can't walk on water, he can't raise the dead
How can he be so damn good when he can't lie straight in bed
Plenty around, they would if they could
Little Johnny How-- can he be so good

Kids are in detention, kids are overboard
Sing the same song and tug the right cord
Cricket is the ashes, lies are bulldust
At the end of the day just who do ya trust
Being a pollie don't make you a cheat
Just don't ask how we sell our wheat
Winners are grinners and losers are not
Get what you can, and keep what you got

He can't walk on water, he can't raise the dead
How can he be so damn good when he can't lie straight in bed

Plenty around, they would if they could
Little Johnny How-- can he be so good

Once upon a time, turn back the clock
Little Johnny H was a laughing stock
Took it on the chin and took it in the back
Now it's George and John in the same sack
Don't be alarmed and don't be alert
Little white lies and no one get hurt
All about clichés, pain and no gain
Excuse me sir, but could you please explain

He can't walk on water, he can't raise the dead
How can he be so damn good when he can't lie straight in bed
Plenty around, they would if they could
Little Johnny How-- can he be so good
Little Johnny How-- can he be so good
Little Johnny How-- can he be so good

(End Song)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Thank you, Mike, and that's the feedback for this month. That's … wasn't much there at all, really, was it? podcast@samuelgordonstewart.com is the email address if you'd like to send some feedback, or you can send spoken feedback via the Samuel's Persiflage website, or you could even leave a comment on the Samuel's Persiflage #8 page on … on my blog. All of those ways will get … might just get you on the show. It depends on the comment. I mean, if you just send me something completely trivial and pointless, such as … I don't know, sometimes I include them. I mean, we had one last month with someone just saying, "Gouranga, Gouranga, Gouranga." I don't know why I included that one (laughing). Oh, dear. Maybe I am going mad. podcast@samuelgordonstewart.com's the email address. I've said that 15 times now, you know. Maybe I should just press this button.

(Music)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: That seems to have solved it. Well, normally we only have one Thought for the Month; but there's a few things on my mind. Most of them relate to the interview we had with Leo not long ago. I was just thinking it would be good if I could stick to a script. I mean, I wrote a perfectly good … actually, no, it wasn't very good script (laughing) … for the intro to the interview with Leo, and if I'd stuck to the script or perhaps written a -- a proper script -- I mean, the script I've got here doesn't even mention Windows Vista -- but if I'd stuck to the script, maybe this accident wouldn't have occurred:

> **"Samuel Gordon-Stewart:** And for most people, the next version of Windows Vista is probably going to be at the top of their priority list."

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: See I'm pretty sure that we haven't had a version of Windows Vista yet, apart from the Betas and Release Candidates, which really doesn't count. So how we can have the next version, I really don't know.

Another one, if we could all use the same measuring systems. I mean, there we were, talking in degrees Fahrenheit, and this is a podcast coming to you from Canberra in Australia, and we use degrees Celsius. Leo said that he … his temperature was in the 70s. Well, if … if that's the case, if that's in Fahrenheit, then it's absolutely fine; but if it's in Celsius, then, well, it's absolutely boiling. Just for the record, his 70s could be anywhere from about 21 to 26 degrees Celsius, which is very nice; but bear in mind, it was morning where he was. It was about 9:00 a.m., whereas where I am, in 40 degrees Fahrenheit or 4.6 degrees Celsius, well, it's about 2:00 a.m. when I said that. So the -- it's kind of comparing apples and oranges, really, I think.

(00:55:37)

And the other one, it would be good if there was a degree symbol on the keyboard. I mean, why isn't there? I mean, I look at this keyboard here, and they're symbols I'd never even use. I mean, the little upward-pointing arrow above the 6, I think I've used that once. Once. And I use degree symbols just about all the time. It would be much easier if there was a degree symbol on the keyboard somewhere. I mean, I know I can hold down Alt and press a bunch of numbers, and a degree symbol will appear; but it's not quite the same thing. There should be a degree symbol on the keyboard. At least I think so.

That's the Thoughts for the Month.

(Music)

Samuel Gordon-Stewart: Well, I'm babbling; incoherently babbling. So I think it's a good thing that that music is playing, because that means it's time to go, and I'm sure that you've had enough of me incoherently babbling. I'll be back again next month to incoherently babble a little bit more; but, until then, maybe you'd like the answer of the Persiflage Puzzle. Well, it's "Boney M", a rather popular group from the 1970s -- musical group, that is. They're … apparently, they're still around. I'm not entirely sure if that's accurate; but, you know, they were -- they were very popular in the '70s. I think they've kind of trailed off since then (laughing). They're certainly not on the Top 40 charts any more, but it's a very good group, some very good music there. And, yeah, I was having a listen to some of that music before I actually came on air here; so, a very good group indeed.

That's the show for this month. podcast@samuelgordonstewart.com is the email address if you'd like to send me some feedback. I wouldn't be surprised if having Leo on the show has actually brought a -- me a few more listeners, so welcome to all of you. You're probably going to run away screaming now, scratching your heads, wondering, "How did he ever get a show?" That's probably the benefit of podcasting: anyone can get a show. But, yeah incoherent babbling again (sigh). I give up. I think I'm going to go and have a lie-down. You have a great month. I'll see you again in October. Until then, tada.

(Music)

[END AUDIO FILE: 00:58:26]