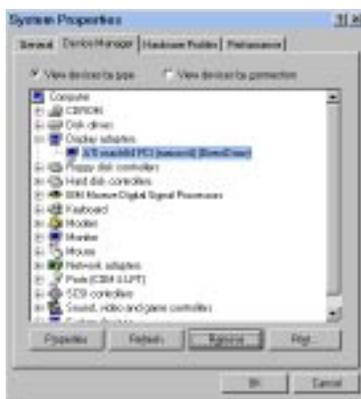


question time

This month we offer advice on hardware conflicts, expansion ports and drive bays, copying files between floppy disk drives, deleting unwanted icons, changing from a US to a UK keyboard, and solving a printing problem

I have an Olivetti PCS P/75 PC. When I was performing a routine check on my system using Windows 95's 'System Properties', I noticed my SVGA adaptor was conflicting with a 'PCI VGA-compatible display adaptor'. I ran the Hardware Troubleshooter and ended up removing this device from the system, then restarting my computer. When Windows 95 started up, it detected a new hardware device – a 'PCI VGA-compatible display adaptor' and proceeded to set it up, leading to another hardware conflict. Can you help?
Justin Whelhouse, Crawley, West Sussex

We've had this problem with a couple of PCs in the past and it seems to lie with the Plug and Play capabilities of certain video cards. To solve it, first make sure that you have the driver disks for your video card. Then, remove the entries for both video adaptors from your system using Control Panel's 'System Properties' and restart your computer. After this, Windows 95 should detect the presence of the real video card and install the software for it.



I'm about to buy a PC but am a little confused about expansion slots, parallel/serial ports and drive bays. What is each for and

what is the optimum arrangement for a new PC?

R Haycock, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

As far as the number of drive bays is concerned, it depends on how many disk drives you want in your PC. The drive bays are the slots at the front of the PC's case where the floppy and CD-ROM drives go and most PCs have room for both, with a spare bay for another drive. Spare bays are only important if you want to add an extra drive but even so, it's possible to do this without using a drive bay anyway.

Virtually all PCs have one parallel port (LPT1) and two serial ports (usually COM1 and COM2) at the back of their case. The parallel port is used to connect a printer; the serial ports are for such devices as a mouse or modem. This combination is fine for most purposes, but

depending on what you connect to your PC, you can run out of serial ports. If you think two serial ports won't be sufficient, buy a PC with a separate PS/2 mouse port and an internal modem.

Finally, the expansion slots are inside the PC's case and they're where you fit expansion cards. There are two types – ISA and PCI, and most modern PCs have a few of each. A multimedia PC will probably have cards in these slots already; it's a good idea to check there is at least one slot of each type spare for further expansion.

I have two floppy drives in use simultaneously but when I right-click on a file to use the 'Send to' option, I can only send the file to the 'A' drive, not the 'B' (second) drive. Can I include both drives in the 'Send to' list?
Brain Sexton, Poole, Dorset

Q

Every month in Question Time you make reference to AUTOEXEC.BAT, CONFIG.SYS, WIN.INI and SYSTEM.INI files. Where would I find these files and what is their significance? I use Windows 95.
Mr G Dinnal-Allen, Battersea

A

The files you mention contain a variety of important pieces of information relating to a PC's configuration. As a Windows 95 user you are unlikely to need to look at or edit any one of these files, but they aid us in solving problems because the information they hold tells us a lot about how your PC is set up.

The files are stored in different places on your hard disk, but there's a useful Windows program that opens them all up at once – this is called the System Configuration Editor. To run this program, go to your Start button, select Run, type SYSEDIT into the displayed entry box and, finally, click the OK button. Users of Windows 3.1 can also run SYSEDIT by going to the File menu in Program Manager, selecting Run, typing SYSEDIT into the entry box and clicking on OK.

Remember though, do not make any changes to these files unless you have a reason to do so. SYSEDIT should be used for printing out the said files (to send to *What PC?*, for example) and making changes only when instructed to do so.



Question time

I recently installed a second floppy drive but whenever I use either Windows 95's or MS-DOS's 'disk copy' command, I can't make my system copy directly from one drive to another. All that happens is that it reads from one drive, stops for a moment, then copies to the other, saving virtually no time. Why is this happening?

Keith McIntosh, Sunderland

Firstly, the items in the 'Send to' list are stored in a folder in the Windows folder. By placing shortcuts in this folder, you can send files to almost any destination. For example, by creating a shortcut to Notepad, you can view any text-based file by 'sending' it to Notepad, even if it doesn't have a valid text extension (.TXT, .DOC, etc).

Secondly, the only way for a computer to copy a disk is to read part of it and then write the part it's read to another disk. If you think about it, it's impossible for these two things to happen simultaneously – something has to be



read before it can be written. It would be possible for a computer to read a tiny part and then write it, giving the impression of reading and writing at the same time, but it would be exactly that – the impression that it is doing it. Instead, computers read large

I recently purchased a new Pentium 133MHz with Windows 95 and I am very pleased with it. However, when using my word processing software I encounter an irritating problem: if I type the '@' symbol I get a the double quotation mark symbol ("), and vice versa. I understand this can be easily rectified; can you tell me how?

John Braddock, Burnley, Lancashire



Your problem is caused by the fact that Windows 95 thinks that you are using a US, rather than a UK, keyboard. To correct this, you need to alter your keyboard properties from within Control Panel. Select the 'Language' tab and then double-click the entry for your keyboard below 'Installed keyboard languages and layouts'. You can then choose the correct keyboard from a drop-down list – usually 'British'.

chunks at a time before writing, as it's much simpler.

By the way Keith, if you give us your full address, we can send you your prize.

As a regular reader of Question Time, I have learned how to delete unwanted files from my hard disk. However, after deleting some programs that I no longer used I found that their icons were still present in Windows 3.1's Program Manager. Is there any way to remove them?

Stephanie Hodgkinson, Preston, Lancashire

Yes there is. You can delete any icon within Program Manager by clicking on it once and pressing the delete key on your keyboard.

I have an IBM Aptiva 766 with 4Mb of RAM running Windows 3.1, which I use for preparing a parish magazine. I hadn't experienced any problems until recently, when I wanted to print

a 14-page document (no graphics and only two fonts) – it refused to do so, displaying instead an 'Insufficient memory' error. It has always managed this in the past, so what has changed?

Secondly, as I'm planning to start using DTP software and scanning images, is there any way to increase the 'performance' of my existing memory, or would you advise that I invest in an extra 4 or 8Mb of RAM?

Susan Preston, Haddington, East Lothian

The fact that you've only recently started getting this message when attempting to print is probably connected to the amount of space available on your hard disk drive. When Windows 3.1's Print Manager receives a job it creates a temporary file on the hard disk – a 'spool' file. Even though a 14-page document seems quite small, the spool file it needs to create will generally be much larger than the file itself. If you're running low on hard disk space, it is likely that you will get the 'Insufficient memory' message whereas previous similar print jobs completed successfully. You can try freeing up some space by deleting unwanted files and programs from your hard disk.

For the longer term, however, we would strongly recommend you upgrade your RAM. The Aptiva 766 has four SIMM (single in-line memory module) sockets and can be upgraded to a maximum of 128Mb (4x32Mb SIMMs). Obviously, 128Mb of RAM would be way beyond what you need – with Windows 3.1, an extra 4Mb (giving a total of 8Mb) is a reasonable amount – but, as always, our advice is to go for as much as you can afford.



We regret that we cannot provide readers with individual replies but, if you have a question or problem you want to share with other readers, write to us at: Question Time, *What PC?* Editorial, VNU House, 32-34 Broadwick St, London W1A 2HG.

If possible, please include details of your hardware and preferably copies of your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files – and for Windows problems, your SYSTEM.INI and WIN.INI files.

The writer of every published letter will receive a FREE COPY of either *Microsoft Works 95* or *Microsoft Publisher 95*. Please state which you would prefer.

