



# WORKSHOPS

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- ♦ SET UP a wired home network
- ♦ CREATE a golf scorecard in Excel

- ♦ MAKE a Yahtzee gamecard
- ♦ PLUS top Hints & Tips

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### FROM THE EDITOR

Looking for the best  
computer deals  
doesn't always mean  
you have to leaf

through the Saturday paper or  
trawl the internet to find and  
compare the latest prices. There's  
a far more direct way to hunt  
down bargains to suit your needs  
– and your wallet – and it's called  
a computer fair. Once associated  
with dodgy dealers, computer  
fairs have now come into the  
mainstream. You can find  
everything, from old computer  
parts to the latest digital kit, all  
under one roof and at a venue  
near you. If you're a keen  
upgrader, or just looking for a fun  
Saturday afternoon out, check out  
our feature on page 60 on making  
the most of computer fairs.

Dylan Armbrust

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# WIN!

Gaming products from 2K Games worth over

## £2,400!

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## Internet services

# Zombie army attacks PCs

Infected users could be taken offline in tougher measures to combat zombie networks

**CONSUMERS COULD** find their internet connections drastically curtailed if internet service providers (ISPs) follow new guidelines.

An international governmental anti-spam consortium, the London Action Plan (LAP), has called on ISPs to tackle the growing problem of zombie networks and quarantine customers whose PCs have been hijacked to send out **spam** and **viruses**.

To get the message across, the LAP – which includes the UK Office of Fair Trading (OFT), the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and government agencies in 18 other countries – has launched Operation Spam Zombies.

Zombie networks are made up of thousands of computers infected by viruses. Last month a survey found that the European Union leads the world in the number of computers that are

controlled remotely by hackers. Over May, an average of 172,000 new PCs were infected globally each month.

Zombie networks are typically controlled by hacker operations, such as spamming and denial of service attacks. However, they are increasingly being used for other illegal activities such as storing child abuse images and **phishing** websites.

By routing emails through zombie computers or using these hijacked PCs to host websites with illegal activities, spammers or hackers are able to hide the origin of junk mail and make it more difficult for law enforcement agencies to find them.

Because zombie networks are considered such a serious threat, Richard Cox, of anti-spam organisation Spamhaus, said that the only way to tackle the issue at the moment was to take affected customers offline. Following the news that customers of ISP Telewest had been blacklisted for this reason, Mr Cox said ISPs finally had to listen to calls to take

tough measures.

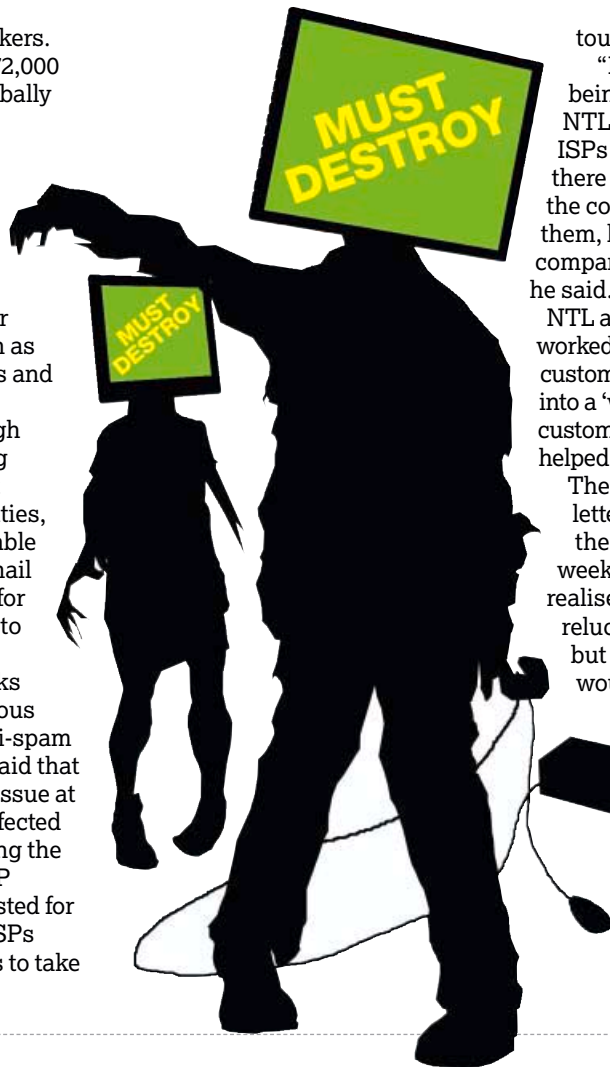
“It works well and it is being done by some ISPs – NTL has already done it. ISPs can technically detect if there is a problem long before the consumer knows and help them, but many of the big companies haven’t listened,” he said.

NTL agreed that this measure worked and said it put customers with infected PCs into a ‘walled garden’, sent the customers a message and helped them clean up their PCs.

The LAP plans to send letters to 3,000 ISPs around the world in the next few weeks. The FTC said it realised some ISPs would be reluctant to use this solution but hoped the campaign would force them to be more proactive. The

OFT said a number of leading ISPs are signed up to the LAP and appeared to be willing to consider the proposals. ■

[www.oft.gov.uk](http://www.oft.gov.uk)



## IN BRIEF...

### Phone theft

Reprogramming stolen mobile phones will become a crime under the Government's forthcoming Violent Crime Bill. An average of 328 mobile phones are stolen in London alone every day – half of them from under 18s – and this form of theft is one of the fastest growing crimes. When a mobile is stolen and reported to the phone company, a unique 14-17 digit serial number known as the IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) allows the phones to be blocked by all networks and rendered useless. But there are tools on the internet that can change the IMEI number. People can now register details of their mobile phone on a website designed to reunite them with their phones if these are lost or stolen and then found. It is free to register. [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com)

## Legislation

# Phishing to be classed as criminal offence

**THE GOVERNMENT** has made phishing a specific, criminal offence under its revised Anti-Fraud Bill.

Now any person falsely claiming to be a legitimate financial institution and disseminating emails to large groups of people in order to gain access to individuals' personal financial information will be committing fraud.

By classing these attacks as fraud, the legislation gives prosecutors the power to sentence convicted criminals to up to 10 years in jail.

**NO PHISHING HERE  
CRIMINAL  
OFFENCE**

Because many of the phishers are based overseas, the maximum 10-year sentence will also make the fraudulent activity a potentially

extraditable criminal offence. This will help the international community work together in the fight

against cyber-crime.

Phishing incidences reached a peak in January 2005 but then dropped off again. However, in recent months there has been a resurgence of phishing attacks. Security experts are attributing this to the huge

rise of zombie networks being used to pump out massive volumes of scam emails, as cyber-criminals look to increase their profits.

The current legislation will ease the path for bringing criminal prosecutions by including phishing acts under the intent of false representation laws.

Once it has worked its way through Parliament, the updated legislation will make the confusing and outdated array of existing laws on fraud much clearer.

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

## IN BRIEF...

### Game gurus

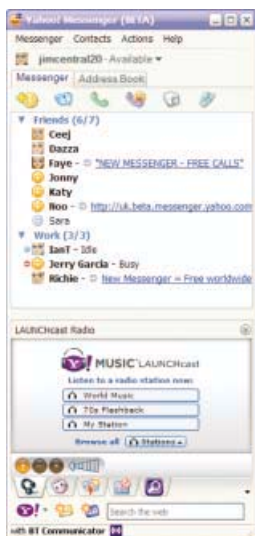
Channel 4 has launched a competition to find the next generation of game developers. Game Guru lets amateur developers enter their webgames for the chance to win £1,000 and a top-of-the-range PC from PC World. Games must be smaller than 250kb and must be written in Flash, Director Shockwave or Java applets. All submitted games meeting the competition's requirements will be hosted on the Channel 4 website. The winner will be announced on 6 November.

[channel4.com/gameguru](http://channel4.com/gameguru)

### New Yahoo

A test version of the next version of Yahoo Messenger comes with free global PC-to-PC phone calls and voicemail. Yahoo said there is no need for a separate internet-based telephone or even a headset providing the PC has a microphone built in. In addition, Yahoo has introduced interactive photo sharing using a drag-and-drop feature. A new set of tools lets people add and share their friends lists with others. Responding to the growing problem of spam and phishing attacks on instant messaging systems, Yahoo has included a new security filter that allows people to quickly report spam or unsolicited messages.

<http://uk.beta.messenger.yahoo.com>



## Viruses

# They want your money

**VIRUS WRITERS** have found a new way to extort money from people by scrambling the files on their computer.

Last month the first case was discovered of a hacker scrambling computer file information and then demanding money for the means to unscramble it.

Although this form of attack is relatively new, security experts warn that if organised crime gets hold of the idea, consumers could be on the receiving end of a wave of attacks.

Security company Websense Security Labs, which came across the attack, said a hacker had used a known vulnerability in Internet Explorer (IE) that enabled the downloading of a **Trojan** onto the PC. It then searched for files with various extensions and encoded them.

The original documents were deleted and the newly encoded files became unreadable. The Trojan then dropped a message onto the user's PC demanding money for the tool needed to decode the files. This particular scam asked for \$200 (about £110).



Although Microsoft had provided a patch for this IE flaw, in this case it hadn't been installed. Websense said many people could be vulnerable because they don't regularly download updates from Microsoft. Anti-virus software wouldn't be a defence until it had been updated to protect against the virus.

Although this attack was relatively unsophisticated, Websense said it was concerned that organised crime gangs could decide to use this form of blackmail with more sophisticated encryption tools that would be virtually impossible to break. Websense warned that targeted files could range from word documents to digital photographs.

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

## Web browsers

# Hit and miss for security on Netscape 8

Netscape's new web **browser** is causing problems for Internet Explorer (IE).

Netscape 8 is designed to offer protection from malicious websites and uses both Mozilla Firefox and IE technology to display websites.

Although Netscape 8 uses the Firefox software by default, the security settings on many websites will only work with IE. So as long as it has determined the site is trustworthy, Netscape switches over to IE's browser features.

But a flaw removes IE's ability to display some web documents, including **RSS** feeds, so they appear blank.

Netscape said a patch for the problem should be available soon.



▲ Some of Netscape 8's new security features are causing problems

Netscape 8's improved security includes tabbed browsing features that show what security settings are in place for that specific site.

The browser also uses lists from Netscape to decide on what security settings to use for a website. These can

easily be changed by the user. Extra security aids include a pop-up blocker and a single button on the Taskbar to remove the entire contents of the history folder to ensure privacy after a browsing session.

<http://browser.netscape.com>

## Phishing

### Phish net

Netcraft has released a security toolbar for the Firefox browser and Internet Explorer to combat **phishing** scams.

The technology relies on individuals earmarking the web addresses of phishing websites and passing them on to other users. The toolbar then blocks access to the sites, showing how the fraudulent site differs from the legitimate version and supplying information on the site's hosting location.

By displaying the country where the website's server is located, the Netcraft toolbar helps people more easily spot fake internet addresses. The toolbar supports Internet Explorer running on Windows XP and Firefox version 1.0 and later for operating systems including Windows, Linux and Mac OS.

Meanwhile, Netcraft has also reported that vigilantes are targeting phishing websites. The company has seen phishing sites quickly taken down and replaced by pages warning customers of the attempted fraud.

<http://toolbar.netcraft.com>

## Jargon Buster

Techno babble demystified...

- ▶ **Instant messaging** Real-time text-based communication over the internet.
- ▶ **Phishing** Internet fraud that tries to trick users into revealing personal details.
- ▶ **RSS** A way of receiving briefs of stories on the web.
- ▶ **Spam** Junk email sent to large groups of people.
- ▶ **Trojan** A malicious program disguised as a harmless program.
- ▶ **Virus** A malicious program designed to cause annoyance or damage to data.

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## IN BRIEF...

### Memory loss

Flaws have been discovered on two models of Canon cameras that can make images disappear. The bug, which affects the EOS-1D Mark II and the EOS-1Ds Mark II cameras, occurs when users press the display button while the camera is still writing pictures to the **memory card**. Another bug can cause a loss of pictures for users of Lexar Professional 80x-speed compact flash memory cards. This vulnerability also affects the EOS 20D, EOS Digital Rebel XT, EOS 350D Digital, and EOS Kiss Digital N. Canon and Lexar will exchange affected memory cards. Call Canon on 08705 143723 for assistance. [http://lexar.com/support/cust\\_advisory.html](http://lexar.com/support/cust_advisory.html)

### Simply irresistible

Vodafone has launched two basic voice and text handsets. The Simply Sagen VS1 and VS2 have dedicated buttons for common tasks, while the Vodafone Simply service offers voicemail and on-screen notification of missed calls. Customers using the services will be offered the choice of a pre-pay handset at £80, or a free handset with a monthly price plan. [www.vodafone.co.uk](http://www.vodafone.co.uk)

### Free music

BT and Sony are giving new broadband users the chance to experience free digital music. Users signing up to the 1Mbit/s BT Broadband Basic package, at £18 per month, will receive a voucher for 10 free downloads, while those who opt for the 2Mbit/s BT Broadband Classic (£25 per month) or BT Yahoo Broadband (£27 per month) will receive 30 free downloads. The offer is open until June 24 to people who sign up using the BT link on Sony's website. [www.products.sony.co.uk/btoffer](http://www.products.sony.co.uk/btoffer)

## Internet services

# Diallers still wreaking havoc

ROGUE DIALLERS continue to prove a huge problem for users of dial-up internet services. Following the launch of BT's free software and early warning system on 3 May, the company said it was protecting as many as 83 people an hour from rogue diallers.

Rogue diallers are programs that change the number a PC dials to access the internet to a premium-rate number. BT said the problem had eased slightly but on average it was still alerting around 304 customers daily to suspicious activity through its text-to-landline messaging system.

The telecoms watchdog, ICSTIS, has received hundreds of complaints as consumers who have been saddled with bills of up to several hundred pounds. BT's figures show that despite efforts by the industry to cut off the phone lines rented by the companies that run these diallers, they are still proving to be a huge problem for consumers.

BT's Privacy Online software, which has been downloaded by thousands of the company's customers, warns immediately if a dial-up modem attempts to dial any number than isn't on a list of 'approved' numbers set up by



the user, which would include their Internet Service Provider's national rate or freefone number.

The second defence consumers can set up is to receive a text message to their landline if their PC attempts to dial a number from an unusual destination, such as a foreign country, or if their bill rises sharply. Customers who do not have a text-enabled handset at home receive the text contents converted to a voice message. ■

[www.bt.com/privacyonline](http://www.bt.com/privacyonline)

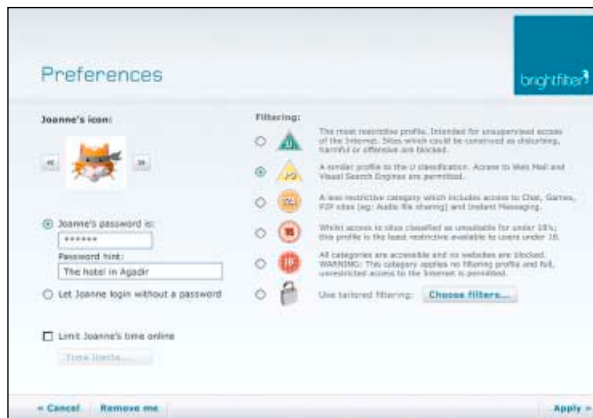
## Internet security

# New security services keep kids safe

INTERNET SECURITY software used in thousands of UK and US schools has now been made available to protect children at home.

Brightfilter classifies web content for children with film-style classification ratings of PG, 12, 15 and 18. The system allows parents to select a personalised login for each member of the family and control which rating their children can access.

It is based on a large categorised database of websites, which have been tested both manually and automatically by detection software. The database covers 60 languages and is updated hourly. Brightfilter can be downloaded for £25 per year, which covers up to three PCs in the home. There is a two-



▲ Use Brightfilter to control each family member's level of internet access

week free evaluation period.

Meanwhile, CyberPatrol 7 now covers **spyware** and **phishing** threats along with its web-blocking features. The program can also monitor usage of games, and filter newsgroups, websites and

chat sessions. If a child tries to erase the internet history, the PC is blocked from the internet, alerting the parent. It is available as a 14-day free trial and costs £26 per year.

[www.cyberpatrol.com](http://www.cyberpatrol.com)  
[www.brightfilter.co.uk](http://www.brightfilter.co.uk)

## Online scams

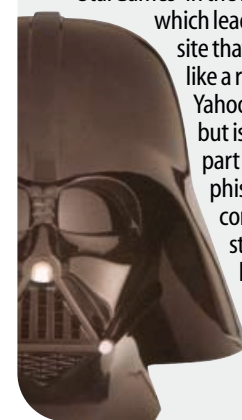
# IM in touch with the Dark Side

Computer users are being warned about a new scam that makes use of instant messaging networks.

A new **worm** and a phishing scam targets users of AOL and Yahoo instant message services. In both cases, people receive a message with a reference to the *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* movie, neither of which have anything to do with the film.

The AOL message reads: "hehe, i found this funny movie!" If the link is used, a virus downloads that gives the attacker control of the PC.

The Yahoo message has "StarGames" in the link, which leads to a site that looks like a real Yahoo site but is in fact part of a phishing con to steal login details.



## Jargon Buster

Techno babble demystified...

- ▶ **Mbit/s** A measure of data-transfer speed. A megabit is one million bits.
- ▶ **Memory card** Small card that can store many megabytes (Mb) of data or documents.
- ▶ **Phishing** Internet fraud that tries to trick users into revealing personal details.
- ▶ **Spyware** Software installed as part of another application specifically to monitor and report back on a computer's use.
- ▶ **Worm** A program that transmits and copies itself over a computer network, such as the internet.

For more on Jargon Buster visit:  
[www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)

## IN BRIEF...

**Council text**

A local council is turning to technology to keep young people off the streets. Darlington borough council's TextVibe, which started on 1 June, sends information about local events to registered users. The system will also send questions about sport, transport, facilities and problems in the area. Users sign up by visiting the town hall or any council-run youth club in the borough but not online.

[www.darlington.gov.uk](http://www.darlington.gov.uk)

**Memory boost**

Fujifilm has announced a new range of **memory cards** aimed at both professional photographers and consumers. The High Speed SD card is available in 60x and 133x speeds and offers up to 20Mbit/s transfer rate. The 133x card comes in sizes up to 1Gb. Prices start at £85. The Compact Flash range now has cards from 256Mb to 8Gb, with speeds of 40x and 133x. Prices start at £80. Fujifilm also has the MMC range that works on digital cameras, handhelds and mobile phones from £50 for the 128Mb card to £200 for the 1Gb model.

[www.fujifilm.co.uk](http://www.fujifilm.co.uk)

**Image library**

The British Library is to improve its online images service. The service has thousands of images of rare manuscripts, books and paintings, including the Magna Carta and Shakespearean manuscripts. Some 14,000 images are currently available, but the library wants to increase this figure to over 100,000. Prices vary, but low-resolution images (72dpi) for personal or school use are free to download.

[www.bl.uk/imagesonline](http://www.bl.uk/imagesonline)



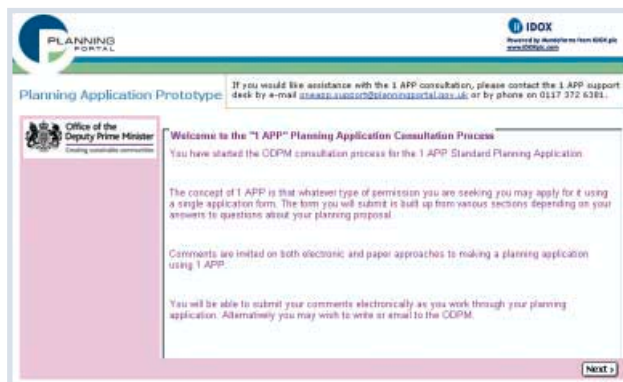
## Internet

# Planning permission online

THE GOVERNMENT is hoping to end confusion in applications for planning permission with a new online form that can be used by everyone.

The Planning Portal, which is part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, is consulting professionals and the public on the new electronic form, code-named 1App.

It said that the form could help to end "decades of inconsistency" in the planning process, which often confuses people who want to obtain planning permission. The portal currently allows users to look up planning information and get help on making planning applications. But it is not a simple process as there are several types of forms required. To confuse matters more, existing forms differ substantially depending on which local authority issue them. The number of copies to submit and the supporting information to submit with the form also varies from council to council.



▲ The Government wants feedback from the public on an online planning permission form

These would all be replaced by the 1App form, which will be used by everyone from Government and local authority workers to members of the public.

Internet users can visit the consultation website, which contains a prototype of the electronic application form and a form for submitting comments about 1App. These can be sent electronically or posted. The consultation ends on June 28 and the results will be made available in September, after which work will begin on 1App, if the results are favourable. ■ [www.oneapp.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.oneapp.planningportal.gov.uk)

## Wireless hotspots

## Wireless plans are on track

First Great Western continues the trend for train companies to offer wireless internet access to customers by adding it in 85 UK stations.

Ten stations, including Bristol Temple Meads, Reading, Plymouth and Swindon, will get wireless access points in the next few months. The remainder of stations will be connected by early 2006. The train company is working with wireless network operator The Cloud to install and manage the access points.

The service will cover the whole station area, including platforms, and will connect to all major internet service providers (ISPs). Users will be billed as usual through their ISP, unless they use pay-as-you-go, which will cost £4.50 per hour.

First Great Western said it wants to "ensure customers can use their travelling time as productively as possible". [www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk](http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk)

## Energy

## Idle PCs push up bills

COMPUTERS AND TVs left on standby mode are more expensive to run than a fridge. This was the finding of a study by the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford.

Looking at the reasons why electricity usage has soared in recent years, despite energy-efficient products and consumers' increasing environmental awareness, it found the UK's love of gadgets is a major factor because we leave these electronic on. Standby losses refer to energy usage by devices when not in use. This

includes TVs that users wish to be able to switch on and off using a remote control, hi-fi systems being left on for the clock display, and PCs left in standby mode with the screen saver running. The study concluded that PCs alone account for up to 15 per cent of a household's electricity bills.

The researchers found that most people surveyed believed these standby energy losses are tiny. But when presented with the amount of energy consumed by these devices, 50 per cent took measures to modify their usage.

[www.eu-energystar.org/en](http://www.eu-energystar.org/en)



## Volunteer for BBC's media player trial

The BBC is looking for 5,000 people to participate in a trial of its interactive Media Player (iMP).

The new technology will let users download BBC programmes for up to a week after they were originally broadcast. The software, which has been described as "iTunes for the broadcast industry", lets users search the schedules and pick programmes to download.

The iMP was tried out for the first time in 2004 by 1,500 BBC staff. The next trial will test the system's robustness, and how it copes with more people and more content.

The trial users will need a broadband connection, but other than that the scheme is open to anybody in the UK. It



▲ See Eastenders a week after it aired

will run from September to December and the application process, which is open now, will run until August.

Those interested should email [imptrial@bbc.co.uk](mailto:imptrial@bbc.co.uk), giving details of age, post code and gender. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

## IN BRIEF...

### Orange email

Orange has developed a tool to help its customers access email via their mobile phone. The company said its research showed that most people don't realise they can send and receive email using their existing handsets. The simple tool shows the user how to select their handset and email provider and guides them to the best method to retrieve email. [www.orange.co.uk/emailyourphone](http://www.orange.co.uk/emailyourphone)

### Product recall

Hitachi has issued a recall for the battery packs used on its PDM302 portable DVD players. It warned that the battery packs on some models could overheat. The serial numbers of the players Hitachi has identified are C404000001 to C407007420. The serial number is located on the base of the unit. Hitachi is advising those with the affected devices to stop using them immediately and contact the company for a replacement battery pack on 0800 923 0091. [www.hitachidigitalmedia.com](http://www.hitachidigitalmedia.com)

## <Technology>

# Digital ad deluge predicted

PEOPLE WILL one day need a 'digital bubble' to protect them from unwanted electronic information, according to BT futurologist, Ian Pearson.

Mr Pearson said the growth of wireless networks will allow advertisers to target pedestrians and people will have to find some way of protecting themselves against the blitz of digital data as they walk past shops.

Speaking at the London College of Fashion about the future of fashion and technology, he said: "[In the future] there will be chips all over the high street relaying information and you will be bombarded everywhere you go. You will need a digital bubble force field – a shield that lets through the information you want and blocks everything else."

Incorporating technology into fashion items was also discussed, with the focus on 3D body scanning and made-to-



▲ It may not be long before we need protection from advertising

measure clothes. Selfridges in London is already offering this service and customers can have jeans made to fit their shape perfectly. Clothes with technologies such as chips woven into the fabric are already being developed. For example, Burton has designed a ski jacket with touch buttons on the sleeve, which control portable music players such as iPods while on the slopes. ■

[www.btinternet.com/~ian.pearson](http://www.btinternet.com/~ian.pearson)  
[www.fashion.arts.ac.uk](http://www.fashion.arts.ac.uk)

## <Music>

# Apple adds podcasts to iPod

Apple will support podcasts in the next versions of the iPod and iTunes.

Podcasts – sound files and audio content such as radio shows – have surged in popularity because any digital MP3 player can be used to listen to them.

Podcasting is different from other types of audio content delivery because it uses the **RSS** protocol. This allows people to create their own radio shows. Challenging traditional broadcasting methods this way has meant a number of radio stations are now making their programmes available as podcasts.

Computeractive will look at podcasts in issue 193, giving a clear definition of the phenomenon, some examples of podcasts, including music and comedy, as well as telling readers how they can get a podcast. The feature will also have a step-by-step guide to help readers make the most of this growing pastime.

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

## <Games>

# The Sims spawns new life



Play God by controlling the evolution of a species

**THE CREATOR** of the popular Sims game is developing a new game in which players can really play God.

Called Spore, the game allows players to control the evolution of a species, from amoeba to interstellar race. The Sims creator, Will Wright, offered an insight into the game at last month's E3 expo in Los Angeles. He said he wanted to take the idea

behind The Sims, where players run the lives of their characters, a little bit further.

Players are able to choose the physical attributes of their creation, for example how many legs and arms it will have, and once this is done the game will work out how the creature will behave and evolve. The PC version is due out by autumn of 2006.

<http://spore.ea.com>

## <Computers>

# New perspective on crime



Crime scenes can be recreated by computer

**THE CHALK** line around a body has been supplanted by computer graphics.

Italian police are using a computer from SGI to recreate crime scenes. It allows them to view it from different perspectives and check the trajectory of bullets.

The crime scene is captured with photographs and video. These are then analysed by the computer and a virtual

scene is produced within 24 hours. Carlo Bui, the officer in charge of the project, said the investigators had to behave much like art critics so they didn't miss tiny details.

SGI told us there has been interest from UK police forces, but an Association of Chief Police Officers representative said they couldn't comment on technology they hadn't seen. [www.sgi.com](http://www.sgi.com)

## Jargon Buster

### Techno babble demystified...

- ▶ **Gb** A measurement of storage capacity – usually for hard disks.
- ▶ **Mbit/s** A measure of data-transfer speed.
- ▶ **Memory card** Small card that can store many megabytes (Mb) of data. Often used as removable storage in digital cameras.
- ▶ **Network** A way of connecting several devices so they can share data.
- ▶ **Resolution** The amount of detail shown in an image, whether on screen or printed.
- ▶ **RSS** A way of receiving summaries of stories on the web.

For more on Jargon Buster visit: [www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)

## WIRELESS ADSL MODEM / ROUTER 802.11G


**ALL-IN-ONE  
WIRELESS SOLUTION**

**quicklinx** 2Z9MCV

The all-in-one solution for fast connection to the internet for your home, far faster than a dial-up, and without tying up your phone line.

- High-speed ADSL2 Modem gives you a fast, "Always On" connection to the Internet

**NEW LOWER PRICE**

only **£64.<sup>62</sup>** ( **£55.00** ex VAT )

## ADSL WIRELESS MODEM ROUTER

**WITH FREE USB  
WIRELESS ADAPTER**

**quicklinx** 395KCV

The 3Com® ADSL Wireless 11g Firewall Router combines an ADSL modem, router, 802.11g wireless access point, four-port switch, and firewall to enable up to 253 total (128 wireless) users to economically and securely share a single ADSL connection.

only **£62.<sup>99</sup>** ( **£53.61** ex VAT )

## 802.11G 54MBPS PCI CARD

**CONNECTS DESKTOP  
PC TO WIRELESS LAN**

**quicklinx** 3119CV

- Works both with IEEE 802.11b and 802.11g products
- PCI card connects desktop PC to Wireless LAN
- Ad-Hoc and infrastructure communication
- Support IEEE802.11b/g transmission mode and up to 54Mbps data rate

dabsvalue

only **£14.<sup>99</sup>** ( **£12.76** ex VAT )

## 802.11G 54MBPS USB STICK

**WIRELESS VIA  
NOTEBOOK USB PORT**

**quicklinx** 39JVCV

- Complies with the IEEE 802.11b and IEEE 802.11g 2.4GHz (DSSS) standards
- Supports 64/128/256-bit WEP, WPA (TKIP, IEEE 802.1x) and AES functions for high level of security
- Supports peer-to-peer communication among any wireless users, no Access Point required

dabsvalue

only **£19.<sup>99</sup>** ( **£17.01** ex VAT )

## 802.11G 54MBPS ACCESS POINT


**quicklinx** 3K7QCV

Acting as a bridge between the wired Ethernet and the 2.4GHz IEEE 802.11g/b wireless LAN, this wireless LAN access point can let your wireless LAN client stations access both the wired and the wireless network nodes.

dabsvalue

only **£32.<sup>57</sup>** ( **£27.72** ex VAT )

## CORDLESS DESKTOP LX500

For an even cooler media experience


**AMAZING  
PRICE**
**quicklinx** 39Z4CV

Burning CDs, downloading clips, playing music, watching DVDs... today's PCs are bursting with possibilities. The stunning Cordless Desktop® LX 500 offers the perfect way to orchestrate the pieces for an even cooler media experience. Check out some of the features this mouse and keyboard combination has to offer.

- New Logitech® Media Life™ software: Bring together your digital pictures, video clips & music playlists in a single bold interface with easy navigation.
- Sleek keyboard controls: Control audio/video playback, launch Microsoft Office, and more... or reprogram the buttons to do whatever you want.
- One-touch communications: Access email, activate webcam, launch instant messenger, and even change your online IM status.

**NEW LOWER PRICE - SAVE £10 - WAS £38.<sup>76</sup> inc VAT**

- USB •PS/2 •Cordless •Multimedia Control •Optical
- Zero Degree Tilt™ •Application Switch ...and more

only **£28.<sup>28</sup>** ( **£24.07** ex VAT )

## PSC 1610 ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER, SCANNER, COPIER

**3 PRODUCTS IN 1**

**quicklinx** 3L2QCV

Print and copy in true-to-life colour - with or without a PC - with up to 4800-optimised dpi or optional 6-ink colour. Get your photos printed direct from memory cards or PictBridge-enabled cameras. Scan at up to 1200 x 4800 dpi, 48-bit colour. The HP PSC 1610 All-in-One Printer, Scanner, Copier is designed for creative families and other busy home users who want all-in-one versatility plus easy-to-use photo features for creative projects, photo sharing and homework.

Print, scan, copy and create - everything you need in one easy-to-use device.

**NEW LOWER PRICE - SAVE £25 - WAS £114.<sup>99</sup> inc VAT**

- Print photos with or without borders up to 215 x 610 mm
- Print or copy at up to 23ppm in black / 18 ppm in colour

only **£89.<sup>99</sup>** ( **£76.59** ex VAT )

## DVD640E DVD WRITER

**FREE MEDIA BUNDLE  
WHILE STOCKS LAST  
SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS**

**quicklinx** 3N4DCV

HP's latest external DVD writer with double-layer recording capability and LightScribe direct disc labeling lets you preserve, edit and share up to 8.5GB on one double-layer DVD and burn customized labels directly to LightScribe discs. It records double-layer DVDs at up to 2.4X and single-layer DVD+R at up to 16X.

- Features LightScribe Direct Disc Labeling Technology

**ETCH IMAGES DIRECTLY  
ONTO DISC**

only **£74.<sup>15</sup>** ( **£63.11** ex VAT )

## EASY MEDIA CREATOR 7.5


**NEW**

**quicklinx** 3NRCCV

Burning and copying CDs and DVDs has never been faster, and creating Hollywood-style movies or photo slideshows has never been easier. Add to that a complete, award-winning backup application and you can feel confident that all your projects are safe.

**LOWEST  
PRICE**
**BELKIN.**
**quicklinx** 3PN4CV

The Hi-Speed USB 2.0 14-in-1 Media Reader & Writer lets you drag and drop files, images, and music to your computer from your PDA or handheld, MP3 player, digital camera, or other device. You can edit, then store your files at transfer speeds of up to 480Mbps-40 times faster than USB 2.0 media readers.

only **£16.<sup>45</sup>** ( **£14.00** ex VAT )

## FINEPIX F10 ZOOM

### Introducing the FinePix F10 Zoom ...the stamina camera



AMAZING  
PRICE

FUJIFILM

quicklinx 3N6QCV

Most digital cameras are only part-timers. Why? As the day wears on, their batteries start to run dangerously low, and their low-light performance is beset by image quality problems. The F10 Zoom, with its new Real Photo Processor, is the exception. With a 500-shot battery life and an incredible sensitivity range of ISO 80 to 1600, the FinePix F10 Zoom is a camera to be used at any time, day or night.

- Super CCD sensor delivering 6.1 million effective pixels
- High resolution 2.5-inch LCD monitor for optimum clarity and detail
- 3x optical zoom lens
- 500-shot battery life
- Class-leading sensitivity setting for low light conditions
- VGA movie capture of 30 frames per second with sound

• 6.1 Megapixels • 3x optical zoom • 500 shot battery life  
• VGA movie capture • Large 2.5" LCD display

only **£219.99** ( £187.23 ex VAT )

## NW-HD5S 20GB MP3 HDD WALKMAN



SONY

UP TO 40 HOURS  
BATTERY LIFE

STORE UP TO  
13,000 TRACKS

quicklinx 3MWBCV

The brand new NW-HD5 is an ultra-compact 20 GB HDD player, combining great looks with cutting-edge design and an incredibly long battery life. Sony have thought of everything: not only does the NW-HD5 offer 40 hours of battery life, the battery is removable meaning you can carry a spare or pick up a new one while you're out. The NW-HD5 is extremely user-friendly: sporting an exceptionally large and easy-to-navigate 7-line LED screen, the attention to detail in the design of the player is obvious. Its technologically-advanced 'follow turn' feature means the display is synchronised to your hand movements, flipping from horizontal to vertical depending on your every move.

• 20 GB internal Hard Disk Drive memory  
• SonicStage® 3.1 software • Sony's G-sensor technology

only **£184.27** ( £156.83 ex VAT )

## AL1715S 17" TFT DISPLAY



acer

AMAZING  
PRICE

quicklinx 3P3SCV

Up-grade your PC system with the AL1715s, a reliable solution to render the ergonomic benefits of LCD technology. The slim and compact silver design liberates the workplace transforming the computing area into a modern work or entertainment area. The AL1715s is the ideal solution for home or office PC users requiring a smart interface with rapid response times for the best in digital playback and digital movies.

- 1280 x 1024 resolution
- 500:1 contrast ratio
- 8ms response time

• 17" TFT • Silver/Black • 150° Horizontal viewing angle  
• 300 cd/m2 • Analogue • ISO 13406-2 • Slim Format • TCO '99

only **£145.64** ( £123.95 ex VAT )

## TUNGSTEN E2



NEW

quicklinx 3NH2CV

Packed with the latest handheld technologies, including Bluetooth® and an extra-sharp, high-resolution colour display. The palmOne Tungsten™ E2 also features non-volatile flash memory for safe storage for your calendar, contacts, documents, photos and videos, even if you don't have time to recharge.

palmOne



ENTERTAINMENT  
WHEREVER YOU GO

SMARTDISK

quicklinx 3P4PCV

Transfer, store and share your videos, pictures, audio and data files with FlashTrax XT, the patented, palm-sized, portable multimedia player and video recorder that travels anywhere. Download and watch videos on the flip-top 3.6" colour LCD or TV.

only **£279.99** ( £238.29 ex VAT )

## 1GB USB 2.0 FLASH DRIVE

BIG STORAGE



dabsvalue

quicklinx 34FCCV

The concept of Dabsvalue is to offer customers the best value product, sourced from a variety of manufacturers all over the world, in any given category, at any point in time.

- Tiny pocket size design
- High speed USB interface
- Password protection
- Shockproof design

only **£48.98** ( £41.69 ex VAT )

## 256MB SECURE DIGITAL CARD



Kingston  
COMMITTED TO MEMOry

quicklinx 37R5CV

With the built-in write-protection switch to prevent accidental data loss, Kingston's legendary quality assurance and affordable price - you'll get peace of mind and the best price-to-performance value.

GREAT VALUE

only **£15.42** ( £13.13 ex VAT )

## MSX-512S MEMORY STICK PRO 512MB



SONY

quicklinx 36FPCV

Easily store and transfer all kinds of digital data - pictures, video, music, presentations, spreadsheets etc. The MSX-512S is backwards compatible with most devices that use standard Memory Stick PRO media. Its slightly smaller than a stick of chewing gum, so it's incredibly compact and easy to store.

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## CD-R 48X 50 SPINDLE PACK

50 PACK VALUE



SONY

quicklinx 2G2RCV

The mechanical precision needed to meet today's high-speed recording requirements. Compatible for playback on CD-ROM, audio CD players and photo CDs, these 700MB/80 minute CD-Rs are ideal for demo music mastering, prototyping CD-ROMs and limited edition CD production runs.

only **£9.99** ( £8.51 ex VAT )

## DVDR 8X MULTIUSE +/- 100PK



dabsvalue

quicklinx 3NBSCV

MultiUse means that it works as both a DVD+R and a DVD-R, therefore whether you use the DVD-R drive in your PC or the DVD+R recorder under your TV, a MultiUse Disk will work.

100 PACK VALUE

only **£19.99** ( £17.02 ex VAT )

only **£136.30** ( £116.00 ex VAT )



## Get Some Answers!

Consumeractive sticks up for your rights.  
If there's an issue you want investigated, get in touch



### PROBLEM Microsoft is holding me back

I was in the process of having a new 64-bit computer delivered and had purchased a copy of Windows XP. I read the story in issue 189 about an upgrade to the operating system for a 64-bit system. I went to the Microsoft site to get the information but couldn't complete the registration for the free upgrade.

I explained that I was having a new 64-bit PC built and rather than having Windows XP Professional installed and having to download this later, I wanted an upgrade disc. The PC builder told me that I had to download the upgrade myself from Microsoft's website. But no matter what I did I couldn't download the upgrade.

I rang Microsoft again, and was told someone would fax an activation key and I should be able to download it. Again no joy and despite numerous phone calls, I have been put off getting the computer now until the upgrade comes out on disc.

*Peter Collins, via email*



The development of 64-bit computers means that applications designed for the platform will run faster, although there are very few available yet. The 64-bit version of Windows isn't even available as a full product at this stage – although those that buy a 64-bit PC with Windows XP Professional edition can obtain a free upgrade via the internet. It is only possible to download the upgrade to a 64-bit PC, and not a 32-bit computer (which the vast majority of people have). Microsoft has made this



### PROBLEM Can you shed some light?

Eight months ago I bought two notebook computers from Tiny as Christmas presents for my children but the batteries on both computers would not charge. I phoned Tiny and was told to send them back. Then I was told I would have to pay for the delivery charges.

In the end they agreed that they would not charge me for the carriage and I sent the computers back for repair. Both were repaired and worked fine but now the screen of one of them does not light up.

I was told to send the computer back again, and again told I had to pay just over £37 for carriage. I am unsure what to do now. Surely I should not be out of pocket for this.

*Ron Brill, via email*



Mr Brill still has four months to go on his original 12-month

warranty so we can understand his confusion about paying for the cost of

carriage and insurance for what he considered faulty goods. Certainly the first time he was told this just after he bought the PCs was wrong.

Under the amendment to the Sale of Goods Act which came into force in March 2003, for the first six months, if a consumer says the goods are faulty it is up to the manufacturer to prove otherwise. If they had turned out not to be faulty, the company could have charged him for the carriage.

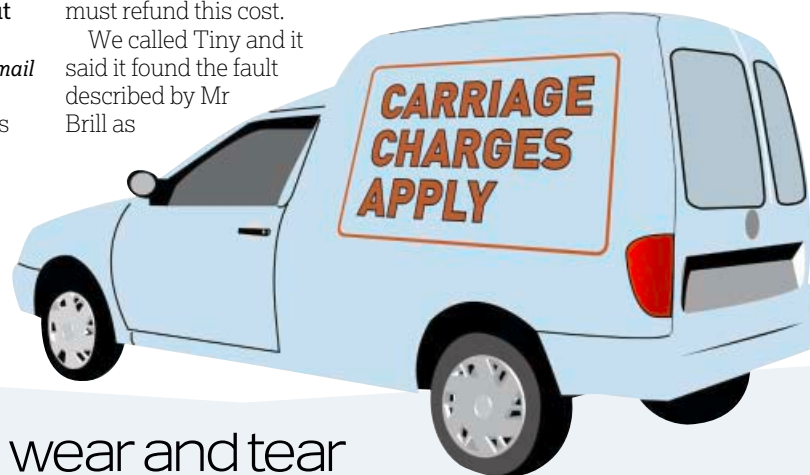
But after eight months, the onus switches to the consumer to prove the goods are faulty. This means some companies do charge for carriage, but if a fault is found they must refund this cost.

We called Tiny and it said it found the fault described by Mr Brill as

"puzzling" so was charging for the cost of carriage.

"If it is faulty we will reimburse Mr Brill for the carriage and insurance, but if it is a case of misuse then we won't. Misuse falls outside the warranty conditions. There is also the issue of fair wear and tear," Tiny pointed out.

This is true and some things can only be expected to last a certain amount of time before needing replacing. But we were told if it is the bulb that has gone then Tiny would repair this and reimburse the costs. The company does appear to be acting so Mr Brill will return the PC for repair and see what happens. ■



## Fair's fair with wear and tear

**THE SALE OF** Goods Act states that goods must be fit for purpose and of satisfactory quality.

It also says that as consumers we should not be left out of pocket trying to put things right. The seller has to bear certain costs, including postage or return carriage, and,

particularly for heavy items, it is the retailer's responsibility to arrange for collection.

People do have up to six years to make a claim if goods become faulty – five years in Scotland after discovery of the fault – but it is worth remembering that

consumers need to be realistic.

Certain components are not expected to last – this is called fair wear and tear – and this could mean that a claim is not possible if, for example, a PC will work again with a new graphics card or hard disk. ■

perfectly plain on its website. The site specifies the type of hardware that the new 64-bit operating system requires, so check this list carefully if you are planning to buy a 64-bit PC in the near future and want to get the upgrade to Windows 64-bit earlier than next year.

You should also check to make sure the PC's software is designed for 64-bit computing. If your PC manufacturer supports the new operating system it will be able to provide you with a CD that includes all of the right drivers and software specific to your computer. If not, many utilities may not work. Owners of compatible systems can get the upgrade at <https://microsoft.productorder.com/clientx64/default.aspx>.

While Microsoft's website was quite clear, the person operating its helpline that day was not. Mr Collins has decided to wait until the new 64-bit PC arrives, and then wait for the full upgrade to become available on CD. ■



### PROBLEM Mesh messed up my order

I ordered a PC that cost over £1,600 from Mesh over the phone on 19 February 2005 and paid for special delivery for Saturday 5 March. It didn't turn up and no one from Mesh phoned to inform me that the delivery was not coming that day.

I called to find out what was going on and was told the orders were late and everyone had been phoned at 6pm the day before. I would not know if they phoned because I was not at work at 6pm on a Friday evening.

I was then told that delivery wouldn't be until the following Saturday. I decided to cancel the order and I was told the returned funds would be credited to my bank within three working days.

Then, about 10 March, a printer turned up at my door from Mesh.

I did not accept the item and it went back, so I decided it would be a good idea to send written confirmation of my cancellation by recorded delivery.

I also sent an email and asked Mesh to confirm receipt of my email and letter. They did neither but when I phoned it was confirmed the order was cancelled. Then on 12 March the PC turned up at my door. I did not accept it and it went back. Since then despite repeated phone calls I still have not received my refund.

*Rob Gillson, Farnham*



Under the Consumer Credit Act 1974, there is no time limit specified for a

refund, but three months is unreasonable. Mr Gillson has now got his refund but he believes he is around £40 out of pocket for the interest charges that accrued on his card. Mesh has given him £30 worth of vouchers to spend but Mr Gillson would prefer the interest charges to have been refunded.

We spoke to Trading Standards and were told that Mr Gillson should be reimbursed this money. They said it would have been easier if he had made this clear to Mesh at the beginning but he now needs to prove how much he paid out and ask Mesh to pay this. We have also contacted Mesh about this outstanding interest. ■



### PROBLEM PayPal seems to be paying me no heed



In issue 189 David Driver was having problems with his bank and PayPal. Mr Driver

sells items on eBay and had never had a problem getting payments made via PayPal into his account.

Then, transfers that he was expecting failed to arrive in his bank account. With £330 outstanding he was concerned. He contacted both PayPal and his bank to enquire about the funds. Both passed the buck, claiming they did not have the money.

We discovered that the problem related to the account number that PayPal was using; one digit was wrong. But as Mr Driver pointed out, the account number is one he has used without problems in the past.

The stalemate between PayPal and Mr Driver's bank continued and so we felt the Financial Ombudsman needed to be contacted.

Mr Driver wrote to both parties detailing the dispute and stating that it was an official complaint. Both PayPal and his bank were under obligation to acknowledge the letter within five working days and resolve the complaint in eight weeks.

Fortunately, things went to plan and Mr Driver now has his money – it was with his bank all the time. ■

## 10 Tips for Buying Safely

- 1 Keep copies of the original Computeractive advert and all further correspondence. If you speak on the phone, make a note of whom you spoke to.
- 2 On large orders, obtain a written quotation.
- 3 If possible, pay with a personal credit card – all transactions over £100 should be covered by the card company's insurance scheme.
- 4 Does the price quoted include everything discussed? Is VAT extra?
- 5 Check how the supplier will deliver, whether or not delivery times are guaranteed and whether there is a delivery charge.
- 6 Is free telephone technical support included in the price? Some suppliers offer support only on premium-rate numbers. Is it easy to get through? Try dialling the number to test it.
- 7 Is the warranty return-to-base or on-site? Return-to-base means you will have to pay to ship the product back to the supplier.
- 8 If you are paying extra for on-site support, does the manufacturer offer guaranteed response times? If you rely on your PC for your business, you will need it fixed, pronto.
- 9 Is the supplier reputable? Does it comply with BS5750 or ISO9001? If in doubt, ask to see customer testimonials.
- 10 When your PC arrives, check that all branded components are genuine.

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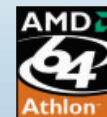
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# Sharp shooters

**Cover story**

Want to learn more about how digital cameras work and the settings and features that will best suit your needs? We offer candid buying advice about today's cameras

**C**hoosing a digital camera can be a perplexing process and it is easy to become confused by acronyms and technical jargon. What's more, if you don't know your megapixels from your metering modes before you hit the high street, you may find yourself being cajoled into a purchase that might not best suit your needs by a pushy in-store sales advisor.

Since you'll be spending anything from £200 upwards on a good camera, you will want to be sure that the camera you are buying is able to produce good-quality images and offers all the features to help you create the kind of photos you'll want to keep.

Here at *Computeractive*, we believe in telling it like it is, cutting through the technical jargon and getting to the facts. So, over the next few pages, we'll be explaining just how digital cameras work and what sort of features to look out for when you hit the shops.

## **Terminology exposed**

Your chances of both making the right purchase and getting the maximum usage out of the digital camera you eventually buy can be greatly increased with a little understanding of how the technology actually works. In fact, digital cameras work in a surprisingly similar fashion to their film-based siblings. Light is focused through a lens onto a photo-sensitive surface in exactly the same way, except that, instead of using a frame of film, the area exposed by the shutter is a light sensor. Most cameras today feature a type of sensor chip called a **CCD**. The camera then translates the information captured by the sensor into an image, which is stored in the camera's memory or on the camera's **memory card** as an image file.

Almost everybody would agree that the main concern when buying a digital camera is the quality of the finished photos itself. Image quality is frequently judged by the amount of detail in an image which, in turn, is directly related to the **resolution** of the sensor. This is measured in **pixels**, the tiny light-sensitive



Illustration: Ian Naylor

elements that make up a sensor. As digital cameras are now capable of taking higher-resolution images than ever before, you'll find resolution is most likely to be quoted in **megapixels**. A megapixel is one million pixels, so a 4-megapixel camera, for example, would produce an image made up of four million pixels.

In computer terms we're more used to describing the resolution of devices, such as PC monitors, by a horizontal measurement multiplied by a vertical one. The same can be applied to the resolution of a digital photo or the CCD sensor that took it. That's why you might find a 4-megapixel camera's maximum resolution quoted as 2272 x 1704 in the camera's image settings menu.

It would be natural to assume that the higher the resolution, the better the quality of the finished print. Technically, however, this isn't quite true. It would be more accurate to say that a higher resolution will result in a larger picture. With this in mind, you should give some thought to how you want to use your photos before buying a camera, to determine what resolution you will need. To print a 6 x 4in photo, you will need a 2-megapixel image and the larger you want to print an image, the higher the resolution you will need. For a complete

guide to printing sizes, see the illustration on page 21.

You may not always want to print the photos you take at large sizes, in which case you can use a lower resolution setting to maximise storage space on the camera's memory card. Most cameras have a range of different quality settings so experiment to see which ones give the best balance of quality against file size.



Powerful 5-megapixel cameras such as the Ricoh Caplio R2 are available for little more than £200

## The resolution revolution

When digital cameras first started appearing on the market a few years ago resolutions were relatively low, with many barely scraping the 1-megapixel mark, and many people, quite rightly, considered digital cameras to be vastly inferior to traditional 35mm film. Over the years, however, resolution has steadily risen while prices have taken a dramatic tumble. All of this means it is now possible to pick up a high-quality 5-megapixel camera for little more than £200, such as the Ricoh Caplio R2 (£230) that was reviewed in issue 189 or the Pentax Optio WP (£230) we looked at in issue 188. If you're on a tight budget, a 3-megapixel camera will still be up to the job but we wouldn't recommend opting for a model with a lower maximum resolution than this.

To confuse matters, some manufacturers have also started to factor in other software-assisted techniques for augmenting image resolutions, which is where things can get even more complicated. Some companies also use different methods of constructing the image sensors in their cameras to maximise quality. Fuji's Super CCD HR sensors, for instance, use an octagonal arrangement of pixels that, Fuji claims, is capable of capturing finer detail and increased sensitivity compared to standard sensors. Sony's Super HAD CCD, meanwhile, uses a tiny lens within the camera to focus light more accurately on ever-smaller sensor chips.

The truth is that many of these terms simply add to the already confusing array of jargon that consumers have to deal with. When you're out shopping, try and find out the number of actual pixels that a camera



▲ Try to go for reputable lens makes such as Carl Zeiss, which is used by Sony

records, as this is often a more accurate method of judging the amount of detail you'll get in finished photos. Also useful to know is the sensitivity of the image chip. A higher **ISO** number denotes more sensitivity, akin to higher 'speed' film, which means you don't need as much light to take a good shot. Some cameras allow you to manually alter the ISO setting to mimic the effects of using a 'faster' film. We'll look at ISO settings again later in the feature.

## The right lens

While pixel power is undeniably a big determining factor when it comes to choosing a camera, there are many other important components and features that contribute to image quality. One of the most vital elements of any camera is, of course, its lens. Some professional-style digital cameras feature high-quality interchangeable lenses but these tend to be extremely expensive and, unless you're a real enthusiast, you don't need to be so extravagant. Since the size of most image sensors is much smaller than a frame of film, however, even the most straightforward digital cameras need to have a very high-quality optical lens to direct light accurately to the sensor.

At the very worst, a poorly constructed lens can result in image defects known as chromatic aberration and vignetting. These present themselves

## Images from camera phones

More and more mobile phones have built-in digital cameras these days and, where once all you could expect was a blocky postage stamp-sized image, now one- and even 2-megapixel camera phones are available.

Transferring images from the phone to a PC is simple, although the cable required to connect the phone to a **USB** socket is rarely provided as standard by manufacturers. They can be bought from your phone service provider's website for £25 to £35.

Mobile handsets that support **Bluetooth** can also transfer photos wirelessly. If your PC isn't

► Cameras on mobile phones are getting ever more powerful



Bluetooth-ready, you can pick up a USB Bluetooth adapter, such as Belkin's F8T008UK, for around £25. Once your phone and your computer are 'paired' (talking to

each other in Bluetooth-speak), you can then use either the synchronisation software that was supplied with your mobile or your phone's 'push' feature to zap photos wirelessly to your PC.

Some newer handsets store images on removable memory cards, in which case transferring files could be as simple as popping the card out of your phone and into a corresponding memory card slot on your PC. If your mobile service allows you to send data, then it is possible to use the phone's email feature to send them individually to your own email address as attachments.

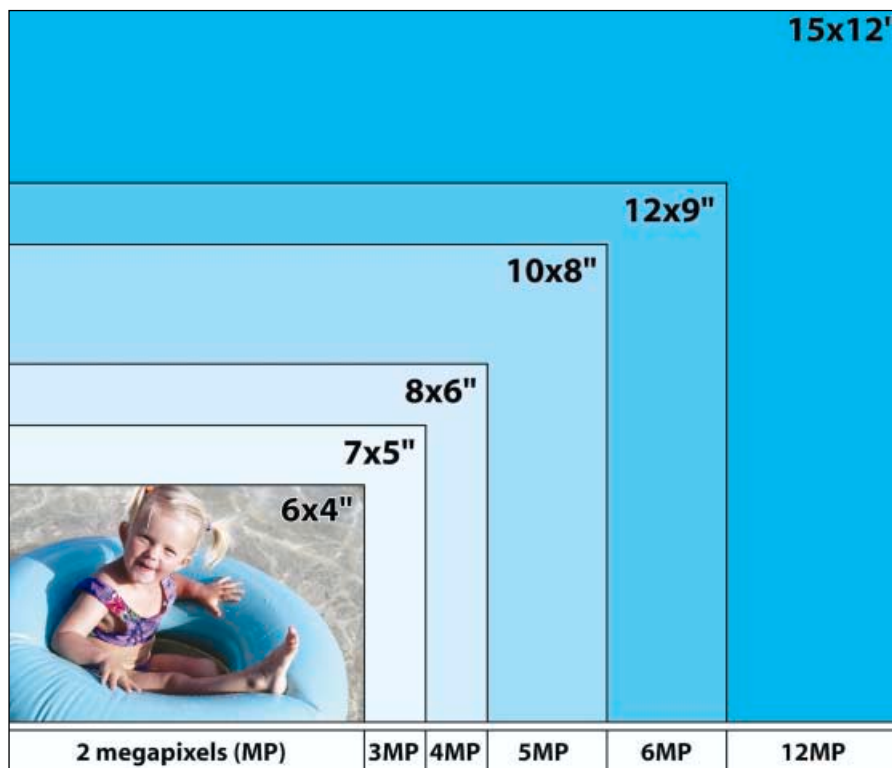


▲ Sony's latest digital camera features a 2.5in LCD display

as strange halos of light along the edges of objects in a photo or dark patches in the corners of photos. At best, a good optical lens can outweigh some of the shortfalls of a lower resolution sensor, helping to increase the colour depth and detail of a picture. Sadly, it's not always obvious as to what makes a good lens and what makes a bad one until you've actually tried them out for yourself. Go for a glass lens and opt for one of the big brand-name lenses if you can; Panasonic's Leica, Sony's Carl Zeiss or Fuji's Fujinon are often a good indication of quality. Also look out for the camera lens' focal length, usually quoted as an equivalent value range for a 35mm film camera. A short focal length will allow you to capture a wider scene, while a longer focal length will result in a narrower picture angle. In other words: the greater the focal range, the more versatile the camera.

Most digital cameras have a stated optical zoom capability, usually 3x, but 4x and above is preferable. You might find that the manufacturer quotes two zoom figures, one for optical zoom and one for digital zoom. The only really important one here is the optical zoom, which provides proper optical magnification. The digital zoom attempts to emulate zooming by enlarging a portion of the image electronically, and often results in poor image quality. If you can turn the digital zoom off in the settings menu, we'd recommend you do this.

One of the biggest physical changes in the transition from film to digital was the arrival of the **LCD** screen. You can use this to compose images and view photos you've taken and delete any that aren't up to scratch. Sony's new DSC-T7 features a 2.5in display, although smaller screens will do the job just fine. Many manufacturers now use special anti-reflective coatings or high-contrast displays to help visibility in conditions like bright sunlight. This should be indicated in the camera's technical specifications list.



▲ The higher your digital camera's resolution in megapixels, the larger the photos that you can print

Some even allow you to zoom into areas of pictures you have taken and crop or perform other basic in-camera editing. LCDs can be a big drain on battery power, though, so it's best to buy a model that comes with an old-school viewfinder as well, so you can resort to this if you're running on empty.

Whether you're using a viewfinder or an LCD screen to compose a photo, the image itself will actually differ slightly from the image you think you are taking, although this is hardly discernible to the vast majority of us. This is because you are not seeing what the lens sees but a close approximation. To see exactly the same image in the viewfinder that the camera sees through the lens, you'll need a digital SLR (single lens reflex) camera. These models are aimed at the professional or enthusiast photographer and so usually offer a greater number of manual settings and features and a higher resolution sensor. Costing anything from £500 to £6,000, however, we wouldn't recommend an SLR for anyone other than a more accomplished digital photographer.

### Quick on the draw

Digital cameras are famous for something called 'shutter lag', which is when there's a slight delay between you pressing the shutter release button and the actual photo being taken. This can be down to a number of factors but the most common is how quickly the camera's electronic auto-focus, exposure meters and



▲ One of a camera's most important features is its optical zoom capability



▲ Most cameras have an automatic sliding lens cap to protect the lens

## Jargon Buster

Techno babble demystified...

- ▶ **Bluetooth** A technology that allows devices to communicate with each other wirelessly.
- ▶ **CCD** A light-sensitive component used in digital cameras and camcorders.
- ▶ **Gb** A measurement of storage capacity – usually for hard disks.
- ▶ **ISO** A figure representing a camera's sensitivity to light. The higher it is, the more sensitive the camera is.
- ▶ **LCD** Technology used to create low-power, slim display panels.
- ▶ **Mb** A measurement of storage capacity, usually for memory.
- ▶ **Megapixel** A measure of the level of detail recorded by digital cameras – one megapixel means an image made from one million tiny dots (pixels).
- ▶ **Memory card** Small cards that can store many megabytes (Mb) of data or documents.
- ▶ **Pixel** The smallest part of an image displayed on a monitor or captured by a scanner or digital camera.
- ▶ **Resolution** The amount of detail shown in a digital image.
- ▶ **USB** Universal Serial Bus. A standard which allows quick and easy connection of external peripherals to your PC.
- ▶ **White balance** How a camera finds a white object in a shot to use as a reference point for representing colour.
- ▶ **Wizard** An automated 'assistant' that guides you, step-by-step, through a complex process.

For more on Jargon Buster visit:  
[www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)



▲ If possible, it's best to switch off your camera's digital zoom altogether

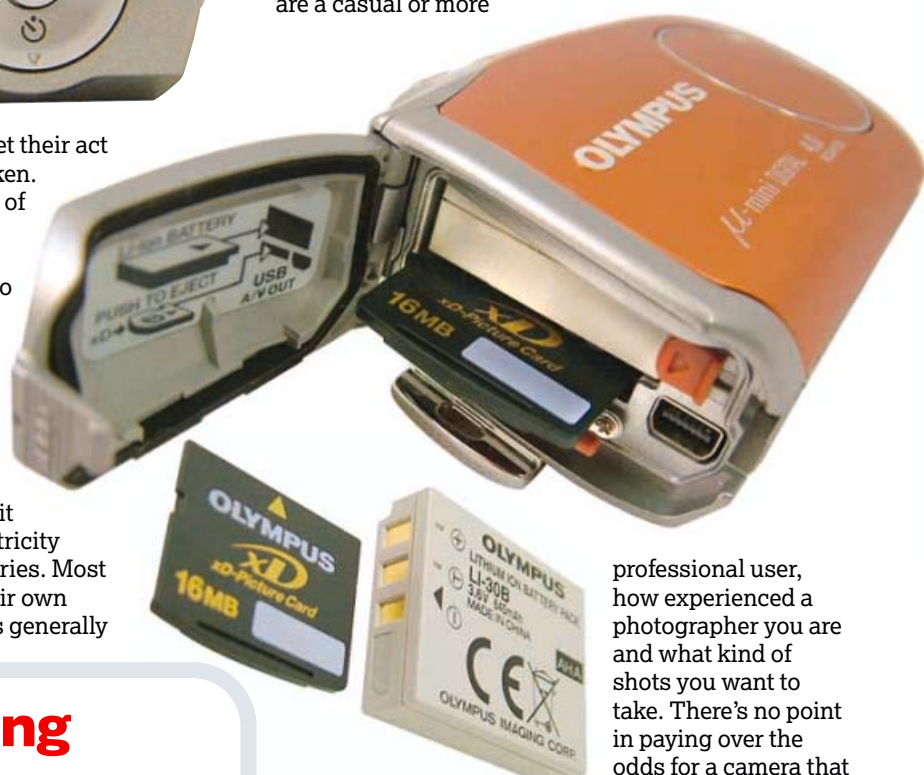
auto **white balance** settings can get their act together prior to the shot being taken. Some manufacturers make a point of flagging up particularly speedy cameras, so check the camera's features for details. The best way to get a feel for different speeds, though, is to test out a selection of cameras in the shop before you buy. Ask for batteries to test a display model in-store.

While we're on the subject, power is one of the few ongoing costs of a digital camera, whether it gets its juice from your mains electricity supply or via replaceable AA batteries. Most cameras these days come with their own rechargeable power cell and this is generally

cheaper in the long term than buying new AA disposable cells every time your camera runs out of juice. Digital cameras eat up a battery's power, rechargeable or otherwise, so if your camera uses a rechargeable cell, you might want to invest in a second cell to take out with you. Prices vary according to manufacturer so you might want to check how much a secondary battery will cost before you buy.

## Fancy features

Digital technology has made it possible to add a whole raft of new features and functions to cameras, some of which are extremely useful. The kinds of features you're likely to use depend on whether you are a casual or more



professional user, how experienced a photographer you are and what kind of shots you want to take. There's no point in paying over the odds for a camera that offers features you will never use, and an understanding of

▲ Ensure you know which type of memory card your camera requires to expand storage and how long a fully charged battery will last

what the features you may come across when you're looking at cameras actually do will help you pick the right model for your needs.

Most compact digital cameras feature a mode dial to help you switch quickly between a series of presets that are designed to work well in specific situations, represented by different icons. The setting depicted by the head icon should be used for portrait shots. The mountain symbol is for landscape photography, while the picture of a running person denotes fast action shot settings intended to reduce motion blur. Alternatively, you might find these and other automated settings on the camera's scene settings menu. Some models such as the HP R507 (featured in the compact digital camera group test in issue 183) also feature an on-screen help menu that explains how to use the settings on offer.

Most of us will use the Auto setting, which will automate every aspect of the camera's operation, for most of the photos we take. However, experimenting with aperture and shutter speeds manually can produce some very interesting and professional-looking effects. You may be able to access these

## Printing, editing and sharing

The first thing to do when you get your camera home after a photographic outing is to transfer the saved images to your PC. This can be done by using a USB cable to directly connect the camera to the PC, a camera docking station or by slotting the camera's memory card into a reader. You might be happy leaving your photos on your PC, saving them to a CD or DVD or sharing them using an online photo gallery such as Kodak's Easyshare Gallery ([www.kodakgallery.com](http://www.kodakgallery.com)). If you want to create prints of your photos, though, there are several options available to you.

The most obvious option if you have a photo quality inkjet printer at home is to



print them off yourself. Alternatively, use a printing kiosk in-store on the high street, a high-street photo printing service such as those provided by Boots of Snappy Snaps or order prints online from the likes of Photobox ([www.photobox.co.uk](http://www.photobox.co.uk)) and Fotango

(<http://photos.fotango.com>). We investigated the various methods of creating prints of photos in issue 185 of *Computeractive*, so refer back for details of the costs involved in each method and the relative image quality of the prints created in our tests.

settings directly on the camera's mode dial; set the dial to A for aperture settings, S for shutter speed or M for a more comprehensive set of manually adjustable settings. If your camera doesn't feature a mode dial, check for these settings in the settings menu. A camera's manual settings can be used to achieve some great effects, with a little understanding of how they work and how they affect the photos you're taking. The aperture setting describes the extent to which the lens opens up and is measured in f-stops. Without getting too technical, the higher the f-stop value selected, the smaller the aperture. This setting is particularly useful if you want to focus on a particular area of the image. Try selecting a low f-stop number for portrait shots to keep the subject in clear focus but render backgrounds out of focus.

The S setting, on the other hand, gives you control over the shutter speed. Use a fast shutter speed (1/500, for example) to capture a fast-moving object in bright conditions while reducing the risk of motion blur. A slower shutter speed is useful for darker conditions when you want to keep the shutter open for longer to allow enough light to reach the sensor. Ideally, if the shutter speed is slower than 1/60, you'll need a tripod as any movement of the camera while the shutter is open will result in a blurred photo.

Some cameras also have an EV compensation feature that allows you to purposefully under or over-expose a shot. This can be handy if, say, you specifically want to darken a shot when the camera's in-built light meter has incorrectly judged the exposure or if you want to achieve a specific effect such as silhouetting a subject against a sunset. Look for the EV settings in the camera's menu or as a button on the rear of your camera with plus and minus symbols on it. You may find that EV compensation isn't available to you when your camera is in fully automatic mode.

It's also useful to have dedicated buttons for flash, white balance and macro modes, so check for these – they're usually on the back of the camera. A macro button is often represented by a small picture of a flower, while flash is represented by a lightning symbol. Macro mode is very useful for taking close-up shots and some compact digital cameras allow you to take shots as close as 3cm from a subject. This should be listed in the camera's specifications.

## Photo finish

There are literally dozens of other features that may or may not be included on your camera. Some, like exposure compensation, red-eye reduction flash, a waterproof body or self-timer photography may prove useful, while others, such as the ability to edit pictures on the camera or panoramic picture stitching (where the camera helps you to take photos side by side to make up a panorama) may go largely unused. This all depends on how you plan to use the camera so give this some serious thought to this before you buy.

The main thing is to bear in mind that it's not always worth paying over the odds for features you're not going to use. Similarly, don't feel like you have to spend money on more megapixels when all you're ever likely to want is a standard size set of prints. Save your money for more important things – plenty of storage space, for example. Most cameras come with a smallish memory card or internal memory, but

it's always useful to have plenty of space to store more pictures, so consider spending some of your budget on an extra high-capacity memory card of 512Mb, 1Gb or beyond.

One last piece of advice we would offer is something that's surprisingly easy to overlook. It might seem like a purely cosmetic aspect, but the size and shape of your camera is absolutely fundamental to the way that you use it. The fact is that you will get loads more from your camera if it's convenient to use and small enough to carry with you wherever you go.

Unfortunately, the only real way to find out which camera is physically right for you is to pay a visit to your nearest camera shop and get a feel for them yourself. Our suggestion is to make a checklist based on the information in this feature, take it down to the high street to get an idea of what the cameras that fit into your budget look and feel like, and then look for the cheapest prices for the models you like on our Active Prices online comparison service ([www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices)).

*Jonathan Parkyn*

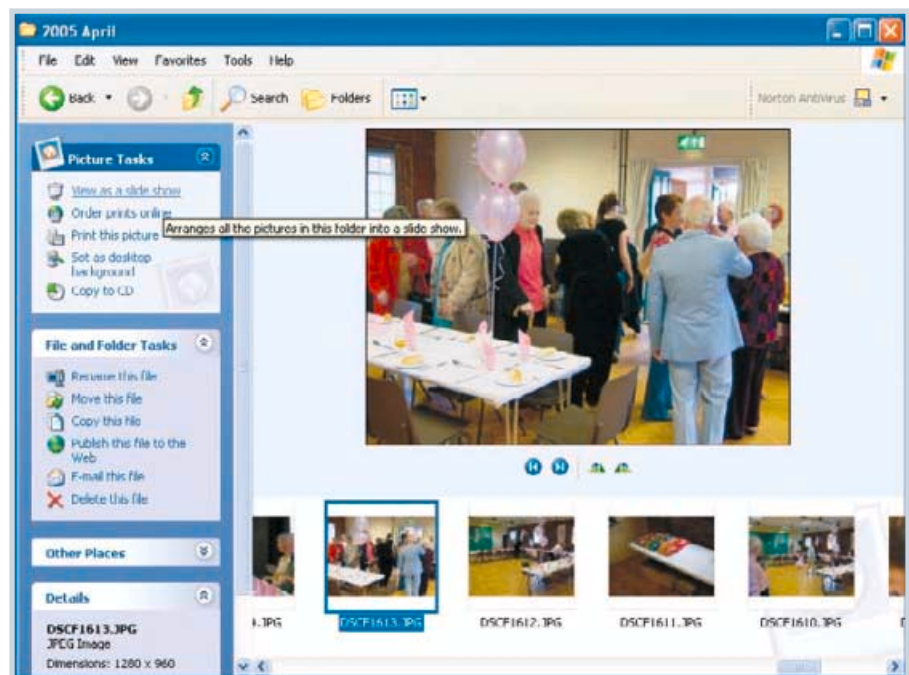
## Picture tasks

Open any folder containing image files in Windows XP and you will see the Picture Tasks menu displayed on the left-hand side of the folder window. The options here are designed to help you manage your photos. Click on the 'View as a slide show' option and all the photos in the folder will be displayed as a full-screen slideshow – select an image by clicking on it in the folder window to make this the first image displayed. Press

the Esc key at any point to stop the slideshow. Click on the Order prints online option, meanwhile, and the Online Print Ordering Wizard will guide you through the process of selecting images to be printed and ordering these online. Microsoft partners with ExtraFilm, Jessops and Bonusprint to offer this service. To use a different service, you'll have to visit its website yourself.

Use the Print this Picture

option to call up the Photo Printing Wizard, which will help you set page layout options to create the best possible print of your image using your own printer. If you're particularly fond of a specific photo, you can set this as wallpaper by clicking on the Set as desktop background option, while the Copy to CD option simplifies the business of saving your image files to disc with the help of the CD-writing wizard.



# Hot New Products



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## Reviewed in this issue...

|                               |                                      |           |
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## Our Star Ratings

With every review we do, we tell it like it is and give it Computeractive's authoritative star rating. Here's what those stars mean:

**Excellent** ★★★★★

**Worth it** ★★★★

**OK by us** ★★★

**Poor** ★★

**Awful** ★

## NOTEBOOK COMPUTER >> £799

# Medion MD95376



It benefits from AMD's latest mobile processor technology but lacks any graphical prowess

Over the past couple of months we've seen a few notebook computers equipped with Intel's latest Centrino upgrade (codenamed Sonoma). Not to be outdone, AMD has unleashed its own notebook-specific technology called Turion.

AMD has designed Turion to provide features that improve mobility – such as longer battery life and greater **Wi-Fi** compatibility. However, Turion is also part of AMD's drive towards 64-bit computing, much like the Athlon64, and will be able to take advantage of 64-bit software, such as Microsoft's planned replacement for Windows XP: Longhorn.

The Medion MD95376 is the first Turion-equipped notebook we've seen and is available exclusively from Staples stores. It comes with an AMD Turion 64 ML-30

**processor**, which runs at 1.6GHz. This isn't the fastest Turion processor available but managed to rack up a decent score in our system tests – comparable with a similar Intel Pentium M processor. However, the Medion's 1Gb of memory should have pushed its speed and score up further, especially in office and high-intensity tasks such as image editing.

The 100Gb **hard disk** is big for a notebook PC and will certainly provide enough storage space for today's multitude of media files and megabyte-

hungry software applications. If things do get a little tight, the built-in DVD-writer can archive data on all disc formats (including double-layer discs) apart from DVD-RAM.

The DVD-writer can also play DVD movies, and the 15.4in widescreen display presents a good image. The viewing angle is

a little tight, so you will have to be directly in front of the screen to get the best picture. However, colours were rich and there wasn't much blurring.

However, graphics is where this notebook falls

short. It barely managed to run our 3D graphics tests and you can forget about playing the latest games. This is because the graphics system steals 64Mb of memory from the main memory to operate.

On the plus side, the MD95376 is the best-built notebook so far from Medion and the keyboard is nice to type on. The trackpad has scrolling areas for moving through office documents and web pages, and there is a collection of hotkeys. There are three **USB2** ports, one mini-**FireWire** socket and a monitor-out connection on the back and the usual

collection of **PC Card**, **network**, modem and headphone/microphone sockets on the side. Wi-Fi is built in. Battery life was impressive at 2h 48min, which is no doubt helped by the Turion technology. It comes with Windows XP Professional, Ahead NERO Burning ROM & ReCode SE for creating CDs and DVDs and a 90-day trial of E-Trust's AntiVirus software. The warranty is 12 months' return to base.

Luke Peters

## We say...

**GOOD POINTS** AMD's latest 64-bit mobile processor; good battery life; great value

**BAD POINTS** Awful graphics; should perform better than it does

A powerful computer for the price but if you play 3D games, steer well clear

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Staples, no UK number

**Info** [www.staples.co.uk](http://www.staples.co.uk)

**Retail Price** £799

**Buy** Staples stores nationwide



▲ The Medion makes use of AMD's latest 64-bit Turion processor

## ALSO CONSIDER...

**EVESHAM VOYAGER C510**. 1,174. A Sonoma notebook that performs consistently in all areas. ★★★★★ *Issue 185*

## ROUTE PLANNING >> £200

# Navicore Personal

Convert your mobile phone into a powerful handheld route planner

If you often find yourself juggling between driving and map-reading when on your way to an unfamiliar destination, then investing in some navigation software for your mobile phone will undoubtedly relieve the strain.

Navigation devices come in two forms: those that carry all data (including the application, maps and all navigation info) on the actual device, and those that get most of their information from another computer, which is accessed via **GPRS** or **3G**.

Navicore Personal fits into the former category as everything is supplied on a **memory card**. The main benefit of this method is that navigation and route-planning information can be accessed much quicker because it is stored locally. Also, navigation data is not lost when mobile phone signal strength is weak. Currently Navicore Personal is only available on phones with Symbian's 60 or 80 series software, which includes Smartphones from both Nokia and Siemens.

The Navicore Personal package consists of a **GPS** receiver and an MMC memory card filled with the application and a map of the UK. Worldwide maps are also available but these are supplied on separate memory cards, which have to be swapped when entering another country. The maps and the application take up about 160Mb of the 256Mb-sized memory card, so there is plenty of space on the memory card left to use. The GPS receiver connects to the mobile phone via **Bluetooth**.

Route planning and navigation is quick and easy. Calculating a route takes a few seconds and if you digress from the original course, it doesn't take long before new directions are displayed.



▲ Navicore's maps proved to be both accurate and easy to follow

Another important factor is accuracy, and Navicore doesn't disappoint. We were very confident listening to the spoken instructions, which were clear, timely and concise. It also meant we could keep both eyes on the road. Every road name is given on screen, and you can choose to display places of interest, hotels, petrol stations, hospitals and other useful locations.

Initially, it's annoying to learn exactly how the software defines some road situations. Sometimes, a roundabout is presented as a junction and vice versa, and sometimes it advises to 'keep left' when 'turn left' would have been more accurate. But this is not a major gripe. The navigation software can also be used without the GPS receiver as an atlas. Roads or places of interest can be located through manual scrolling and zooming in, or by entering postcodes or address details.

Anna Lagerkvist

### ALSO CONSIDER...

**T-MOBILE MDA WITH CO-PILOT LIVE.** Up to £320. Aversatile GPS system, despite its small screen. ★★★★★ Issue 188

## We say...

**GOOD POINTS** Quick; can be used to plot routes without GPS receiver

**BAD POINTS** Discrepancies in some traffic definitions

If you've got a compatible mobile phone, this is one of the cheapest GPS solutions around

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Navicore, no UK number

**Info** [www.navicore.fi/en\\_GB/](http://www.navicore.fi/en_GB/)

**Retail Price** £200

**Buy** [www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices)

## MEDIA STREAMING DEVICE >> £245

# Buffalo LinkTheater

Play DVDs and stream music and videos over a network, using one device



The LinkTheater is one of many media-**streaming** devices on the market but in addition to playing computer files on your television, it also includes a DVD player.

Like other streaming devices, this one allows you to hook it up to a wired or wireless **network** in your home and stream videos, music and pictures from any computer to a TV set or hi-fi. The built-in DVD player means you can reduce the number of boxes under (or on top of) your television, and decrease the power that the whole lot uses. There is also a **USB 2** port to plug in an external flash memory drive, or camera, and play files from.

It supports a bewildering array of standards – up to 802.11g for wireless, high-definition TV (HDTV) at the highest quality level, DivX, WMV and WMV HD format video, and WMA and MP3 audio files. It has progressive scan outputs,

meaning that if you connect it to a progressive scan television, you will see an improvement in quality. Although there are not many televisions capable of displaying progressive scan signals, they are becoming ever more common, so this machine could increasingly prove to be a bonus in future, should you upgrade your television. Likewise with HDTV, there are no British television companies broadcasting an HDTV signal at the moment, but it is a standard that will take effect over the next few years, so having a HDTV-ready player is useful. Of course, you will need a high-definition television set or monitor on which to view HDTV files in all their glory.

▲ The LinkTheater combines DVD playback and media streaming with support for future technology

Setting the LinkTheater up was uncomplicated – plug it into the mains and a television and it works as a DVD player, and attach a network cable and it automatically connects to the network. If you want to stream media across the network, you need to install the supplied software on all the relevant PCs on the network. The software is, likewise, easy to use and doesn't take up much of the PC's processing power, but it is a hassle to have to run yet another media application on the computer in addition to whatever media player you already use.

Setting it up on a wireless network was a little more troublesome – it took a while to recognise the network at all, and it only supports the older **WEP** security, rather than the newer **WPA**. This means

you might have to lower the security of your home wireless network just to use the player – not an ideal situation. That aside, the quality of playback is good. Streamed files play very well in both audio and video quality, and it will also play all the supported file types from DVDs and CDs that you insert. Oddly, playback from these discs appeared to be slightly lower in quality than over the network but not enough to cause concern.

Anthony Dhanendran

## We say...

**GOOD POINTS** Decent quality playback; progressive scan; HDTV outputs

**BAD POINTS** Complicated wireless set-up; doesn't support recent wireless security standards

Good video playback and good value but lacking some crucial security features

**Overall** ★★★

**Contact** Buffalo 01753 555 000

**Info** [www.buffalotech.co.uk](http://www.buffalotech.co.uk)

**Retail Price** £245

**Buy** [www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices)

quality than over the network but not enough to cause concern.

### ALSO CONSIDER...

**PHILIPS STREAMIUM SL4001.** £300. More expensive and has similar security problems, but offers better playback. ★★★★★ Issue 178

# Hot New Products ▶

## Jargon Buster

Techno babble demystified...

▶ **3G** Short for 'third generation mobile telephone network'. 3G networks support fast data transfer, making such things as sound and video transmission possible.

▶ **Bluetooth** A technology that allows devices to communicate with each other wirelessly.

▶ **Driver** Software needed to allow Windows (and other operating systems) to communicate with a peripheral.

▶ **DVI** A video connection used on some TFT monitors that provides a purely digital connection.

▶ **Firewall** A system that prevents unauthorised access to a computer over a network, such as the internet.

▶ **FireWire** A super-fast data link between your PC and devices such as digital camcorders.

▶ **FTP** File Transfer Protocol. A way of transferring files over the internet, particularly when maintaining websites.

▶ **Gb** Gigabyte. A measurement of storage capacity, usually for hard disks.

▶ **GHz** Gigahertz. A measure of how fast the processor in your PC works.

▶ **GPRS** A mobile phone standard providing an 'always on' connection.

▶ **GPS** Network of satellites orbiting the earth, and used to pinpoint an exact position on the planet.

▶ **Hard disk** A high-capacity disk drive fitted in almost all PCs and used to store applications and files.

▶ **Mb** Megabyte. A measurement of memory storage capacity.

▶ **Memory card** Small card that can store many megabytes of data. Often used as removable storage.

▶ **Network** A way of connecting several computers and printers so that they can share data.

▶ **Operating system** Crucial software that governs how hardware and software work together.

...Continues on page 28

For more on Jargon Buster visit:  
[www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)

OPERATING SYSTEM >> £89

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# Mac OS X Tiger

An almost compulsory upgrade to Apple's latest operating system

**M**icrosoft takes several years to produce each new version of Windows, but Apple likes to upgrade its Mac OS X software on an almost yearly basis.

Version 10.4, also known as 'Tiger' is one of the biggest updates so far, with around 200 new features. A lot of these are rather obscure technical changes, though, so Apple is putting most of its focus on a handful of really eye-catching new characteristics.

The feature that Apple seems to be most pleased with is Spotlight. This is a powerful new **hard disk** search tool that can not only locate files with a particular name, but can also search the actual content of the files as well. Digital photos, for instance, can contain 'keywords' such as the date or location where the photo was taken. Spotlight can search for these keywords, allowing you to locate all the pictures taken in 'Barcelona' or all those taken in May 2005. It can also delve into spreadsheets or even **PDF** files to see if they contain the information you're looking for.

However, our personal favourite feature is The

Automator, which is a kind of very basic programming tool. It provides you with a list of predefined 'actions' that can be used to control programs such as iTunes or the Mac's iMovie video editor. You can use these actions to automatically perform tasks such as grabbing some songs from an audio CD, converting them into MP3 format and then adding them to a playlist. It's a great timesaver for routine, repetitive tasks, and you don't have to be skilled to use it. You can also download new 'actions' from the internet to control other programs such as Microsoft Word or Adobe Photoshop.

Another handy timesaver is new the RSS option within the Safari web browser. Also known as 'really simple syndication', RSS is a system that allows websites to provide you with a 'news feed' of regularly updated stories. The RSS feature in Safari can now automatically detect the news feed on any website and



▶ The new Spotlight search tool is both powerful and versatile

turn it into a web page that contains convenient summaries of all the latest news stories. It can even combine RSS feeds from multiple websites, allowing you to create your own personalised news digest.

You can customise a Mac even further using the new 'Widgets' feature. Widgets are small programs that perform specific tasks, such as checking the weather forecast or (our favourite) providing a list of all the local wireless hotspots. These Widgets are hidden most of the time but can be instantly activated simply by pressing the F12 button on the keyboard. Apple includes about a dozen Widgets with Tiger, and there are dozens of others that have been written

by Mac users, which you can download from the internet free of charge.

Tiger also includes updated versions of programs such as iChat, the **instant messaging** program that can now conduct four-way video-conferencing sessions (although you'll need both a fast Mac and a fast internet connection to pull that one off).

We've had our doubts about some of the previous upgrades to OS X, but Tiger suggests that Apple is really hitting its stride right now, and we can definitely recommend it as a 'must have' upgrade for anyone that owns a Mac.

Tiger will be included with all new Apple computers – look out for our review of the company's new iMac in a forthcoming issue. Those interested in the relative benefits of Apple

computers and Windows PCs should read our feature on page 32.

Cliff Joseph

## We say...

**GOOD POINTS** Lots of new features; easy to use; free internet downloads for Tiger software

**BAD POINTS** Needs at least 512Mb of memory

Full of new features and definitely recommended for anyone that owns a Mac

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Apple UK 0800 039 1010

**Info** [www.apple.com/uk/macosex](http://www.apple.com/uk/macosex)

**Retail Price** £89

**Buy** [www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices)

# Evesham Ebox 2

A PC that wants to oust your set-top boxes and DVD player from the living room

**E**vesham's Ebox 2 is another example of how PC manufacturers are changing the notion of what it means to own and use a PC and it won't stand out from the other devices in your living room. The only visual giveaways are a **FireWire** socket and a pair of **USB 2** ports on the front panel.

The PC runs Windows Media Center 2005, an **operating system** designed to make it easy to enjoy photographs, music or DVDs. In particular, it simplifies the process of watching, recording and storing TV programmes, linking in with aerials and set-top boxes so that all can be managed through the simple menu-based interface. However, we advise you to call the company to make sure your existing set-up is compatible.

Noise is an issue for computers of this type and the Ebox is quiet as a mouse. Options for watching and recording TV

are about as good as it gets today, with a dual digital tuner. This means you can watch one station while recording another and receive Freeview broadcasts. A **200Gb hard disk** is sufficient but a multi-format, dual-layer DVD writer is provided if you need to free up some space. The Intel Pentium 4 processor running at **3GHz** with **512Mb** of memory performed respectably in our tests and **Wi-Fi** is built in. The leads required to plug the PC into standard TV sockets are supplied, but normal PC

content and web pages will look odd on a TV because of resolution issues. A **DVI** port is supplied to connect to a PC monitor but it's not possible to use it while watching the TV screen.

Evesham provides a good set-up poster and a separate signal booster box. The four USB 2 and single FireWire sockets situated at the rear may be difficult to use and we'd have liked to see them at the front. Still, the Ebox is narrowly the best device of its kind available.

Paul Allen



▲ The Ebox 2 is powerful, quiet and looks good

## We say...

**GOOD POINTS** Good looks and fair performance; quiet; ability to watch and record channels simultaneously

**BAD POINTS** Best suited to DVI-compatible displays such as LCD and plasma TVs

A stylish Media Center PC that doesn't skimp on features

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Evesham 0870 160 9500

**Info** [www.evesham.com](http://www.evesham.com)

**Retail Price** £999

**Buy** [www.evesham.com](http://www.evesham.com)

## ALSO CONSIDER...

**HI-GRADE DMS II 3400.** £1,099. A quiet Media Center PC but there's no digital tuner. ★★★★★ *Issue 189*

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# Hot New Products▶

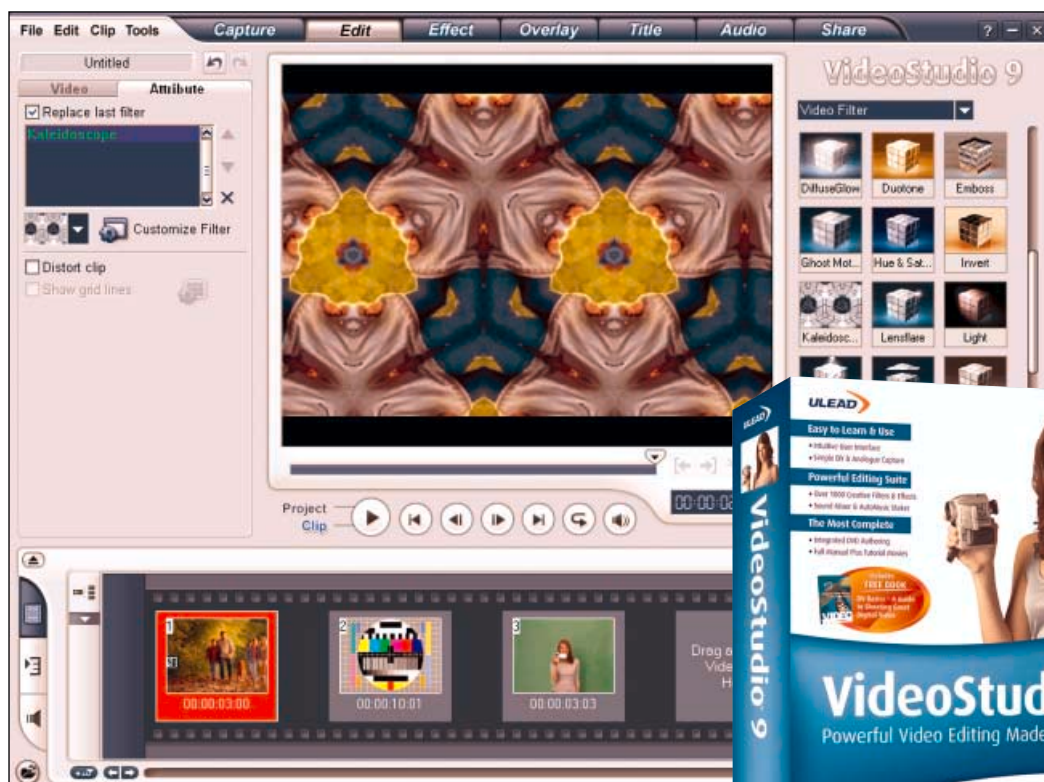
## Jargon Buster

### Techno babble demystified...

...Continued from page 26

- ▶ **PC Card** A credit card-size device for adding anything from a modem to a hard drive to a notebook PC.
- ▶ **PDF** A file format that allows formatted pages of text and graphics to be viewed and printed correctly on a variety of machines.
- ▶ **Plug-in** A small program that adds extra features to an application and is loaded only when needed.
- ▶ **Processor** The chip that is the 'brain' of the computer. The faster it is the better a PC will perform.
- ▶ **Registry** A database integrated into Windows which stores information on all hardware and software installed on your PC.
- ▶ **Spam** Junk email sent to large groups of people offering such things as money-spinning ideas.
- ▶ **Stream** When data flows to your PC as needed. Internet broadcasts are often streamed.
- ▶ **System Tray** Found on the far right of your Taskbar, it displays icons showing which programs are always running in Windows.
- ▶ **USB** A standard which allows quick and easy connection of external peripherals to your PC.
- ▶ **USB 2** Faster but backwardly-compatible successor to USB that's used by such things as MP3 players.
- ▶ **Virus** A malicious program designed to cause at best annoyance and at worst, damage to data.
- ▶ **WEP** Wireless Encryption Protocol. A way to encrypt data being transmitted over a wireless network to prevent it from interception.
- ▶ **Wi-Fi** A catchier name for the 802.11b or 802.11g standards used for wireless networking devices.
- ▶ **Wizard** An automated online 'assistant' designed to guide you, step-by-step, through a potentially complex process.
- ▶ **WPA** The latest generation of ultra-safe wireless security.

For more on Jargon Buster visit:  
[www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)



▲ VideoStudio 9 offers an impressive array of customisable features for its highly reasonable price



## VIDEO-EDITING SOFTWARE >> £50

# Ulead VideoStudio 9

Edit video and make your own DVDs with this low-cost package

If you like the idea of editing home videos with your PC, you don't need to buy any software: Windows XP comes with Windows Movie Maker, a reasonably effective video-editing application. So why would you want to consider coughing up £50 for

VideoStudio 9 from Ulead?

When in full swing, both applications employ similar interfaces, with a preview window, clips area and storyboard running along the bottom. Drag the clips onto the storyboard, rearrange them at will, add a few effects and transitions and then preview the results before creating or 'rendering' the final edited video.

However, before you ever get this far in VideoStudio, the software prompts you to select from a number of video-production methods. The first, called DV-to-DVD Wizard, is new to this latest version. The idea here is to do away with editing all together: just connect the DV camcorder to the PC, press play on the former and the incoming footage can more or less be directly burned to DVD.

While this works, it offers minimal control. Better is VideoStudio's Movie Wizard: capture footage from your camcorder or select a clip from your **hard disk**, choose a preset theme, tweak the settings and

render the video. When done, click the Create Disc button and the results are burned to DVD, VCD or SVCD.

For full control the user must venture into VideoStudio Editor. Here, footage can be captured, trimmed and manipulated in innumerable ways. For a £50 product, the spread and number of effects and transitions on offer is very generous. All the while, the storyboard strip at the bottom of the editing window provides a visual guide as to what will happen, and when. At any time, items on this strip can be simply picked up and repositioned; or deleted.

Finally, the Share tab is the place where all your efforts are packaged and outputted according to your desires. In addition to burning to disc, the software can also facilitate streaming video for your website, or a low-resolution clip for use on a Pocket PC or Windows smartphone.

While it's packed with great features and tools, our chief criticism is that at times operation can be sluggish.

Scott Colvey

## We say...

**GOOD POINTS** Movie Wizard mode makes video production simple; new facility to stream footage direct from camcorder to DVD

**BAD POINTS** Can run rather slowly at times

It's simple to use and offers oodles of fancy effects and transitions

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Ulead, 01327 844880

**Info** [www.ulead.co.uk](http://www.ulead.co.uk)

**Retail Price** £50

**Buy** [www.ulead.co.uk](http://www.ulead.co.uk)

## ALSO CONSIDER...

**PINNACLE STUDIO PLUS 9.** £70. Simple to use and great value for the price. ★★★★★ Issue 174

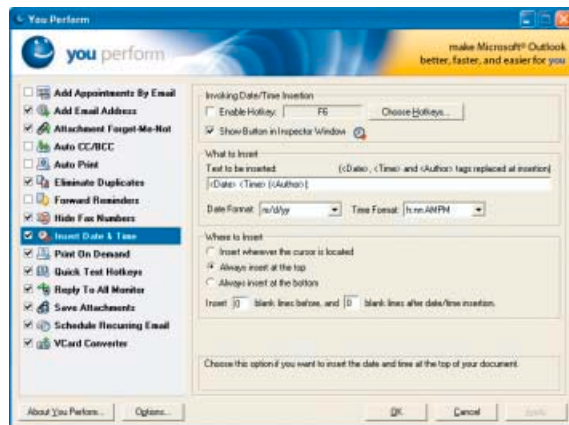
# You Perform

Add extra features to Outlook with these useful utilities

**M**icrosoft's Outlook is one of the most popular personal information manager applications around but even in the latest version there are gaping holes in its repertoire – and that's where third-party add-ons come in handy.

You Perform isn't just a single expansion pack, though. It's a whole suite of 15 individual utilities designed to make Outlook better, faster and more efficient. Each utility targets a specific area where Outlook's own options are weak, while You Perform provides a simple single interface for configuring and managing the various settings of individual **plug-ins**.

So, if you've ever replied to all only to find you've included yourself on the list, You Perform offers a tool to prevent that from happening again. It also features a



▲ You Perform combines 15 utilities that improve the way Outlook performs

useful attachments manager, which can save any email attachments to a specific folder on your **hard disk**, to stop your inbox from getting clogged up. And, if you've ever forgotten to attach a document or file to an outgoing mail, You Perform features a utility that offers a 'missing attachment?' reminder you

before you send your message.

There are too many useful extras to list in much detail here – an automatic carbon copy (CC or BCC) function, a contacts-to-Vcard converter, duplicate message/contact eliminators, reminder forwarding, and a tool that instantly turns sent or received email addresses into contacts are just a few.

You Perform only works with the full version of Microsoft Outlook (versions 2000 and up) and not the cut-down Outlook Express that comes free with Windows. As such, it will appeal to business types than home users.

Nevertheless, the package is easy to use and adds a tremendous amount of useful extras to the original application's palette of tools, many of which become invaluable almost from the second you install the utility suite.

Jonathan Parkyn

## We say...

**GOOD POINTS** Plugs the gaps in Outlook's range of features; extremely easy to use; seamless integration

**BAD POINTS** Some features are less relevant to home users; no support for Outlook Express

An excellent range of utilities for Outlook users, although less useful for home users

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** You Software, no UK number

**Info** [www.unlimited.com](http://www.unlimited.com)

**Retail Price** £35

**Buy** [www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices)

## ALSO CONSIDER...

**EUDORA.** A free email client with lots of interesting features. ★★★★★ *Issue 185*

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# Hot New Products

**PHOTO EDITING >>**  
**£40 (DELUXE),**  
**£25 (BASIC)**

## Photo Explosion Deluxe

A complete suite of tools to edit and make use of your pictures

**P**hoto Explosion Deluxe contains a full set of tools for working with pictures, much the same as can be found in far more expensive picture-editing programs.

There are three parts to the main program: a browser, which is similar to Windows Explorer, allowing you to browse your **hard disk** and see thumbnails of any images you find. Unlike more expensive programs, it



doesn't allow you to organise your pictures, or label or tag them, although there is a separate program, Photo Explorer, that does that. It does let you pick up your pictures from a camera or scanner, however.

The second part is a picture editor, with various tools for enhancing your images. It's comprehensive but the automatic fixes are not quite as clever as those in, say, Photoshop Album.

Finally, there is a project section which contains templates for certificates, clothing, CD inlays, labels and many other ideas. These templates are easy to use, although there are no **wizards** to take you through the process – it's a case of loading the template, then double-clicking on each item to customise it.

The program comes with the templates on two CDs – as well as a further CD full of pictures in the deluxe version – along with programs to create panoramic images, morph images together, and make a slideshow.

Anthony Dhanendran

### We say...

A solid and inexpensive set of programs for playing with pictures

**Overall ★★★★★**

**Contact** Nova Development 01752 202507  
**Info** [www.novadevelopment.co.uk](http://www.novadevelopment.co.uk)  
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**SPEAKERS >> £80**

## Philips MMS321 speakers

Surprising sound quality for the size tempered by a silly design flaw



Now that legal music download sites are cheap and plentiful and games feature such realistic sound, good quality speakers are an important part of the home PC set-up.

The Philips MMS321 stereo speakers are tall and slim, and require very little space. They are also magnetically shielded, so can be placed right next to your monitor. Conversely, the combined amplifier unit and power adapter is large and heavy, but can easily be situated beneath a desk or table.

Sound quality is particularly impressive, with deep, rich bass and unexpected clarity from such small devices. What a shame, then, that Philips has included the worst-designed power switch and volume control we've seen in a very long time.

Situated on the side of one of the speakers, the dial is almost flush against the case, and the only point of leverage is a pinpoint-sized dimple that requires a strong fingernail to shift it. You have to hold the base of the unit firmly, so it's a two-hand job.

Adjusting the volume once switched on is equally difficult and there is no headphone socket for convenience. At this price, we expect ease of use, not just quality.

Let's hope Philips sorts out these silly design failures, because the audio quality of these speakers is outstanding for their size.

Paul Allen

### We say...

Great audio quality let down by inconsiderate design

**Overall ★★**

**Contact** Philips 01293 773128  
**Info** [www.philips.co.uk](http://www.philips.co.uk)  
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**SECURITY SOFTWARE >> £35**

## BitDefender 8 Professional Plus

With so many online threats it can be a big task just keeping on top of all the ways to protect a computer.

To start with, BitDefender 8 Professional Plus includes a **virus** scanner which scans your PC, email and **Registry** for viruses. If Windows has been attacked, you can start your PC with a repair disk to check for viruses and repair problems.

The **firewall** module controls which programs can access the internet and the numbers that they try to dial. This is a vital tool for dial-up internet users.

Finally, the anti-**spam** filter integrates with Outlook

Express and can import your address book.

BitDefender 8 can be installed on two computers and includes two years of updates.

Tim Smith



### We say...

A comprehensive security suite with essential tools whichever way you access the internet

**Overall ★★★★★**

**Contact** Editions Profil UK 01564 200948  
**Info** [www.editions-profil.com/uk](http://www.editions-profil.com/uk)  
**Buy** [www.editions-profil.com/uk](http://www.editions-profil.com/uk)

**DIGITAL MEDIA PLAYER >>**  
**£119**

## Tuny 7 512Mb

The tiny Tuny 7 continues the trend for slick, white, iPod-like music gadgets, but it features a 1.3in colour screen. There is also an iPod-style circular button at the front, which controls the volume as well as order of play.

It plays a variety of music formats and can store around 100 songs in its 512Mb memory (other sizes are available). You can access tunes either from the list of stored music or create a playlist of your favourite songs. The display will show you relevant information, including equalizer mode and playback time. The display looks a little cluttered by all this information, though.

A voice recorder is included while the FM radio player is easy to operate and has a recording option. You can also store and view images. This is a neat little player, though its interface



could be simpler. The sound is decent and the supplied headphones don't disappoint.

It comes with **USB 2**, audio cables and a necklace attachment.

Anna Lagerkvist

### We say...

A slick player, if not the most user-friendly, but with decent sound

**Overall ★★★★★**

**Contact** PleasecanIhaveone.com  
0870 2241891  
**Info** [www.dynatel.com/e\\_index.asp](http://www.dynatel.com/e_index.asp)  
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## DIGITAL CAMCORDER » £110

### Digital Blue Digital Movie Creator 2

A fun and friendly digital video camera for children

The Digital Movie Creator is a digital camcorder for kids. Accordingly, it is bright blue, made of plastic, and the video quality is not particularly good.

Then again, it's much better than you might expect from first impressions and the camera is fairly robustly put together. Simply insert four AAA batteries (which are not supplied), and shoot away. It only has 16Mb of memory, so you can only store around four minutes of footage, with audio, on the camera before it needs to be downloaded to a PC – although you can record indefinitely if you leave it attached to the PC.

The software is easy to install, and,

like the camera, is clearly designed with children in mind. It's easy to use once you get the hang of it, although the stylised controls can be a little confusing at first. You can add effects and sound to your film, cut it to your liking, and then save it.

It's true that four minutes of video is not very much, but for playing around, it is adequate, particularly given the short attention spans of its target audience (the box says it is for children of seven and older, although seven-year-olds might find the learning curve steep).

There is no manual, but there is a comprehensive help section in the software, with diagrams. The Digital Movie Creator isn't at all suitable for anyone who wants a lot of control over their movies, and the quality is decent but not hugely impressive. For children, though, it is an excellent, if expensive, introduction to movie-making.

Anthony Dhanendran



#### We say...

It's not cheap and it could do with a manual, but it would make a great gift for a budding George Lucas

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Digital Blue

**Info** [www.playdigitalblue.co.uk](http://www.playdigitalblue.co.uk)

**Buy** [www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices)

## PERIPHERAL » £20

### Trust NB-5100P Multimedia remote

Showing home videos on your notebook lacks a certain style if you have to keep leaping up to control your media player. The Trust NB-5100P is a small remote control that solves the problem.

Installation includes installing a small USB infrared receiver, even if your notebook already has one. A small program is installed that sits in the System Tray to pass on the commands from the remote control. It comes ready to control many different programs including PowerPoint, Windows Media Player and several DVD movie players.

It is possible to change what the buttons do to suit your requirements and when it is not in use, it will slot neatly



into your notebook's PC Card slot.

At £20, the NB-5100P is a great little accessory for a price that beats its competitors.

Tim Smith

#### We say...

Practical and with a novel storage feature, this is a real bargain

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Trust 0845 60 900 36

**Info** [www.trust.com](http://www.trust.com)

**Buy** [www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices)

## UTILITY SOFTWARE » £30

### Stuffit Deluxe 9

If you already use compressed folders in Windows XP, you might wonder what the point is of spending money on compression software, but Stuffit Deluxe 9 does far more than shrink files to save space on your hard disk.

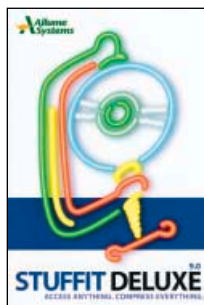
Stuffit Deluxe can create archives using the ZIP format or its own format, which can compress JPEG image files and show thumbnails when viewing archives. Stuffit integrates into Windows Explorer so it is possible to create, view and decompress files using the right mouse button menu.

A very useful addition is the Disk Index, which keeps track of files archived to CD or DVD. The index can then be searched by file name or date so you can see which disc you need.

Archives can also be converted into self-contained programs that will decompress by themselves, so your recipient doesn't need a copy of Stuffit. This does increase the size of archives, however.

Regular backups are easy with the scheduled archive creation. These can be saved to a disc or sent over the internet using ftp or email.

Tim Smith



#### We say...

Great for compressing files and finding them once they are archived

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Allume 0870 027 0972

**Info** [www.allume.com](http://www.allume.com)

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## REMOVABLE STORAGE » £175



### Fujitsu HandyDrive

Handy but pricey removable hard disk

External hard disks provide a simple way to expand your computer's storage, and the HandyDrive lives up to its name. It's small, thin, light enough to slip into a pocket and it can store 100Gb of files.

The device plugs into a USB 2 socket with the supplied cable but it requires a lot of power from the USB port. If you are using an external hub, it will need its own power supply. There is a power socket on the drive, but no adapter supplied, so you'll have to find your own if you need one.

When first attached, the device draws its own drivers from the supplied CD. The disc also contains a manual, which confusingly refers to the drive needing a FireWire connection – this is not the case.

Operation couldn't be simpler, as the HandyDrive appears as a named drive in My Computer, into which files can be dragged and dropped. We copied about a gigabyte of music to the disk in just over a minute, which is impressive. It comes with a carry case with a separate section for the USB cable.

The only disappointment is the price – shop around and you can get three times the storage for this money or the same storage for half the cost.

Paul Allen

#### We say...

A good product that's simplicity itself to use but expensive compared with others

**Overall** ★★★★★

**Contact** Fujitsu, 0870 162 2166

**Info** [www.fujitsudrives.com/shop](http://www.fujitsudrives.com/shop)

**Buy** [www.fujitsudrives.com/shop](http://www.fujitsudrives.com/shop)

# Return of the Mac

Until recently, the Mac was being usurped by the PC, despite its aesthetic appeal. But thanks to the iPod and lower prices the Mac is reclaiming its crown

**J**ust a few years ago the Apple Mac looked dead in the water. With a tiny market share, problems involving compatibility with other computers, and overly expensive kit, the company was kept alive by a small but devoted army of admirers. But by emphasising its beautifully designed computers and phenomenally successful iPod portable music player, it turned the corner and began to win new fans. More importantly, Apple's prices are now within the reach of all.

So what are PC users missing out on, and what are the things that PC users can still gloat about? Over the next few pages, we explore

the Apple Mac inside out, looking at how and why it differs from Windows-based computers, and explaining what you can do on a Mac that you can't on a PC, and vice versa.

## Taking a bite out of the PC market

Back in the 1980s there was a huge variety of computers available. With fierce competition and the increasing dominance of what was then known as the IBM PC, one

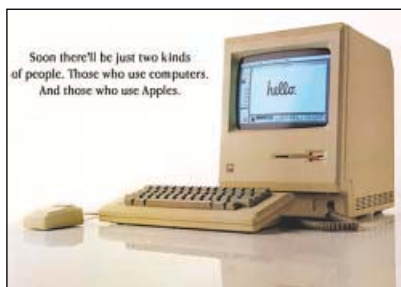
by one the other systems died out, leaving two little-known companies, Apple and Microsoft, to fight for control of the **operating system** market. In the 1990s, Microsoft became dominant, largely due to its decision to license its operating system to any company building PCs capable of running its software. Apple retained exclusive rights, giving it sole control of what its products looked like and were capable of. Competition between Windows PC builders drove down prices, leaving Apple with a range of exquisitely designed but much more expensive products.

Technically, the Mac differs from the PC in several ways – using different components and different software. The Mac goes back almost as long as the PC,

having been 'born' in 1984 (the PC is three years older). Like the PC, it has gone through several changes since then, and the original is barely recognisable in the current models.

The major reason for the difference between Macs and PCs is the **processor**. While a PC can use two types of processor – Intel or AMD – both are essentially the same and both can run the same software. Macs, on the other hand, use a PowerPC processor – no relation to the PC – which runs its own software. The Mac operating system is called Mac OS and does much the same tasks as Windows. It oversees the running of the computer, allows the user to run programs, looks after the housekeeping tasks, such as disk management, and provides an interface for the user to interact with the computer.

It's fair to say that the Mac introduced several innovations to home computers that have now become standard, such as a graphical interface, mouse, 3.5in floppy disks and Wysiwyg ('What you see is what you get') for word processing and graphics, meaning that printed documents would be identical to the image seen on screen. The PC has, of course, caught up with these, but the Mac still looks quite different from the PC when you



▲ Apple's first adverts reveal its distinctly unglamorous roots





◀▲ The new iMac (left) and eMac (above) house the monitor and computer in one unit and are perfect for home users

switch it on. Both use a **Desktop** setup, where you access files and applications using icons. But instead of a Start menu, there is a Dashboard of applications and files, and programs are organised in a slightly different way.

By and large, the Mac has always been more of a creative tool than the PC. It was designed with artists, video editors, sound enthusiasts and designers in mind, with graphical, sound and video quality that has always, until recently, been superior to the equivalent PC. To this day, you will find Macs in the offices and workshops of designers and artists all over the world, despite the fact that PCs have now caught up in terms of providing decent creative software. Even here at Computeractive we use Macs to lay out the pages of the magazine.

Possibly the most obvious difference is the look of the case and accessories. Apple threw computer manufacturers into a spin in 1998 when it unveiled the brightly coloured and radically shaped iMac, and in the process it picked up millions of new users around the world. Since then, its design team, led by British-born Jonathan Ive, has led the way in computer aesthetics. The most famous of their design successes has been the iPod, which has also led hordes of new users to the Mac's door.

### The software

The latest version of the Mac's operating system is Mac OS X, and Apple has

recently released an upgrade, which goes by the name of Tiger (see our review on page 26). The Mac Desktop might look unfamiliar, and it does things in different ways, but the principle is the same – files and programs are represented by icons, grouped into folders, and viewed through windows. Double-click on a folder to open it in a window, and double-click on a file to open or run it. Although you cannot run PC software on a Mac, there are many programs that come in versions for both, and for almost all the rest, there are equivalent Mac programs.

The operating system itself comes with a suite of tools and utilities, as you would find with Windows. These include management tools, such as a search program, games and a text editor. But unlike the PC, new Macs all come with a software suite called iLife as standard. This contains five applications for working with media of all kinds: iTunes, the music player which will be familiar to iPod-owning PC users; iPhoto, a picture editor; iMovie HD, a video editor; iDVD for creating discs; and GarageBand for editing and creating music. All of these are more than capable of basic and



▲ All Macs come supplied with iPhoto for editing and organising your digital photos

◀ Apple's iPod has been hugely successful and has helped Apple win new converts

▼ iLife contains five applications for working with all kinds of media



## Jargon Buster

Techno babble demystified...

▶ **CRT** The glass tube-based technology used to produce an image in most TVs and monitors.

▶ **Desktop** What you see when you first start up a PC. The Desktop displays a selection of icons.

▶ **Firewall** A system that prevents unauthorised access to a computer over the internet.

▶ **FireWire** A super-fast data link between your PC and devices such as digital camcorders.

▶ **GHz** A measure of PC processor speed.

▶ **Hacker** People who break into other people's computers and networks.

▶ **JPEG** A common format for compressed image files. The small file size makes them ideal for web pages.

▶ **Network** A way of connecting several devices so that they can share data.

▶ **Operating system** A crucial piece of software that governs how hardware and software work together.

▶ **Processor** The chip that is the 'brain' of the computer.

▶ **Spyware** Software installed as part of another application to monitor and report back on a computer's use.

▶ **USB** Universal Serial Bus. A standard that allows quick and easy connection of peripherals to your PC.

▶ **Virus** A malicious program designed to cause at best annoyance and at worst, damage to data.

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intermediate editing and organising of your media, and they are certainly a match for the paid-for equivalents to be found on the PC. There are paid-for programs available for users who find they need more, but these programs are enough for most users.

Microsoft Office is available for the Mac, including the usual software – Word, Excel, PowerPoint and others. But as a bonus, the equivalent of Microsoft Works, AppleWorks, is included free with all Macs. Put all this together and you have a powerful computer that can be used for most tasks straight out of the box.

The recently released Mac Mini, which starts at £339 – albeit without a keyboard, mouse or screen – includes both iLife and AppleWorks. Although this isn't quite the bargain it seems – some manufacturers are selling PCs with a flat screen, keyboard, mouse and software for £400 – it's still a very good price, and the Mac Mini certainly looks more impressive than the equivalent-priced PC. Buying a PC would also mean having to buy the software yourself. While this needn't be a problem, or expensive, it is more trouble than simply having it on the computer when you start.



▲ The Mac Mini is impressive in both design and price, but remember that it doesn't come with a monitor, keyboard or mouse

Mac speeds currently range from 1.25GHz on the Mac Mini to 2GHz on the top-of-the-range iMac, while consumer PC speeds range from 2GHz to 3.6GHz but the Mac processor works more efficiently so the gap between figures is meaningless.

Plugging things into a Mac is similar to a PC. Macs have **USB** and **FireWire** ports, like PCs, and although many accessories have to be specifically designed for Mac use, you can plug in most cameras and USB keys and should find that they work fine.

Although PC programs aren't compatible with the Mac, files are. A **JPEG** image file from a PC, for example, can be read on a Mac. You should also be able to plug a Mac into your **network**, wired or wireless, and have it work without too many problems. It would certainly be possible for a PC user to set up and configure a Mac without too much hassle. After all, while Windows XP has come on leaps and bounds in ease of use, the Mac still has the edge in our view.

### The crunch

Now that price is no longer an issue, there are two main factors to take into account if you are considering a Mac: compatibility and style.

By style, we mean whether you would be comfortable getting used to a new way of working. While the principle is the same, Macs and PCs do things differently, and if you've put a lot of work into getting used to Windows, consider whether you'd be happy

starting over with a Mac. Then again, Macs are still easier to use than PCs, so it may not be as big a slog.

Your PC files and discs will be compatible with a Mac, as will your network. If you're thinking of buying a Mac to run alongside an existing PC, there are no serious concerns. However, if you plan to replace a PC with a Mac, remember that none of your software, games or utilities will work on it. You will need to find Mac equivalents for your favourite tools and if legal music downloads are something you enjoy, only the iPod will play your tunes.

Anthony Dhanendran

## Bad Apples

The received wisdom is that Macs are much safer than PCs when it comes to **viruses**, **spyware** and other security threats. It's certainly true that virus writers target PC users running Internet Explorer because this is the most common combination on the internet. The virus writer's strike rate will be higher doing this, than if they were to target Mac users.

Yes, the Mac is safer in general, with fewer discovered security holes, but that doesn't mean it's totally free from attack. While as a Mac user you won't be susceptible to PC viruses or spyware designed to trap PC users, there are still threats. Like the PC, Macs come with a personal **firewall** built-in, and automatic updates if bug fixes are needed.

Finally, because of the way Mac OS works, the system's core is more protected from viruses than under Windows. It is fair to say that, for now, Macs are safer than PCs, but that may change as virus writers and **hackers** start to take an interest.



▲ With iMovie and iDVD you can edit video clips and then burn them to disc

As well as the Mac Mini, there are two other Macs aimed at home users – the eMac, starting at £550, and which looks a bit like the original iMac, having a large, bulbous **CRT** screen, and the new iMac, which starts at £899, and consists of a slim monitor-and-computer unit, with separate keyboard and mouse. These get more powerful, and the screens improve, as the prices get higher. As with a PC, the general rule is that the more you pay, the more you get, but it is always worth considering how much power you really need from a computer.

### The specs

It can be confusing comparing the processor speed of these computers with PCs – as they use different processors, the speeds can't be directly compared.

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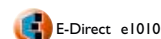
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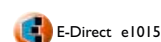


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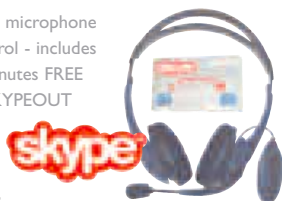
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# Cell mates

Spreadsheets are an easy way to organise information simply and effectively. We illustrate the benefits using Microsoft Works

**W**hile the basic functions of word-processing programs are as easy to grasp as the electronic equivalent of pen and paper, the benefits to be gained from spreadsheets can be harder to fathom.

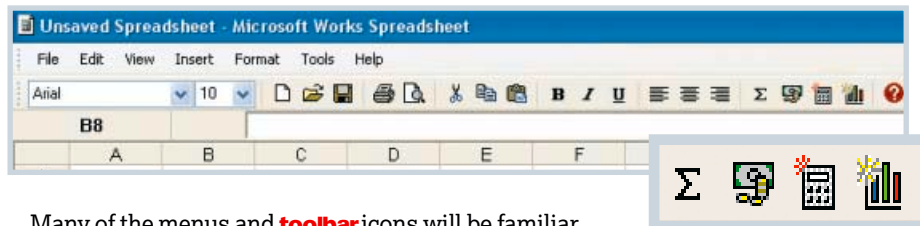
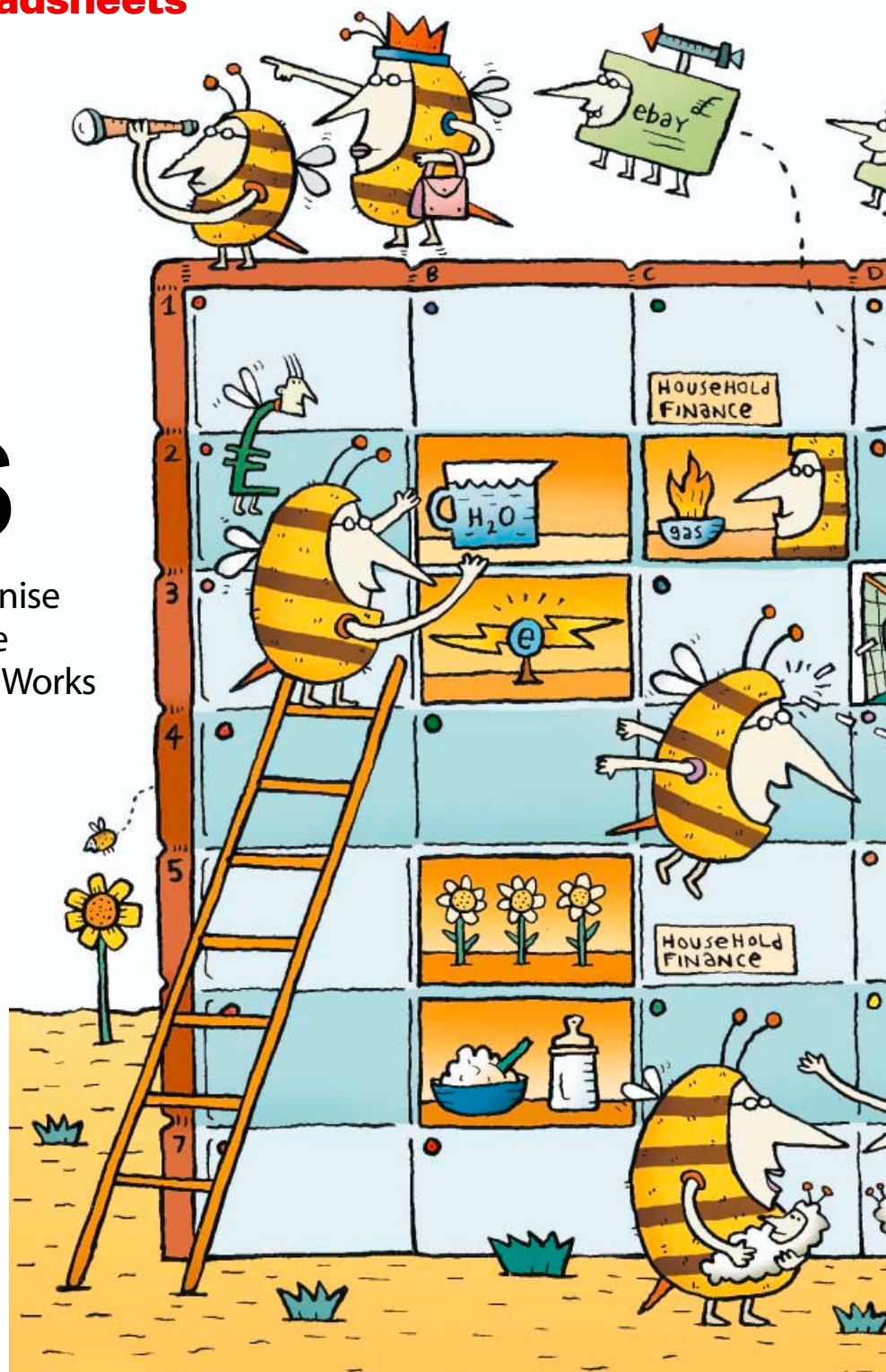
A spreadsheet is a grid of small boxes called **cells**, which can contain any sort of information, such as numbers and text. It provides a neat way to organise and present information using graphs and charts, but can also perform functions and calculations that update the information automatically. The key to this updating is the use of formulae.

A formula manipulates the information in any number of cells and shows the result. For example, you can keep a running total of profits made from eBay transactions by using a formula to work out the difference between the original cost of an item and its sale price. Our mini-Workshop on page 41 shows how to complete such a project. Other potential uses include listing school grades and using a formula to work out the average, or creating a league table for a sports club that updates points and standings as you enter scores week by week. We have included a guide to setting up a scorecard for the popular dice game Yahtzee in the Workshops section on page 48.

There are various spreadsheet programs but we're going to look in detail at the one provided within Microsoft Works 8. The principles are the same for Microsoft Works Suite and older versions of the program. Many new PCs come with Microsoft Works already installed, and at £30 the software is relatively inexpensive to buy if you don't already have it. It also includes a word processor and other useful office tools.

## Getting to work

To begin creating a Works spreadsheet, choose the application from the Start menu. A new spreadsheet will appear, and you will be presented with a large grid of cells. They are arranged vertically in columns labelled with letters and horizontally in rows that are numbered. You can have a total of 65,536 rows and 256 columns, which gives a total of 16,777,216 cells. In short, you are highly unlikely to run out of space in a spreadsheet.



Many of the menus and **toolbar** icons will be familiar from Microsoft Word but there are a few extra buttons to highlight. The icon that looks like an M turned on its side is a shortcut for the SUM function, which is a quick way to add up numbers. When a column or row of numbers is highlighted, clicking on this icon will produce the total in the cell immediately below or to the right. Any subsequent change to one of the numbers that make up the sum, and the total will be updated.

To the right of this icon is the Currency icon that will format numbers with a pound symbol and two

▲ Works has shortcuts to commonly used formulas and formatting options

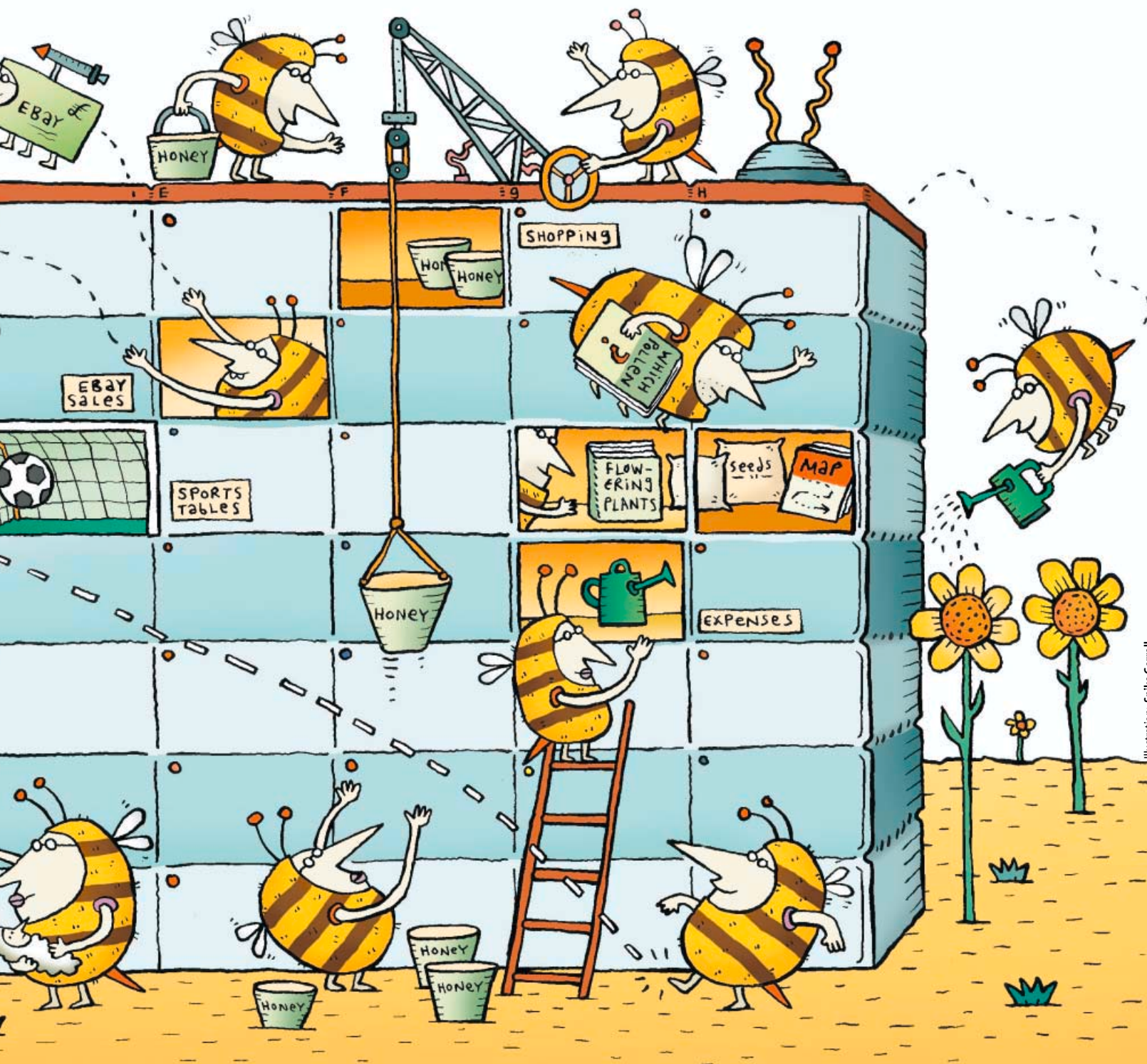


Illustration: Spike Gerrell

decimal places. Next is the EasyCalc shortcut, an icon that looks a little like a calculator, which starts a **wizard** for writing formulas. Finally, there is the chart button for creating graphs. All of these options have corresponding entries in the drop-down menus across the top of the screen.

### A simple spreadsheet

The most important part of creating a spreadsheet is using formulas, which manipulate the contents of other cells using mathematical calculations. Once the contents of these cells are changed the formula result is automatically updated. Click in cell A1 and type 6. Press the right arrow and type 2. Move to cell C1, type  $=A1-B1$  and press Enter. The cell now displays 4, the remainder of 6 minus 2. Move back to cell B1 and type 3. The formula result is automatically updated to 3 to reflect the different numbers.

## Free downloads for Works

**YOU CAN FIND** downloads for Microsoft Works on the Microsoft website at [www.microsoft.com/products/works/downloads.msp](http://www.microsoft.com/products/works/downloads.msp).

This page contains important updates for Works. If you are using Microsoft Works 7 you can download an update enabling it to co-exist with Word 2002. There are several file conversion utilities here as well, which are very useful if you want to share files with people using Microsoft Office. Some of these utilities are able to convert several files at once to help save you time. If you are still using Works 4, there is a Year 2000 update, so that

dates will be displayed properly.

Updates are important but not much fun. Microsoft has plenty of new templates for Works at [www.microsoft.com/products/works/default.msp](http://www.microsoft.com/products/works/default.msp). You can download calendars and holiday planners to use with Works Spreadsheet. Just like any other template they are just as useful as a source of inspiration as they are at serving one particular purpose.

You can also access some templates online from the Works Task Launcher. If you see a template with an MSN logo, it is available online.

# Feature **Introduction to spreadsheets**

Simple formulas are easy to view in cells, but when larger numbers are involved, it's easier to view cell contents in the formula bar above the spreadsheet. The contents of any cell are displayed here when you click on it. This bar can be turned on and off from the View menu.

You can also change the appearance of cells to draw attention to important information. Right-click on any cell and select Format from the menu that appears. Click on the Shading tab and select a colour from the Pattern color menu, then click on the Solid (100 per cent) option in the Pattern menu. A preview of the cell will appear in the bottom of the window. When you are happy with the appearance of the cell, click on OK to apply your changes.

There are two methods of text entry in Works: Enter and Edit modes. When you start to enter text into a cell, Works switches to Enter mode, meaning that any information you type in replaces the data in the cell. In Enter mode, using the arrow keys will shift the cursor from cell to cell. Edit mode should be used to make a minor change to the contents of a cell. Click on a cell and press the F2 key to access this mode. You can now add additional text and use the cursor keys to move around the text. Pressing F2 switches between modes when editing cells.

## **Inspirational aids**

A good way to start making spreadsheets is to use one of the many **templates** included with Microsoft Works, which provide a framework for information.

Microsoft supplies lots of templates with Works that you can use to reduce the time you spend designing spreadsheets. They are a great way to spark your inspiration. To open a template, click on the File menu and select New to launch the Template wizard. Click on the Works Spreadsheet option on the left, then on the Financial worksheets lists. Select the Monthly home budget from the middle column and click on the Use this style. Works will open with this spreadsheet template. You can change the labels on any cells that are not relevant.

Follow the mini-Workshop at the end of this feature for a step-by-step guide to using templates.

## **Let's get together**

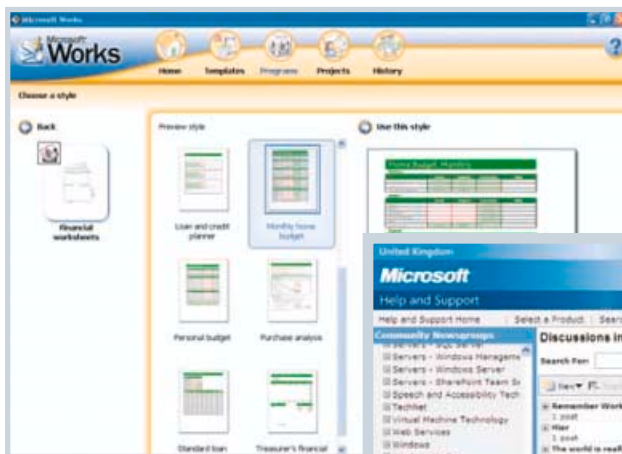
One of the advantages of Works is that you can easily share information with other Microsoft programs, which can save you a lot of time. For example, you can use a list of addresses in Spreadsheet to create many letters in Word Processor. Not only can you include the addresses but you can add extra personal information – such as the specific gift you were given if you are creating thank-you letters, for example.

To do this, click on Start, All Programs, Microsoft Works and then Microsoft Works Spreadsheet. Create your list with column headings for first name,

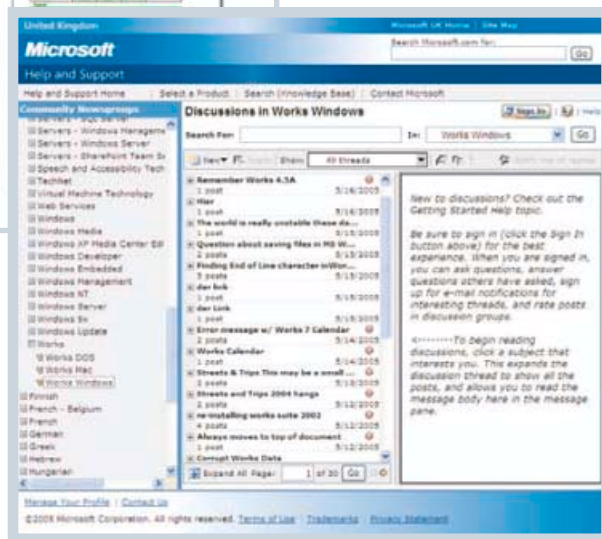
surname, every line of their address, present received and personal message. Enter all the information and save your spreadsheet by clicking on File and then Save as. Give your spreadsheet a name and select Text and Commas (\*.csv) from the Save as Type menu.

Start the Works Word Processor and write your letter but leave blanks for all the information in the spreadsheet. Save the document, and then click on Tools, Mail Merge and then Open data source. Click on 'Merge information from another type of file' in the window that appears and select the Spreadsheet list

in the dialogue box that appears. You will need to change the Files of Type option to Text Files (\*.txt; \*.csv; \*.tab; \*.asc) for your list to appear in the right location. Click Yes to the first question that appears



▲ Works comes with templates for completing a wide variety of different tasks



▲ Posting a question on the Works Newsgroup is a great way to get advice from others

and then select Comma in the next window and click on OK. A window will appear called Insert Fields with a list of the different categories in your list. Move the cursor to the different blanks in the document, click on the Field name and then on Insert to tell Word Processor to insert that information into this specific place in the document. When you have finished, click on the View results button to create all the documents using the information from the list.

## **How to find help**

If you get lost or reach an impasse, there is a useful Help function in Works Spreadsheet. Press F1 on the keyboard and the Help pane will appear to the right of your spreadsheet. Type a question into the text box at the top and click on Search to find an answer to your problem.

There is also plenty of help on the internet and much of this is provided by Microsoft itself. The first place to look is the Works for Windows Support Centre at [www.microsoft.com/products/works/support.msp](http://www.microsoft.com/products/works/support.msp). This website has answers for some of the most common problems experienced in Works.

To ask a specific question, try the Works **Newsgroup**. Start Internet Explorer and go to <http://support.microsoft.com/newsgroups>. Click on the plus next to English, then on Works and then Works Windows. The discussion topics are listed in the middle column.

## **Jargon Buster**

**Techno babble demystified...**

➔ **Cell** A spreadsheet page uses rows and columns to divide a page into cells. Rows and columns are identified with letters and numbers, so each cell has a unique co-ordinate, such as D15.

➔ **Newsgroup** Discussion areas on the internet, where you can post a message and read replies from other people, like an office noticeboard.

➔ **Template** A web page design, document or a spreadsheet that contains all the required formatting for a particular style or type of document.

➔ **Toolbar** A strip of icons that runs across the top of most Windows applications. Used to provide quick access to certain important features, such as saving and printing.

➔ **Wizard** An automated online 'assistant' designed to guide you, step-by-step, through a potentially complex process.

For more on Jargon Buster visit:  
[www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)



To ask a question yourself, click on the New button above the message list. You will need to sign in with a Microsoft Passport. If you do not have a Passport account, click on the Register button, otherwise enter your username and password and click on Sign In. Click on the New button again and select General Question. Give a short description of the problem in the Subject box and then give as much detail as possible in the Message box. Enter a Display name and click on the 'I accept' option. If you want, you can click on the Notify me of replies option to be sent an email as soon as someone responds to your query. Finally, click on the Post button to send your question to the newsgroup.

If you have a more serious problem, the Microsoft KnowledgeBase may hold the answer. Start Internet Explorer and enter the address ***http://support.microsoft.com/works***. This page has links to solutions to the most common problems with Works. If you cannot see a relevant article, you can enter a question in the search box on the right of the page.

Once you get more confident, you may want to share your spreadsheets with other people and at this point you'll probably come across its big brother Excel. It is possible to open Excel files in Works Spreadsheet but while Excel can have several worksheets in one file, Works Spreadsheet can only load one of these sheets when you open the Excel file. If you try to open a spreadsheet with more than one worksheet, Works Spreadsheet will prompt you to choose a sheet to open.

The other thing you may find is that your friends with Excel will start boasting about other features that are not to be found in Works Spreadsheet. If you want to experiment with more complicated spreadsheets without the cost of Excel, download OpenOffice from [www.computeractive.co.uk/downloads/1135399](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/downloads/1135399). It has most of the features of Excel but it is completely free to use. For those that already own Excel, see our Workshop on creating a golf scorecard on page 48.

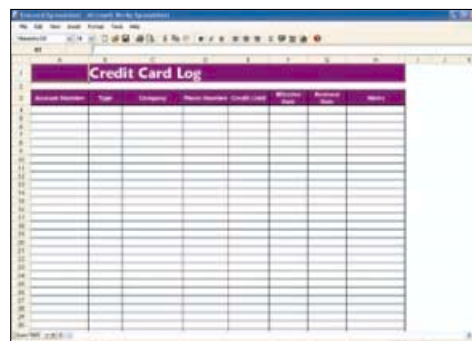
Spreadsheets may be daunting to start off with, but with the basics, the only limits are those set by your imagination. You can organise long lists of information faster than on paper and have calculations updated automatically. Don't forget to check our Workshops section for more practical ideas on spreadsheets.

**Learn more** 

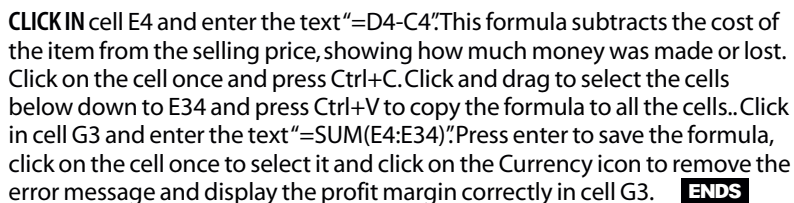
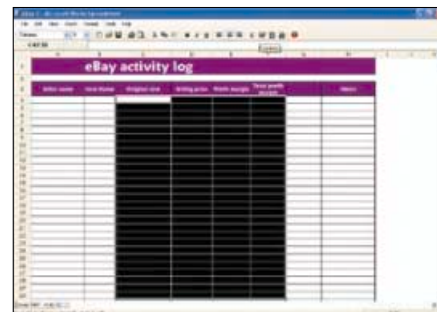
Page 48 ▶  
Page 55 ▶

A spreadsheet is a great way to keep track of profits from buying and selling on eBay. It can tell you at a glance how much you have made and can be sorted to see your most profitable sales. Enter all formulas without the quotes.

**CLICK ON** Start, All Programs and then Microsoft Works Task Launcher. Click on the Templates icon at the top of the screen followed by Home & Money, then Important Household Records in the list of categories on the left. Scroll down to the Credit card log in the centre of the screen, click on it and then click on the Use this style button. 



**CLICK ON** cell B1 and enter “eBay activity log”. Click on cell A3 and enter the following headings, pressing tab to move to the next cell: Seller name, Item name, Original cost, Selling price, Profit margin, Total Profit margin. Delete the contents of the next column, marked Renewal Date, by clicking on the cell and pressing and drag to select cells C4 to F34.





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## Jargon Buster

Techno babble demystified...

- **Broadband** Refers to high-bandwidth internet connections, such as ADSL.
- **Cell** A spreadsheet page uses rows and columns to divide a page into cells. Each cell is identified with a co-ordinate, such as D15.
- **Dialogue box** A small window that pops up to display or request information.
- **Hard disk** A high-capacity disk drive used to store applications and files.
- **Mbit/s** A measure of data-transfer speed. A megabit is one million bits.
- **Modem** A device that lets two PCs communicate over a telephone line.
- **Motherboard** The main circuit board inside a PC into which every other component connects.
- **Network** A way of connecting several devices so that they can share data.
- **Network interface card** Each PC on a network needs a network interface card, into which
- the network cable is plugged.
- **PC Card** A credit card-size device for adding anything from a modem to an external hard drive to a notebook PC.
- **PCI** A high-performance expansion slot for desktop PCs, allowing simple installation of PCI components like sound cards and modems.
- **Router** A device used to connect computers together or to the internet as an alternative to a modem.
- **System Tray** Found on the far right of your Taskbar, it displays icons showing which programs are always running.
- **USB** A standard allowing easy connection of peripherals to your PC.
- **Virus** A malicious program that causes annoyance or damage to data.
- **Wizard** An automated 'assistant' that guides you through a potentially complex process.

For more on Jargon Buster visit:  
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## In this Issue...

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Keep your PC free from invading software with Microsoft AntiSpyware **p44**

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Discover how using formulas in Microsoft Excel can help you manage your golfing handicap **p48**

### Set up a wired network

Creating computer networks using cables can be easier and cheaper than modern wireless options **p51**

### Use Microsoft Works to make a game scoresheet

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### Hints and tips

Add art to Word documents, edit digital video cheaply, minimise the chances of dodgy DVD burning and more... **p58**

## LEVEL 1 2 3

### What the WORKSHOP LEVELS mean...

**LEVEL 1** Suitable for the most anxious novice, Level 1 deals with simple tasks that every computer user can try.

**LEVEL 2** More involved, but simple enough for all to complete, Level 2 may introduce you to new features in applications.

**LEVEL 3** Will bolster your existing knowledge and help you to see how much your computer can do. Clear but demanding.

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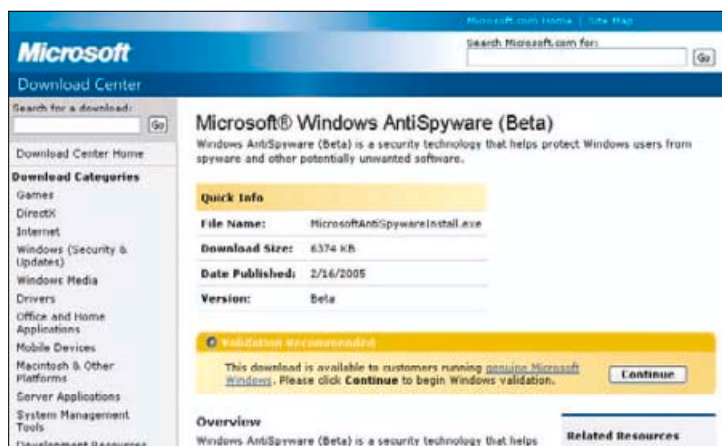


# Protect your PC from spyware

Keep your computer free from a range of privacy invading software using Microsoft's AntiSpyware tool

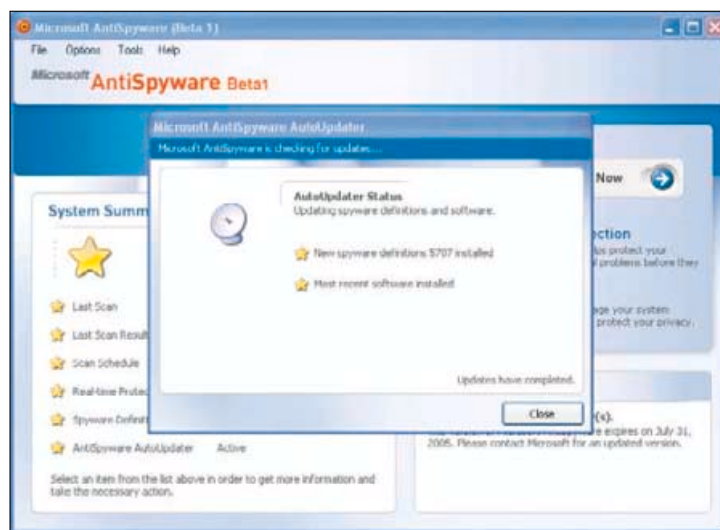
We've become used to **virus** threats, and most PC users understand the importance of anti-virus software. But there is another wave of attack in the form of spyware – software which hides in the background, monitoring your computer use, bombarding you with adverts or changing program settings.

Microsoft's new AntiSpyware program for Windows XP will protect your PC and data from these attacks. Though still in test form, AntiSpyware will warn you whenever a system setting is changed or a program tries to install itself, giving you the option of blocking the action and preventing intrusions.



## STEP 1...

**PAY A VISIT TO** Microsoft's Security At Home website by going to [www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware](http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware). From here you can download the AntiSpyware program. Click on the download link and you will be prompted to validate your copy of Windows XP – a process which is currently optional. Click on the Continue button, select the Yes or No option to indicate whether you want to validate or not, and then click on Continue followed by the Download button, and save the file to the Windows Desktop for easy access. ▶



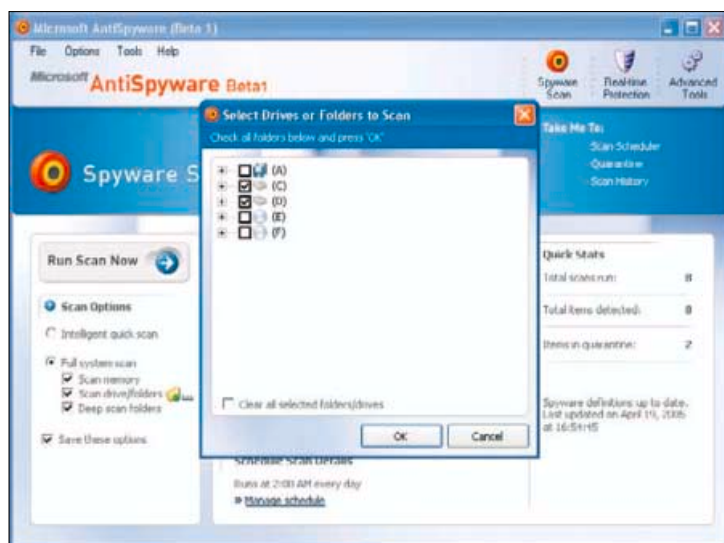
## STEP 2...

**WHEN THE DOWNLOAD HAS** completed, double-click on the MicrosoftAntiSpywareInstall.exe file to start the installation process. Click on the Next button, accept the terms of the license agreement and click on Next again. Decide where you want the program installed and click on Next and then Install – when this is done, tick the box labelled Launch Microsoft AntiSpyware and click on Finish. The first thing you need to do is update the spyware definitions of the program, so click on File followed by Check For Updates and wait while any available updates are downloaded and installed. ▶



## STEP 3...

**TO START CONFIGURING THE** program, click on Options followed by Settings. Here, make sure the Enable Automatic Updates option is enabled and use the drop-down menu to the right of this to choose the 'System start up' option. It's unlikely that you will need to change any of the other settings for the moment, but you may want to click on the General link in the list to the left of the screen. Here you can indicate your level of computer ability and choose to hide the Notification Area icon for the program if you want to.



## STEP 4...

**YOU'RE NOW READY TO** scan your computer for the first time. Click on the Spyware Scan button to the upper-right of the program window and then click on Scan Options to the left. The first time at least, it's a good idea to run a thorough scan so select the 'Full system scan' option and make sure that the three checkboxes are ticked. If you have more than one **hard disk** (or more than one partition), click on the icon next to Scan Drive/Folders and select each of the drives you want to scan before clicking on OK.



## STEP 5...

**WITH YOUR SCANNING OPTIONS** set, click on the Run Scan Now button and sit back while the program scours your hard disk for spyware. As the scan is taking place you can keep an eye on anything that has been detected by looking in the Scan Progress column to the right of the screen. Here you can see how many files AntiSpyware has tested and how many have been found to be infected. You can see a list of specific spyware that's been detected to the left.



## STEP 6...

**ONCE THE SCAN IS** complete, you have the opportunity to view more-detailed results of anything that has been detected. The results page is divided into a number of columns – the action it is recommended to take for each instance of spyware, the name of the offending items, and the seriousness of each threat. Click on any of the spyware listed here and you can read more information in the panel to the right. The names, descriptions and location details should help you to identify what can be removed.

**NEXT STEP**  
turn over...

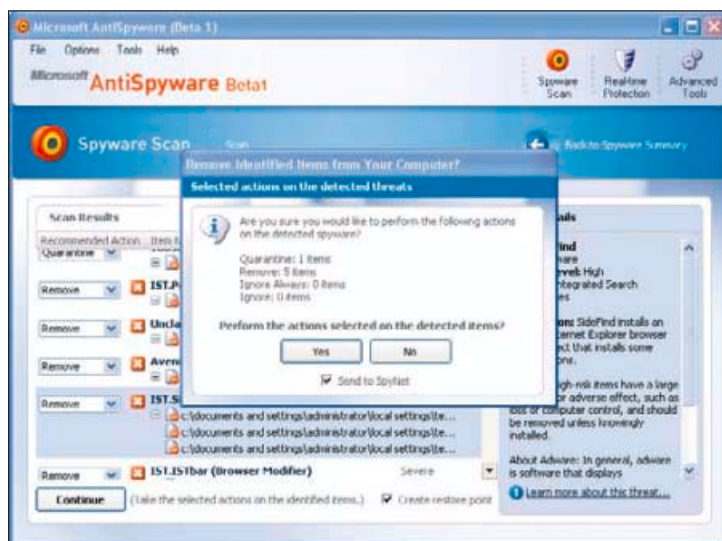
# BLOCK PRYING EYES

## Protect your PC from spyware



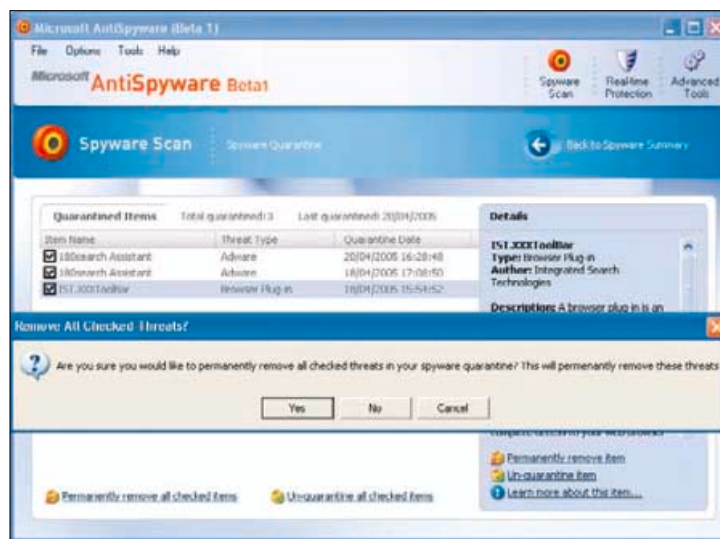
## STEP 7...

**BEFORE YOU START REMOVING** anything from your PC, it's a good idea to take the precautionary measure of creating a restore point – just tick the checkbox at the bottom of the screen. Microsoft AntiSpyware will have suggested what action you should take for each suspect item, such as removing it, or placing it in quarantine. You can also make your own selection using the drop-down menu next to each entry in the list. Quarantining is a good idea if you're not certain about something, but creating a restore point gives you the option of undoing your actions anyway. Click on Continue when you've made your selections. ➤



## STEP 8...

**A CONFIRMATION SCREEN WILL** be displayed asking you if you're sure you want to continue. From here you also have the option of reporting details of the spyware found on your computer to something called SpyNet. This will help with future development of the program and its updates, but you can click to remove the tick from this box if you'd rather not participate in this way. Click on the Yes button and the program will create a restore point, if you selected this option, and then set about the task of cleaning up your computer. Click on OK when the Spyware Cleaning Complete message is displayed. ➤



## STEP 9...

**IF YOU PLACED ANY** of the detected items into quarantine, you will need to continue using your computer as normal for a while to find out if you can safely remove them or not. When you have decided one way or the other, click on the Tools menu, followed by Spyware Scan then Manage Spyware Quarantine. Tick the boxes next to any entries you're interested in – you can view a description to the right to help with identification – and click on either the Permanently remove or the Un-quarantine link at the bottom of the screen, according to the action you want to perform. ➤



## STEP 10...

**TO SAVE HAVING TO** remember to run a spyware scan in the future, it's a good idea to set up a scheduled task which will take care of this for you. Click on Tools, then Spyware Scan followed by Manage Spyware Scan Schedule, and from the first menu choose between daily, weekly or monthly scans. You will then need to set additional day and time options depending on your original selection. To the right of the window, select the scanning options you want to use and click on the Update Schedule button. ➤



## STEP 11...

**ANTISPYWARE PROTECTS YOUR PC** using tools called Security Agents. To see what these are doing, click on the Real-Time Protection link at the upper-right of the screen. Internet Agents prevent changes being made to your internet connection, while System Agents prevent changes to important system settings and Application Agents prevent the installation of unauthorised programs. Ideally you should have all of these options enabled – just hover your mouse over each item in the list and click on Activate if they are set to Inactive. ▶



## STEP 12...

**CLICK ON THE ADVANCED** tools link at the top of the screen and you'll find three options to choose from. System Explorers enables you to find out a great deal about what is running on your computer and gives you the ability to close anything which seems suspicious. Working your way through the list you can see everything that is currently running, which programs start with your computer, which Internet Explorer add-ons are installed and much more. Anything that is not recognised by Windows will be marked for your attention so you can then disable or delete the offending item. ▶



## STEP 13...

**BACK AT THE ADVANCED** Tools page, click on the Browser Restore page. Many spyware programs attempt to change your Internet Explorer settings, and you can use this page to configure the default settings you want to use. If you need to change any of the settings, select an entry in the list and click on the Change Restore Setting link at the bottom of the screen before entering your preferred setting. Should you need to restore any settings which have been changed, tick all of the boxes corresponding to these settings and click on the Restore button. ▶



## STEP 14...

**THE ADVANCED TOOLS** section also includes an excellent privacy tool. Click on the Tracks Eraser icon and then on 'Show only available erasable data'. You will see a list of all of the installed programs which store a record of the files you have been using – information which may be accessed by spyware. You can remove this information from your hard disk by clicking on the Check All links and then the Erase Tracks button. This process helps to keep a lot of information private. **ENDS**

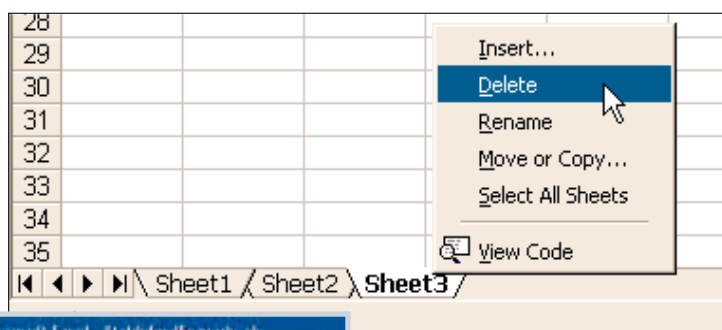
## Create a golf scorecard

Discover how advanced spreadsheet formulas can help you manage your golfing handicaps

Even if you're not a golf fan, this Workshop will show you the benefits of clever use of formulas in **spreadsheet** applications like Excel. Specifically, we're going to create a sheet in Excel to apply the Stableford scoring system for a round of golf. You'll need a handicap and a note of the par scores and index

numbers for a golf course but if you just want to try out the techniques, follow the examples below.

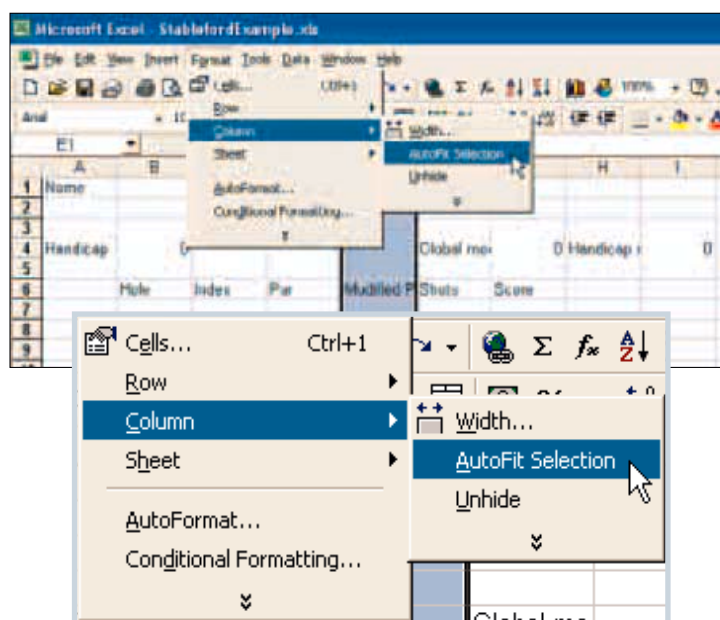
There are some fairly complicated formulas that need to be entered, so follow our instructions carefully. The methods demonstrated can be applied in any spreadsheet application.



### STEP 1...

**LAUNCH YOUR SPREADSHEET APPLICATION** and create a new workbook. We're using Excel, which opens with three blank worksheets. We only need two for our scorecard, so to keep things

clean right-click on the tab marked Sheet 3 and select Delete from the pop-up menu. Now right-click on the tab marked Sheet 1, select Rename and type 'Front Sheet' before pressing Enter. In the same way, rename Sheet 2 to 'Template Sheet'. Click on the tab for Front Sheet and in **cell C1** type the title 'Score Summary'. Starting in cell B3, create a simple table with headings of Name, Strokes and Score. Add any formatting you want to make them easier to read. As these are headings, we've increased the size of the font, and set it to italics. Incidentally, we'd recommend saving your work regularly, so you might wish to save now. ▶



### STEP 2...

**NOW CLICK ON THE** Template Sheet tab. In cell A1 type 'Name'. In cell A4 type 'Handicap' and enter a zero ('0') in cell B4. In cell F4 type 'Global modifier' and in cell H4 type 'Handicap modifier'. Enter a zero into cells G4 and I4. Starting from cell B6, enter the following headings: 'Hole', 'Index', 'Par', 'Modified Par', 'Shots' and 'Score'. Press Tab after each name to move to the next cell. Next use the AutoFit Selection command (from the Column sub-menu of the Format menu) to increase the size of columns where the headings don't fit. ▶

| Hole | Index | Par |
|------|-------|-----|
| 1    | 18    | 18  |
| 2    | 17    | 18  |
| 3    | 16    | 18  |
| 4    |       |     |
| 5    |       |     |
| 6    |       |     |
| 7    |       |     |
| 8    |       |     |
| 9    |       |     |
| 10   |       |     |
| 11   |       |     |
| 12   |       |     |
| 13   |       |     |
| 14   |       |     |
| 15   |       |     |
| 16   |       |     |
| 17   |       |     |
| 18   |       |     |

| Index | Par |
|-------|-----|
| 18    | 18  |
| 17    | 18  |
| 16    | 18  |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |
|       |     |

| A  | B        | C     | D   | E            | F               | G           |
|----|----------|-------|-----|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1  | Name     |       |     |              |                 |             |
| 2  |          |       |     |              |                 |             |
| 3  |          |       |     |              |                 |             |
| 4  | Handicap | 0     |     |              | Global modifier | =INT(B4/18) |
| 5  |          |       |     |              |                 |             |
| 6  | Hole     | Index | Par | Modified Par | Shots           | Score       |
| 7  |          | 1     | 18  | 6            |                 |             |
| 8  |          | 2     | 17  | 4            |                 |             |
| 9  |          | 3     | 16  | 3            |                 |             |
| 10 |          | 4     | 15  | 2            |                 |             |
| 11 |          | 5     | 14  | 1            |                 |             |
| 12 |          | 6     | 13  | 0            |                 |             |

## STEP 5...

**THE STABLEFORD SCORING SYSTEM** works by adding strokes to the par depending on a given handicap. If the handicap is more than 18 then every hole is raised by the number of times the handicap can be divided by 18. For example, if the handicap is 18, then one is added to every hole. If the handicap is 36, two is added to every hole, and so on. In cell G4, enter: `=INT(B4/18)`. This formula gives the number of times the handicap can be divided by 18, the result being provided as an integer (a whole number without fractions or remainder).

| A  | B        | C     | D   | E            | F               | G     | H                 | I           |
|----|----------|-------|-----|--------------|-----------------|-------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1  | Name     |       |     |              |                 |       |                   |             |
| 2  |          |       |     |              |                 |       |                   |             |
| 3  |          |       |     |              |                 |       |                   |             |
| 4  | Handicap | 0     |     |              | Global modifier | 0     | Handicap modifier | =MOD(B4,18) |
| 5  |          |       |     |              |                 |       |                   |             |
| 6  | Hole     | Index | Par | Modified Par | Shots           | Score |                   |             |
| 7  |          | 1     | 18  | 6            |                 |       |                   |             |
| 8  |          | 2     | 17  | 4            |                 |       |                   |             |
| 9  |          | 3     | 16  | 3            |                 |       |                   |             |
| 10 |          | 4     | 15  | 2            |                 |       |                   |             |
| 11 |          | 5     | 14  | 1            |                 |       |                   |             |
| 12 |          | 6     | 13  | 0            |                 |       |                   |             |

## STEP 6...

**WE STILL NEED THE** remainder to work out which holes need to have their par adjusted, and this is the job of cell I4. Into I4, enter the formula: `=MOD(B4,18)`. This gives the remainder of the division of the two numbers as a whole number, not a fraction. So if the handicap is 6, this formula will return a value of 6. If the handicap is 24, the formula will still return 6 as this is the remainder when 24 is divided by 18.

## STEP 3...

**IN THE CELLS BENEATH** the heading Hole (in column B) enter the numbers 1 to 18, in ascending order. In Excel, you can use AutoFill to speed this up. Enter the first three numbers and select them with the mouse. Now move the pointer to the bottom-right of the selection until it changes to a small plus (+) symbol. Press the left mouse button and drag the mouse down. You will see a small preview by the cursor, when this reaches 18, release the mouse and the cells will be filled. Repeat this for the Index column but in reverse order (ie, from 18 downwards).

| A  | B        | C     | D   | E            | F               | G            |
|----|----------|-------|-----|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1  | Name     |       |     |              |                 |              |
| 2  |          |       |     |              |                 |              |
| 3  |          |       |     |              |                 |              |
| 4  | Handicap | 0     |     |              | Global modifier | 0            |
| 5  |          |       |     |              |                 |              |
| 6  | Hole     | Index | Par | Modified Par | Shots           | Score        |
| 7  |          | 1     | 18  | 6            |                 |              |
| 8  |          | 2     | 17  | 4            |                 |              |
| 9  |          | 3     | 16  | 3            |                 |              |
| 10 |          | 4     | 15  | 2            |                 |              |
| 11 |          | 5     | 14  | 1            |                 |              |
| 12 |          | 6     | 13  | 0            |                 |              |
| 13 |          | 7     | 12  | 0            |                 |              |
| 14 |          | 8     | 11  | 0            |                 |              |
| 15 |          | 9     | 10  | 0            |                 |              |
| 16 |          | 10    | 9   | 0            |                 |              |
| 17 |          | 11    | 8   | 0            |                 |              |
| 18 |          | 12    | 7   | 0            |                 |              |
| 19 |          | 13    | 6   | 0            |                 |              |
| 20 |          | 14    | 5   | 0            |                 |              |
| 21 |          | 15    | 4   | 0            |                 |              |
| 22 |          | 16    | 3   | 0            |                 |              |
| 23 |          | 17    | 2   | 0            |                 |              |
| 24 |          | 18    | 1   | 0            |                 |              |
| 25 |          |       |     |              |                 | =SUM(G7:G24) |

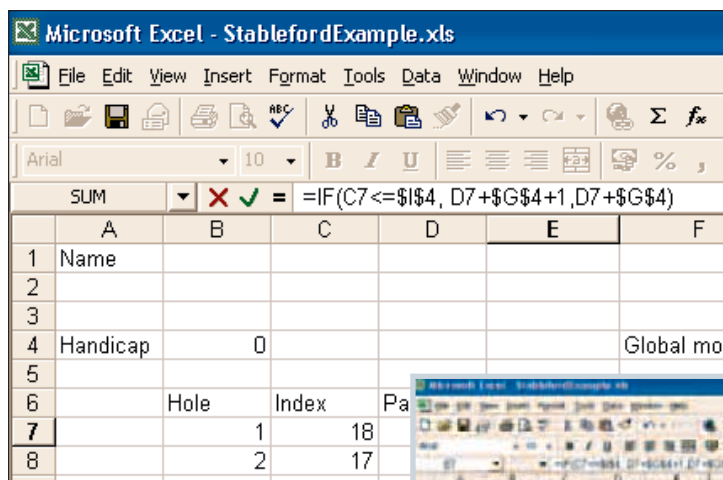
## STEP 4...

**ENTER THE PAR FOR** each course hole in the Par column (follow the example in our screenshot if you wish). Now it's time to enter the formulas to calculate the total number of strokes and the score for the round. (For clarity, the formulas we print in the magazine are enclosed in quote marks: you should NOT include these when entering a formula into your spreadsheet.) Click on the cell F25 and enter this formula: `=SUM(F7:F24)`. In cell G25, enter `=SUM(G7:G24)`. Both these formulas should give a result of 0 at the moment. If you wish, select both cells and apply some distinguishing formatting.

**NEXT STEP**  
turn over...

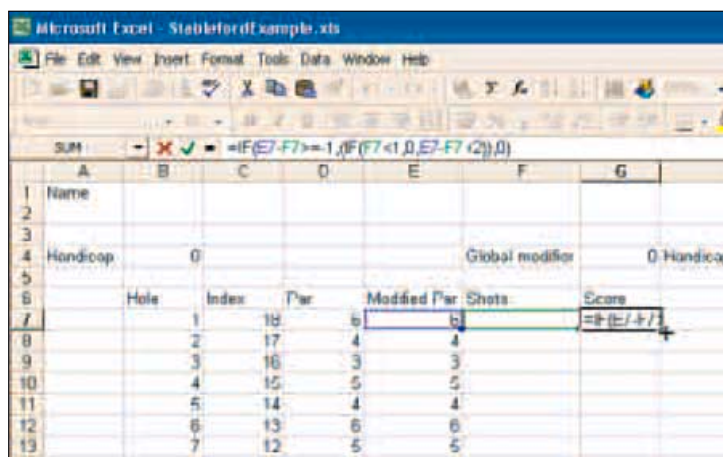
# ADVANCED SPREADSHEETS

## Create a golf scorecard



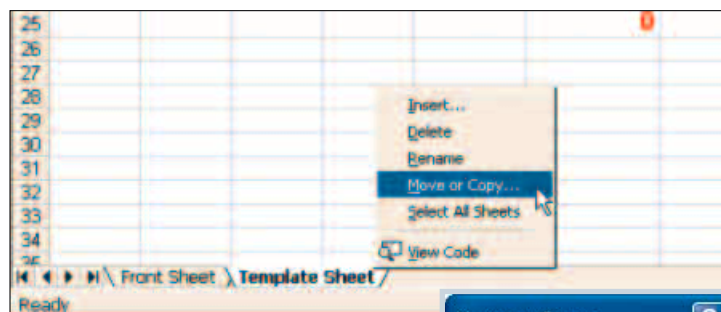
### STEP 7...

**NOW WE'LL USE THE** two figures generated by steps 5 and 6 to modify the par for a hole. This requires a complicated formula, so take particular care here. In cell E7 enter: `=IF(C7<= $I$4, D7+$G$4+1, D7+$G$4)`. If the handicap is less than or equal to the index of the hole, the spreadsheet adds one to the par and the adjustment that should be made to every hole as determined in step 5. Use the AutoFill function described in step 2 to copy this formula down to cell E24, to cover all holes. The dollar signs in our formula will ensure that references to 'static' cells are maintained during the AutoFill process (this is known as 'absolute referencing').



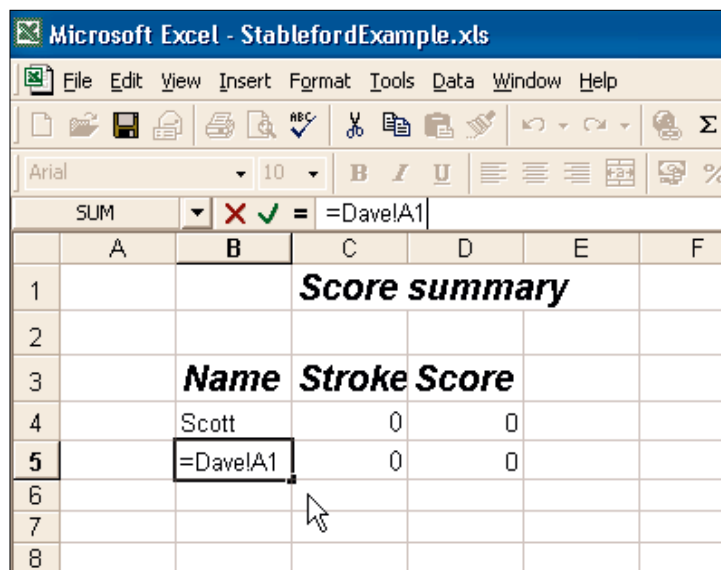
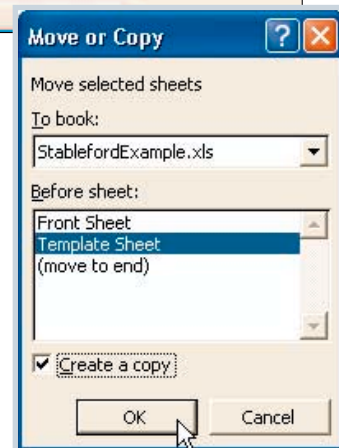
### STEP 8...

**OUR FINAL FORMULA IN** this sheet works out the score for the hole. If the hole is made within the modified par, two points are scored with an extra point for each stroke under par. One point is scored if the hole is one over par, and there are no points if there are two or more strokes over par. In cell G7 enter the formula `=IF(E7-F7>=1, (IF(F7<1, 0, E7-F7+2)), 0)`. Use AutoFill to copy this formula to cells covering scores for all remaining holes (ie, down to G24).



### STEP 9...

**TO MAKE A SCORECARD** for each player you will need to make a copy of the Template Sheet. To do this, right-click on the Template Sheet tab and select Move or Copy from the pop-up menu. Leave the 'To book' option as it is and select the sheet you want the new sheet to appear before. In this case click on Template Sheet. Click to place a tick in the 'Create a copy' checkbox and hit OK. Right-click on the tab for Template Sheet (2) and rename it with the name of the first player. Enter this name into cell A1 and type their handicap into cell B4. Repeat this step for as many players as you need. We've created sheets for two players, called Scott and Dave.



### STEP 10...

**NOW CLICK ON THE** Front Sheet tab. In cell B4 enter the formula `=Scott!A1`. This copies the contents of cell A1 on Scott's sheet (in this case, it's his name). In cell C4 enter `=Scott!F25` and in cell D4, enter `=Scott!G25`. Repeat for all the players. To get the information for other players, replace 'Scott' with the appropriate worksheet name. As you enter the strokes into the individual sheets, the scores on Front Sheet will be updated automatically. **ENDS**

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH MSN

# act!vated



Sponsored special from

**msn** Spaces  
**msn** Messenger

It's good to chat! So we show you  
how you can keep in touch online  
simply and safely with MSN  
Messenger and MSN Spaces

Published in association with  
**computer**  
**act!ve**



# Spaces your place on the web

Make a little space for yourself



## Create your own world online

- Share your thoughts, music and photos
- Secure, safe and as private as you want it to be
- Express yourself and get connected

[www.msn.co.uk/spaces/ca](http://www.msn.co.uk/spaces/ca)

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Keep you and your family safe on the internet with our simple guide to security and privacy

VII



# Have your say

Whether you have something you want to say to one person or one million people, MSN Messenger and MSN Spaces can help you get your message across

Virtually everyone uses email these days, and instant messaging is more common than ever, too. But for many people, the idea of having a video conversation or sharing photos and thoughts via a website seems just a little, well, odd. And it's probably really complicated too, isn't it?

You couldn't be more wrong. With the latest version of MSN Messenger, it's much easier than you think to chat with people on the net. It just takes a couple of clicks and you'll see your friends and family face to face; no need for an expensive 3G phone! And with over nine million MSN Messenger users in the UK, and 155 million around the world, chances are the people you want to chat with are already using it. We'll show you how to share photos in a couple of clicks and how you can use the world's first free, full-screen video conversation.

And if you thought that 'blogs', or online journals, were just for the hard-core techies, think again. MSN Spaces makes it easy to put whatever you want online – whether it's just a handy way of being able to make private notes wherever you are, somewhere to share the



pictures of your new baby with family and friends, or a more public arena to tell people about the music you love, the recipes you create or your view on world events.

MSN Spaces and MSN Messenger are great for your kids, too. Thanks to Microsoft's built in privacy protection, you can make sure that your children are protected online, and there's plenty of information to make sure that both you and them know how to keep it that way. In fact, they're great for everyone, whatever their age.

With the new MSN Spaces and MSN Messenger, video chatting and blogs have moved from the realm of the technical to the everyday. They're free too, so you don't have to hand over your credit card details or tie yourself into a contract with anyone. All you need is a Microsoft Passport account – and if you already use Hotmail, MSN or Windows Messenger, you have one of those already.

So, whether you want to find out how your children can chat with their grandparents, how to add to your MSN Space to show off your photography, or keep in touch with the office when you're working at home, all you need to do is follow our simple examples and you'll be sharing, communicating and having fun in next to no time.

# Here's something to talk about

With MSN Messenger and MSN Spaces talk isn't just cheap – it's free! Better yet, you can now see friends and family face to face, share searches, songs, snaps and more

If you thought that instant messaging was just about typing messages to other people, then you're behind the times! MSN Messenger lets you swap files with people in your contact list and much more.

The latest version of MSN Messenger lets you chat face to face with friends and family around the world; all you need is a fast internet connection, a webcam, and a microphone headset and you'll be able to see a full-screen video of the person you're chatting with – completely free.

There are lots more great new features too. For example, when you're chatting with someone you can both see the same answers to a web search thanks to shared searching, making it an even better tool – whether you're explaining a tricky technical problem to a colleague, or trying to help a friend with their homework assignment. You can also buy credits and then

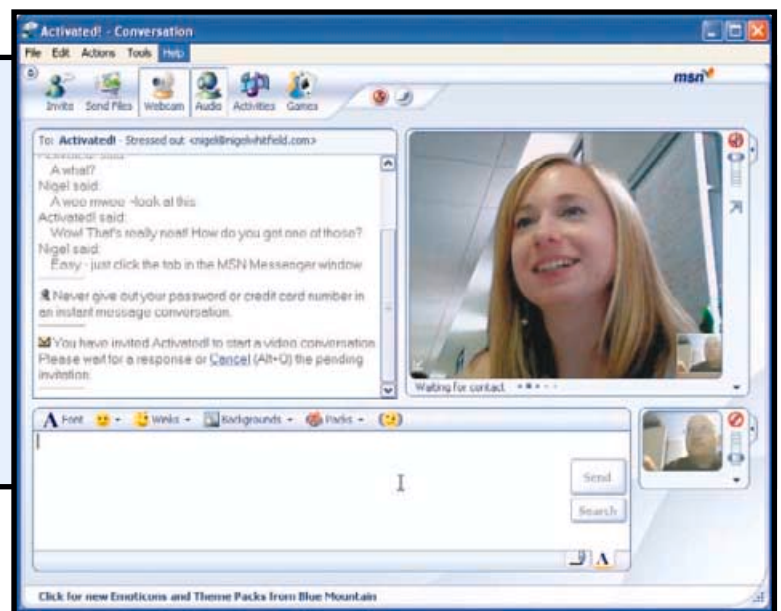
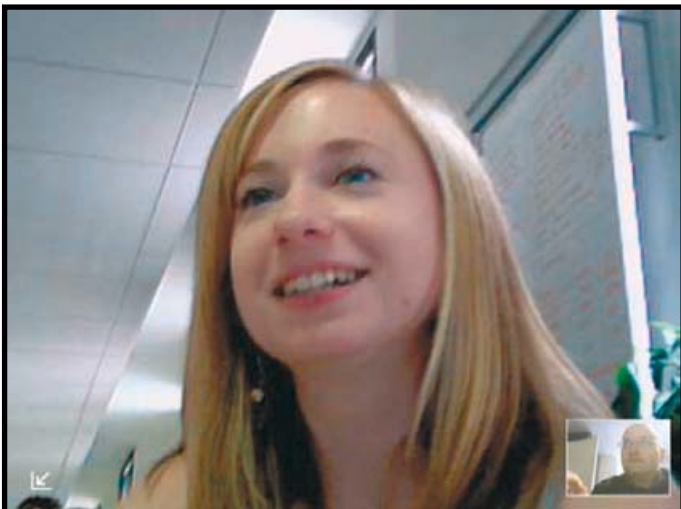
use MSN Messenger to send text messages to mobile phones.

If you're telling someone about the things you enjoy, why not let MSN Messenger help you? It can automatically let everyone know what music you're playing on your PC. Whether you use Windows Media Player or iTunes, just click to turn on "What am I listening to". You can create animated icons to show people just how you feel – so if you want to appear in their MSN Messenger window as a clubber, you can. You can even put different expressions on your face, just by clicking to send an emotion.

Best of all, all these great features are incredibly easy to use. To get started with the new version of MSN Messenger, visit [www.msn.co.uk/messenger/ca](http://www.msn.co.uk/messenger/ca) and click on the download link. Then follow our simple instructions to video chat, share photos or show off your emotions.

## Starting a video chat with the new MSN Messenger

Having a video conversation on MSN Messenger is very easy. You don't need to do any special configuration – if you have a webcam installed, MSN Messenger should work with it. While you're having a conversation with someone, click on the Webcam button at the top of the chat window and choose Start a Video Conversation. Your chat window will grow and you'll see your own picture at the bottom right, as in our screenshot.

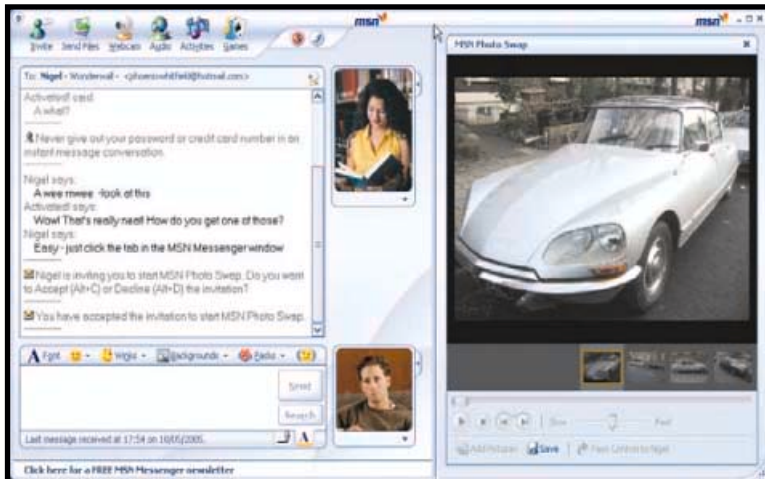
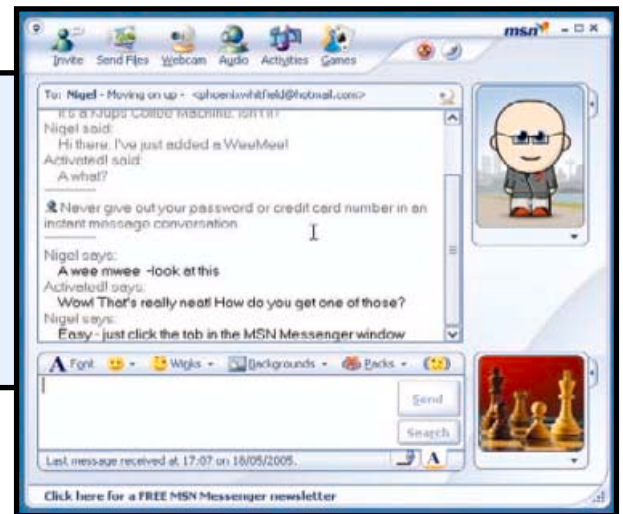


## Go full screen!

When you're chatting with someone who has a webcam, you'll see their pictures appear at the right of the screen, above your picture. If you want to see them take up the whole screen, click on the small arrow pointing into the corner, just under the volume control. Here's what you'll see – and if you have a webcam too your picture will be in the small box at the bottom right. To switch back to normal, just click on the arrow at the bottom left of the picture.

## Show how you feel with a WeeMee

Click on the WeeMee tab at the left of the MSN Messenger window and you can create a customised icon, choosing hair, clothes and accessories, from [www.wee-mee.com](http://www.wee-mee.com). Download the icon to your computer for £3 and that's the way people will see you as you chat. A WeeMee isn't just a picture, though; with a click of the mouse, you can make it match your mood and appear confused, angry, surprised or happy.



## Share photos with MSN Messenger

Click on the Activities button at the top of the MSN Messenger window and choose MSN Photo Swap. If you are new to Photo Swap, you'll be asked to install a small application. Click on Add Pictures in the panel at the bottom-right and choose your photos. Thumbnails will appear at the bottom of the panel, and the one you highlight will appear in the top. Click on Play to start a slideshow, or Pass Control to let the person you're chatting with add photos, or control which is displayed.

# A Space of your own

Whether you want to share your thoughts on world politics, photographs of your last holiday, or just make quick notes for your novel whenever you're near a computer, MSN Spaces can help you.

MSN Spaces is a great new way of putting together a website and makes it easy to add information whenever you want – whether it's text, photos, links, or a list of the tunes you're listening to today. You don't need to learn how to use a web editor, how to create a slideshow, or anything fancy. If you can work a mouse, you can create your own MSN Space, completely free – just follow the instructions below to get up and running, or visit [www.msn.co.uk/spaces/ca](http://www.msn.co.uk/spaces/ca) to find out more.

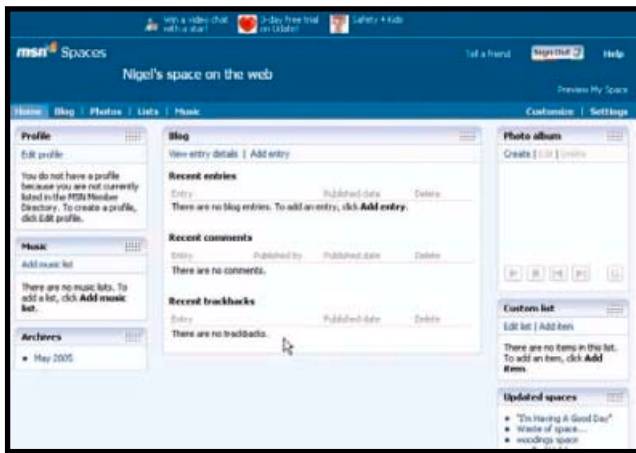
When you sign up, you'll receive 30Mb of storage free for your MSN Space – that's enough for around 750 web-quality photographs, so even the most snap-happy will have plenty of room to show off their images. And you can add comments, lists of favourite things, and information about the music you like, so an MSN Space is a great way to express your personality – or even just to share a few bits and pieces between a group of friends.

You don't have to worry about the technical side, either. MSN Spaces will automatically archive your blog entries each month, and let you delete old pictures if you need to free up space. You can see how many people have visited your pages, and even allow them to add comments and feedback if you like.

## Setting up your MSN Space in fifteen minutes flat

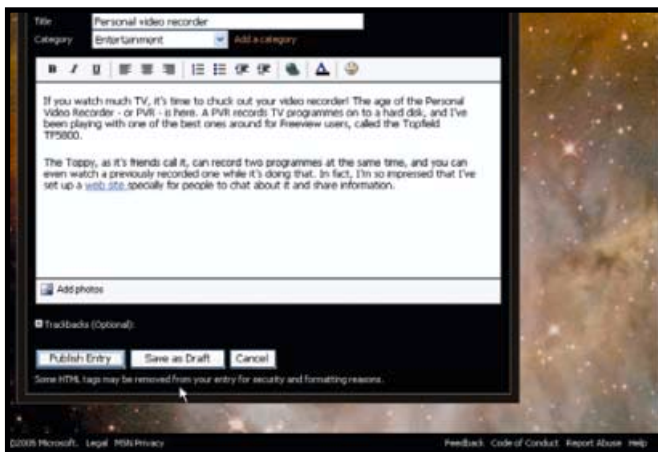
**1** Creating an MSN Space is simple, especially if you already have the latest version of MSN Messenger installed. All you need to do to begin is click on the My Space button at the top of your contact list and you'll be taken to this screen. Give your space a title, then pick a name to use as the last part of the web address, and click on Check Availability; if the name's free, click to accept the Service Agreement, and then Create your MSN Space.





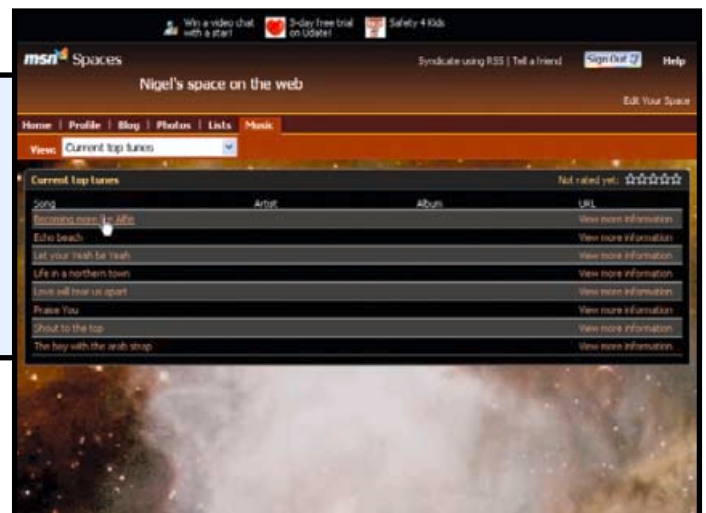
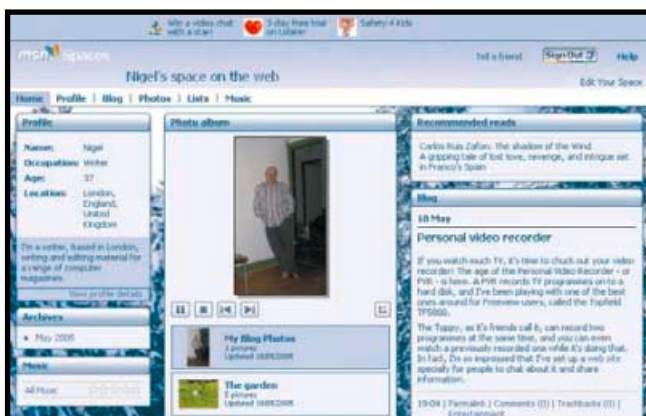
**2** Here's what you'll see when you look at your MSN Space for the first time. It might not look inspiring, but it won't take long to fill it up with great stuff. Let's start by adding some pictures of our classic car collection – just click on Create in the PhotoAlbum section then choose a name for your album, and click on Add Photos. You'll be asked to download a small Photo tool and then you can choose the pictures you want to add.

**3** Fancy a makeover? Click on Customize in your MSN Spaces page and choose one of the themes from the drop-down menu to change your look. If you don't want one of the items on the page, click on Modules and select Remove next to it. You can even drag the different parts of your MSN Space around the page, to arrange them in the order you like, and select different layouts.



**4** Want to tell everyone about a great website you've found, sound off against bad service, or jot down some notes to jog your memory? Click on Add entry in the Blog section of your MSN Space, and type in whatever you want. You can create categories for your posts, and even include links and photographs in them – and photographs from your blog posts will automatically be added to your albums for people to view separately, too.

**5** You can share information about your favourite books or recommended shops, top nightclubs, and so on, by adding lists to your site. Click on Lists at the top of your MSN Spaces page, select Create a list, and choose a type of list – there are entries for adding books, blogs and other information. Then simply type in the entries for your lists, click on Add, and each list will appear as an item that can be moved around the page.



**6** When you've added your lists, created blog entries, and uploaded photos, it's time to see what your MSN Space looks like to other people. Just click on Preview My Space, at the right-hand side of the page, and you'll see it as others will. Click on Edit Your Space to return and make more changes. Easy, isn't it?

# Keeping your private life private

If you want to make sure your kids are safe while they surf or create an MSN Space for your eyes, only MSN Messenger and MSN Spaces give you total control over who has access to what

**M**SN Spaces and MSN Messenger are great tools to use, whatever your age, but if you're a parent you may be concerned about what your children might be able to do online. To help make sure they are safe on the internet, MSN Spaces and MSN Messenger provide plenty of ways to maintain your privacy and give you control over who can make contact online.

The key to privacy and security for both chatting via MSN Messenger and sharing via MSN Spaces is your Microsoft Passport and MSN Messenger Contact list.

You can use your Contact list to control who is allowed to send you messages. Not only that, but by ticking the Alert me box in the Privacy section of MSN Messenger's Options screen, you'll be told whenever anyone else adds you to their Contact list.

If you don't want somebody to be able to contact you any more, you can simply delete them from your Contact list, and they won't be able to send you any

messages, or even see if you are online. If you just want to stop them temporarily, but still keep them as a contact, right-click on their name in your Contact list and choose Block from the menu. You can easily unblock them again if you want to.

When you're chatting online, it can be easy to forget what it was you said at the beginning of the conversation, and it's useful to be able to refer back – or to see what your children have been talking about, if you're worried about what they're up to online. Just click on the Tools menu in MSN Messenger, select Options, then Messages, and tick the box to Automatically Keep a Record of My Conversations. To make it even easier to pick up where you left off, in MSN Messenger you can even choose to have your last conversation appear at the start of each new one, making it really easy to recap.

Your contacts on MSN Messenger are one of the building blocks for MSN Spaces, too. You can keep your space completely private if you want to – and plenty of people do use it as a place where they can collect their thoughts or write notes, whenever they're near a computer with access to the internet. When you first create your MSN Space it will automatically be open to all the people on your MSN Messenger Contact list.

If you prefer, you can choose people from your Contact list so that only a very select group can see what you've put in your MSN Space – perhaps you want your most trusted friends to give you their opinion, before you let everyone on your Contact list see what you've been up to. And, of course, if you like, you then can let everyone see your MSN Space.

Whichever option you pick is entirely up to you, so you can create a MSN Space that says whatever you want, and not worry about who's going to see it. You're in control.

## Space for music

Music is one of the things that brings many people together – and there's no reason why that can't be the same on the web as it is in other parts of life. With MSN Spaces, you can let people know what you're listening to with Music lists, and they can click on the names of tracks to hear or buy them online. It's easy to get started; click on the Music link on your Spaces page, and then click on Copy a playlist from Windows Media Player. You'll have to give permission for the Spaces website to look at your music files, and then you'll be able to pick the playlists you want to share. Click on Next, then Copy, and your playlist will be added to your MSN Space. If someone wants to hear the track, or even buy it, they just need to click on the link and they can find it at MSN Music.

## SMART info for kids

Make sure your kids are aware of the SMART Guidelines when they use the internet:

- Stay Safe, don't give out personal information
- Meeting strangers is dangerous
- Accepting files from strangers can cause trouble
- Remember, people may not be who they say they are
- Tell someone you can trust if something makes you feel uncomfortable

MSN has a website for parents and children to find out more about online security, at [www.msn.co.uk/staysafe/ca](http://www.msn.co.uk/staysafe/ca).

# **msn** Messenger just got better

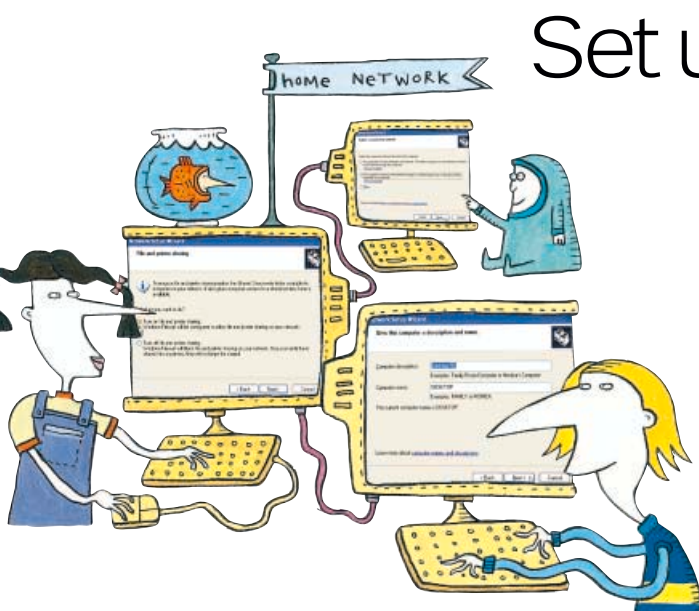
Free video calling anywhere in the world



## ***Download the new MSN Messenger***

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- More personal expression
- Share your photos and much more with your friends and family

[www.msn.co.uk/messenger/ca](http://www.msn.co.uk/messenger/ca)



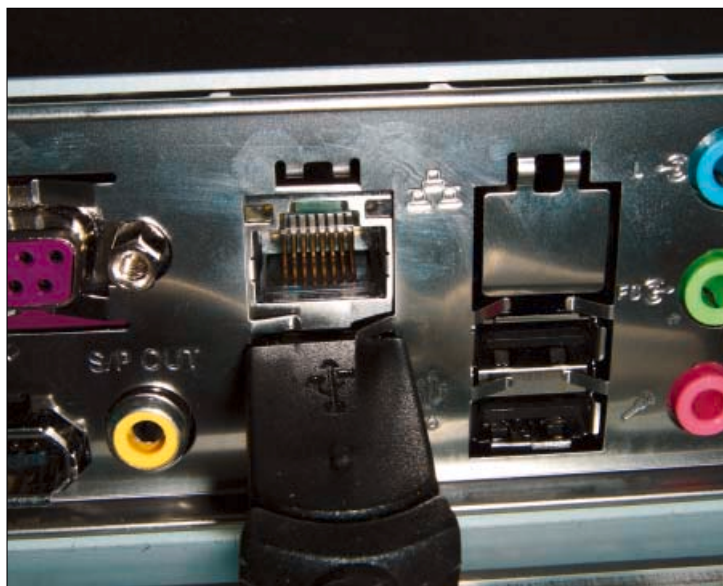
## Set up a wired network

Creating computer networks with cables can be easier and cheaper than wireless options

With all the hype currently surrounding wireless **networks**, more conventional wired networking has, somewhat unfairly, taken a back seat. But with faster transfer speeds and, in most cases, easier set-up, operation and lower equipment costs, wired networks still have a big part to

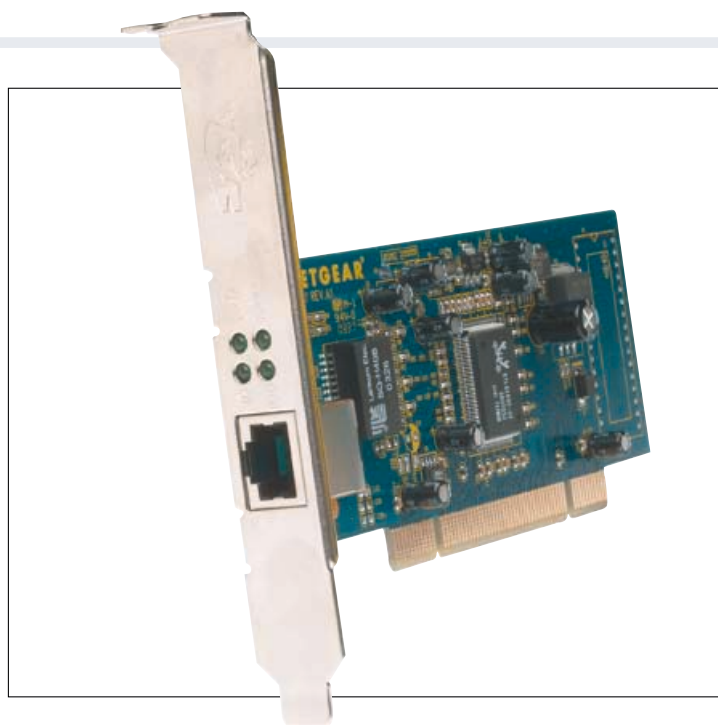
play in home computing.

In this Workshop, we'll show you how to set up and configure a wired network from scratch. Once you have all the necessary equipment, Windows XP's Network Setup Wizard makes the whole process both quick and effortless.



## STEP 1...

**EVERY COMPUTER TO BE** included in your wired network requires a **network interface card** (or NIC). Most modern desktop PCs come complete with a built-in NIC (usually located at the rear of the PC, near the **USB** sockets – it may be labelled 'Ethernet', which is the name of the network technology that enables PCs to communicate with each other). Similarly, most notebook computers include a NIC connection. Before you move on to the next step, check to see if each of your PCs has a port similar to the one photographed here. ▶



## STEP 2...

**IF YOU HAVE AN** older PC that doesn't have a NIC, don't panic. Network adapters for both desktops and notebooks are readily available for around £10. Notebook network adapters often come in the form of **PC Cards** and are simple to install. Desktop versions are usually internal **PCI** models, meaning you'll need to open your PC to install one – a reasonably easy job providing there is a spare slot on the **motherboard**. 10/100**Mbit/s** cards are the standard (the '10/100' indicating it can run at either 10Mbit/s or 100Mbit/s). ▶

**NEXT STEP** ▶  
turn over...

# NETWORK YOUR PCs

## Set up a wired network



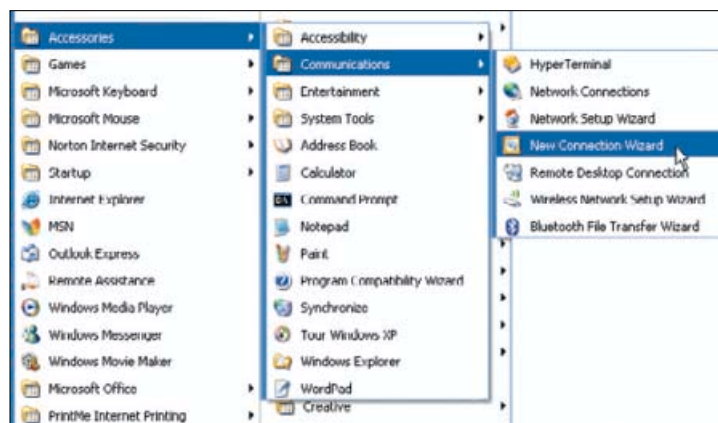
### STEP 3...

**WIRED NET WORKS USE WHAT** is called Ethernet cable. It's important to make sure you buy the correct cable for your type of network. If two PCs are being connected together directly without the use of a **router** (known as an ad-hoc network), you'll need to purchase 'crossover' Ethernet cabling. If, however, you're connecting more than two PCs, this will require some additional hardware (like a router) and standard Ethernet cabling is required. ▶



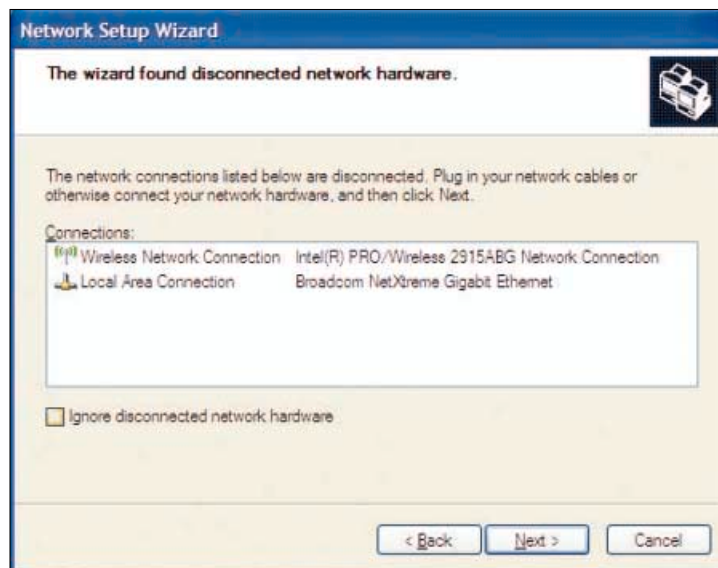
### STEP 4...

**AS EXPLAINED IN THE** previous step, you'll need to purchase some form of router if you want to network more than two PCs together. Many modern routers include a built-in **broadband modem**. Costing around £50, these allow you to share high-speed internet access across your networked PCs without the need to have a specific PC turned on. It is also possible to buy very fast NICs that transfer data at up to 1,000Mbit/s, and these are called 10/100/1000Mbit/s cards. Note that if you're installing 1,000Mbit/s NICs (see step 2), you'll need a comparable router. Before you move to the next step, connect each PC to your router (or to each other if you're creating a simple two-computer network) using the appropriate Ethernet cabling. ▶



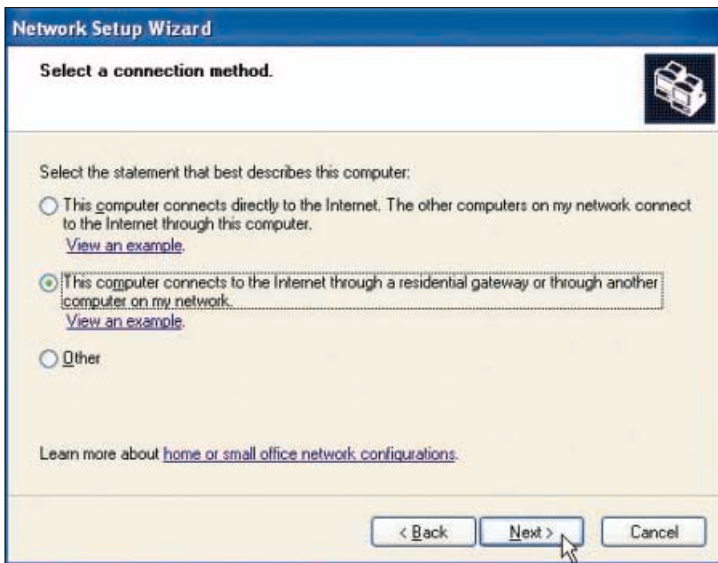
### STEP 5...

**NOW YOU HAVE ALL** the equipment and have wired everything up, it's time to set up the software side of the network. It is possible to configure your network manually, but the easiest way to set everything up is by using the Network Setup Wizard utility that comes as standard with every copy of Windows XP. You'll find this by clicking on the Start button, selecting All Programs, then Accessories and finally Communications. The Network Setup Wizard will be listed along with other network utilities. Click on it to launch the **wizard**. ▶



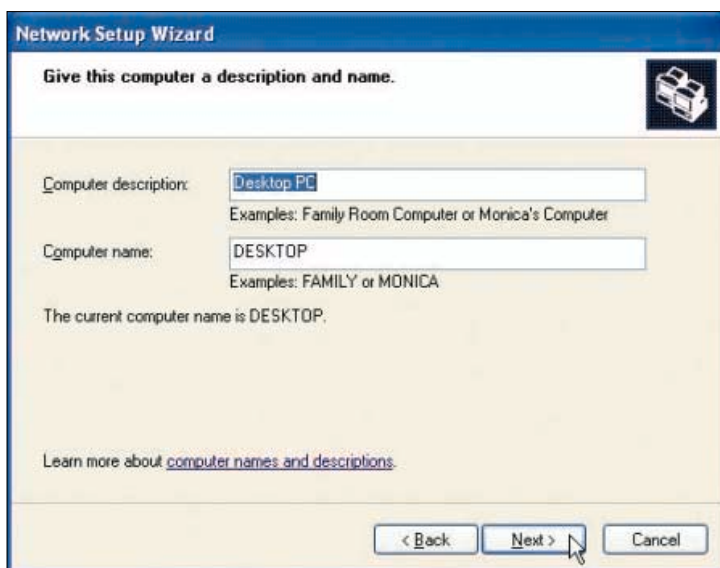
### STEP 6...

**BEFORE SETTING UP YOUR** network, the wizard will detect what networking hardware you have installed in your PC. If it comes across any networking hardware that has been disabled or, in the case of our wired network displayed above, doesn't have an Ethernet cable plugged in to it, it will ask you whether or not you want to ignore it during the set-up procedure. Check over the list of disconnected hardware and click to place a tick in the Ignore disconnected network hardware box. Click on Next when you're ready to continue. ▶



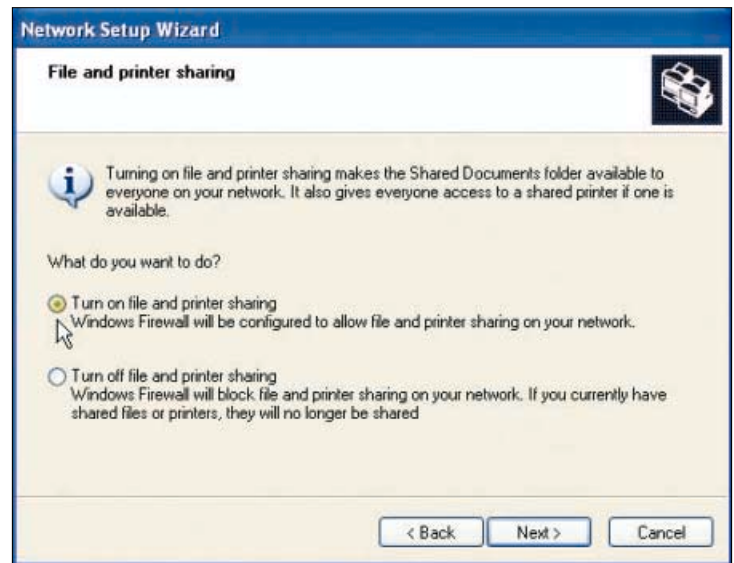
## STEP 7...

**THE WIZARD WILL NOW** ask you to specify how this PC will connect to the internet. If this PC has a USB modem attached to it and you want the other PCs to connect to the internet through this PC, select the first option. The second option should be selected if the PC is to connect to the internet either through another PC on the network or via a router with a built-in modem. If you don't plan to have internet access on your wired network, choose the option labelled Other. ▶



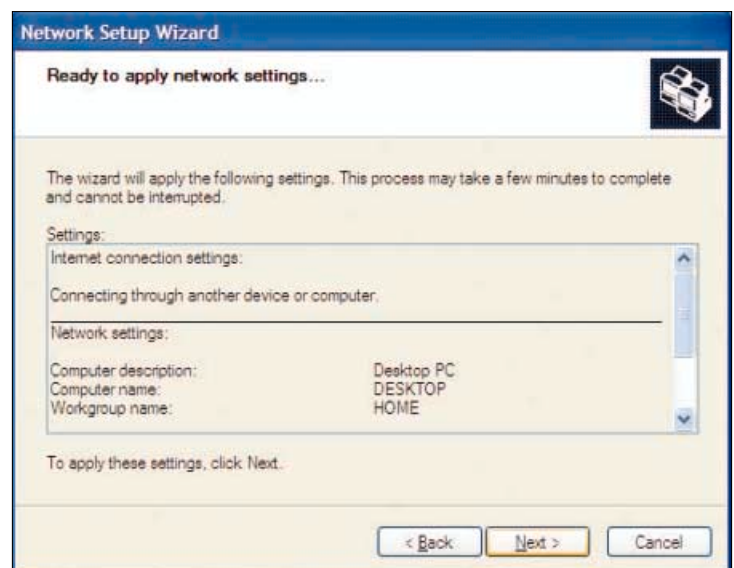
## STEP 8...

**THE NEXT STEP LETS** you give your PC an identity on the network. You'll notice two fields require an entry – Computer Description and Computer Name. The Computer Description field lets you enter a meaningful description for this particular PC, while the Computer Name is a shorter version that will be used as a unique identifier during network operations. Once you've entered the names, click Next and choose a workgroup name. Keep a note of the workgroup name as you'll need it when you set up the other PCs. ▶



## STEP 9...

**YOU WILL NOW BE** asked whether or not you want to turn on file and printer sharing. It's quite likely that you'll want this to be turned on as it allows you to not only quickly transfer files between all the PCs on your network, but also access any printers that might be installed on individual PCs. If you elect not to turn on the file and printer sharing, the Windows Firewall will be set up to block all file and printer-sharing activity. ▶



## STEP 10...

**THE NETWORK SET UP WIZARD** will now have all the information it needs to correctly set up this specific PC for your new wired network. Before you apply the new settings, you'll notice it gives you a detailed description of the choices you made during the set-up procedure. Take a moment to read the settings and click on Next when you're happy. The wizard will now apply the settings – on some PCs this can take several minutes, so be patient. ▶

**NEXTSTEP**  
turn over...

# NETWORK YOUR PCs

## Set up a wired network



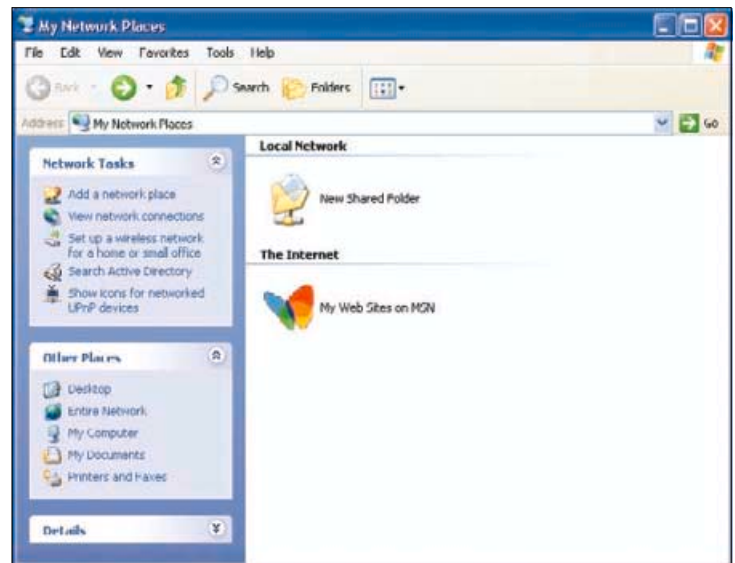
### STEP 11...

**ONCE THE SETTINGS HAVE** been applied, you'll need to run the wizard on each of the PCs you want to include on the network. If you want to make things simple, you can create a network set-up disk based on the settings you made in the previous steps. The settings can be copied on to a standard floppy disk or even a USB key and then copied to the others PCs in your network. The wizard will show the available choices, so make your selection and click Next. ▶



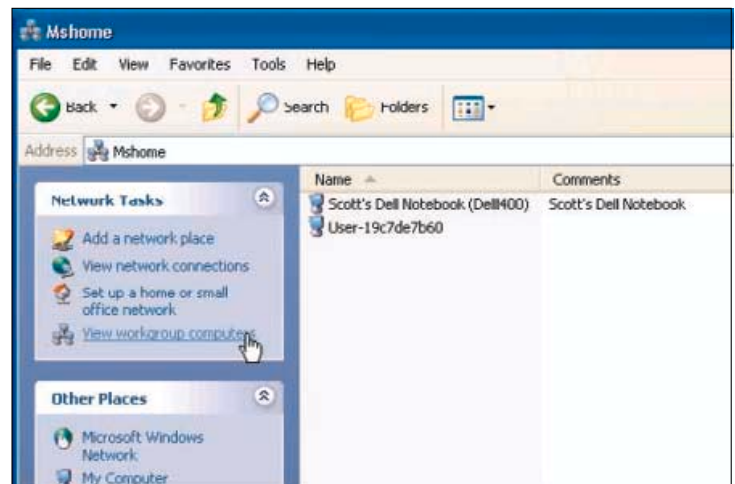
### STEP 12...

**NOW YOU HAVE SET** up the network, it's time to put it to use. If you want to share a folder, locate it using Windows Explorer and right-click on the folder icon. Select Properties from the list of options and then click on the Sharing tab. Now change the sharing option to Share This Folder. You can also apply other settings, such as permissions, but for now we'll stick with a simple share. ▶



### STEP 13...

**FROM ANOTHER PC ON** your network, double-click on the My Network Places icon from the Windows Desktop. You'll notice a section labelled Local Network and, within this section, you'll see the newly-shared folder. As long as the PC that holds the shared data is turned on, you'll be able to access all the information stored within it from any PC on your network. ▶



### STEP 14...

**IF YOU LATER NEED** to alter the arrangement of your network – perhaps to add a new computer – then open My Network Places again and click the 'Set up a home or small office network' link in the Tasks pane. Also in the Tasks pane, try clicking on the View workgroup computers link, to see a list of all computers turned on and connected to the network. **ENDS**

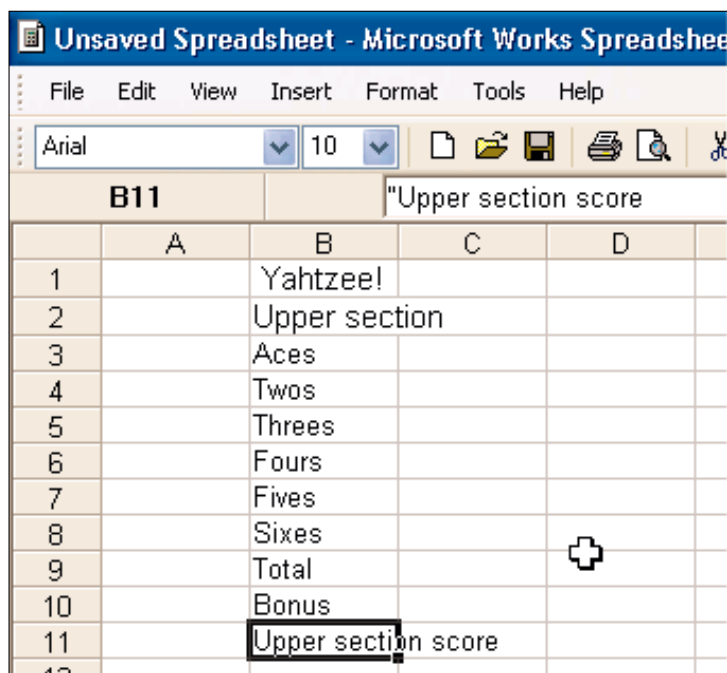


## Use Works to make a game scoresheet

Tot up Yahtzee dice rolls and bonuses automatically by creating a simple spreadsheet in Microsoft Works

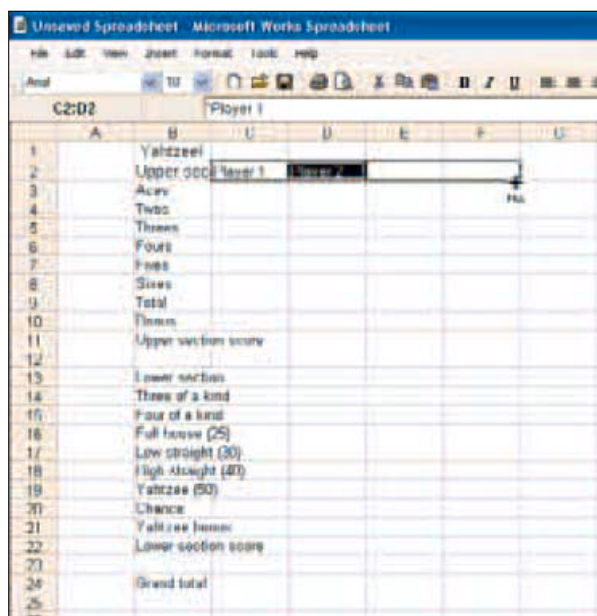
According to the company behind it, each year 50 million people buy the dice game Yahtzee. And no wonder: it's a fun and addictive creation. If you're a fan of Yahtzee, you'll no doubt long ago have worked through the little pad of scoresheets supplied in the box.

Of course, it's easy enough to keep track of scores on blank paper but in this Workshop we'll show how to design a dedicated Yahtzee score **spreadsheet** that you can use to print off a new stock of scoresheets – or even to automatically tally up your dice totals for you.



## STEP 1...

**WE ARE USING THE** spreadsheet application that comes with Microsoft Works but the demonstrated techniques and should work in any spreadsheet application. Open a new worksheet and into cell B1 type the heading 'Yahtzee'. Directly below this, in cell B2, type 'Upper section'. In cells B3 through to B8, enter the Yahtzee scores ('Aces', 'Twos', 'Threes' and so on). Type 'Total' into cell B9 and 'Bonus' into B10. Finally for this section, enter 'Upper section score' into cell B11. You might want to take this opportunity to save your work. ▶



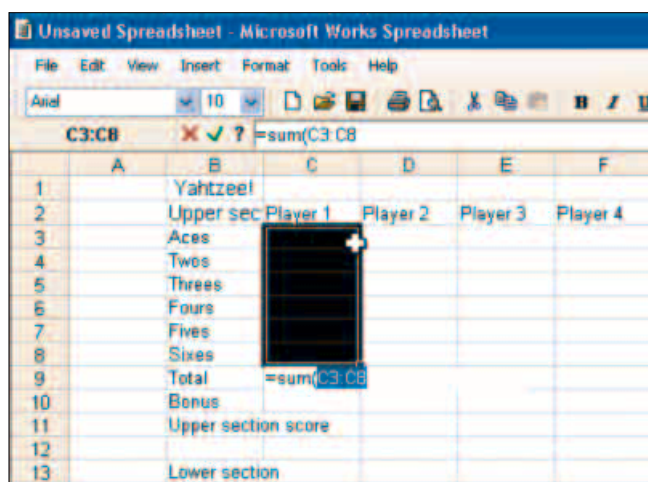
## STEP 2...

**WE WILL LEAVE A** space between the upper and lower sections of the scoresheet; so type 'Lower section' into cell B13. Again, you need to spend time typing the various score categories into cells B14 through to B21 (starting with 'Three of a kind' and ending with 'Yahtzee bonus'). Into cell B22 type 'Lower section score' and in cell B24 'Grand total'. In cell C2 and D2 tap in 'Player 1' and 'Player 2'. You can continue along the row, adding as many players as you wish. The AutoFill function in Works will do this automatically. Highlight the first two entries (in cells C2 and D2), point to the little black square in the bottom-right corner of cell D2 and click and drag to the right. Release the mouse button when you have reached the desired number of players. ▶

**NEXT STEP**  
turn over...

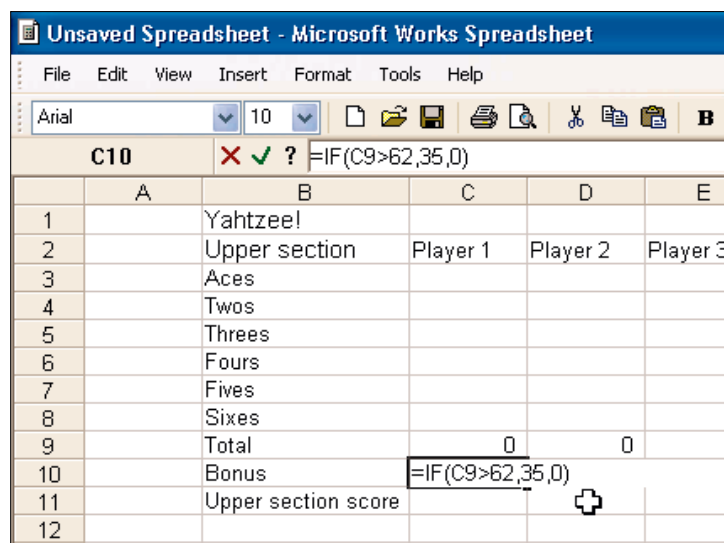
# MAKE YOUR OWN SCORESHEET

Use Works to make a game **scoresheet**



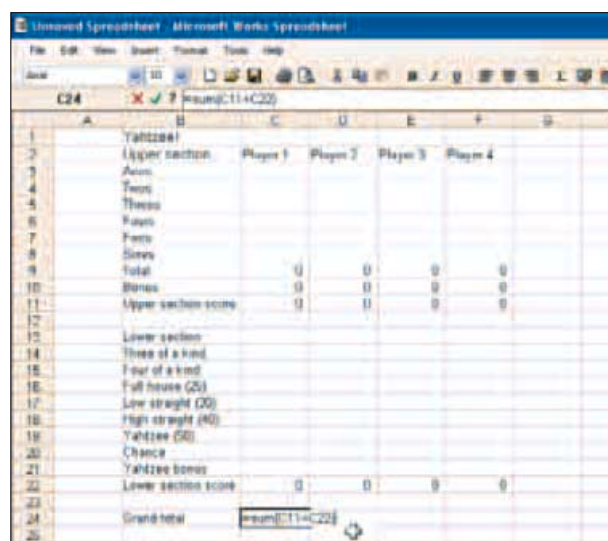
## STEP 3...

**DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE** formatting of your scoresheet for now – we'll tidy it all up later. More important right now is to enter the formulas to automatically tot up the results of each player's dice rolls, including the automatic addition of the 35-point bonus should the player notch up 63 points in the upper section. In cell C9 tap in the following formula (without the quotes): `'=SUM(C3:C8)'`. Use the AutoFill function explained in the previous step to copy this formula to all the other players' score columns. The formula for the lower section score is much the same: enter `'=SUM(C13:C21)'` into cell C22, and copy it across to the other score columns using AutoFill.



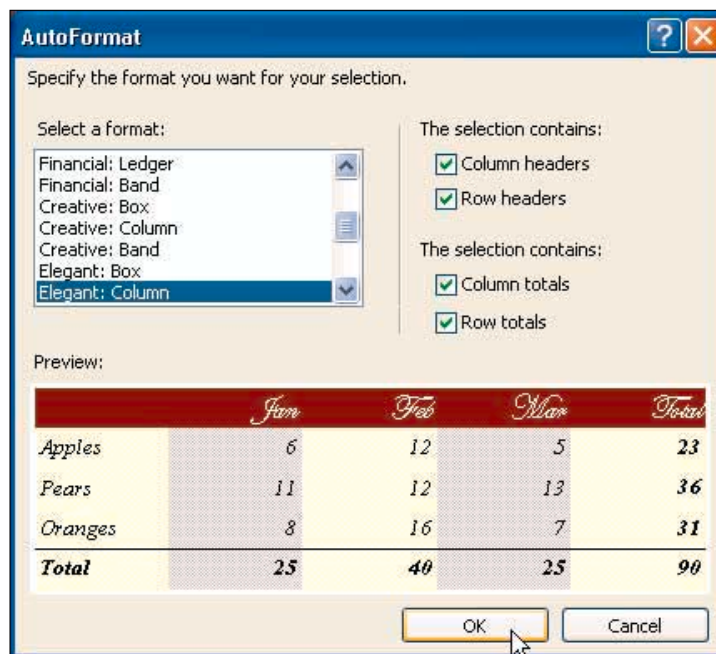
## STEP 4...

**THE MOST COMPLICATED FORMULA** is the one that adds on the 35-point bonus when a player has reached the 63-point qualifying level in the upper section. However, this isn't as bad as you may fear. We'll explain how it works in a moment but for now, enter the following formula into cell C10 (without the quotes): `'=IF(C9>62,35,0)'`. This formula first examines the contents of cell C9 (the current total score of the upper section) and, if it is determined to be greater than 62, it automatically inserts 35 into cell C10; otherwise, a zero is entered. Now copy this formula across to the other players' columns, using the AutoFill method described in step 2.



## STEP 5...

**THE FINAL TWO FORMULAS** are very simple, and tot up the upper section score and any earned bonus, and the grand total at the bottom of the scoresheet. In cell C11, type: `'=SUM(C9:C10)'`. Copy this across to the other players' columns, using AutoFill. Do the same with the 'Grand total' row, having entered the following formula into cell C24: `'=SUM(C11+C22)'`. This last formula simply adds up the scores of the upper and lower sections, giving the grand total.



## STEP 6...

**YOU NOW HAVE A** fully automated Yahtzee scoresheet that will add up the dice rolls of all players, if you so wish. However, you might simply want to make a few physical printouts and do things manually. Currently, though, the sheet looks plain and spare. You can manually apply whatever formatting you wish to tart things up but why not try Works' AutoFormat option (from the Format menu)? This will quickly make your sheet look a whole lot brighter. **ENDS**



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- eTrust 7 AntiVirus OEM
- OEM DivX codec
- Photo software: Ulead Photo Explorer 8 SE Basic OEM, Ulead Cool 360° SE Basic OEM



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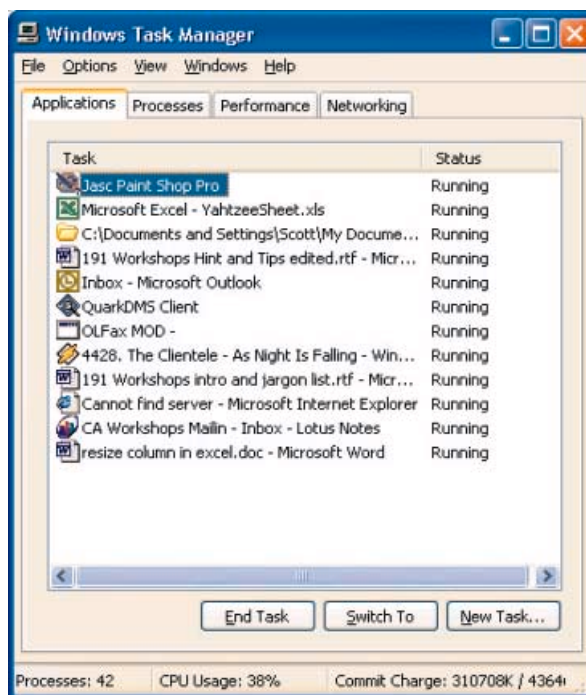
# HINTS AND TIPS

Spend less than a minute on each of these simple pointers and make your PC easier to use...

## DVD BURNING

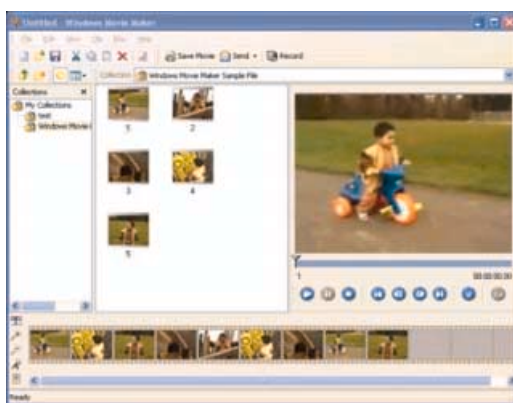
### Too many programs

If another application demands the computer's attention while you're burning a DVD, you may end up with a spoiled disc. To help prevent this, close all programs other than your DVD software. Also switch off your screensaver and make sure that your anti-virus scanner isn't about to start a scheduled system scan. Check the Notification Area (also known as the **System Tray**) in the Taskbar for clues about the existence of background programs. To double-check, right-click on the Windows Taskbar and select Task Manager from the pop-up menu. When your DVD-burning program is running, we'd recommend that it should be the only program listed here.



▲ Task Manager makes it easy to cut down on the number of programs running

## MOVIE MAKER



▲ Use Windows Movie Maker for your basic video-editing needs

### Cut-price editing

If you have a digital camcorder and a want to try your hand at playing around with footage on your computer, you don't need to spend cash on expensive video-editing software. Microsoft includes its own basic but perfectly serviceable video-editing program with Windows XP. Click on Start, point to All Programs, then to Accessories, and click on Windows Movie Maker. Use the Record button to capture video from a connected camcorder and then use the storyboard at the bottom to order the clips.

## READER TIP

### Picture this

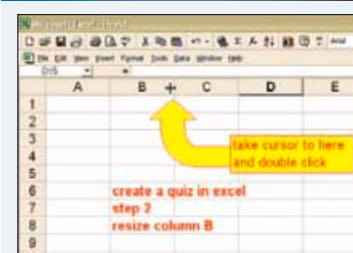
Want to make more impact with that poster or newsletter produced in Microsoft Word? First, launch WordArt, which you'll find by pointing at Picture in the Insert menu. In the **dialogue box**, select the top-left-hand box (the one with just the outline of text), tap in your text, then click on OK. Now highlight the text in the document and an edit bar will come up. Select the bucket with a brush and choose a fill colour, then click on OK. Your text now appears on the document in the colour as requested and you can manipulate the text to whatever size and shape you desire.

*David Blyth, viaemail*



▲ Give your text a splash of colour with WordArt

## READER TIP



### Easy resize

There are several ways to resize columns in Excel. My favourite is to just double-click on the column divider in the cell-reference headings at the top of the sheet. This is both easy and immediate.

*John Fergus, viaemail*

## HELP FELLOW READERS

### Reader tips

We continue to receive a fantastic response to our request for reader tips, so we have made them a regular feature of the Hints and Tips page. If you have a great hint or tip that you think would benefit your fellow *Computeractive* readers then we encourage you to send it to us. We can't promise to publish all received contributions but be assured that we will consider each and every one individually for quality and usefulness. Those that make the grade will be published on this page, with full credit given to the author. Note that in order to be considered for publication, the hint or tip should not exceed 100 words. If possible, please supply a suitable screenshot to illustrate the text. Please email your contributions for consideration to [workshops@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:workshops@computeractive.co.uk) or write to us at our usual address (mark envelopes 'Hints and Tips'). By submitting a hint or tip you are agreeing to have it published by VNU Business Publications.

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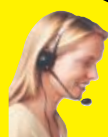
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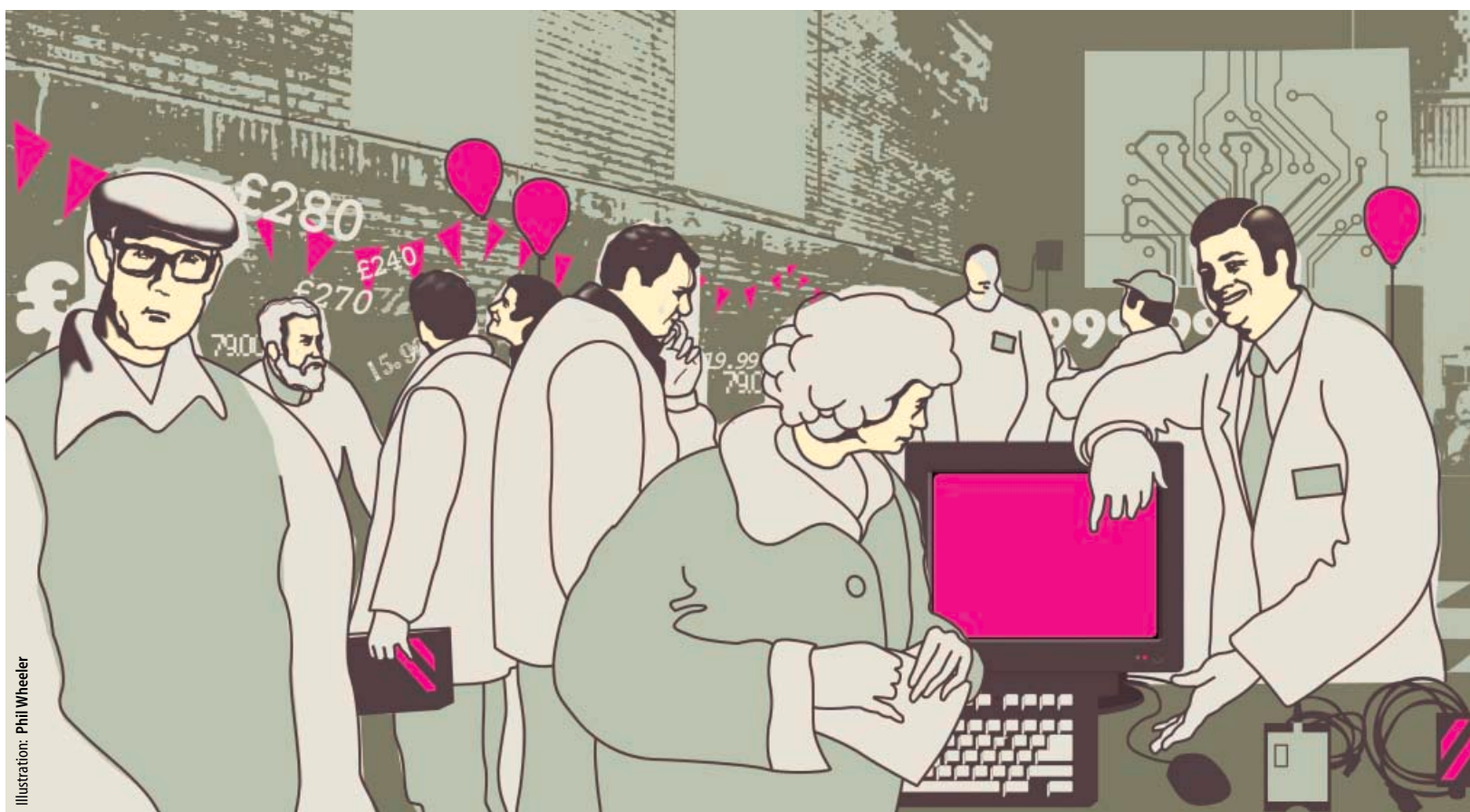
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# Trading places

Some people think that buying from a computer fair is a bit of a gamble. But with a little forward planning and some shrewd buying tactics you can find yourself a great deal

**T**hey attract hundreds of thousands of customers every year yet spring up and disappear in a day. Quietly, and with the minimum of fuss, computer fairs have become a cornerstone of the IT market for both consumers and traders, providing great deals on new and second-hand goods. As with all forms of shopping, a little preparation and knowledge of your rights and responsibilities as consumers will go a long way to helping you bag a hassle-free bargain. We spoke to some fair organisers and the Trading Standards Institute to prepare a guide to finding fair bargains.

Computer fairs are not to be confused with informal events such as car boot sales, which have no special status or exemptions from consumer protection laws (you can read more about car boot sales in the box on page 63). Computer fair traders are bound by the Sale of Goods Act 1979, regardless of whether they are companies or sole traders. This means that you have the same rights and responsibilities as when buying from a high-street store. We'll consider this more in a moment, but making a shrewd purchase at fairs is all about preparation and determination so first we're going to discuss tactics.

## Fair tactics

If you haven't been to one before, computer fairs can seem a little overwhelming at first, being closer in character to a street market than a shopping centre. Typically, an organising company hires a venue, such as a community centre or large warehouse, and rents tables to local traders. These can be private, one-person operations, eBay power sellers, local shops or large companies. Most traders deal in cash, while some may have facilities to accept debit or credit cards. Even at medium-sized events, the array of goods on offer is staggering – from custom-built power PCs costing more than £1,000 to packs of blank CDs for a couple of pounds.

While you can simply browse, we recommend going for a purpose and armed with some knowledge. If you know your PC could do with a boost, wandering around asking traders about the impact of more memory or a new **graphics card** could tempt you into an unwise purchase. Memory, for example, comes in different types, so make sure you know the type your **motherboard** requires. The same goes for connections used by **hard disks** and graphics cards, so before deciding to add internal components check what's going to fit. The free Belarc hardware tool



([www.computeractive.co.uk/2128769](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/2128769)) we discussed in our upgrades feature in the last issue provides a list of all the hardware and software installed on a PC, and will give you the crucial information you need – namely the type of motherboard you have and the amount and type of spare slots it contains.

Salespeople can also be a useful source of advice, and it's not difficult to tell apart those who are genuinely trying to be helpful from those pressing the hard sell. If you're unsure about a purchase, ask for advice and spell out your particular concern – whether a component is compatible with what you have, for example.

Tony Allen of the Trading Standards Institute says that computer fairs can be a great way to get good bargains, providing people carry out some research and resist the urge to impulse buy. "My advice is to get an idea of what constitutes a reasonable price for the item you're hoping to buy, and the internet is a real help for that. You should also try a bit of bartering. British people aren't keen on that sort of thing but it's a market, so haggle."

You can also try phoning the organisers or looking at their website to see what registration requirements there are for traders. Good organisers will retain full contact details for traders and pass these on if a dispute arises. Mark Smith, of Northern Computer Markets ([www.computerfairs.com](http://www.computerfairs.com)) says that while the organisers of computer fairs bear no legal liability for transactions made there, his company is happy to give consumers the information they need to pursue disputes.

"Sellers have to be registered with us for customer protection. If someone isn't happy with their purchase or has some kind of dispute, they can come to us for the contact details registered to that seller." Mr Smith says that consumers can call the company or simply turn up at an event to request a trader's contact details.

Computeractive tested this by applying to become an Northern Computer Markets trader. Sure enough, our registration pack arrived with a registration form requesting postal and email addresses, landline and mobile telephone numbers and asking us to confirm whether we were a company or sole trader.

In some parts of the country, traders at such events are required to apply for a licence to sell by the local authority. This is the case in Greater London, Kent, North Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. Approved dealers will have a certificate, and your local authority will be able to tell you whether it makes this demand of traders.

### Spotting fakes

Another thing to look out for at fairs is counterfeit goods, especially if buying software. "It is a big problem at some fairs, and is obviously illegal. If you buy counterfeit software, you have no way of knowing whether it will work or even if it's just a blank CD," says Mr Allen. You also have no right to support from the software developer. Mr Smith says that his staff keep an eye out for pirate software by walking around the venue as traders set up, looking for illegal copies. Those found selling them are ejected.

Spotting fakes is easy. Look at the CD or DVD for official labels. Microsoft products will have a certificate of authenticity stamped on the box, along with a hologram. In all cases, there should be at least one supporting document. Watch out for photocopies, and that goes for software covers too. Most, but not all, software requires a registration or activation code, so ask if one is required. Also beware of incredible bargains. Microsoft Office 2003 costs about £300, so if it's on sale for £10 don't be surprised if the discs actually contain Englebert Humperdinck's Greatest Hits.

If you're buying second-hand goods ask the seller

## Jargon Buster

Techno babble demystified...

**Graphics card** The part of a PC that displays the image you see on your computer's monitor.

**Hard disk** A high-capacity disk drive fitted in almost all PCs and used to store both applications and files. Hard disk storage capacity is measured in gigabytes.

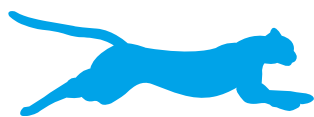
**Motherboard** The main circuit board inside any PC into which every other component connects.

**Webcam** A video camera designed to connect to your PC. It can be used to record video clips which you can send by email, or to transmit images directly over the internet for video-conferencing.

For more on Jargon Buster visit:  
[www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)



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64mph



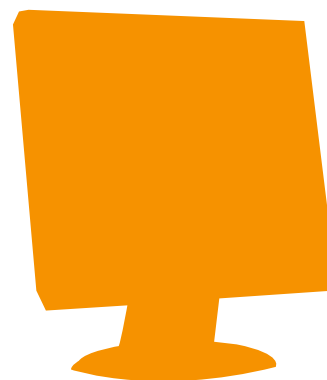
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whether there are any defects and examine the unit for dents or other evidence of damage. It's perfectly all right to buy less than perfect goods. In fact, this is where the bargains are often to be found. Just make sure this information is noted on your receipt, for reason that will become clear when we discuss consumer protection law.

Having some proof of purchase is particularly important and the Business Names Act 1985 requires traders to give a receipt that bears their name and address. This doesn't include a telephone number or email address, but we advise you to ask for one, or both, on your receipt. A few casual questions can be really helpful too – ask whether the trader regularly attends the fair and the best way to contact them just in case. Honest traders will be open about this.

## Avoid shocks

Many fairs offer an excellent range of 'refurbished' PCs, which means they are second-hand and probably repaired after faults. This is another great source of bargains, but be extra careful with second-hand electrical goods. Look out for plugs – these should be new, properly fused and fitted with a cardboard template showing the correct wiring scheme of blue, brown and blue and yellow. Plugs with red, black and green wiring may not be illegal as such, but they don't meet modern safety standards.

"There's no difference between new and second-hand goods as far as quality and safety are concerned," says Mr Allen. "A court would accept a lower standard of quality for second-hand goods, but they must still be as described and fit for purpose. The law says that electrical goods must be safe but older goods are only expected to meet the safety standards of the time they were manufactured."

The Sale of Goods Act is a complicated beast, and we wrote in detail about it and other laws that protect consumers in issue 169. The potted version is that this law provides a few clear principles against which disputes between buyer and seller can be judged. The first is that goods must be "as described", meaning that descriptions, whether verbal or in writing, must accurately reflect the item being sold. If a trader tells you that a DVD writer records all kinds of discs, and you then discover that it doesn't write dual-layer discs, you are entitled to a replacement that does what the trader claimed, or a refund.

The second is that goods must be "fit for purpose", a term that is a little more open to interpretation than the first. It implies a responsibility on the consumer to understand the limitations of items, which in practical terms means that you can't expect a product to do a job it wasn't designed for. For example, graphics cards must be fitted into a particular sort of connection on the motherboard. If a consumer mistakenly buys the wrong sort, a trader is not obliged to offer a replacement or refund. Many will, providing a receipt is retained and the item is returned undamaged in its original packaging, but that's a matter of courtesy rather than law.

Making claims against traders on either point is something that must be done within what the Sale of Goods Act calls "a reasonable time". Many retailers



Select Country: **United Kingdom**

**To find a Computer Fair...**

- Click on the map.
- Use the event search.
- Or just click here.

- What is a computer fair?
- How to buy at a computer fair
- Consumer rights information

Ads by Google

**Upgrade Computer**  
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Town/City:

Venue Name:

Computer Fair

Dumfries & Galloway

For best results choose an event type and a county

▲ You can find a reputable fair through organisers' sites like that of Northern Computer Markets

insist that this period is seven days – some even print this misleading statement in their terms and conditions – but the truth is the period is not defined at all. That's not to say you should hang about; we strongly advise buyers to raise

queries about goods as soon as possible.

That brings us to the third pillar of the Sale of Goods Act: goods must be of satisfactory quality. Many items are offered with a warranty of one year. That does not mean that all goods are expected to last a year or that your rights dissolve a year after purchase. That's where interpretation comes in. A PC that cost £800, it could reasonably be argued, should last more than a year while a £10 **webcam** might not.

The Act gives consumers six years in which to raise a claim but proving liability past the first year is a legal quagmire and only really worth pursuing when large sums are involved. But the Sale of Goods Act has been amended to give buyers some more protection in the first six months following a purchase. The law now assumes that any fault found in the first six months after purchase was there before the sale and therefore down to the manufacturer. This doesn't apply to accidental damage, so don't dunk an unlikely keyboard in the bath and expect to be able to invoke this rule for a less offensive replacement.

## Fair and square

Computer fairs, by their very nature, are local affairs and tend to advertise in local newspapers. The internet has made tracking them down much easier. There is no central list of fairs, but several sites list links to individual organising companies, usually by location. Try a simple search for 'computer fair UK' at [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk).

We've highlighted many of the things that can go wrong at computer fairs in this feature, but don't let that persuade you not to go. In a guide such as this, we have to throw light on the negatives so readers are aware of the potential pitfalls, but that doesn't mean your local fair is a den of fraudsters. Honest retailers love fairs because they present few overheads, and these savings translate into good bargains that attract brisk business. Just keep a sensible head on your shoulders, don't be blinded by outrageous bargains or hard sells and shop shrewdly.

Paul Allen

## Car boot sales

**THERE ARE MANY** misconceptions about car boot sales and similar events. Deciding who is and isn't a trader is a matter for a judge, but broadly speaking those selling multiple copies of an item, suggesting that they buy to sell, could be viewed as traders. That means they are bound by the Sale of Goods Act.

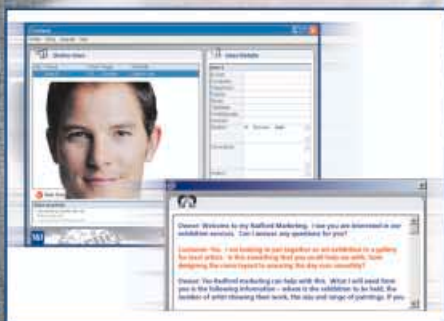
Even those simply clearing out their attics for a few quid have some responsibility to consumers under the Act and are obliged to provide accurate descriptions of the goods they sell. If an item has minor defects, or a certain function does not work, it's perfectly all right for them to sell it providing they are clear about it. We advise extreme caution at boot sales, especially if considering electrical equipment. Knowing that the person who sold you a faulty electrical item could face prison and civil action is unlikely to be a comfort if it causes you serious injury.

The quality and legality of software on sale at such events could be described as decidedly iffy.

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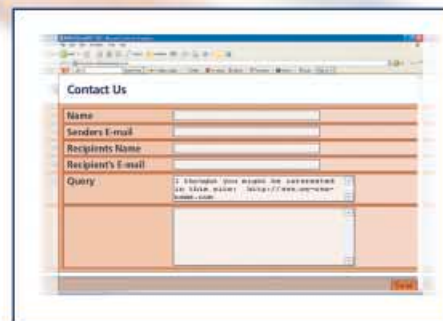
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## Called to **account**

Online banks offer more convenience and control over your money than high-street banks, but many people have been put off by security scares. We weigh up the pros and cons

**B**anking doesn't have to involve tedious queues in your local branch, or annoying mechanical voices on telephone response systems. Every bank worth its salt now has an online banking service, offering users an unprecedented level of control over their finances. There's no waiting until the monthly statement to find out the awful truth about that sudden shopping spree, and with a few mouse clicks you can move money to or from other accounts, maximising the interest you receive on savings or minimising bank charges.

While online banking gives you control, many of us may still be worried that if we can view such sensitive information online, then so can others. The banking industry insists that its security technology has improved since the days when leaks of banking information made the news pages on a frighteningly regular basis. We look at six online banking services to ask whether these promises are true, and assess the features on offer that could help you manage your money.

### **Cash points**

Online banking isn't that new – you've been able to bank via a computer since the 1980s, although the original services were limited and often required you to dial directly into the bank's systems, using a dedicated terminal. But with the advent of the web, more and more people are doing their banking online; one in five of Barclays' small business customers bank online, and there are five million Barclays personal accounts managed online, too. Other banks tell a similar story, so while banking on the internet isn't quite the norm, it's certainly come a long way in the past few years.

For many users, banking online can be key to keeping better control of their finances. Instead of walking to a cash-point for a mini-statement or waiting for the post, you can see right away whether or not you have enough cash in the bank. You can pay a bill at 3am when you wake up remembering it rather than waiting until the morning. It's also possible to apply for other products online, making it simple to set up a savings account and move money there to earn more interest.



Internet banking makes it possible to offer services that just wouldn't have been economical before. Some banks now send mini-statements via text message to your mobile phone, for example, enabling customers to keep tabs on important transactions even when on holiday. Most banks charge for posting copies of statements but the online services give access to records going back years at the click of a mouse.

Given the range of facilities that online banking makes possible, and the ease with which it allows us to access our money, perhaps the real question is not why are so many people using it, but why have so many others yet to take the plunge?

### Under lock and key

For many people the biggest potential obstacle to banking online is security. Scare stories in the media about online scams have done little to ease such anxieties. Many of us will have received email messages asking us to re-confirm account details, often from a bank or online service that we've never used. Click on the link and a convincing copy of the login page for an internet banking service will appear, but instead of signing into the bank, the details will wing their way to someone else who will try to use it to plunder your bank account. Known as phishing, this scam might seem simple but enough people fall for it to make it worth the fraudsters' while.

It's not just scam emails that you need to be wary of; some advanced **spyware** programs can monitor the keystrokes you make when using your computer, relaying them to fraudsters who will try to work out what passwords you were typing into a website, in

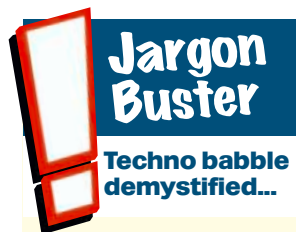
the hopes of getting access to your accounts.

Such spyware programs are, thankfully, rare, and a regular check of the PC using programs such as Spybot Search & Destroy or Ad-Aware can minimise the risk that they pose (for more on the threat posed by spyware and advice on how to combat it, see the feature on this topic in the next issue). There's also an important distinction to be made when talking about phishing scams too: remember that these scams do not exploit a hole in your bank's security technology, rather they exploit the recipient's good faith.

All online banks use a range of technology to keep your financial data safe. A padlock icon in the frame of your **browser** or the letters https:// at the start of a web address show you have a secure connection. Most banks will also ask you different information each time you log in, so someone would need to monitor you several times to be sure of having all the information they need to access your account. And many banks never ask for your whole password, but just a few random letters from it each time.

Since its creation in 2001 the National High Tech Crime Unit ([www.nhtcu.org](http://www.nhtcu.org)) has arrested more than 80 people involved in computer crime and is now targeting people involved with phishing scams. As the unit's annual report makes clear, computer crime is largely targeted at businesses and even personal credit and debit card fraud is much more common offline, with more than half of it taking place at the point of sale.

It's good to be cautious when banking online, but the risks associated with internet banking shouldn't be overstated. If you employ a little common sense and good computing practice (refer to the guidelines



**Techno babble demystified...**

- Browser** An application that lets you view pages on the internet.
- Cookie** Text files generated by websites you visit and stored on your hard disk. Cookies contain preferences and other information about your use of the sites.
- Download** The process of transferring files onto your PC directly from the internet.
- Spyware** Software installed (usually surreptitiously) as part of another application installation specifically to monitor and report back on a computer's use.

For more on Jargon Buster visit: [www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)

in the box on page 68 for more information)  
you'll be fine.

## How the banks compare

One of the biggest problems facing anyone who wants to explore online banking options is that, in most cases, it's not possible to see the service in action until you have committed to an account. Some banks offer a demo on their websites, but it's often restricted to an animated movie or an overview of one of two parts of the service. You can't find out how easy it is, for example, to set up a payment to a friend's account or find details of a particular transaction.

Lloyds TSB is the honourable exception here, with an excellent demo that lets you try just about everything. With other banks, by the time you discover that the online service fails to meet your needs, it's too late to do anything about it. We'd like to see more banks offer comprehensive demonstrations.

# Barclays Bank

Barclays' online service provides a reasonable range of banking options, although it hasn't the same wide range as First Direct, nor is text message banking available. The service is available to both Apple Mac and PC users. Information can be **downloaded** to a computer to make financial planning and tracking easier. We found it wasn't possible to view as many historical transactions as with other services.

Signing in is a drawn-out process, too, compared with some competing services, requiring a surname, eight-digit number, five-digit passcode and two letters from your password. It's a fair bit to remember, but security is paramount. We were surprised to find that transfers to accounts at other banks now take an extra day, (four instead of three), apparently for security reasons. So much for computerisation.

## Co-Operative Bank

The Co-Operative Bank is well known for its Smile online-only service but it also has a reasonable profile as one of the few high-street banks to maintain a strong ethical stance. Although it has few branches on the high street, customers can pay in money at any Post Office.

The Co-Op offers a reasonable range of products online, including savings accounts and credit cards, though signing in is a bit lengthy, requiring account number, sort code, PIN and the answer to a memorable question.

Other drawbacks of the service include an inability to download data to a computer, which makes it much less useful to the self-employed, for example. It's not possible to view a range of transactions by date either. This service is limited in comparison with others, but it does provide simplicity, easy bill

apply | why us | contact us | recommend us | awards | media map | security | login | make

fd

banking mortgages loans credit cards save/invest travel/foreigns insure firstdirecty login

## good vibrations

"It's the first direct, my salary cleared"

Text a "T" to us on 07736 24 24, and we'll send you a text message linking direct to view all your services

do you have a mobile phone? if so, are you using text message banking? no? then you're missing out...

- it's really easy to set up
- you choose which kind of messages we send and on which accounts
- we can let you know when a certain credit has hit your account or when your balance reaches a certain level
- you don't need to call us, you'll find out

### banking

- current account
- internet banking
- text message banking
- register

see more services

▶ First Direct's service is clear and easy to use and it offers a wide range of options

services.  
process, too,  
ting services,  
digit number,  
letters from your  
to remember

log out

fd

banking mortgages loans credit cards save/invest travel/foreigns insure firstdirecty login

analyse your spending

try it now

what is your...

get by

get by (lowest first)

try it now

| date     | details of                                                           | paid out | paid in | balance |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| 16/05/05 | HOLKINS & BARRETT<br>OXFORD STREET<br>SANDERS & CO<br>MANCHESTER     | 0.00     | 17.44   | 1039.49 |
| 17/05/05 | MURPHY SPENCER DMS<br>OXFORD STREET<br>APRIL LTD                     | 16.00    | 1039.49 | 1023.49 |
| 16/05/05 | KIDNEY CO LTD<br>NOTTINGHAM                                          | 0.00     | 1039.49 | 1039.49 |
|          | TESCO STORE 807 DEAN ST<br>BETHNAL                                   | 6.41     |         |         |
|          | SANDERS & CO<br>MANCHESTER                                           | 26.97    |         |         |
|          | SANDERS & CO<br>MANCHESTER                                           | 31.71    |         |         |
| 15/05/05 | ASDA RESTAURANT LTD<br>LONDON SW7                                    | 14.00    |         | 1029.38 |
|          | PURBY BLUE LONDON                                                    | 20.00    |         |         |
|          | ALPINE BLUE LONDON                                                   | 20.00    |         |         |
|          | CHAMBERLAIN<br>CHAMBERLAIN                                           | 4.50     |         |         |
|          | CASH BANCALY MAY 11<br>F. BANCALY                                    | 40.00    |         |         |
| 11/05/05 | CASH HIBB MAY 11<br>GLoucester Inn NW<br>EQUIPMENT LTD LONDON<br>W1D | 20.00    |         | 1004.12 |
|          | NET WAREHOUSE LTD<br>ROMA 1000                                       | 34.99    | 0.10    |         |
| 10/05/05 | DE J. J. LIMITED<br>CASH PAYMENT 25 MAY 05<br>PAGET STREET 1000      | 20.00    |         | 1004.12 |
| 09/05/05 | WYNDHAM GLOUCESTER<br>WYNDHAM GLOUCESTER<br>ROAD                     | 30.00    |         |         |
|          |                                                                      | 0.01     |         |         |

information on charges relating to foreign transactions

payment and 24-hour telephone banking at local rates. Transfers to and from other Co-Op accounts are instant.

## First Direct

First Direct has no high-street branches, but customers can use any HSBC branch for transactions. The service works with both Macs and PCs but to use Internet Banking Plus, which displays balances from other banks too, you need Windows. Signing in is simple – if you save a **cookie** on your PC, it's a matter of entering three random letters from your password. It's important to note that you should not save cookies when asked if using a public or shared PC. While the risk is small, it's just not worth taking.

The interface is clear, although some icons are a little small, and you can apply for and manage a wide range of accounts. It lacks the ability to search for specific transactions, but customers can view statements going back years. There's also a free text message service to alert you to low balances and major transactions and 24-hour telephone banking.

**HSBC**

HSBC's online banking service, like First Direct, is quite comprehensive, although the sign-on process is a little more drawn out. Some of the options, like text message banking and access to accounts from other banks, aren't available to HSBC customers. On the positive side, it's easy to use, and transfers to and from other HSBC group accounts – including First Direct – are instant. You can also manage your account by telephone, though not with



[Home](#)
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[Investment info](#)
[Barclays Value](#)
[Security](#)
[Contact us](#)
[Help](#)

[View account product online](#)

**Personal Banking**  
 23 May 2005 [Logout](#)

**New Statements**  
[Online Search](#)  
[Customer No.](#) [Job](#)  
[Statements](#)

## See Statements

This is the latest information available for your account.

[See statement download details](#)  
[View all statements for this account in table view](#)

**Current Balance** £80.76

**Last Night's Balance** £125.19

**Overdraft facility** £0.00

**Statements**

This is the detailed view of all transactions for the last seven days. They are presented in **reverse date order**.

Transactions made after 4.30pm will be dated with the next working day.

[Customer My Site](#)



| Date       | Kind of transaction    | Debit  | Credit | Balance |
|------------|------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| 23/05/2005 | Cash Withdrawal        | £80.76 |        | £76.19  |
|            | 20050521 21MAY 20.31   |        |        |         |
|            | CASH/POS STATION ATM   |        |        |         |
| 18/05/2005 | Cash Withdrawal        | £31.50 |        | £125.19 |
|            | 1805                   |        |        |         |
|            | AUCTIONEER GREENWI     |        |        |         |
| 18/05/2005 | Card Purchase          |        | £25.00 | £150.69 |
|            | SOMERFIELD PETROL      |        |        |         |
|            | REF 531 0802071300 BCC |        |        |         |
| 17/05/2005 | Card Purchase          |        | £23.27 | £107.69 |

### ▲ Barclays enables customers to download account statements

## Staying safe with online banking

**ALTHOUGH YOU** may hear horror stories about scammers stealing your financial details, staying secure isn't as hard as you may think. First, make sure you have good anti-virus and anti-spyware software installed on your computer and keep it up to date.

Second, never click on links in emails that ask you to update or verify your account details. They may look genuine, but they'll almost certainly be fakes. Type in the address of your online bank, or save it as a bookmark in your browser, and always access your account that way. If a site suddenly demands extra information – like your whole password, instead of just two random letters – stop. Call the bank and ask if they've changed their login procedure.

If you are asked to create a password, choose one that can't be guessed or found in a dictionary. Combinations of letters and digits are advisable. More banks are now moving towards multiple passwords, which require answers to a range of personal questions such as maiden names, children's names and a date of birth. If your bank uses this method, ensure you keep your passcode secret if using a shared PC at home.

[Log Off](#)
[Print](#)
[Help](#)

**The COOPERATIVE BANK**  
 Customer led, ethically guided

Wednesday 18 May 2005

## Statement

Your Accounts

[Statements](#)

Page 376
 Date 16/05/2005

| Pay Bills         | Date       | Transaction                        | Deposits | Withdrawals | Balance    |
|-------------------|------------|------------------------------------|----------|-------------|------------|
| Standing Orders   | 05/05/2005 | BROUGHT FORWARD                    |          |             | £184.36 CR |
|                   | 06/05/2005 | ITL GROUP (BCM)                    |          | £82.65      | £101.71 CR |
|                   | 06/05/2005 | LINK 18:41MAY05                    |          | £40.00      | £61.71 CR  |
| Funds Transfers   | 09/05/2005 | WATERSTONES                        |          | £16.99      | £44.72 CR  |
|                   | 09/05/2005 | LINK CHARGE 17:39                  |          | £1.50       | £43.22 CR  |
|                   | 09/05/2005 | LINK 22:44MAY06                    |          | £10.00      | £33.73 CR  |
| Customer Services | 09/05/2005 | LINK 17:39MAY06                    |          | £30.00      | £3.73 CR   |
|                   | 09/05/2005 | PRIVILEGE INSURANC<br>32276632/00  |          | £38.48      | £34.75 CR  |
|                   | 08/05/2005 | NPOWER GAS LIMITED<br>235461701312 |          | £29.00      | £63.75 CR  |
|                   | 10/05/2005 | ITUNES MUSIC                       |          | £0.79       | £64.54 CR  |
|                   | 10/05/2005 | SAINSBURY'S S/MKT                  |          | £26.16      | £90.70 CR  |
|                   | 10/05/2005 | MANGOSTEEN THEATRE                 |          | £23.11      | £123.81 CR |
|                   | 10/05/2005 | LINK 17:39MAY09                    |          | £20.00      | £143.81 CR |

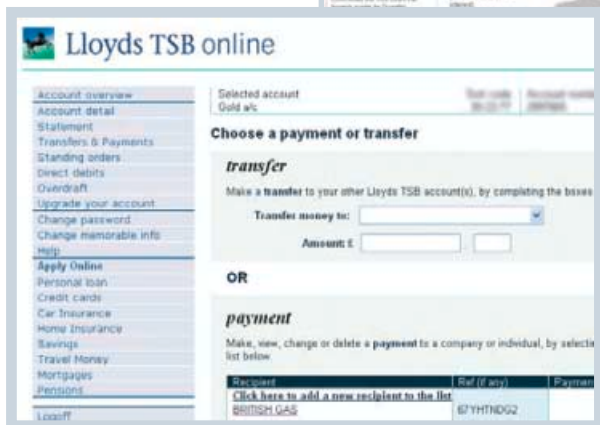
▲ The Co-Op's online service is limited but does offer simplicity and 24-hour phone banking

quite the same level of service offered by First Direct.

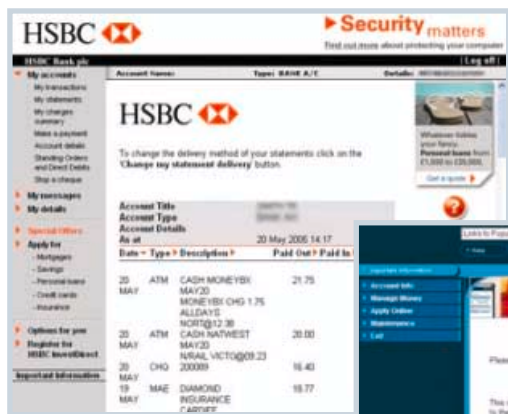
Setting up new payment destinations is simple, with a list of destination types provided, as with most of the other banks we looked at. And you can see most of your old transactions online, or download them to your computer. Overall, there's a good range of services, backed by one of the world's biggest banks – but if you want complete control of your finances, HSBC's First Direct is a better option.

## Lloyds TSB

Lloyds TSB's service has recently been updated and now features a text-message service (not quite as comprehensive as FirstDirect's) and the option to dispense with paper statements in favour of the more detailed information available online – including the ability to search transactions online as far back as 2002. A full range of banking services is available online and there's a very good online demo as well.



◀ Lloyds TSB offers several features not seen in other online banks



◀ Transfer money within the HSBC group instantly

▼ RBS offers limited features online



last six months' worth of transactions online, and there are no email or text-message statement facilities. So, while the service was unfussy and easy to use, we were a little disappointed by the range of features available.

As with many of the other large banks, it's an online service that's useful if you already bank with RBS. But it's just not full-featured or flexible enough to make it worth switching from the bank you currently use.

The interface is clear and easy to use, and it's simple to download information to your computer. Alone in our test, Lloyds TSB offers the ability to change your address and other personal details

online. Backed by a large branch network, this is a flexible option for many who want to bank online.

## Royal Bank of Scotland

The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) provides a comprehensive online service that allows you to manage and apply for a wide range of accounts, including savings, overdrafts,

personal loans and credit cards. It also offers support for a variety of web browsers, and provides easy set up of new payment destinations.

However, set against that is the fact that you can only view the

## Branching out

There's little doubt that, if you want to stay on top of your money, online banking is the way to go and you're far more at risk from fraud offline – when you drop credit card receipts outside shops or hand over cards in restaurants. For many people, the thought of changing banks is a nightmare, and so will settle for the service provided by their current bank. But it's much easier to switch than it used to be, and there are two services that we think provide a wide range of features, including text-message alerts, and access to a good range of accounts online.

Lloyds TSB, with its searchable statements, and the ability to do away with paper in favour of electronic statements, is a very good contender and, unlike other banks, you can get a good idea of their internet services from their website. Although its site might not look as slick, First Direct's online service works well, and is backed by a helpful phone banking service too. However, after much deliberation we've settled for Lloyds TSB as our home banker.

Nigel Whitfield

## ONLINE BANKS COMPARED

| SERVICE                 | BARCLAYS              | CO-OPERATIVE BANK                                           | RBS                     | HSBC                    | FIRST DIRECT                  | LYOYDS TSB                                                    |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Website                 | www.barclays.co.uk    | www.coopbank.co.uk                                          | www.rbs.co.uk           | www.hsbc.co.uk          | www.first-direct.com          | www.lloydstsb.com                                             |
| Phone                   | 0500 007234           | 0845 721 2212                                               | 0800 100 3081           | 0800 032 4738           | 0800 242424                   | 0845 300 0000                                                 |
| Paying in by post?      | No                    | Yes, and at Post Offices                                    | No                      | No                      | Yes                           | No                                                            |
| Transfer time (days)    | 4                     | 3                                                           | 3                       | 3                       | 3                             | 3                                                             |
| Download data           | Yes                   | No                                                          | Yes                     | Yes                     | Yes                           | Yes                                                           |
| Email statements        | No                    | No                                                          | No                      | No                      | No                            | Yes                                                           |
| Text message statements | No                    | No                                                          | No                      | No                      | Yes                           | Yes                                                           |
| Pros                    | Simple to use         | Ethical stance; most transactions available at Post Offices | Simple to use           | Good range of products  | Excellent phone service       | Very simple to use                                            |
| Cons                    | Lengthy logon process | Very limited branch network                                 | Lacks advanced features | No text message options | Relies on HSBC branch network | Person-to-person phone banking not available on free accounts |
| Rating                  | ★★★                   | ★★★                                                         | ★★★                     | ★★★                     | ★★★★                          | ★★★★★                                                         |

NOTES: 1 Most banks provide a range of account options, with differing interest rates and charges. 2 All banks provide branch facilities for paying in

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## Get **out there**

Take advantage of the longer summer days and do a little work on the lawn or on the green



THE SECOND half of June contains the longest days of the year, so we have put together five CD-ROMs to help you appreciate the great outdoors.

If you plan to overhaul your home and garden, or are building from scratch, we have two great design packages. Master Landscape Pro is a powerful suite that will take care of all your design needs, while Your 3D Garden

Designer Deluxe will help you plan and create your ideal garden quickly and professionally.

You can take a virtual tour of the planet and explore its mysteries with Eingana Virtual 3D World Atlas, or take to the stars with Atlas of the Solar System. Teaching You Golf Skills is for the more sporting. It will give you all the theoretical knowledge of the game along with plenty of advice on equipment and technique.

*Martin James*

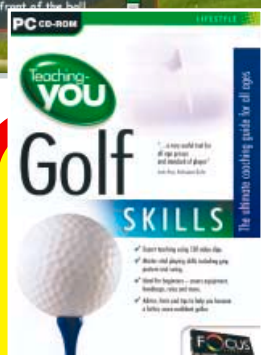
### Teaching You Golf Skills



**T**eaching You Golf Skills is full of tips for anyone interested in starting or improving the game of golf. It runs directly from the CD, with no program to install so it is very quick to get started.

Navigation is simple and all areas are accessible with a click of the mouse. The program is divided into logical sections, such as equipment and technique, with further subsections letting you explore in more detail.

The advice on technique is comprehensive and well backed up by photographs and video clips relating to each topic. Practice is always the best way to improve but



**TEACHING YOU GOLF SKILLS**  
Contact Focus Multimedia  
Tel 01889 570156  
Info [www.focusmm.co.uk](http://www.focusmm.co.uk)

**Overall ★★★★★**

**Price £10**

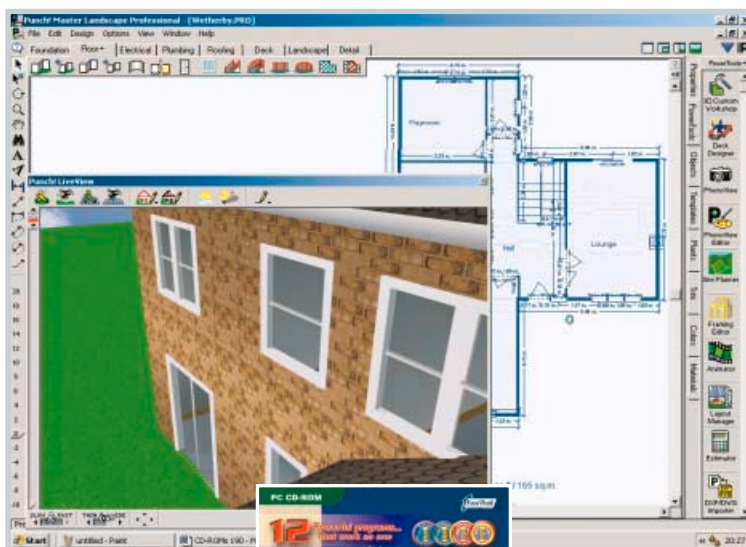
this program offers lots of advice to help you get the best from your equipment. Beginners will find the explanations of golfing terms and equipment very useful.

Seasoned golfers will appreciate the section with information, contact details and web links to various golfing associations, and

information relating to golfing rules, scoring and general etiquette.

For those who are new to the game of golf or anyone who wants to expand their knowledge, Teaching You Golf Skills is a great way to get into the swing of things. ■

### Master Landscape Pro



**L**ike other titles in the Punch range, Master Landscape Pro is a very serious program, so if you just want to play around with home design, you should look elsewhere. If you know what you're doing, however, and want to create a floor plan with as much detail as possible, this is the program for you.

Master Landscape Pro incorporates 12 programs, from the main floor-planning program to tools to create everything, from roofing to decks to topography and plants. The main program window is quite cluttered with the various buttons and toolbars, but fortunately there is a sizeable

printed manual to help you out.

There are options to hide layers of your floor plan, such as electrical or plumbing, if you need to clear the view, and all the usual 3D walkthrough options are there to help you create a vision of your home as you create it. Once your design is completed, you can use the excellent

cost estimator to project the cost of all the building materials used.

Master Landscape Pro is a hugely powerful and professional program but you might spend longer learning how to use it than you do building your home. ■



**MASTER LANDSCAPE PRO**  
Contact Fasttrak  
Tel 01923 495496  
Info [www.fasttrak.co.uk](http://www.fasttrak.co.uk)

**Overall ★★★**

**Price £40**



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|                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| 1. Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch                                                                                                                    |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| To: The Manager<br>Bank or Building Society                                                                                                                                                |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Address                                                                                                                                                                                    |  | Postcode                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2. Name(s) of account holder(s)                                                                                                                                                            |  | 5. Reference number (for office use only)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <input type="text"/>                                                                                                                                                                       |  | <input type="text"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 3. Branch Sort code                                                                                                                                                                        |  | 6. Instruction to your Bank or Building Society                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <input type="text"/>                                                                                                                                                                       |  | Please pay VNU Business Publications Ltd Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with VNU Business Publications Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society |
| 4. Bank or Building Society account number                                                                                                                                                 |  | SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <input type="text"/>                                                                                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## Atlas of the Solar System



▲ There's plenty of images and information but very little interactivity here

**A**tlas of the Solar System is an interactive space-based encyclopaedia that combines plentiful reference material with images, photographs and various interactive touches, such as virtual tours and simulators of planetary orbits.

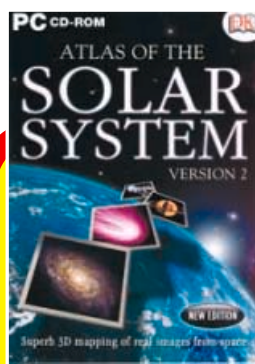
The program is set up with each planet listed down the left of the screen, with their respective moons popping up when you move the mouse over a particular planet. Click on any of these planets or moons and its image appears in the main window, with textual information below.

You can rotate each image

through 360 degrees or zoom in for more detail, which is based on information returned from real space missions.

The four virtual tours include exploring a crater on Mars and a flight over the surface of the moon. While these sound exciting in theory, they are not much more than gimmicks that do little to inspire the imagination.

This poor attempt at interactivity is where Atlas of the Solar System falls short. The information included is reasonable but unfortunately its attempts to capture the real look and feel of space are less than stellar. ■



### ATLAS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Contact GSP  
Tel 01480 496666  
Info [www.gsp.cc](http://www.gsp.cc)

Overall ★★

Price £10



▲ Take a voyage of discovery around the planet

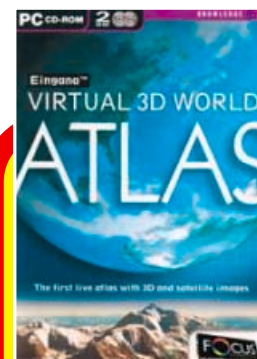
## Virtual 3D World Atlas

**H**ave you ever pored over an atlas of our planet and wondered what it must be like to visit such far off places as Belize or Samoa? Eingana Virtual 3D World Atlas lets you do just that with a virtual representation of the entire planet that you can explore at your leisure.

You are free to travel anywhere on the planet using the application's simple navigation controls. You can either pinpoint a location you wish to go straight to or manually travel there at any speed, from ocean trenches to mountain peaks.

Cities aren't represented in much detail, and imagery other than the land itself is limited but that won't matter too much when you're scaling Everest or flying over the Sahara.

Be warned, though: the full program requires 2Gb of hard disk space, good graphics and a large amount of memory in your PC for best performance. Still, Virtual 3D World Atlas is a good effort and is surely just the start when you consider today's ever-increasing computing power. ■



### EINGANA VIRTUAL 3D WORLD ATLAS

Contact Focus Multimedia  
Tel 01889 570156  
Info [www.focusmm.co.uk](http://www.focusmm.co.uk)

Overall ★★★★★

Price £10

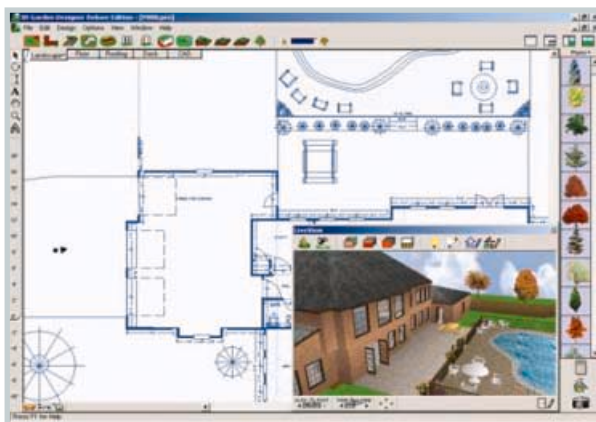
## Your 3D Garden Designer Deluxe

**I**f you are thinking about remodelling the garden, or are starting one from scratch, you will need to do some careful planning.

It's all too easy to over plant, or plant at the wrong times, and most of the time you only realise the error when it's far too late to do anything about it.

Your 3D Garden Designer Deluxe allows you to plan all aspects of a new garden on your PC, and then take virtual tours of it when it has been finished. You can also view projections of how the garden will look in years to come.

It's from the same family of software as the Master Landscape Pro suite, also reviewed in this issue, and



▲ Plan the perfect garden for all seasons

on top of its focus on planning out gardens, it also provides powerful architectural tools for creating such things as decks, driveways and other exterior structures.

It's also less daunting than Master Landscape Pro, and as a result takes less time to get to grips with, although there is no printed manual to help you get started.

The plant database includes information on thousands of plants, but while it is certainly helpful, you'd be better off looking to a more dedicated plant encyclopaedia for your information.

There are other nice touches, such as being able to adjust the angle of the sun on your garden to see how the lighting affects it, and the ability to import a photo of your garden and design your 3D garden around it.

You will have to be prepared to spend quite some time getting to know the program and its capabilities but once that's done it's a very handy resource for bringing your gardening dreams to life. ■



### YOUR 3D GARDEN DESIGNER DELUXE

Contact Focus Multimedia  
Tel 01889 570156  
Info [www.focusmm.co.uk](http://www.focusmm.co.uk)

Overall ★★★★★

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## SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

PC: Windows 98SE/ME/NT/2000/XP, 64Mb RAM, CD-Rom drive.

Mac: Powermac or compatible, MOS9.1 upwards, 64Mb Ram.

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## Close Combat: First to Fight

Keep your squad in check and this is a rewarding tactical shooter

**W**hether you consider it to be a great training method or propaganda, there have been a number of games developed in conjunction with America's fighting forces. The latest of these, Close Combat: First to Fight, was created with the help of the US Marine Corps.

The game is set in Beirut, where forces from neighbouring countries nations have caused civil unrest. You play a Marine lance corporal at the head of a four-man team acting on behalf of a United Nations peacekeeping corps.

You must lead your team to success across six missions, divided into levels. Each level has various sections to complete, ranging from simple search-and-destroy excursions, to hostage rescue situations, and high-value target acquisition.

First to Fight is reminiscent of games such as Brothers in Arms, or SWAT 4. Although you can play the game largely by yourself, you'll have more success by getting your troops to work as a team. For instance, running into a room full of

insurgents with guns blazing will probably get you killed, but getting your team to use the appropriate weapons and assault techniques for a given situation works much better.

Artificial intelligence is fairly good. Unlike some games of this type, you can usually rely on your men to

form an effective team. Your unit follows the real-life Marine Corps doctrine known as "Ready-Team-Fire-Assist", which dictates that your team moves in a particular formation to provide 360° cover.

For example, when you ascend a staircase, your team will watch all possible angles from which an enemy could approach. They're usually very effective in these roles, and accurate in their shooting. Unfortunately, it only takes one or two shots for you to get killed. If you or two or more members of your team dies, the mission is over.

First to Fight also takes into account factors such as morale and discipline to determine the success of your troops. If you consistently make poor decisions, your men will refuse to take orders, or execute them badly. Making wise decisions and keeping everyone healthy usually results in a squad that follows your orders to a T.

**"Making wise decisions and keeping everyone healthy usually results in a squad that follows your orders to a T"**

There are some glitches in the game that cause members of your squad to do ridiculous things. In some instances orders were ignored. This isn't so bad when you're walking down an empty corridor, but can lead to some scary moments when flanked by insurgents.

A good player should be able to complete First to Fight after about 10 hours of continuous play. It also has a multiplayer mode where you can go head

to head in a team death-match, or play co-operatively with your friends in the single-player campaigns. This can be done via a network or the internet.

On the whole, we enjoyed First to Fight. Its presentation is a little lacking in places, and it has the occasional annoying glitch, but it should appeal to anyone who enjoys squad-based tactical shoot-em-ups.

*Rory Reid*

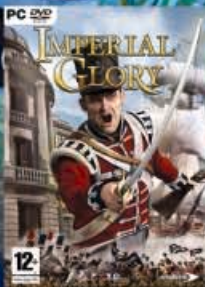




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## Boiling Point: Road to Hell

In Road to Hell, players take control of Saul Myers, a Legionnaire whose daughter has disappeared in the hostile jungles of South America. It's up to you to rescue her, but you'll need more than just a gun to do so.

On the journey, you'll interact with various factions, including the Government and the mafia. Each group will provide assistance, but they don't all get along, so siding with one group will usually lead to another becoming your sworn enemy.

Road to Hell takes place on an enormous map. This makes for some exciting and seamless gameplay, but you may find

yourself wandering around aimlessly looking for a vehicle to get from place to place.

If you're after a quick shooting fix, we'd recommend opting for something else, but if blasting action with a convincing storyline is what you're after, it's worth checking out.

Rory Reid

Info [www.uk.atari.com](http://www.uk.atari.com)  
PEGI age rating 16+  
Also consider Starship Troopers

Overall ★★☆☆

Price £35

## Games Top 10

Here are the top 10 games according to the official UK Leisure Software chart. ©ELSPA. Compiled by Chart Track.



The Sims 2

- 1 Guild Wars**  
£30 (online role-playing) NCSoft Europe
- 2 Half-Life 2**  
£40 (first-person shooter) Sierra
- 3 The Sims 2: University**  
£20 (add-on pack for the Sims) EA Games
- 4 Championship Manager 5**  
£35 (football management) Eidos
- 5 World of Warcraft**  
£35 (online role-playing) Blizzard
- 6 Football Manager 2005**  
£35 (football management) Sega
- 7 The Sims 2**  
£40 (people management) EA Games
- 8 Empire Earth II**  
£35 (real-time strategy) Sierra
- 9 Stronghold 2**  
£35 (real-time strategy) 2K Games
- 10 Pariah**  
£30 (adventure game) HIP Games



## SCAR

**S**CAR: Squadra Corse Alfa Romeo is a racing game unlike any other. It is touted as the first 'CARPG' ever developed, as it combines fast-paced car racing with elements you'd normally associate with role playing games (RPG).

Instead of the usual system of upgrading parts of your car to improve performance (tyres or engine, for example), SCAR uses a skill system consisting of nine different abilities divided into three tiers of experience.

Skills include intimidation, which allows you to scare other drivers into making mistakes, and vision, which lets you turn back time to correct mistakes. The more you race, the more these

skills improve.

It is easy to see how incorporating RPG elements into a racing game could turn out for the worse, but the makers of S.C.A.R have done a fantastic job in marrying the two genres. If you want a realistic racing game with a compelling character-building element, this comes thoroughly recommended.

Rory Reid

Info [www.blackbeangames.com](http://www.blackbeangames.com)  
PEGI age rating 3+  
Also consider GTR – FIA GT Racing Game

Overall ★★★★★

Price £30

## Freedom Force vs The 3rd Reich

If you're a fan of muscular men and women in tight-fitting lycra, then you'll want to check out Freedom Force vs The 3rd Reich. Like the

original Freedom Force game, this is a tactical squad-based adventure full of humorous comic-book touches and colourful graphics.

The action continues where the original Freedom Force left off. Shortly after saving the world, the game's cast must travel back in time to the year 1942 in a bid to defeat the Nazis.

Players control a small troupe of superheroes, destroying anyone foolish enough to get in their way. This can be done by employing super powers, but it is often more fun to use objects strewn around the various levels. Strong characters can pick up cars and hurl them at enemies; and you can even knock your foes off buildings and into the path of oncoming traffic.

The action in Freedom Force vs The 3rd Reich is mostly continuous, but you'll need to pause the game at regular intervals to issue commands to your squad. Keeping track of everything is initially quite tricky, as you'll often have to split the team to take on different enemies in different locations.

Once you get over this minor hurdle, the game becomes a lot of fun. If you have even a passing interest in comic books, or simply want to play something a little different, we recommend Freedom Force vs The 3rd Reich.

Rory Reid



Info [www.digitaljesters.com](http://www.digitaljesters.com)  
PEGI age rating 12+  
Also consider Evil Genius

Overall ★★★★★

Price £30



# Re-record not **fade away**

Personal Video Recorders may have taken some time to become established but they are a vital component in the modern digital home. We showcase some of the options

**A**sk anyone with a Personal Video Recorder (PVR) what they think of the technology and they'll probably tell you it's the best invention since sliced bread. And rare though it may seem these days, PVRs really are worthy of all the hype they receive. Because TV shows are recorded to their built-in **hard disks**, allowing you to watch them whenever you like (rather than when TV executives think you should), they actually change the way you watch television.

The first PVR to launch in the UK was from a US company called TiVo, but although it was an excellent product the whole concept didn't really take off until Sky introduced its Sky+ machine in 2001. This brought the notion of 'timeshifting' to the mainstream, which not only allowed easy access of recordings but also offered never-before-seen features such as the pausing and rewinding of live TV.

Most people are aware that PVRs can act as replacements for video recorders, but the reality is that they're much more flexible than a traditional VCR.

For starters, pretty much all PVRs use an electronic programming guide (EPG). Instead of having to program in the start and end times for shows you want to record you can just browse through a list of shows in the EPG and select the one you want to record by name. Some machines even include a 'Season Pass' or 'Series Link' option that enable the recorder to automatically grab every episode of

your favourite show without you having to program it each week.

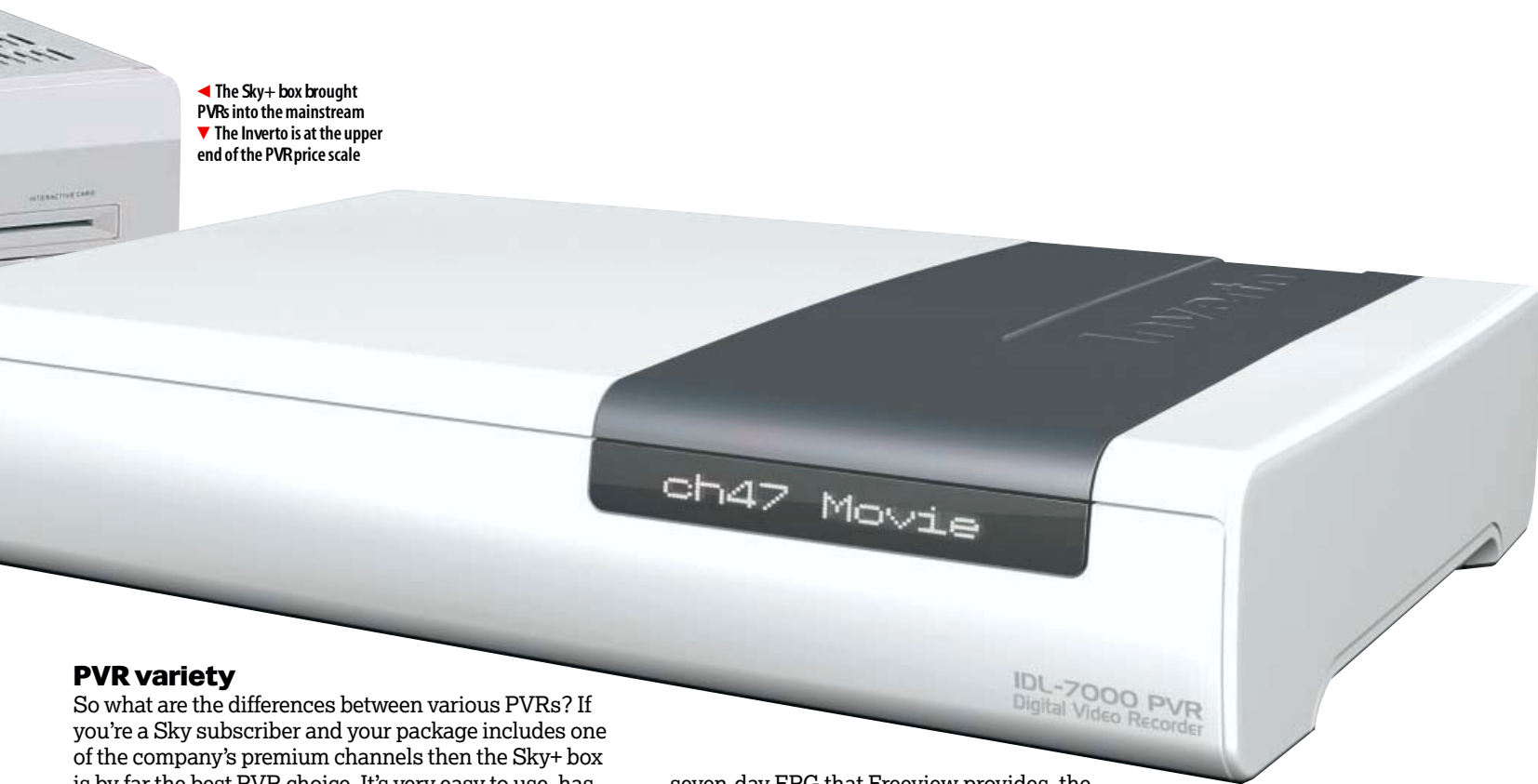
Recorded programs can be viewed by accessing the PVR's on-screen library, scrolling through the list and pressing play on the desired recording. When a show is finished it can be deleted or saved to be viewed again. Some PVRs also have the functionality to output recordings to a VCR or DVD recorder.

## **Lots of space**

The number of shows a PVR can store will depend on the size of its hard disk. Generally you get around 30 minutes of recording time per **gigabyte** of hard disk space. Some PVRs can store more footage by recording shows at a lower quality or by compressing existing recordings so they take up less space. However, Sky+ and most Freeview-compatible PVRs only allow recordings at a single set quality level, so the overall recording time they offer is fixed. For example, the Sky+ 160 has a 160Gb hard disk, which can store 80 hours of TV.

PVRs have other tricks too, such as pausing live TV. If you're watching *EastEnders* and the phone rings, hit the pause button, answer the phone, explain to your mum how her birthday present really did get delayed in the post, and then when the call is finished, press play and rejoin where you left off. Some recorders even record the current channel they are tuned into, allowing you to hit the rewind button and go back to the start of the show.

◀ The Sky+ box brought PVRs into the mainstream  
 ▼ The Inverto is at the upper end of the PVR price scale



## PVR variety

So what are the differences between various PVRs? If you're a Sky subscriber and your package includes one of the company's premium channels then the Sky+ box is by far the best PVR choice. It's very easy to use, has twin tuners that allow two channels to be recording simultaneously, and can automatically record an entire programme series using its 'Series Link' feature. The standard model is available for £149 from Sky's website ([www.sky.com](http://www.sky.com)). Unfortunately, if you're not a subscriber to any of Sky's premium channels, there's a £10 per month fee for the 14-day EPG data.

One of the cheapest PVRs on the market right now is the PVR6240 from Sagem. The unit costs just £130 from Argos and has a 40Gb hard disk that can record around 20 hours of TV. It offers limited features but it does have built-in dual Freeview tuners that can record one digital channel while you watch another.

Another budget option is the Humax PVR-8000T/80GB. It only has a single Freeview tuner on board but it's very easy to use, allows programs to be searched for and recorded by name and, at its current price of £130, it isn't exactly a wallet-drainer.

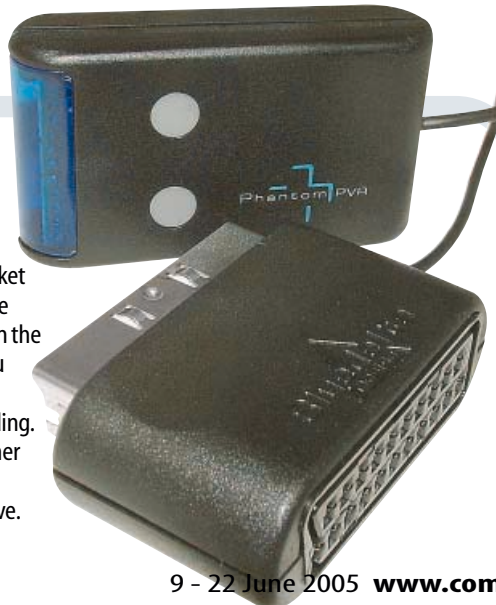
At the pricier end of the market is the Inverto IDL 7000T. It costs £220 and, instead of using the standard

seven-day EPG that Freeview provides, the Inverto uses the 4TV service, which has programming information for 14 days in advance. You can pause live TV, watch one channel while recording another and rewind the channel you are watching by up to an hour. Its 80Gb hard disk also has enough space to store 40 to 60 hours of programming.

## The alternatives

You don't have to use PVRs – there are other options. PCs equipped with Microsoft's Windows XP Media Center 2005 incorporate most PVR characteristics and will store recorded shows on the computer's hard disk. Alternatively, if you have a Windows XP computer with a TV tuner card you can give your PC PVR features by using software such as Showshifter from Home Media Networks.

Niall Magennis



## The cheap way to get a PVR

If you don't fancy upgrading your equipment or can't afford to buy new kit there is a way to make an existing VCR or DVD recorder behave a bit like a PVR. The product is called the Phantom PVR and is available from Bluedelta ([www.bluedelta.co.uk](http://www.bluedelta.co.uk)).

Sky and Freeview set-top boxes generally have a program planner included in their EPG that allows you to mark programs you want to watch during the week. The Phantom takes advantage of this feature.

You teach it the remote control codes for your VCR or DVD recorder and then plug it into the **SCART** socket of your Sky or Freeview box. When the program planner changes channel on the receiver to switch to the program you have set it up to record, the Phantom PVR tells your recorder to start recording. At the end of the show it sends another message to tell the recorder to stop recording. It's simple, but very effective.

## Jargon Buster

Techno babble demystified...

➔ **Gigabyte** (Gb for short) A measurement of storage capacity – usually for hard disks.

➔ **Hard disk** A high-capacity disk drive fitted in almost all PCs and used to store applications and files.

➔ **SCART** A standardised 21-pin connector for two-way traffic of video and audio signals. It is used in Europe to connect domestic audiovisual equipment.

For more on Jargon Buster visit: [www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)



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## Answers to... PC PROBLEMS

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to cure your PC ailments

### Jargon Buster

Techno babble  
demystified...

- ▶ **Cookies** Text files generated by websites you visit and stored on your computer's hard disk.
- ▶ **CRT** The glass tube-based technology used to produce an image in most TVs and monitors.
- ▶ **Desktop** What you see when you first start up a Windows-based PC. The Desktop will display your Taskbar and a selection of icons.
- ▶ **Firewall** A system that prevents unauthorised access to a computer over a network, such as the internet.
- ▶ **Hard disk** A high-capacity disk drive fitted in almost all PCs and used to store applications, documents and files.
- ▶ **Network** A way of connecting several devices so that they can share data.
- ▶ **Resolution** The amount of detail shown in an image, whether on screen or printed.
- ▶ **Router** A device which is used to connect more than one computer together and/or to the internet as an alternative to a modem.
- ▶ **System Tray** Found on the far right of the Taskbar, this displays icons showing which programs are always running in Windows.
- ▶ **VGA** Video Graphics Array. A very basic standard for graphics output.

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[www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)

### The bottom line

**Q** I use Excel a lot and the text in cells is always aligned to the bottom but I prefer centre alignment. Is there any way I can make this the default setting?

*Chris Finn, Beverley*

**A** Click on the Format menu and select Style. Make sure the Style Name is set to Normal and click on the Modify button. Click on the Alignment tab and select Center for vertical in the Text Alignment section. Click on OK and then on OK again.

This change will only apply to the current document. You will need to make this change to the Normal template in order for it to apply to all your new documents. To do this, start a new document and make the change as described above. Then click on the File menu and select Save As. Select Template from the Save as type menu. Click on the My Computer

icon on the left-hand side of the window and double-click on Local Disk (C:), then Documents and Settings, the username you use to log in to Windows, Application Data, Microsoft, Excel and then XLSTART. Type 'Book' in the File Name section and press Enter. Excel will open this template every time it starts and it will include the new formatting. ■

### True colours

**Q** When I apply a background colour to a document in Microsoft Word using the Format menu, the colour appears on the screen as desired. However, when I switch to Print preview mode the document has a white background and if I print the document it comes out with a white background, not the colour I selected. How can I print the document with the coloured background I have chosen?

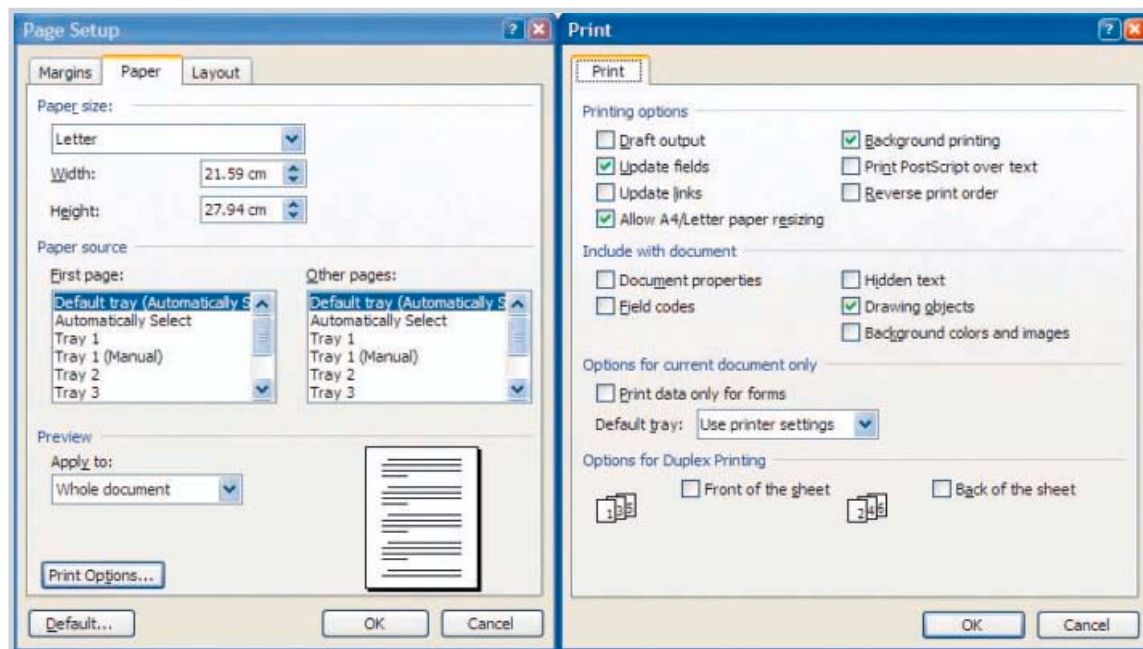
*Bill Dryburgh, Rosyth*

**A** Click on the File menu and select Page Properties. Click on the Paper tab and then select Print Options. Click on the box labelled Background colors and images so that a tick appears. Click on OK in this window and then OK again to save your changes. This change will affect all your Word documents. ■

### Gone but not forgotten

**Q** I use Windows XP Professional and I am having trouble with the Recycle Bin. I can delete items and the icon changes to show that there are files in there, but when I open the Recycle Bin there is nothing there. I can select Empty Recycle Bin but a message appears warning me how many files I am about to delete yet they remain invisible. How can I make these files visible?

*Ray Burrell, via email*



▲ Microsoft Word can print coloured backgrounds, but you have to manually set it up to do so by changing the Print Options

**A** The first thing to check with problems relating to the Recycle Bin is that Windows is actually set up to send files there. Right-click on the Recycle Bin and then click on Properties in the menu that appears. Make sure there is no tick in the box labelled 'Do not move files to the Recycle Bin. Remove files immediately when deleted'. If there is, click in the box to make the tick disappear and then click on OK.

If this does not solve the problem, there is another possible solution. With the Recycle Bin showing that it contains some files, right-click on it and select Empty Recycle Bin. Select Yes from the confirmation box and then restart your computer when it has finished. This should reset the Recycle Bin and make visible any files sent there. ■

## Security files

**Q** While giving my PC a spring clean I came across quite a lot of peculiar files in the Windows folder that I do not recognise. They all begin with the letters KB, followed by a six digit number beginning with eight, such as KB867282.

They all seem to be clustered around two or three dates. When I open them I do not understand the content. Is it safe to delete them?

*L Rostron, via email*

**A** These folders are used to store files used for security updates for your computer and you should not delete them. Most security updates are relatively small in size so there is no real benefit from deleting them. You should assume that any files in the Windows folder are there for a reason and should not be deleted. If you need to make space on your **hard disk** you should either remove programs using Add and Remove Programs in the Control Panel or the Disk Cleanup Wizard.

To start the Cleanup Wizard in XP, click on the Start button and then on the My Computer icon. Right-click on the C: icon and then click on Properties. Click on the Disk Cleanup button, select the different kinds of file to delete in the main windows and then choose OK to tell Windows to delete the files. To start the wizard in Windows 98, double-click on the My Computer icon on the



▲ To avoid deleting important files on your computer by mistake, use the Disk Cleanup Wizard to make more space

**Desktop** to show the C: icon. Follow the Windows XP steps from here. 

## Lost with a map

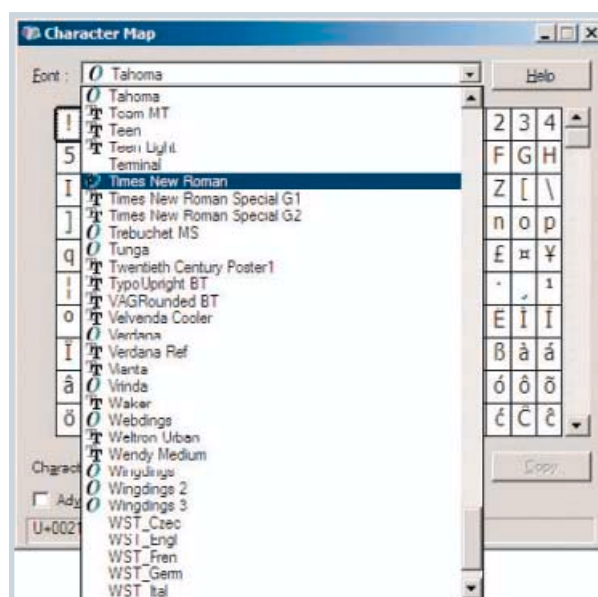
**Q** I read your tip on the Windows Character Map in issue 189 and have since tried to use it. Quite a few of the characters appear as something completely different when I paste them into Word or Excel, even when I've checked that the correct characters are displayed in Character Map. What could be going wrong?

*Tony Oliver, via email*

**A** The Character Map (accessed using Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, then Character Map) allows you to paste any character into your documents. You need to make sure you are using the correct font when you use it – by default, it uses the Symbol font, which is a set of Greek letters and other symbols. If you paste characters from this font into your document, make sure you are using the Symbol font for those characters in the document, otherwise the characters will not show up correctly. You can select which font Character Map uses by choosing it from the drop-down menu at the top of the Character Map dialogue box. ■

## Screen test

**Q** Following your feature on connecting a PC to a plasma screen, I bought a **VGA** cable and hooked up my Sony Vaio VGN-



▲ Make sure the font you're using in your document is selected in Character Map

T1XY notebook computer to my Yamaha plasma television. The plasma immediately displayed the Windows opening screen with the loading bar and then – nothing. The plasma went blank and then displayed ‘no sync. Signal’. The plasma screen would be a brilliant way of showing photos and browsing the web but how can I get it to work?

*Peter Adamson, Wallingford*

**A** This error message means that you are sending a signal to the plasma screen that it cannot display. This particular notebook has a widescreen display and that is incompatible with the plasma screen. You can either change the screen **resolution** in Windows or it

may be possible to set up a signal to the plasma to match its capabilities without changing your notebook's Desktop.

Right-click on an empty part of the Desktop and select Properties from the list that appears. Click on the Settings tab at the top-right of the window. The top half of the screen shows a representation of the monitors that Windows thinks are attached to your computer. If there is only one monitor shown, then it means your notebook sends a copy of what is displayed on its own monitor to your plasma display.

To send a signal that your plasma can use, click on and drag the slider in Screen resolution to one of the following settings: 640 x 480, 800 x 600 or 1024 x 768. Click on Apply to

## We can work it out!

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Contact us by email at [noproblem@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:noproblem@computeractive.co.uk) or by post at: No Problem, Computeractive, 32-34 Broadwick Street, London W1A 2HG. Whether responding by post or email, please include your telephone number and address. Unfortunately, we can't reply personally to your letters and emails or give technical advice over the phone. When sending a query, tell us about your PC and include full information about the hardware and software you're using. Screenshots of your problem would also be useful (try hitting the Print Screen button and then using Paste in the Edit menu of your image processor).

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More problems solved | **turn over**

test the new setting. Do not worry if your notebook's display looks stretched or has black lines down each side – this is just the way it copes with a resolution other than the one it was designed for.

If your notebook is capable of sending a separate signal to the plasma screen there will be a second monitor with a large 2 in the middle of the Settings tab. Move the slider to one of the positions described above and click on Apply. If your plasma is still connected it should start showing the signal from your computer. If you need to be sure which monitor is which, click on the Identify button and Windows will display a large number on each monitor.

If the signal is still unusable by the plasma screen it may be that you need to change the screen refresh rate. Right-click on the monitor that is used by the plasma in the Settings tab in Display Properties and click on Properties. Click on the Monitor tab and select a new refresh rate from the list in the Monitor settings section. Consult your plasma screen's manual for the maximum setting you can use. It will be described as the Vertical frequency and is measured in Hz. 60Hz is safe for most monitors but be careful when making changes to the refresh rate, especially on **CRT** monitors and televisions, as too high a rate can cause damage. Always read the monitor's manual first. ■

## Property management

**Q** What do the terms Read-only and Archive in the File Properties window mean? I have

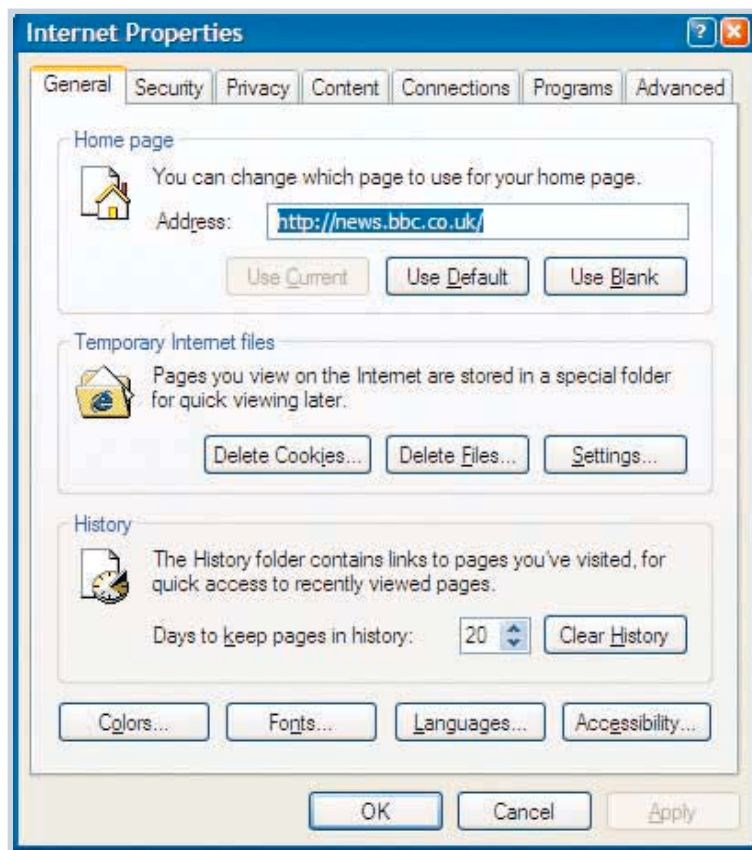
heard one can change these settings by simply clicking in the tick box for Read-only, but what are the benefits in doing this? As I didn't tick these boxes in the first place should they not be left as they are?

*Dave Wareham, via email*

**A** These file properties make sure that Windows treats files in the right way. Read-only prevents anyone from changing or deleting the file unless they first turn this setting off. You can use this to protect important documents – as long as you remember how to turn it off when you want to make changes. Files that you copy to your computer from a CD or DVD will automatically be set to Read-only as you cannot alter them when they are on the discs.

The Archive setting is used by some backup software; if there is a tick in this box the software will make a backup of the file, otherwise it will leave it alone. Any changes made to the file by you or by Windows will make this tick appear in the document properties. It is a legacy from the days before Windows so your backup software may not actually use it. Check its manual for more details.

Windows XP can also compress files to save space on your hard disk. Right-click on a file or folder and select Properties. Click on the Advanced button in the general tab and then click on the option 'Compress contents to save disk space'. Click on OK twice to save your changes. If you opted to compress a folder, a dialogue box will appear asking if you want to



▲ Deleting cookies will foil Yahoo's Web Beacons but you will lose sign-in details for all sites

apply the changes to the contents of the folder. Click on the 'Apply changes to this folder, subfolders and files' option and click on OK. Windows will now compress the files. Compressing files makes extra work for your PC, so it isn't advisable for slow computers. ■

## Keeping my privacy

**Q** I have received an email from someone on a Yahoo Groups mailing list I use, saying that Yahoo is using something called Web Beacons to track

what I am doing on the internet and record every website and group I visit. It gives a link to opt out, but if I do not opt out, is this something that Ad-Aware or SpyBot will take care of?

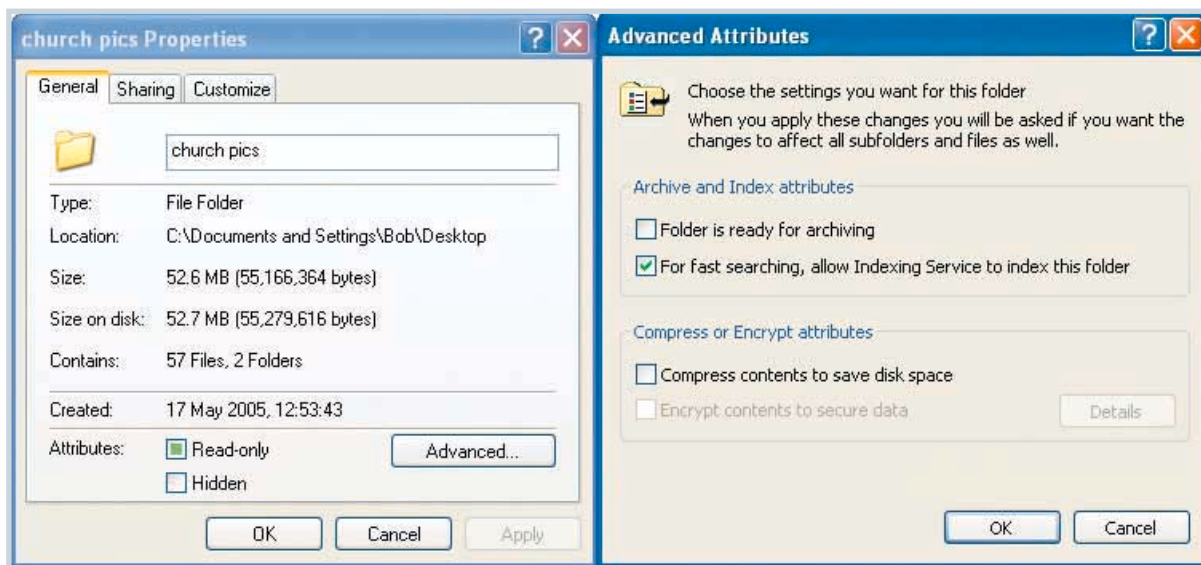
*Ralph Rawlinson, Morecambe*

**A** It is true that Yahoo uses Web Beacons to track users. More details can be found at <http://privacy.yahoo.com/privacy> along with a link to opt out, as you described. The beacons are similar to **cookies**, in that they allow

Yahoo to follow the surfing habits of its users.

The company's privacy statement says that it does not share information that could identify you with its advertisers. Ad-Aware and SpyBot cannot remove the beacons, because they are held on Yahoo's own computers. If you are concerned about the beacons, you should follow the link to opt out of the system.

The best way to make sure you are not being tracked online is to clear your system of cookies. You can do this by going into Internet Explorer, then the Tools menu, then Internet Options, and clicking on Delete Cookies.



▲ Use the settings in File properties to mark files as Read-only, which will prevent them from accidental deletion, or to save disk space by compressing them

Although this will remove all the tracking information from your computer, it could have some unwanted side-effects. Many websites use cookies to automatically log you in, for example. Deleting your cookies will destroy all of this information, so the next time you visit you will have to log in again from scratch. ■

### Spyware dilemma

**Q** I have installed the Microsoft AntiSpyware software on my computer and I would like to know if I can also safely install other software such as Ad-Aware, WinPatrol or SpamPal.

*Euan Scothern, via email*

**A** It is perfectly safe to install other security software on your PC in addition to the Microsoft AntiSpyware program. In fact, there are benefits to doing this as sometimes one will pick up on security issues that another might miss. In any case, SpamPal does a different job to Microsoft AntiSpyware as it detects and removes spam, so they will not interfere with each other. ■

### PCs won't share

**Q** After reading the Wireless made easy feature in issue 187 I decided to install the BT Voyager 2100 **router** to create a **network** between my desktop PC and notebook.

Both PCs run Windows XP Home with Service Pack 2 installed. The desktop is connected to the Voyager 2100 by the wired connection and the notebook uses the wireless (802.11g) connection. Both computers connect to the internet without any problems, but I cannot get them to share files with each other.

I have run the Network Setup Wizard on both machines and ticked the 'Use gateway device for connecting to the internet' option. How do I get the two machines to recognise each other, even though one is wired and the other is wireless?

*Richard Mellor, Congleton, Cheshire*

**A** The method of networking – wired or wireless – should not present a problem, because the router organises the two methods automatically. The problem lies with Windows on both computers.

You should make sure, firstly,

that both are using the same networking settings. Find the My Computer icon in the Start Menu or on the Desktop, and right-click on it, then select Properties. In the dialogue box that appears, click on the Computer Name tab, then note down the computer name and the name of the workgroup that are shown. Make sure the workgroup is the same on both computers, and that the names are different (the computer description does not matter). If the workgroups are different, click on the Change button and change the name so that both match, then click on OK and follow any instructions that appear.

You must also make sure that any **firewall** you use is set up to accept connections to and from other computers. For the Windows Firewall, go to the Control Panel and click on Windows Firewall, then click on the Exceptions tab. Make sure there is a tick in the box for File and Printer Sharing, then click on OK. Repeat the process on the other computer.

Finally, make sure you have some shared folders on one or both of the computers. To share a folder, right-click on it and select Sharing and Security, then tick the box marked 'Share this folder on the network' and give it a name, then click on OK and follow any prompts that appear. ■

### Difficult Desktop

**Q** I was trying to change the size of the icons on my Desktop when I inadvertently clicked on the wrong setting. I am now in a situation that the Properties box is too big for my screen and I cannot see the OK button to confirm my corrections to the theme. The screen is also grey as opposed to the original blue.

*Eve Jones, via email*

**A** The easiest way to restore your settings is to use the Themes tab in Display Properties. Right-click on your Desktop and select Properties. Click in the drop-down menu in the Themes tab and select Windows XP. Press Enter to confirm your change and Windows should return to how it was when you first used your computer. You can use Enter as a shortcut for OK in most windows, although it is better to be sure that you are pressing the right button by using the mouse. ■

## READERS TO THE RESCUE...

Can you help your fellow readers? Do you need a problem solved? Join our forum dedicated to PC trouble-shooting at [www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)

### THE PROBLEM

Is there a program that I can download to enable me to make use of the print screen button on my keyboard? I have Windows XP.

*P Brover, issue 186*

### YOUR ANSWER

I have found Printkey 200 to be very useful. It is freeware, only 560Kb, and can be used on Windows 98/SE/ME/XP. It can be downloaded from [www.webtree.ca/newlife/printkey\\_info.htm](http://www.webtree.ca/newlife/printkey_info.htm).  
*Stevieb, via email*

### THE PROBLEM

I used to have an arrow that let me display the unused icons in my **System Tray** but it has vanished and all of the icons are shown. How can I return to hiding these icons?

*Andrew Perry, Computeractive forum*

### YOUR ANSWER

Right-click on an empty space on the Taskbar, select Properties and then Taskbar. Click on Hide Inactive Icons to place a tick in the box, then on Apply. If you want to set some icons to always be visible, click on the Customise button next to that option and make sure your icons aren't set to hide when inactive. If you make any changes, click on OK, then remember to click on Apply before clicking on OK again.

*Gill, Computeractive forum*

### THE PROBLEM

If I insert figure one in cell A1 in Excel how do I get the incremental numbers down to cell A50 automatically? Is this also possible with dates such as Monday to Sunday?

*Buddy, Computeractive forum*

### YOUR ANSWER

Type 1 in A1, 2 in A2 then highlight these two cells. Move the mouse to the bottom right-hand corner of the selection so it changes to a black plus. Click and drag from here down to row 50. It needs the first two numbers to know by how much to increment. Similarly, type "Monday" in a cell and drag the bottom right of the cursor for as many weeks as you want to repeat.

*Mgmcc, Computeractive forum*

## Your help wanted

If you can answer the questions below, or have questions you want answered, write to the No Problem address given on the left, or go to our website: [www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)

### THE PROBLEM

Is it possible to add a JPG image to a Database in Microsoft Works? When I follow the Help instructions all I end up with is the text <picture>.

*David Williams, Computeractive forum*

### THE PROBLEM

I have an old Toshiba notebook and the battery will no longer hold a charge. Is it possible to have the battery rebuilt or must I replace it?

*Maurice Chapman, Computeractive forum*

# Site seeing...

Motoring is about more than traffic jams. We look at four sites that celebrate the exciting side of cars

Go to [www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk) to find quick links to all these featured websites

## www.oldclassiccar.co.uk

OldClassicCar is the perfect place to find information and contact other enthusiasts about classic cars. There is no shortage of articles about caring for vintage cars, as well as plenty of safety advice. If you are considering buying a classic car, there are plenty of links to follow and a handy guide to things you should avoid.



## www.porsche.co.uk

Porsche makes some of the most desirable cars in the world and its British website has everything you need to know about the cars. You can play audio and video clips of the cars starting and racing off into the distance. More serious dreaming is possible with the car configuration tool giving you the opportunity to build your dream car.



## www.bbc.co.uk/topgear

With a new season of car reviews and offbeat features, Top Gear is about the lighter side of motoring. The website has a leaderboard of celebrities' driving skills, and you can take part in the 2005 survey. The site is worth checking out just for the video of their attempts to break a Toyota Hilux truck using fire, water and a demolished tower block.



## www.uglycars.co.uk

A website guaranteed to make you feel better about your car – unless you happen to find it listed here, uglycars.co.uk pays tribute to cars without style. Each car is rated for style and awarded a paper bag rating to represent how embarrassed any passengers should be if they are seen in one. Good for a quick look to ease the stress levels.



## SITE OF THE FORTNIGHT

### www.dslzoneuk.net

DSLZoneuk.net is a great source of information about broadband. There are comparisons between many broadband providers and tools for checking your connection speed. Providers are rated by their users for speed and reliability. The download time calculator is useful for comparing gains given by different connection speeds, and a news section lists BT exchanges that have recently been broadband-enabled and those to be enabled soon.



▲ Get information on broadband on the double

## FREE Downloads

We've trawled the internet to test what you can get for free...

### ITUNES 4.8

[www.computeractive.co.uk/2129121](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/2129121)

#### Watch video using iTunes

The latest version of iTunes now supports video files and fixes a security problem from the previous version.

Type: Freeware

File size: 19.5Mb

Download at 56K: 1 hour



Overall ★★★★★

### AVAST ANTIVIRUS

[www.computeractive.co.uk/2128339](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/2128339)

#### Free antivirus protection

Virus protection is essential whether you use broadband or dial-up. AVAST antivirus will scan your computer and protect you from any new threats.

Type: Freeware

File size: 8.81Mb

Download at 56K: 31 minutes



Overall ★★★★★

### FIRETUNE FOR FIREFOX

[www.computeractive.co.uk/2135450](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/2135450)

#### Get the most from Firefox

Quickly optimise Firefox – just select the speed of your computer and of your internet connection and Firtune will tune it up. Firtune can back up your old settings in case you want to undo its changes.

Type: Freeware

File size: 915Kb

Download at 56K: 3 minutes



Overall ★★★★★

### WEATHER WATCHER

[www.computeractive.co.uk/2128923](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/2128923)

#### Is it raining outside?

Weather Watcher will keep you up to date with the weather in your area. It can also download weather satellite images to use as your Desktop wallpaper.

Type: Freeware

File size: 1.24Mb

Download at 56K: 3 minutes



Overall ★★★★★

### ARCADE CLASSIC ARCADE PACK

[www.computeractive.co.uk/2135459](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/2135459)

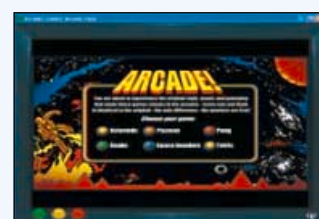
#### Enjoy all the old classics

This program includes six classic games in their original glory: Asteroids, Snake, Pacman, Space Invaders, Pong and Tetris.

Type: Freeware

File size: 560Kb

Download at 56K: 2 minutes



Overall ★★★★★

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tiscali.

# Win **2K Games** products and a notebook worth over **£2,400!**

Get in combat training with First to Fight

**C**lose Combat: First to Fight puts you in the place of the toughest soldiers around – the marines. In this first-person shooter, you lead a four-man fire team of United States Marines through the perils of urban combat in the Middle East.

We have teamed up with the game's publisher, 2K Games, to give 20 readers a copy of the game each. One lucky winner will also receive an Alienware 51m-7700 notebook computer on which to play the game.

While developing the game, its makers worked with marines on active duty. They were on hand to make sure the game is as realistic as possible – down to how marines move, how they talk, and the tactics they employ on the field of battle. The game even replicates what it feels like to be in a fire fight and the way battles sound. Close Combat: First to Fight gets you as close as possible to being in the thick of the action with the marines.

The notebook computer features a blisteringly fast Pentium 4 processor running at 3.6GHz, as well as 1Gb of DDR2 memory and nVidia GeForce Go 6800 graphics with 256Mb of dedicated memory. There is also a Creative Sound Blaster Audigy 2 ZS sound card for extra-high-quality sound for your games, music and DVDs. The notebook

## WHAT YOU CAN WIN

First prize – Alienware 51m-7700 notebook computer and a copy of Close Combat: First to Fight  
19 runners-up – a copy of Close Combat: First to Fight

has a 17in widescreen display and comes with Windows XP Home Edition, an 80Gb hard disk and a DVD combo drive that reads DVDs and writes CD-R and CD-RW discs.

The winner of the notebook will also receive a copy of Close Combat: First to Fight, and 19 runners-up will each receive a copy of the game.

## How to enter

For a chance to win these great prizes, answer the question below and return it to us before 23 June to: 2K Games competition, Computeractive, PO Box 10218,

Sutton Coldfield, B76 1ZB.

Alternatively, you can enter online at [www.computeractive.co.uk/competition](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/competition).  
[www.2kgames.com](http://www.2kgames.com)



◀ Be the best, with an Alienware notebook and First to Fight

## 2K GAMES COMPETITION

### How to enter by post

Just answer the following question and send the answer, to arrive by 23 June 2005, to: 2k Games competition, Computeractive, PO Box 10218, Sutton Coldfield, B76 1ZB.  
Please complete the entry form in clear, block capitals.

### Question

**What type of combatant do you play in Close Combat: First to Fight?**

- a) A pilot ☐
- b) A driver ☐
- c) A marine ☐

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone no: \_\_\_\_\_

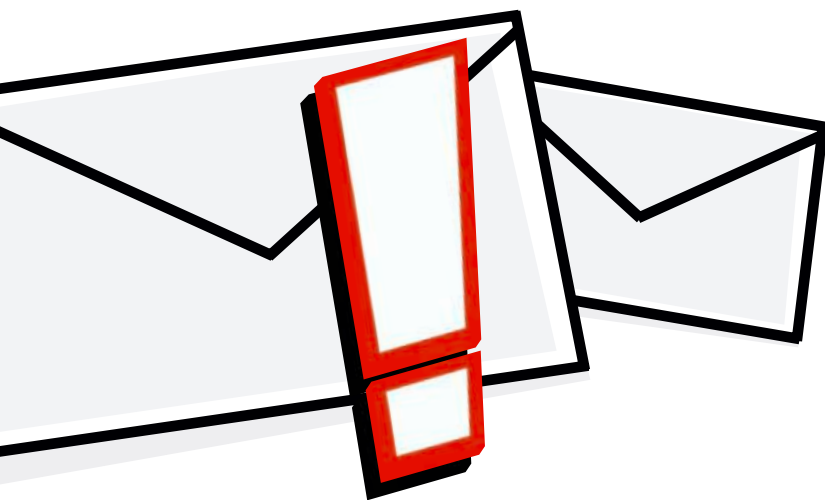
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Congratulations

The winners of issue 185's competition are: Vernon Anderson of Chippenham, Rob Davies of Birmingham, Gerald Dawson of Slough, Michael Emmen of Penrith, Bruce Fox of Sutton-in-Ashfield, Stewart Hunter of Glasgow, David Longson of Chesterfield, John McMurtry of Larne, Dawn Webb of Derby and K A Williams of Frome. Each will receive a Rio Carbon 5Gb media player.

Standard competition rules apply. Competition not open to employees of 2K Games or VNU Business Publications. There is no cash alternative and the Editor's decision is final. Offer applies to UK and Irish Republic only. Photocopied forms, postcards or sealed envelopes with the answers on the back are also acceptable. Only one entry per household. Email entries not accepted. We may use your contact details to communicate with you regarding Computeractive. ☐ I am a subscriber to Computeractive. We may use the contact details supplied to communicate with you regarding PCW. ☐ I am a subscriber to PCW. Email: ☐ Tick box to receive information about other products and services from the VNU Group by email. ☐ Tick box to receive information about products and services from selected companies by email. Postal/telephone: ☐ Tick box if you do not want to receive information about other products and services from the VNU. ☐ Tick box if you do not want to receive information about products and services from selected companies by post/telephone.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [WWW.2KGAMES.COM](http://WWW.2KGAMES.COM)**



We want your opinions! Write to us on any of the topics covered in Computeractive



**Star letter**

## Make a donation



In nearly every issue of *Computeractive* you refer people to free anti-spyware programs and other software, for example SpyBot Search and Destroy. I followed your advice and have had this quick and thorough product installed for some time now. What is never said is that although it is genuinely free and not limited in either time or functions, donations are appreciated for its maintenance.

I would like to make an appeal to readers: when free software has been installed,

tested and found to meet expectations, give a thought to making a donation where possible. If every user each sent just a few pounds it would encourage the developers to maintain and evolve their products. The developer behind SpyBot has obviously put a lot of time and effort into putting together and maintaining the software.

But his time has a value and where else can you try a product as many times and for as long as you like before deciding you want it? It makes sense to give people like him a bit of financial support for their efforts. If software developers like him weren't around we would have no choice but to buy commercial software in sealed packets – no trial, no return.

*Paul Denyer, Havant*

Some commercial packages do offer free trials, but we agree with Mr Denyer that it would be a good thing to make a small donation.



### Take the strain

I read the review of desktop sets in issue 189 with interest and I got to thinking about a particular problem I have been having.

I use a computer almost solidly five days a week. The issue of RSI in the wrists has been addressed on many occasions and keyboards and mouse mats often have padded rests built in. I have not had a problem with my wrists, but rather with my right index finger due to repeated mouse clicks. I have swollen joints in the finger and stiffness and pain in the tendon extending back into my hand, which is presumably RSI, but is now known as Mouse Finger in my office.

I am attempting to train myself to use the middle finger of my right hand, although this is somewhat awkward. I wonder if mouse manufacturers have considered this issue or whether other people have found a way around this painful problem?

*Mel Hollwoger, West Runton*

There are other devices you can use instead of a mouse – trackballs, for example, usually allow you to operate mouse keys with the thumb, while some keyboards include a trackball that is operated with the right hand while the mouse buttons, also on the board, are operated with the left. We are planning a feature on this subject in September, but in the meantime, our corporate charity, Abilitynet, gives lots of

good advice on this matter. Visit [www.abilitynet.org.uk/myway/keyboard/instead/alt-mice.htm](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/myway/keyboard/instead/alt-mice.htm) for more information.

As for your issues at work, employers have a responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure staff can use equipment without damage to their health. Speak to your Human Resources department about this.



### Candid camera

I have always found your Workshops a pleasant way of brushing up my computer skills

but must question the usefulness of the home security Workshop in issue 190.

As someone who is regularly away from home for long periods, I am obviously concerned with home security. However, employing a webcam to keep an eye on things when I am abroad is hardly practical. Firstly, it would require me to leave my PC on for an extended period, contrary to all safety advice that urges me to switch off and unplug electrical appliances. Secondly, the ability to receive warning emails or videos

**Computer  
active**



EACH ISSUE, the writer of our Star letter will receive a NEC ND3540A dual-layer DVD drive, enabling one hour of DVD video to be recorded in just six minutes and up to 8.5Gb to be stored on one disc. With 32-speed CD-burning capability, it is also a versatile and cost-effective solution for burning CDs.

For more information on the NEC ND3540A drive and other NEC products, go to [www.nec.co.uk](http://www.nec.co.uk).

Have your say; email us at [letters@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:letters@computeractive.co.uk) or write to us at: Letters, Computeractive, VNU Business Publications, 32-34 Broadwick Street, London W1A 2HG.

To be considered for the Star letter prize, please include your full name and address. We cannot offer technical assistance or reply personally to correspondence but all letters are read by our staff.

assumes the proper functioning of the internet connection. Unfortunately, even broadband has a habit of failing fairly regularly in my part of London.

Even assuming that everything is functioning properly, how am I to proceed? Am I to spend hours hunched over a monitor in a Bangkok internet cafe? And what if I do detect an intruder? I can hardly take speedy action and by the time the police or neighbours are alerted, the culprit will be long gone. The only result will have been to ruin my holiday.

*Kenneth Milton, via email*

## Legalised robbery

For decades now the music industry has charged more for CDs in the UK than the US or the rest of Europe, and it is disheartening that this trend continues in the digital age.

While not the most expensive source of legal downloads, Apple's iTunes cannot justify its pricing policy. iTunes restricts customers in the UK to buying only from its UK site. Songs cost 99 cents in Europe, but 79p in the UK. This makes buying a song in the UK over 10p per song more expensive, on current exchange rates, than in Dublin or Paris.

It is getting harder to justify these price differentials. It is simply not good enough for companies to say that we should be comparing the price to other UK sites, and that as CDs are cheaper in the US it is reasonable to charge more for a download here.

Fortunately, the Office of Fair Trading and consumer organisation, Which?, agree and have made an official complaint to the European Commission that Apple is preventing cross-border shopping. In the meantime the UK customer will continue to pay more – hardly an inducement to use a legal download source.

*Paul Holmes, Ossett*

## Parents not to blame

I found the attitude of the London School of Economics (LSE) in your article in issue 189 pretty offensive. The LSE's argument that a parent who isn't computer-savvy and web-wise is letting their child down, "stifling their



▲ Are technophobe parents letting their kids down? Let us know your views

education and reducing their job prospects", is rubbish. Students may increasingly rely on the internet for homework and job applications, but I can't accept that this is a matter that will be crucial in their development.

The internet is too often held up as a fount of knowledge but most of us soon realise that while the web is broad in its information, generally speaking, it is not deep. If research and serious study is to be undertaken, children need to be guided towards pertinent source material – and surely this is the job of a teacher rather than the parent. It matters little if the information is contained on a website or in a book, as long as the child knows where to look. Too much emphasis is placed on internet usage in education, not computer usage. It is up to adults to decide how best to keep their children safe online, but letting their kids down educationally by not being web gurus? Sorry, no.

*Steve Dempster, Malvern*

## Bothered and bewildered

The article in issue 190 about older users being bewildered about new technology rang true. As one of your 'older users' I agree that terms used to describe new technology can be confusing.

However, I find that this problem can be overcome by

seeking clarification from my son or grandson. What really is confusing is the amount of technology in a new piece of equipment. I am about to change my mobile phone but all I want is one where I can speak to someone and they can speak

to me or perhaps even send text messages to each other. I also want a phone book that is easily accessed. I need nothing more. When I explain this to a shop assistant I get the feeling they want to pat me on the head while saying "there there, never mind".

Incidentally, whilst on techno babble, the Jargon Buster on page 7 begins its definition of USB 2 by saying it is "faster but backwardly-compatible." What does that mean? Sounds rude to me.

*Norman Groves, via email*

Backwardly compatible means the device in question will work with older software or devices so a **USB** device can connect to a **USB 2** device. Mr Groves may also be pleased to read in this issue that calls for simpler mobile phones are being heeded – see page 9.

## Two strikes and you're out

On reading the news item concerning PC World's £36k 'mistake' in issue 189, I gather the contradiction in what PC World had stated did not strike them at all.

The 'comprehensive processes' they have in place to 'ensure that mistakes are not made' are definitely in tatters now, especially since not one but two 'mistakes' were made. It would appear, therefore, that their

'comprehensive processes' will now need a 'comprehensive rewrite'.

*Robin Rae, Chipping Sodbury*

## Who is responsible?

You say that it's the user's responsibility to wipe personal data before returning a computer or camera. However, in most cases, an item is returned because it does not work, which would prevent the user from doing this. So it is not a clear-cut situation. Both parties have a role to play in keeping personal data secure, and the shop/retailer has a 'duty of care' towards the consumer.

*Gary McGuinness, via email*

If a consumer returns goods just because they don't want them then they should ensure they have wiped data off a **hard disk** or **memory card**. We realise this is problematic if the goods are faulty; in such cases some companies hand the corrupt disk or card back to the consumer; some, however, decide to reuse these and therefore they should wipe the drive. If this is the case then they are under a duty of care to ensure data is completely wiped off and they will also have to let consumers know that the drive or card is second-hand and not sell it as new.

## Jargon Buster

### Techno babble demystified...

- ➔ **Hard disk** A high-capacity disk drive fitted in almost all PCs and used to store applications, documents and files.
- ➔ **Memory card** Small cards that can store many megabytes (Mb) of computer data or documents.
- ➔ **USB** Universal Serial Bus. A standard that allows quick and easy connection of external peripherals to your PC.
- ➔ **USB 2** Faster but backwardly-compatible successor to USB that's used by such things as MP3 players and external disk drives.

For more on Jargon Buster visit:  
[www.computeractive.co.uk](http://www.computeractive.co.uk)

## Corrections and clarifications

It is Computeractive's policy to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please email [letters@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:letters@computeractive.co.uk) with any important corrections.

In issue 184, the phone number and web address for the BT shop in the review of the BT Aviator should be 0800 102800 and [www.shop.bt.com](http://www.shop.bt.com).

Our Best Buys are a selection of the best products reviewed in Computeractive in recent months. Those selected are not necessarily winners of our **Buy It!** award but they have fared well enough in our tests to warrant consideration. The prices were correct at the time of printing but use them as a rough guide. The prices we print are suggested retail prices. For the latest, lowest prices on a wide range of products go to [www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices](http://www.computeractive.co.uk/activeprices)

| PRODUCT | TYPE | WE SAY | PRICE | ISSUE | RATING | AWARD |
|---------|------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
|---------|------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|

## PCs

|                             |                        |                                                                      |           |     |       |         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----|-------|---------|
| Apple Mac mini              | PowerPC G4 1.42GHz     | It's ideal as a stylish second computer for the living room or kids. | £589/£339 | 184 | ★★★★★ |         |
| Mesh Matrix Fireblade CAX   | AMD Athlon 64 3800+    | An excellent PC by any standards. Handles anything you throw at it.  | £1,300    | 186 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Evesham Axis AK47           | AMD Athlon 64 3700+    | A powerful PC with half an eye on the future.                        | £1,299    | 190 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Hi-Grade DMS II 3400        | Intel Pentium 4 3.4GHz | A feature-rich, quiet home entertainment PC.                         | £1,099    | 189 | ★★★★★ |         |
| Intellect ProDesk A64/2800S | AMD Athlon 64 2800     | Excellent office and internet performance for a budget PC.           | £499      | 184 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |

## Notebooks

|                        |                           |                                                                |        |     |       |         |
|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|---------|
| Mesh Centrino PCI-X CA | Intel Pentium M 1.8GHz    | A very capable notebook with excellent battery life.           | £899   | 190 | ★★★★★ |         |
| Asus W5343A-BH         | Intel Pentium M 1.6GHz    | Seriously good looking and very portable.                      | £1,291 | 187 | ★★★★★ |         |
| Sony Vaio VGN-S3XP     | Intel Pentium M760 2GHz   | Can do everything a desktop PC can, but at a hefty price.      | £1,800 | 188 | ★★★★★ |         |
| Cybercom MD42792       | AMD Athlon 2600+          | Not the most powerful notebook but comes with loads of extras. | £799   | 175 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Evesham Voyager X4     | Intel Pentium M725 1.6GHz | It's small, looks good and offers great value for money.       | £849   | 181 | ★★★★★ |         |

## Printers

|                                     |                      |                                                                           |      |     |       |         |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|-------|---------|
| HP LaserJet 1020                    | Laser printer        | Economical and fast, great for the home.                                  | £93  | 190 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Sony Digital Photo Printer DPP-FP30 | Photo printer        | Expensive running costs but excellent long-lasting prints.                | £150 | 186 | ★★★★★ |         |
| HP Photosmart 8450                  | Colour inkjet        | A stunning printer that produces superb prints of all kinds.              | £249 | 183 | ★★★★★ |         |
| HP psc1215                          | Multifunction device | A compact device that offers excellent print quality and value for money. | £70  | 169 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Lexmark P315                        | Laser printer        | Only works with digital cameras and memory cards but it's very cheap.     | £100 | 187 | ★★★★★ |         |

## Peripherals

|                                          |                    |                                                              |      |     |       |         |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|-------|---------|
| LG GSA-4163B DVD writer                  | Removable storage  | Supports every media format going and for less than £50.     | £45  | 186 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| CTX P972L                                | Monitor            | A stylish and very reasonably priced 19in TFT monitor.       | £323 | 179 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Miglia HarmonyExpress                    | Sound card         | An impressive and affordable sound card fitted on a USB key. | £35  | 182 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Ozenda 11g Wireless ADSL Firewall Router | Networking         | An easy-to-use wireless ADSL modem at a great price.         | £71  | 171 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Logitech Cordless Desktop LX501          | Keyboard and mouse | Not the cheapest but a very solid desktop set.               | £60  | 170 | ★★★★★ |         |

## Software

|                                         |                  |                                                                             |        |     |       |         |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|---------|
| Half Life 2                             | Game             | Up there with the best computer games ever made.                            | £40    | 177 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Apple iLife '05                         | Utility software | Four powerful and easy-to-use mac programs for just under £50.              | £49    | 186 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Ufly4less                               | Utility software | The easiest way to track down and book low-cost flights.                    | £25p/a | 190 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Roxio Easy Media Creator 7.5 Supersonic | Media management | A vast collection of music, video and image-editing tools.                  | £70    | 188 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| F-Secure Internet Security              | Utility software | A low-cost, all-in-one security system that requires very little attention. | £39p/a | 186 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |

## Gadgets

|                                       |                        |                                                                  |      |     |       |         |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----|-------|---------|
| Fujifilm FinePix F455                 | Digital camera         | Great price for a great camera.                                  | £260 | 183 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Creative Sound Blaster Wireless Music | Media-streaming device | Its remote makes it the best audio-streaming device of its type. | £150 | 176 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Creative Zen Micro                    | Digital music player   | For its size, it's the best equipped player on the market.       | £190 | 179 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |
| Buffalo Linkstation                   | Networking             | A clever way of storing and sharing your files on a network.     | £149 | 185 | ★★★★★ |         |
| Ricoh Caplio R1v                      | Digital camera         | No memory card but otherwise a good, affordable camera.          | £200 | 184 | ★★★★★ | BUY IT! |

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|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|
| C20 | C40 | 400  | 440  | 460 | 480 |
| 580 | 600 | 640  | 660  | 670 | 700 |
| 740 | 750 | 760  | 800  | 850 | 860 |
| 880 | 980 | 1160 | 1520 |     |     |

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Black Ink Cartridge       | £1.79 each |
| Colour Ink Cartridge      | £2.79 each |
| Twin Pack (1 Blk & 1 Clr) | £3.79      |

## Epson Stylus

|     |      |      |     |     |        |
|-----|------|------|-----|-----|--------|
| C42 | C44  | C46  | C60 | C62 | CX3200 |
| 680 | 770  | 790  | 810 | 830 | 870    |
| 875 | 890  | 895  | 900 | 915 | 925    |
| 935 | 1270 | 1290 |     |     |        |

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Black Ink Cartridge       | £2.79 each |
| Colour Ink Cartridge      | £3.79 each |
| Twin Pack (1 Blk & 1 Clr) | £4.99      |

## Epson Stylus

|        |        |        |        |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| C64    | C66    | C70    | C80    |
| C82    | C84    | C86    | CX3600 |
| CX5200 | CX5400 | CX6600 | RX420  |

|                           |            |
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## Epson Stylus Photo

|       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|
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| RX500 | RX600 |       |

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
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| Colour Ink Cartridge     | £2.79 each |
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| 256Mb £11.49  | 256Mb £12.99 | 256Mb £17.69 | 512Mb £32.25 | 256Mb £13.99       |
| 512Mb £23.89  | 512Mb £25.25 |              | 1Gb £55.25   | 512Mb £26.99       |
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|                                      |       |
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| RX420, 425, R800, 950                | £3.79 |
| Epson Stylus Photo (black or colour) |       |
| 2100, 2200                           | £2.79 |

## Canon Compatible Cartridges

|                                              |        |
|----------------------------------------------|--------|
| BCI 24 (black or colour)                     |        |
| Single cartridge                             | £1.79  |
| Bundle (3 black & 3 colour)                  | £8.99  |
| BCI 3e (black or colour)                     |        |
| Single cartridge                             | £1.99  |
| Bundle (2 black & 2 of each C, M, Y)         | £11.99 |
| BCI 6 (black or colour)                      |        |
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| C6656A | 56        | Black  | £10.99 |
| C6657A | 57        | Colour | £17.28 |
| C6658A | 58        | Photo  | £13.99 |

## Genuine Lexmark Cartridges

| Code    | Model No. | Price  |
|---------|-----------|--------|
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| Canon Compatibles Each**   | SO20093 Bk £1.16    | TO26 Bk £1.75      | TO38 Bk £1.75        | HP Compatibles Each** Pt Ex   | C8728 Col £11.74 £8.21       | 12A1990 Photo £14.09 £10.56 |
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| BCI-21 Bk £1.16            | SO20187 Bk £1.16    | TO29 Col £2.34     | TO431 HCBK £2.93     | 51633 Bk £7.04 £4.69          | 51645\51823 TP £15.26 £9.39  | 17G0060 Col £11.74 £8.21    |
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| BCI-3 Bk £1.46             | TO07\08 TP £4.10    | TO41 Col £2.34     | TO482\3or4 £2.34     | C4844 Bk £8.21 £5.86          | C6615\6625 TP £16.44 £10.56  | 17G0050\60 TP £21.14 £15.26 |
| BCI-3 CMorY £1.16          | TO09 Photo £2.93    | TO40\41 TP £3.51   | TO485or6 £2.34       | C5010 Col £8.21 £4.69         | C6656\6657 TP £19.96 £14.09  | 18L0032\42 TP £25.84 £19.96 |
| BCI-3 QP £4.69             | TO07\09 TP £4.10    | TO321 Bk £2.93     | TO481-6 SP £12.33    | C5011 Bk £7.04 £4.69          | C8727\8728 TP £19.96 £14.09  | Refill Kits/Inks Black Col  |
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6th June - 22nd June 2005

### epson compatible

stylus colour (standard cartridges)

200, 400, 440, 460, 480, 500, 580, 600, 640, 660, 670 photo 700, 740, 750, 760, 800, 850, 860, 880, 900, 980, 1160, 1200, 1520, EX, C20, C40 scan 2000, 2500

\*black from £1.12  
\*colour from £1.85  
when bought in packs of 8  
\*pairs from £2.38  
when buying 8 pairs

stylus colour (chipped)

680, 777, photo 790, 810, 820, 830, 870, 890, 895, 900, 915, 925, C42, C44, C46, C50, C60, C62, CX3200, photo 1270, 1290

\*black from £2.10  
\*colour from £2.60  
when bought in packs of 10  
\*pairs from £3.89  
when buying 10 pairs

stylus colour (chipped)

photo 950, 2100,

black from £2.50  
colour from £2.50(e)  
when bought in packs of 3

C64/C66/C84/C86

black from £2.66  
colour from £2.66(e)  
when bought in packs of 3  
full set £11.49

C70/C80/C82/CX5200  
CX5400

black from £2.66  
colour from £2.66(e)  
when bought in packs of 3  
full set £11.49

R200/R300/RX500/  
RX600

black from £2.50  
colour from £2.50(e)  
full set from £14.00  
when buying 10 + sets

RX420 / RX425

black from £2.62  
colour from £2.62(e)  
when bought in packs of 5  
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when buying 5 sets

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photo matt CD labels (x50) £5.99  
photo gloss CD labels (x20) £3.99  
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### canon compatible

BCI 10 black

BJ30, BJC50, 70, 80, 55, 85, BN700, starwriter jet 300, 500, 4000 £1.50 each

BCI 11 black / colour

BJC50, 70, 80, 85, BN7000, starwriter jet 350c, 550c black £1.00 colour £2.00

BCI 21 black / colour

BJC2000, 4000, 5000 Multipass C20, C30, C50 black £1.50 colour £2.00 1 pair £3.00 3 pairs £8.50

BCI 24 black / colour

S200, S300, i320, i450 i470, i570 black £1.50 colour £2.00 1 pair £3.00 5 pairs £12.00

BCI 3 / 3 photo

BJC3000, 6000 series, S400, S450, 4500, S6300, S6500, i550, i850 £2.00 black/colour £5.99 for 4

BCI 6 / 6 photo

BJC8000, S8000, i950, S9000, i9100 £2.00 black/colour £5.99 for 4

### canon remanufactured

BC 02 black £9.38 £5.99  
BC 05 colour £11.75 £7.99  
BJ150, 210, 240, 250 1000 series £10.49 £5.99

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BJC2000, 2100, 2110, 4000, 4100, 4200, 4300, 4400, 4550, 4650, 5500, MPC-20,

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### hp remanufactured

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HP C6657A colour £14.99  
PSC 2210, 2115, 2110, 1210, 1205, 1110, 1200, 1300, 5552, 5550, 7600

HP 51626A black £ 8.95 £5.99  
desk jet 400, 500

HP 51625A colour £ 9.99 £7.99  
desk jet 400, 500

HP 51629A black £ 9.15 £5.99  
desk jet 600, 660c, 690c 693c, 694c, 695c, 697c

HP C6614A black (HP20) 40ml Superfill £ 9.34 £5.99  
desk jet 610, 615, 640 925xi fax

HP 51649A colour £13.49 £7.99  
desk jet 600, 600c, 625c 660c, 670c, 690c, 691c 693c

HP 51645A black £ 7.99 £5.99  
desk jet 710, 715, 720 722, 815, 820, 850, 870 880, 890, 895, 950, 970 1100, 1120, 1600

HP C6615D black (42ml) Superfill £ 7.99 £5.99  
desk jet 810c, 840c 843c, PSC 500

HP C1823D colour (38ml) Superfill £12.98 £7.99  
desk jet 710c, 715c 720c, 722c, 810c, 815 880c, 890c, 895, 1120 PSC 500

HP C6625A colour (38ml) Superfill £13.99 £7.99  
desk jet 840c, 843c

HP C6578A (38ml) Superfill £13.99 £7.99  
desk jet 930, 950 970CXI, 1220, G55 G85, G95

### Lexmark remanufactured

12A1970 black £13.99  
Z53, Z52, Z51, Z45, Z43, X85, X83, X73, X125, 7200, 7000, 5700, 3200

12A1980 colour £15.99  
Z31, Z11, Optra 45, 40, 7200V, 7000, 5770, 6000, 3200, 3000

1380619 / 13619HC colour £15.99  
Medley 4x, Medley 4c, Winwriter 150c, 100, Exejet IIc, 2055

17G0050 black £13.99  
P706, P700, Z12, Z22, Z32, Z700, Z703, 3100

17G0060 colour £15.02  
Compaq iJ600, Z32, Z22, Z12

### xerox compatible

C / M / Y / B £2.00 each  
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C / M / Y / B £12.00 full set  
M750, M760, M940

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