Letters

Write a star letter and you will win a Pace 56 Voice External modem. Another lucky reader will receive a copy of the informative *The What PC? Guide to your PC*

Hard on the eyes

What a wonderful idea the Jargon Buster booklet that came with the September issue was. There is a need for a dictionary of computer terms.

Unfortunately, this one was set in such a small pale typeface that it was unreadable, even with a strong magnifying glass.

While writing, I'd also like to bring up another matter: can you help me discover a keyboard which has a large left-side shift key? I have seen several illustrations, in magazines and on the outsides of packaging, which show such a key, but on investigation the keyboards themselves have a small shift key on the left. This is frustrating to someone used to a large one on a previous computer system, since when I hit the control key accidentally, with certain combinations of letters, disastrous things like losing the entire file occur.

Marina Oliver,
Princes Risborough, Bucks

While we would not say that our Jargon Buster was unreadable, we would agree that it required a high degree of optic concentration. However, you should be prepared to put aside your magnifying glass as we have decided to help you with your understanding of computer terms by forwarding you a copy of the 431-page conventional book-format *The What PC? Guide to your PC*.

As regards your question about keyboards, a quick survey of the ones in the *What PC?* office showed them all to have a short left-side Shift key. Keyboards with a US layout, however, do have a long Shift key. This can be attributed to the fewer number of total keys on a US keyboard; actually, just one fewer – the one between the left Shift and Z keys.

The solution would therefore be to buy a keyboard with a US layout. It won't have a £ sign on it but with some sticky labels and Windows 95's Keyboard Properties option, this problem can be easily bypassed.

FrontPage fret

After reading your recent report on Web site creators & managers I purchased FrontPage 97 so that I could put up a small database with my free space that I get as part of my deal with Demon. After doing a lot of work on it I discovered from Demon that FrontPage needs much larger Web sites as it has so many of its own conventions and so on that it builds into the site, that it needs 20Mb or more of Web space just to get started – I only have (I think) 5Mb!

Is what Demon says true? Also, does this apply to other software such as Corel Webmaster? Any advice would be appreciated.

Martin Woodrow, cloverpubs@cloverpubs.demon.co.uk

★ Star Letter

Not so funny

I have a quite embarrassing problem with my son Andrew. When I bought my new computer I let Andrew install Microsoft Office 95. Andy thought he would play a joke on me…when I decided to use my software I found it was licensed to 'My Dad's a Fatso'. As you can imagine, I was amused only slightly. I told Andy to remove it and he said he didn't know how. I decided to ask my friends at work to help me – they only laughed.

My new screen saver is 'Get back to work Fatso'. If I can't live this down, can I get it off my computer?

D Hinchcliffe, Wareham, Dorset

We had to laugh too, but help is at hand… To remove your unwanted message from Office 95, all you need to do is uninstall the software and then re-install it with the correct details. To do this, simply go to your Control Panels folder and select Add/Remove Programs. Choose Office 95 from the list that appears and press the Add/Remove button. Once Office is uninstalled, simply run its Setup program again to re-install and follow the instructions.

As for the screen saver, we assume you mean the Scrolling Marquee one. You can change the message by selecting the Settings button in the Screen Saver tab of the Display control panel.

Pace has donated a new 56 Voice External modem to our Star Letter writer. Costing £199, the K56Flex-compatible modem supports downloads of up to 56Kbits/s with a suitable Internet Service Provider. For more information, call Pace on 0990 561001 or go to www.pacecom.co.uk

We're sure that Demon wouldn't fib about this, so perhaps you just happened to speak to someone who didn't know too much about Microsoft FrontPage.

Either way, FrontPage can easily get by with 5Mb of space on the Web server and we've used it to create sites that are full of graphics and audio clips.

If you are to get the most out of FrontPage though, the ISP's server must support the FrontPage server extensions. These allow you to fully exploit the extra features of FrontPage but sites can be maintained without them. Microsoft can

⇨

supply you with details of ISPs that do support the server extensions.
Microsoft: 0345 002000
eu.microsoft.com/uk/sitebuilder/isp.htm

Millennium matters

I read with interest your article regarding the millennium problem (*What PC?* October). I am an IT lawyer with the London IT specialist law firm, Tarlo-Lyons. We have produced a guide for both users and suppliers relating to the millennium problem, though obviously it is geared towards businesses rather than individual consumers.

One problem that businesses have is that they must be careful in the way they present millennium questions to their suppliers – they need to word the request for information carefully or they may be seen to be acquiescing, ie, losing their right of action for problems. The same is true of IT suppliers; they need to be careful in the way they respond to questions, or they may be seen to admit liability.

One thing is clear: the answer to the problem is not to engage in litigation if it can be avoided. If an IT supplier faces multiple court claims it may go out of business and the user will then probably have no way of fixing the problem.

When purchasing new IT systems or entering into contractors' agreements to fix millennium problems the question of warranties as to year 2000 compliance arises, and those involved in negotiating contracts should be aware of the issue.

In situations where IT suppliers do not accept liability they may wish to rely upon their limitation or exclusion of liability clauses in their contracts – the ability to do so may now be questioned following the case of ICL vs St Albans – in that case a limitation of £100,000 was rejected and damages were awarded of £1,300,000!

Note also that some computer systems may also of course have a problem recognising '99' if used for error checking.
Andrew Rigby,
London EC1

August competition winners

Congratulations to Stephen J Naylor of Poole who wins a 200MHz Pentium MMX PC from Eagle Systems. Twelve runners-up will each receive a copy of the WWF Interactive World Atlas produced by Attica – they are: Gerald Teggart of Liverpool, Ian Wriglesworth of Darlington, Nigel Hunt of Woking, B Bedford of Westfield, Sheffield, Mr AE Ward, Rhos-On-Sea, Colwyn Bay, Ken Harris of Woodford Green, Essex, Ian Morgan of Chorlton, Manchester, TC Hughes of Ashton-in-Makerfield, P Stanley of Fareham, Hants, Mr I Hill of Leeds, Mr P Liversidge of Lytham St Annes and Neil Williams of Tamworh, Staffs.

Perils of upgrading

After much investigation and thought, I decided to upgrade my three-year-old 486 PC. I went for a new motherboard, hard disk, graphics card, and 48Mb of RAM. I also opted for an AMD K6 200MHz CPU.

The total cost was £800 – nearly the price of a new computer. To my horror, after the upgrade was done I came across a new PC with a K6 166MHz CPU which cost £939, including VAT. It also had a 15in monitor, a G5861PV Triton motherboard, a Matrox Mystique graphics card and a Diamond Max 2.5Gb hard drive, a Goldstar CD-ROM drive and 32Mb of RAM.

I am now left with a three-year-old computer with a 14in monitor. All other components are three years old, with the exception of the motherboard, hard disk, graphics card, and, of course, a K6 200 CPU.

The point I am trying to make is that upgrading at present is not cost-effective. I would have been better off buying a new PC.
Vance McDowell,
Hove, East Sussex

Desktop Lawyer

Would you be so kind as to either pass my name to Kindware or let me know their phone/fax/address. I wanted to ask them to send me data on Desktop Lawyer as featured on your September cover disc.

Unfortunately, I cannot use the CD that came with your magazine for I still operate a mono Twinhead 486 that continues to give me reliable service after five years' extensive use. If they produce the program on disks I could be interested in purchasing a set; if they do not, I will keep their literature to hand for when I have to buy a new notebook.
Bob Woolley,
Oxford

Kindware's telephone number is 0181 203 6078.

Power cut?

Our consultancy relies on presenting our work via laptops using PowerPoint. Having recently ugraded to Office 97, we have been dismayed to find that opening scanned-in pictures in PowerPoint 97's Viewer takes between 7 and 15 seconds per slide.

If we save our presentations in good old PowerPoint 95, all is well – except that Office 97 then has to 'update' them every time they are opened.

We have remonstrated with Microsoft, who acknowledge the problem – albeit they claim the delay is less than our 7-15 seconds. They say it is to do with the fact that PowerPoint 97 compresses files, which then take longer to retrieve, an 'improved' feature according to them. Not so, for us!
Colin Hession,
Wilmslow, Cheshire

Gateway's great

A reader complained in your Watchdog feature in the October issue about his 'abortive attempts' to get answers from Gateway 2000's helpline, and the problems resulting from the drastic action he then took.

My own experience with the Gateway helpline over the past few years has been the complete opposite.

I have rung the helpline on about five or six occasions; only once or twice because of problems, the rest because I did not have the knowledge to deal with more difficult system mattters.

I have been taken through issues command by command, as though the adviser was sitting in front of the same model. I understand this assistance service continues indefinitely.

Sure there is a problem waiting five or ten mintues before one gets through to technical assistance. I reach for a recent copy of *What PC?* and read through one or two of the more thought-provoking articles that I did not read the first time round. So no loss of time.
Walter Barker,
Bristol

You can write to us at *What PC?* Editorial, 32-34 Broadwick Street, London W1A 2HG, or e-mail us at:
whatpc@vnu.co.uk
Please note that any letters sent to us by e-mail will be printed along with the sender's e-mail address, unless we are specifically instructed otherwise.