

1. **Condes** Discussion of Condes vs Purple Pen.

I find Purple Pen much easier to use for planning straightforward events. It cannot be denied that Condes is much more powerful, with a lot more options.

2. **Start list** Question (from Alan P) who generated a start list and exported to XML but could not separate the schools which were spread out throughout the start list.

Paul would export to Excel and reimport to Autodownload.

I only* use XML files to transfer data between programmes. If any editing is required I use the csv options and use either a text editor or Excel to make the changes. *There are exceptions which I could explain

Paul then gave some information on the templates available in Autodownload when setting up a new event, by going beyond the first setting up page, ie clicking 'next' rather than 'finish'.

The templates are used to initialise all the settings, but they can all be changed if those values are not suitable

3. **Print Station.**

Susanne did not know it was possible to download the SI unit attached to a miniprinter afterwards.

It was to be discussed further later but was not demonstrated in the end (unless that was revisited after I left).

4. **Exporting from Condes.** AndyPat had had a difficulty importing from a Condes file into Autodownload.

This was being followed up by Paul to Andy and others as I left.

I am not sure what problems Andy might have had. I have failed to select any courses before exporting.

5. **MiniPrinters and Computers.** Question: Is it possible to use a miniprinter with a computer?

An Epson type of printer needs power but with computers having better batteries nowadays a computer can be used without a power supply.

Discussion of the cable required to connect the miniprinter with a D connection to a computer USB – it is known that cheaper cables that look as though they have the correct ends do not always work and it is more reliable to buy the expensive one from SI UK.

You definitely need a serial to USB converter to connect a printer station or a printer to a laptop.

I recommend an "official" SI supplied one to connect a printer unit, but (cheaper) different one to connect a printer.

It was thought that on the older miniprinter this was not possible but on the newer 'ABLE' one it was possible. To install on the computer, select 'serial'.

I think that any type of serial printer should be usable. The ability to do so was introduced into AutoDownload part way through its development into today's version.

Alternatives suggested included using two download units and downloading twice – once into the miniprinter to give out splits and the second time to get results into the computer. (Davie Frame)

Someone – probably Paul – said that every club should buy a USB download unit.

I have made this recommendation and many clubs have done so.

6. Purple Keys

Paul elaborated on the use of the purple keys, particularly with reference to the set up with the miniprinter:

“clear back up” should always be used at the start of the event.

“start” can be used for a mass start

“print results” can be used to get a print out of the results as or after people download as the print unit will create results by course (although it will create a new course for people who have mispunched).

7. Kit

Question (from Jane). How much kit does BASOC think they need?

Paul replied showing what a ‘schools kit’ contained. BASOC has two schools kits and 30 controls (might have been 40) so it can alternate between two places. Likewise ECKO. ESOC have 40 controls.

BASOC have 40 SI cards (dibbers) whereas INVOC have hundreds.

The cost of a school kit is around £1500 (not sure if this included 10 units and stakes???)

8. EMIT vs SI

Someone asked why BASOC changed from EMIT to SI

Paul said that he had arrived at BASOC with his experience of SI just when the BASOC batteries in their EMITs were running out so it was a good time to reconsider.

Due to most clubs using SI there are more people around that could help out at larger events using SI.

Jane said that OD had gone for EMIT as they use a lot of parks where controls are vulnerable to theft and originally EMIT control units were much cheaper to replace. Now an EMIT unit is around £80 and an SI one just under £100 so this is less of a consideration.

9. Local Events

Davie asked how it can be made easier to get the information for local events. There was discussion of what information is needed at registration ie that for members of any club, less information is required and they can just put names and dibber numbers onto a list.

People with their own dibbers should be encouraged to get them personalised so their name comes up even on the miniprinter.

East Lothian Outdoor Education dibbers have been given a name eg animal, which is also on the wrist strap, so that kids can easily remember which dibber they used and can recognise it if a print-out of results is done (as above).

It is necessary to make more effort to get full details from newcomers, and also to record the dibber used against the name.

[I will gather together some notes about this. \(Too much to put here\)](#)

10. Questions from Ian M:

Are the cables specific to each machine? Not sure know what cables were being meant but Paul said not).

Who wrote the software Autodownload? Paul replied and explained the background and that it was a club licence which could be bought for one year or five years and would get upgrades with that.

I also added in the possibility of one day licences for situations like using the equipment for another club’s event.

11. Installing Autodownload.

Some people have had problems if for example they used the same name for the computer and the database (there is now a warning about this in the instructions) but it should work if the instructions are followed. Note that the database has also to be installed as part of the process.

12. What is the Capacity of a download unit?

Huge, as long as the back-up is cleared.

The capacity depends on a number of factors, most importantly the type of Slcard. If only old Type5 are used the answer is over 1000. The worst case is all SIACs when the unit would be full after approx 200 downloads.

13. Would you put the courses onto the computer even for a small event? (Crawford)

Paul said he would always import them from Condes, rather than type them in.

Yes, indeed.

14. Battery Packs

Ian P. asked about battery packs as his computer is old and battery would not hold out.

Paul described the Halfords ones although I added that our ones don't last as long as they did at first.

[This is similar to the ones some club have](#)

Vs small generators designed for camper cans etc but these are expensive.

Laptop batteries are getting better, but power is still needed if a laser printer is to be used.

[Laser printers can draw high current for a short time. 2kVA generator is recommended](#)

15. Splits print-outs

In Portugal Jane's print out had a bigger font and also showed the position on each split.

Discussion of the possibility of different "Point of Sale" printers using different widths of paper and print size, vs different software packages which could display different information

It was noted that if places are not wanted eg for big schools events, then places on splits can be turned off in Autodownload

[Modify event, step 5. Untick "Show Position on Print and Download Screens"](#)

Notes written by Sheila Strain

Blue additions by Robin