It used to be that holiday snaps took a couple of days to process after you got home. If they were poor pictures, so be it. Patience was the order of the day.

When Polaroid cameras came out a cartoon showed a tourist, having photographed some ancient ruins, complaining about the 30 seconds it took for the picture to develop.

The early digital cameras had a delay between pushing the button and the shutter operating. I have several seascapes because the whales had dived during that delay. Now cameras are fast enough to take several pictures a second and everyone should be satisfied.

The time between shooting the picture and being able to see the result has been eliminated (with the added benefit that you can usually have another go if you are not satisfied).

The same can be said about most aspects of computing. But not all. There are still a couple of things that cause some people to complain. Possibly because they do not fully understand what is happening.

The helpful boffins have kindly given us the progress bar so that we can see how work is proceeding. We have all been impatient when waiting for the end of an operation – only to find that the last ten percent of the operation takes a much longer time that we have been led to believe.

Unfortunately an accurate timing for, say, file copying, is impossible. The number AND size of the files being copied must be known, as well as the speed capability of the system components (USB 3.0 is a lot faster than USB 2.0, not to mention that within these classes there are variations in performance speeds).

If you are asking the system to be doing something else at the same time you will be diverting some of the capacity and reducing the speed that has already been assumed in the calculation. If you are installing a new programme you might have to select components for installation as you go along and the progress calculation has to be adjusted to suit. Surely any indication is better than none at all.

More and more people are using external hard drives to give them more storage capacity. Having become familiar with the quick writing to their internal hard drive, they wonder why they have to wait longer to copy to an external drive. Again the boffins are being helpful by allowing the external drive to save energy by not spinning if it is not being used.

Then, when needed, it has to 'spin up' to operating speed again before starting work. This will happen only when the drive has been idle long enough for it to power down automatically. Any delay is simply the price paid to contribute towards saving the planet and reduce your energy bill.