



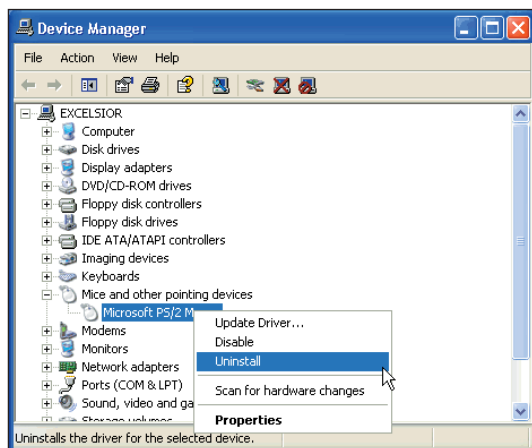
↓ Windows XP

Q I recently purchased a Netscroll wireless mouse and a Genius KB16M wireless keyboard. The keyboard works fine but the mouse doesn't seem to recognise the software, although it is loaded. I think the old mouse software is preventing recognition of the new one. How can I get rid of it?

A Removing the drivers for old hardware is pretty easy. Open Device Manager (Control Panel, System and select the Hardware tab; under

Windows XP you'll need to click the Device Manager button). Now expand the entry for the type of device you want to remove, in this case, Mice and other pointing devices. Select the entry for the hardware you're no longer using and click Remove or, under Windows XP, click Action, Uninstall (see below). This will remove the drivers for the device from your system.

Q Is my Aztech MDP-3858V-WE modem compatible with Windows XP? Device Manager says the modem is working properly, but when I try to connect to my ISP it says the line is busy, and when I try to cancel, it holds on to the line. Under Windows 98 SE it worked perfectly.



← Use Device Manager to uninstall the drivers for obsolete hardware



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A Your problem would appear to be caused by the use of incorrect drivers. Unfortunately there are no Windows XP drivers written specifically for this model of modem. If you visit the driver page on Aztech Systems' website at www.aztech.com/driver/modem_mdp3858.htm, you will see that only generic Conexant drivers are offered for this modem under Windows XP. Conexant is the company that makes the chipset on which these modems are based. These drivers may solve your problem.

However, if you visit the Conexant Windows XP Driver Information page at www.conexant.com/customer/md_winxpinfo.html you will see a list of FAQs (frequently asked questions) regarding these drivers, highlighting possible problems.

In particular, you will see that speakerphone operation is not supported by them. Only the full Aztech drivers provide support for this feature, which is bad news if you want to use speakerphone under Windows XP.

Q I can't get my three-year-old Memorex scanner to work under Windows XP. The Add Hardware Wizard claims there's no driver on the CD. I downloaded a driver, but it didn't like that, either. Can you help?

A If there's no driver for your scanner on the Windows XP distribution CD your only hope is that there may be one on the Memorex support site. Drivers for scanners are at www.memorex.com/service_support/software_display.php?id=131&dl=p.

Unfortunately, if the description of the driver doesn't say that it is compatible with Windows XP, it probably isn't. And in that case there's not a lot you can do.

Q I bought a PNY Technologies USB CompactFlash/SmartMedia reader and then discovered that the CD only contains drivers for Windows 98, Me and 2000. I have Windows XP, so I installed the Windows 2000 driver, ignoring the warning about the driver not being signed.

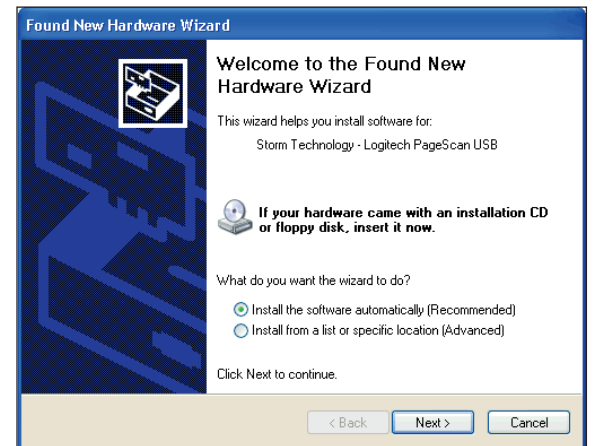
Shortly afterwards, XP spontaneously rebooted, requiring me to unplug the device and reset the PC, after which I was able to return to the restore point that XP had thankfully created. Where can I find XP drivers for this card reader?

A If you are unable to find Windows XP drivers for your hardware, try installing Windows 2000 drivers – they are often worth a try. Sometimes they won't work, but it's giving them a go as they won't usually do anything nasty to the system. Drivers run at a hardware level where there are fewer safeguards against bad behaviours, which is why Microsoft recommends installing only certified Windows XP drivers on the system.

Several brands of CompactFlash readers appear to exhibit problems similar to those you describe when installed using Windows 2000 drivers under XP. It's possible that they are the same product simply operating under different names, or that they use the same generic drivers.

Fortunately, PNY Technologies has created a web page where you can

→ Windows may think it has found a new piece of hardware if a device doesn't identify itself consistently at startup



download Windows XP drivers for its CompactFlash readers (www.pny.com/home/techsupport/drivers.cfm).

Disappointingly, these XP drivers are not digitally signed either, although reports suggest that they do actually work and will not make Windows XP unstable.

Q My new Medion PC running Windows XP has started to run the Found New Hardware Wizard at bootup. The hardware in question is the GeForce4 MX display adapter. In Device Manager the standard VGA adapter is shown with

a yellow warning symbol. If I cancel the wizard and reboot, the system starts up and works normally and the wizard doesn't appear. I've reloaded the drivers, but it didn't help.

A This is a tricky one to solve. It doesn't appear to be a common fault, but it's probably a problem with plug and play enumeration. Basically, Windows doesn't assume that the hardware in your PC will stay the same until told otherwise. Instead, at every startup, it looks to see what hardware it can find. The Found New Hardware Wizard, shown above, is started if it finds any hardware that doesn't match what it knows has previously been installed.

Existing hardware may be thought to be new hardware if it doesn't identify itself consistently to Windows at startup. This could be due to a hardware fault, a Bios problem or errors in the device information files held by Windows that may result in ambiguous identification of the device.

The standard VGA adapter driver shouldn't normally be present, although as most graphics cards are compatible with standard VGA, Windows will load this driver if it can't correctly identify the card. It is this driver that may be the cause of the problem.

Go to Device Manager and uninstall the adapter. You should also ensure that the system Bios is set for plug-and-play operation. Go into the Bios Setup utility, which you can access at bootup, and look for an option called something like 'Plug and play O/S?'. Ensure that this is set to On or Yes.

Apart from this, the only other things you can do are to check if a Bios upgrade

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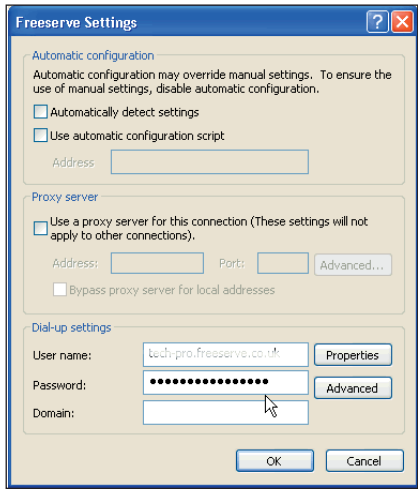
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is available or if there are newer graphics adapter drivers that can be downloaded from the web. As this is a fault involving standard hardware in a new PC, it is really the responsibility of the manufacturer or the store you bought it from to help.

Q I'm running Windows XP Home. Internet access has been fine, until one day my ISP failed to recognise my password and I found that the password field in the dialup box had 16 characters instead of the correct number. I found that if I entered my password manually I could log on. I saved the re-entered password but the problem returned. I have even deleted and re-entered the

← Under Windows XP, the number of dots which appear in the Password box as you type isn't related to the length of your password

dialup parameters, but the password keeps coming up wrong.

A Have you actually tried to connect using the saved password that you think is wrong? We think that the failure to recognise your password was just an ISP glitch that drew your attention to the fact that, under Windows XP, the number of dots in the password box is not related to the number of characters in the password (as shown above).

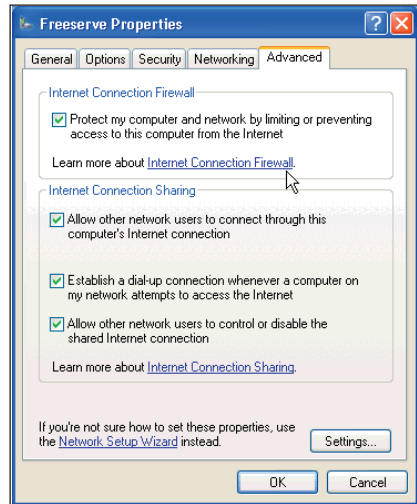
This security feature is designed to make it harder for anyone looking over your shoulder to guess your password. However, it has become a very common cause of calls to helpdesks, because users see the saved password is apparently the wrong length, assume that it is wrong and therefore assume that Windows isn't saving it correctly when, in fact, it is.

Q My computer runs Windows XP Professional. Ever since I converted the file system from FAT32 to NTFS I

have started receiving the following error message when I try to use Picture Publisher 5.0 or Hallmark Card Studio: 'Config.nt. The system file is not suitable for running MS DOS and Windows applications'. Windows XP's Program Compatibility Wizard was no use at all.

A Picture Publisher 5.0 and Hallmark Card Studio are old 16bit apps (time for an upgrade, perhaps?) They make use of the 16bit subsystem that is included in Windows XP to support the use of these older applications. This error occurs if any of the files config.nt, autoexec.nt or command.com are not present in the \Windows\System32 folder. Usually, it's command.com that goes missing, although why, we don't know.

To restore any of these files click on Start, Run, type Msconfig and hit Enter. When the System Configuration Utility starts, click the button captioned 'Expand File'. In the 'Expand One File from Installation Source' dialog box type the name of the file you want to restore, select the location to restore from (this will be either your Windows XP CD or your hard disk, whichever contains a folder called I386) and enter the name of the folder where the restored file should go (such as c:\Windows\System32). Then click Expand.



Q In the August 02 issue of PC Advisor, page 175, you advise Windows XP users to use the firewall built in to XP instead of installing a third-party program. However, I read somewhere else that XP's firewall isn't as good as, for example, Zone Labs' ZoneAlarm. Furthermore, I didn't know XP had a built-in firewall until I read Helpline, so

← Windows XP Internet Connection Firewall: good enough protection for most people

I had already installed ZoneAlarm and it is working fine. Should I uninstall it?

A Our advice was based on the fact that over the past couple of years we have had to resolve a number of obscure software conflicts that have turned out to be caused by third-party firewalls, in particular ZoneAlarm. It's more reliable and efficient to build facilities like this into the operating system than to implement them as a 'bolt-on'.

But if you're happy with ZoneAlarm, and it doesn't appear to be causing conflicts, then use it. We'd advise that you check the built-in firewall is disabled, though, since two firewalls – like two antivirus packages – will probably fight with each other and cause who knows what mayhem.

You can check whether or not the Windows XP firewall is enabled by opening Internet Options in Control Panel, selecting the Connections tab, choosing your ISP and then clicking Settings. Click the Properties button on the Settings dialog box and then ensure that the checkbox on the Advanced tab is clear, as shown left.

ZoneAlarm will consume more resources than XP's built-in firewall, but it provides more information about potential intrusions – a double-edged sword, as the reports it produces have caused many readers to panic unnecessarily.

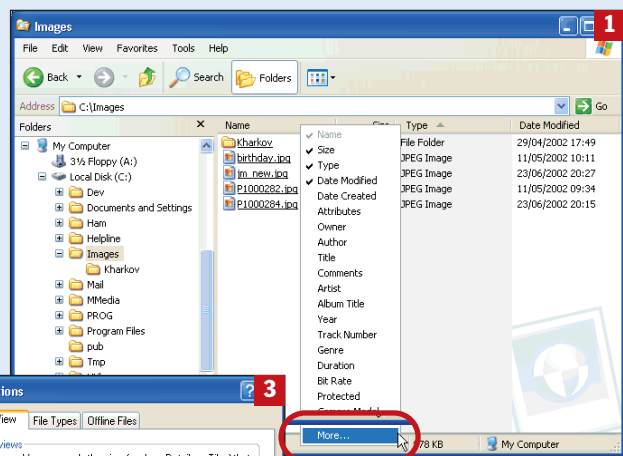
Unlike the XP firewall, it can block illicit software on your PC from sending out information, but this isn't as big a benefit as it sounds. Programs like this are 'backdoors' that need to be contacted from the outside before they send anything, and the Windows firewall will thwart those access attempts. A good virus scanner – which any person who is conscientious enough to be running a firewall is also likely to be using – will detect malicious Trojans before they do any damage.

Customise your Explorer Details view



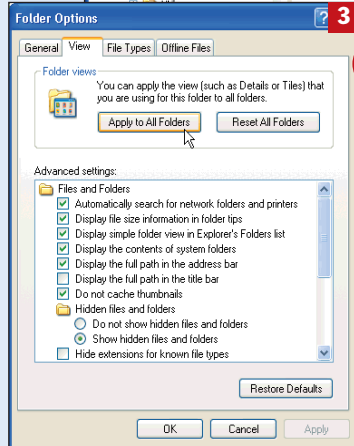
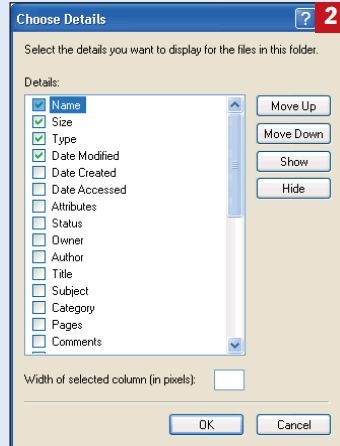
If you would like to know more than the name, size, type and modification date of files listed in Windows XP Explorer's Details view, then you will be glad to know that more information about your files is just a few mouse-clicks away. The only limitation is the width of your screen.

- To show more about your files, right-click the column header bar at the top of the Folder view. You'll see a drop-down menu showing a list of some of the extra items Explorer can display. Just click an item to toggle the checkmark beside it and add it to, or remove it from, the list.**
- Click on More and you'll see an easier-to-use dialog box called Choose Details. Here you can add and remove details without having to right-click the header bar after each change. You can also set the column size and change the order**



in which the columns appear by moving items up and down. Click ok to see the results once you're finished.

3. After you've customised your Details view, you might want to use it for all your folders. To do that, click on Tools, Folder Options, select the View tab and click Apply to All Folders.



Troubleshoot your modem

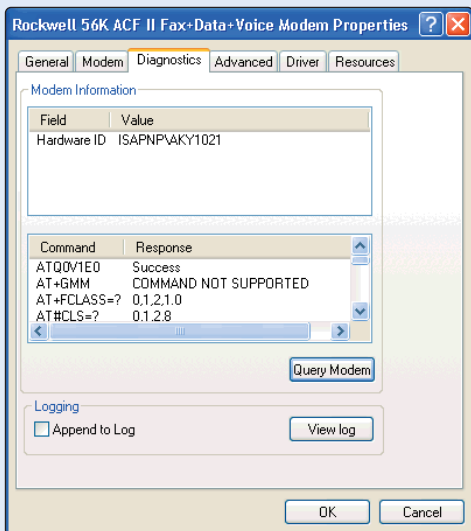


If you use Windows XP and are experiencing difficulty connecting to the internet, don't despair. Windows XP has some useful diagnostic tools.

From Control Panel, open Phone and Modem Options, then select the Modems tab. Choose your modem from the list (usually there's only one) and then click Properties. On the Modem Properties dialog box select the Diagnostics box. Click Query Modem. A list of commands and responses will shortly appear in the lower of the two list boxes. You'll need to be a modem expert to understand the significance of each

response, but the test is a simple way to verify that the modem is working properly.

If you click View Log then a log will appear showing the commands sent to the modem and the responses received from the last time you connected to the internet. If your modem is failing to connect and you don't know why, you may find an error message here that explains the problem. If you need to contact your ISP's hotline about the matter, attach a copy of this log to your email. It may not contain the answer, but at least it will help convey the impression that you know what you are doing.



↑ Use Windows XP's built-in modem diagnostics to troubleshoot failed internet connections

↓ General

Q A CPU identification utility identified my 600MHz Pentium III correctly, but reported that I have only 256KB of L2 cache. My motherboard manual states that a Pentium III has 512KB of L2 cache. Is there something wrong with my processor?

A No. There are two versions of the Pentium III. One version has 256KB of Level 2 cache, the other has 512KB (see right). The version with 512KB should perform a bit better, but it probably makes little difference in the real world.

If you're interested in further technical information about your Intel processor, visit the Intel Developer site at <http://developer.intel.com/>. Information about the Pentium III can be found on the processor's home page at <http://developer.intel.com/design/pentiumIII>.

Q Communication between my Epson Stylus Photo 810 printer and my PC running Windows 98 SE breaks down after the PC has been on standby and I have to restart to fix it. This did not happen with my previous printer, which was an HP DeskJet.

A As the Stylus 810 is a current model it's unlikely to be the printer that is at fault. The problem is more likely to be your PC or possibly Windows 98. Power management and the use of standby has never been completely dependable. It is better with newer versions of Windows, but it has often required newer hardware, complying with a tighter power management spec, to work.

Try installing a Flash Bios upgrade if there's one available for your system.

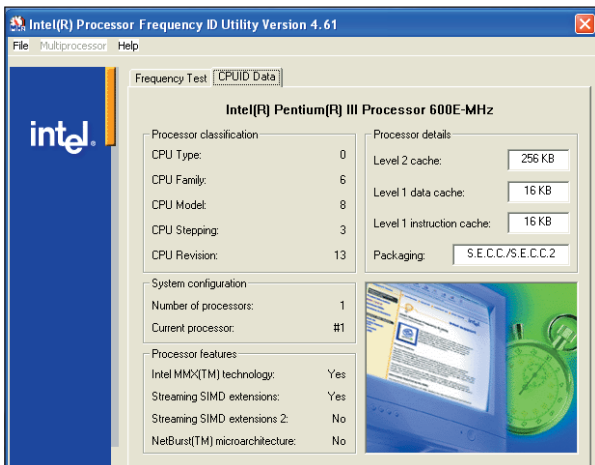
→ Only one type of Pentium III has a 256KB Level 2 cache

Otherwise, you could try out some different parallel port settings in the Bios Setup utility, or even try installing a USB adapter and connecting your printer that way, instead of via the parallel port. But we can't guarantee that these suggestions will work.

Q I have an old Mesh system with a Gigabyte GA-6BXE Slot 1 motherboard. When connected to the mains it automatically boots up without waiting for me to press the power button. I've replaced the PSU (power supply unit) and other components but it still occurs.

A We're not familiar with the details of this PC, but we think you'll find that it is supposed to behave this way. PCs made three or four years ago have a software-controlled power switch. They are meant to be connected to the mains at all times. If you unplug them, the system thinks there has been a power failure. How it behaves when power is restored is an option that you can select in the computer's Bios.

Boot up your PC and enter the Bios Setup menu. Exactly what you do next depends on your system's Bios. If it has a Phoenix Bios, for example, access the Power menu and you'll probably see an option called After Power Failure. You can set this to Last State (the system will boot up if it was running when power was lost), Stay Off (what you are expecting it to do) and Power On, which is the default and what your system is currently doing.



Q My 15in Proview PX-456 monitor is now out of guarantee and its red colour gun has stopped working. Is this easy for a technician to fix or will it be more cost-effective to scrap the monitor?

A Given that the price of a new replacement monitor of similar quality is about £100, it would not be cost-effective to repair your monitor. If it's really the red colour gun that has failed then the repair would involve replacing the picture tube. This typically accounts for 80 percent of the cost of a new monitor.

If it's a fault in the electronics driving the red gun then it will take an engineer a couple of hours to fix. As labour could easily be £40 an hour, plus the cost of parts, even if you could avoid shipping costs by getting a local repair shop to do the work it simply won't be worth the expense.

Q I have an old 486DX PC running Windows 95. The CD-ROM drive does not function. It isn't listed in Device Manager or My Computer and cannot be accessed. All connections have been checked and the drive replaced but it still doesn't work. Inserting a CD causes the light to come on for a few seconds, but nothing else happens.

A If nothing appears in Device Manager then there are no drivers installed for the CD-ROM drive, or at least no Windows drivers. There may be MS-DOS drivers installed, but they could be incorrectly configured. Check config.sys to see if it contains a line that looks something like: Device=driver.sys /d:oemcd001. (The actual name won't be driver.sys, but will depend on the CD-ROM drive manufacturer.) There should also be a line in autoexec.bat that reads: mscdex.exe /d:oemcd001. The '/d:...' part should be identical in both cases.

If there are no drivers installed then you should install some. It's best to install Windows drivers, which you can do using the Add New Hardware Wizard from Control Panel. The driver files will be on a floppy disk that came with the CD-ROM drive.

If you have an emergency disk for Windows 98 you can use it as a quick check that the CD-ROM drive is working. Just boot from the disk, exit to a command prompt and then try to access the CD-ROM. The Windows 98 emergency disk includes MS-DOS CD-ROM drivers. Windows 98 also includes a generic MS-DOS driver called oakcdrom.sys. If you can't find a suitable driver for Windows 95 then you might be able to use this one instead.



Never lose a password



One of the most common problems we get asked to solve is how to regain access to a PC after someone has forgotten the password. If you use Windows XP there's no excuse for this.

A user with administrator privileges can reset passwords. If you do this, however, passwords saved by the PC, and files and emails encrypted by the user will become inaccessible. To avoid this, each user should make a password reset disk using the Forgotten Password Wizard.

Here's how. After you log in, open Control Panel, User Accounts, then click on 'Prevent a forgotten password'. The Forgotten Password Wizard will start. Click Next. The wizard will prompt you to insert a floppy disk in the A drive and type your current password (hopefully you haven't forgotten it already). When you click Finish, it will write information to the disk. Take the disk out, label it and put it in a secure place, because anyone who has this disk can use it to log in to this account without the password.

To use the disk when you have forgotten the password, click 'Use your password reset disk' in the message Windows XP puts up if you type the wrong password. The Password Reset Wizard will start. It will prompt you to put the reset disk in the drive. If it accepts the disk it will then ask you to enter a new password as well as a hint to remember it by. You'll then be able to access your user account. Just don't forget where you put your password reset disk...



↑ Never forget a Windows password again with the Forgotten Password Wizard

If the CD-ROM drive doesn't work after the drivers have been installed, the problem must be hardware. The drive is obviously receiving power and appears to be working normally, so the fault may be in the connection. The cable may be faulty, or connected the wrong way around. The edge that has a stripe should go to the side of the connector where pin 1 is, at both ends.

If the cable is okay, check the Master/Slave settings on both the CD-ROM and the hard disk (if both are connected using

← If your monitor's guarantee has elapsed, it's probably cheaper to buy a new one than get one of the colour guns fixed

the same cable). If the drive is connected to a separate IDE channel, check that this hasn't been disabled in the Bios.

If you installed the CD-ROM yourself and it has never worked then there is another possibility. A few computers of this vintage didn't seem to like having CD-ROMs slaved to the hard drive and the solution in this case was to install an add-in card with a secondary IDE channel (many 486s only had one channel on the motherboard). It may now be hard to obtain a card suitable for use in such an old computer but you might try Adaptec which now owns Future Domain, the company which was once the main manufacturer of them.

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↓ Windows

Q I recently installed System Mechanic and used it to tidy up my drives. After my last cleanup I noticed that when Windows Me starts to load, the message ‘Cannot find the file country.sys’ appears. Windows continues to load normally, however, and I have noticed no adverse effects. How can I avoid such mistakes in the future?

A With today’s large hard drives there’s nothing to be gained and potentially a lot to lose by removing files that you think are not being used, simply to reclaim disk space you don’t actually need. Keep your My Documents folder tidy by all means and clean out temporary files now and again. But unless you know for certain that a particular file on the system is not being used, it’s safer to give it the benefit of the doubt and leave it.

We doubt that the absence of country.sys will cause you any real problems, but to rid yourself of the error message it will probably be easiest to restore the file from your original Windows CD. Start the System Configuration Utility (click Start, Run, type Msconfig and hit Enter). Select the General tab, then click the Extract File button.

The rest should be obvious. Windows should know where the file is supposed to go, but in case it doesn’t come up with the location, you need to put it in the c:\Windows\Command folder.

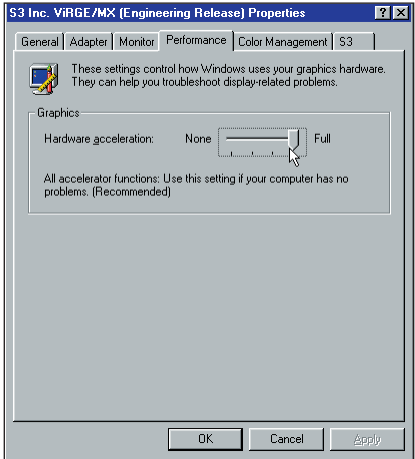
Q I have a Pentium 90 running Windows 95. After I visit websites on the internet I notice a yellow trail about 25mm wide which follows my mouse pointer around the screen. The only way I seem to be able to get rid of it is by closing Internet Explorer and logging off the internet. I replaced the mouse, but it didn’t solve the problem.

A It’s difficult to know what this might be without actually seeing it, but here are a couple of things you can try. First, check first that you aren’t using any software that changes the mouse pointer, such as the Microsoft Plus Pack for Windows or some third-party utility. This might be conflicting with Internet Explorer.

Another possibility, which sounds quite likely as the problem seems only to occur when you’re connected to the internet, is that the SubSeven Trojan (a form of virus) has become installed on your system. This is a ‘backdoor’ infection that allows malicious hackers to make changes to your system, including adding a trail to your mouse pointer.

A good antivirus program should detect this Trojan and clear it from your system, while a personal firewall would prevent hackers from accessing your computer while you surf, although we wouldn’t recommend using a firewall such as ZoneAlarm or Norton Internet Security on such a low-powered PC.

If neither of these are the cause, the problem is most likely to be something related to the graphics card or its drivers. Try reducing the colour depth: right-click the desktop, select Properties and choose



↑ Reducing the hardware acceleration can be a cure for strange graphics effects

the Settings tab. You could also try reducing the hardware acceleration: click Advanced on same tab, select the Performance tab and move the Hardware Acceleration slider towards None (see above). If neither of these suggestions makes a difference, try downloading and installing a newer graphics card driver.

↓ Internet

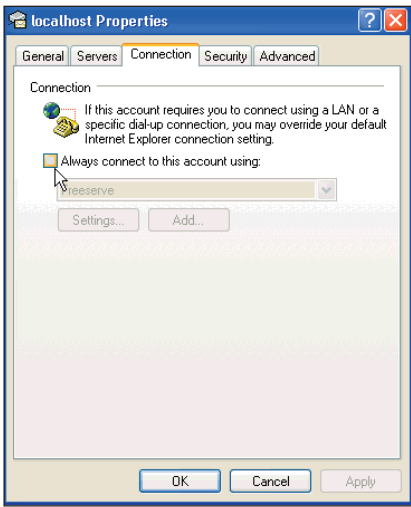
Q My new PC runs Windows XP and when I use it to go on to the internet to check my email, I am automatically disconnected after Outlook completes its task of checking for mail. Try as I might, I can’t seem to rectify this. My old PC was set to disconnect after sending and receiving mail, however it did this only if Outlook Express had started the connection.

A This is the opposite of the problem most people seem to experience, which is that the connection isn’t disconnected when they think it ought to be. After reviewing dozens of descriptions of this problem on computers that are apparently set up correctly, we have concluded that either this feature doesn’t work correctly, or the assumptions that Microsoft used to determine whether or not a connection should be hung up are not the same as users expect.

The only sure way of disconnecting when you have finished with the internet, it seems, is to get in the habit of doing it yourself every time. The biggest cause of problems with this feature seems to be the option that tells Outlook Express which dialup connection to use for a particular account. If you only have one ISP then click Tools, Accounts in Outlook Express. Select each mail and news account in turn, click Properties, select the Connection tab and clear the checkbox for ‘Always connect to this account using:’, as shown below.

Another place where you will find Outlook Express settings that may affect your internet connection is under Tools, Options on the Connection tab. Check the box ‘Ask before switching dialup connections’, although if you only have one ISP connection, or haven’t told Outlook Express to use a particular ISP for a particular account, it should never need to do this. Uncheck the box for ‘Hang up after sending and receiving’. This should prevent Outlook Express from terminating your connection when you don’t want it to.

On this tab you should also see ‘Outlook Express shares your Internet Connection settings with Internet Explorer’. This means that you use the Internet Explorer settings to determine whether or not to hang up the connection. To check these settings click the Change button. This will bring up the Internet Properties dialog box.



↑ Clear this checkbox to make Outlook Express use Internet Explorer connection settings when sending and receiving mail

Speed up Internet Explorer startup time

TIP

If Internet Explorer seems to take longer to get started every time you launch it, you may have too many files in the cache. By default Internet Explorer takes a percentage of free hard disk space to use for its cache. With modern hard drives, that’s a lot of space. Once the number of files in the cache increases, it takes a lot of time and memory to load the index files that help IE to find what is in there. This can have you twiddling your thumbs for several seconds each time you load the browser.

To solve the problem, first empty the cache, then set its maximum size to a more reasonable value. Start Internet Explorer, click on Tools, Options, then on the General tab, under Temporary Internet Files, click Delete Files. Now go and make a cup of tea – clearing out a large cache can take some time.

Once the cache has been emptied click on Settings. You can then set the amount of disk space to use. You probably won’t be able to move the slider in small enough steps so type in the size you want the cache to be. We think that 40MB is plenty: enough to cache the files of frequently visited sites. Now close the dialog boxes by clicking ok and enjoy your rejuvenated, sprightly Internet Explorer.

↑ Allowing too much space for the browser cache can make Internet Explorer very sluggish. We think 40MB is easily enough

Open the Explorer folder you want

TIP

Do you ever tire of having to type lengthy web addresses like http://www.blahblah.com? Then just type blahblah. Internet Explorer will automatically add http://www. at the front and ‘.com’ at the end.

If you aren’t sure whether or not the site you want has a .com address, don’t worry. Internet Explorer will try other addresses like .net and .co.uk too.

If you want to edit a web address in Internet Explorer’s Address bar, you can use Ctrl and the left arrow or Ctrl and the right arrow to quickly move to different parts of the address.

↑ No need to type long web addresses into Internet Explorer

Select the Connections tab, then choose your ISP under ‘Dial-Up and Virtual Private Network Settings’. Click the Settings button to bring up the settings dialog for that connection, then click Advanced. In the Advanced Dial-Up dialog box, choose whether or not to force your PC to disconnect after an idle period has elapsed or let Windows determine that the connection is no longer needed.

Q I have an ISDN line at my home, which provides me with two phonelines. Using the ISDN line or the main phoneline I can both send and receive email, but when using the spare line from a computer in another room, I cannot send email. To do this I have to swap lines. Any ideas what’s causing this?

A Your spare line will have a different number to your main phone/ISDN line. It may be that this number isn’t registered with your ISP, or that caller ID is disabled on that line. Many ISPs restrict the use of unmetered access to specific phone numbers. They may also bar the sending of email, even when using a

metered service, if a line with caller ID disabled is used, because they need to be able to trace abusers of the service.

Q I have started to receive the error ‘Rnaapp caused an invalid page fault in module wininet.dll at 016f:70201a1c’ when I start Outlook Express 6.0. In addition I am receiving notifications that a message I sent could not be delivered to one or more of its recipients. I don’t understand this as I have never mailed these addresses. Does it make any sense to you?

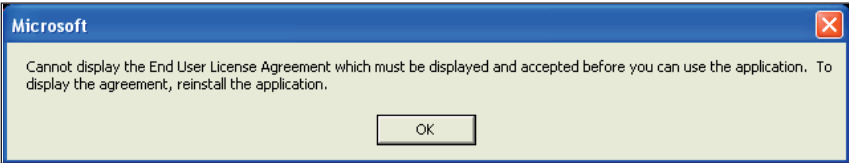
A As we wrote in July’s Helpline, errors involving Rnaapp are often caused by a software conflict. Sometimes a worm or Trojan uses your computer to send out infected messages and this is almost certainly what is happening. The Trojan file was included in the message you attached to your email to us, although as it was quarantined and then removed by our virus scanning gateway we can’t identify it for you. The solution is to get yourself a good up-to-date virus scanner and use it to clean up your system.

↓ Applications

Q In the June 02 Helpline you stated “Drive Image doesn’t create a mirror image of your C drive, so you need to restore your backup to a newly formatted hard disk.” This is baffling to me – surely Drive Image creates a mirror image of a drive and then, when restoring a backup, it will delete the existing partition without the need for formatting?

A Our definition of a mirror image backup is one that is instantly available for use should the original drive fail, simply by making the backup drive the main drive. Drive Image does not do this – you must restore the backup before you can use it. However, Drive Copy, another utility that we were discussing in the same issue, does. You are correct that it is not necessary to format the drive before restoring a Drive Image backup if the target drive for the restore has previously been formatted. We were just trying to make clear that you have to complete some preparatory work before you can start working again if you used Drive Image to make your backup.

Q Since loading AVG from the August cover disc, I find that every time I try to connect to my ISP the computer locks up and has to be rebooted. The only way round this is to disable the resident shield before attempting to connect to the web. What can I do to cure the problem?



↑ You may have to remove all traces of Microsoft Works if you see this error when starting AutoRoute

A It’s not unknown for the resident shield feature of an antivirus program to conflict with other software, resulting in a problem such as this. Unfortunately, there is no generic solution. Nor is this a problem that AVG developer, Grisoft, has already addressed and which we can pass on to readers.

Grisoft’s advice, if you have any problem with AVG Anti-Virus, is first to download the latest update from the website at www.grisoft.com. Because of the time it takes to compile and manufacture the cover disc, the version you installed from there may be a few weeks old and won’t contain the fixes for any subsequently-discovered problems. If you still experience trouble after installing the very latest version, tell Grisoft about it using the Bug Report feature, which you can access from AVG’s Help menu.

Q Since I upgraded from Windows 95 I have been unable to use Corel Print House Magic. When I attempt to insert text I receive an invalid page fault in msvcr7.dll. The version on the CD is 4.20.6201. Do I need a later one and, if so, how do I install it?

A No. The problem with this app seems to be that it doesn’t work with the later versions of msvcr7.dll supplied with

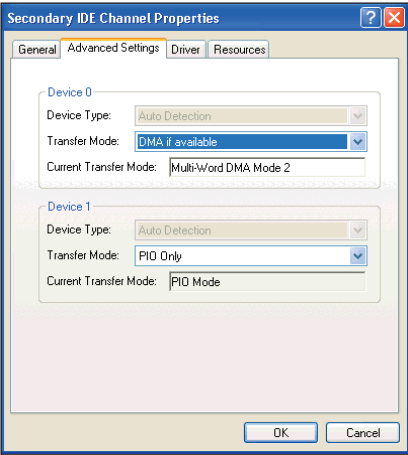
newer versions of Windows and more recent software. This is quite a commonly reported fault. The solution is to copy a version that it is happy with, such as version 4.20 on the CD, into the application’s own program files folder. The program will then use that instead of the newer one in the Windows System folder and should stop giving you the error message.

Q I have AutoRoute 2002 installed on my computer. It came as part of Microsoft Works Suite 2002. When I try to run it I receive an error that says ‘Cannot display the End User License Agreement which must be accepted before you can use the application’ (as shown above). I’ve tried uninstalling and reinstalling, but it didn’t help.

A There must be some leftover file or Registry setting that is causing this. On the Microsoft Knowledgebase we found a utility you can download which is supposed to fix this, although we have read reports that it doesn’t work. After trying the fix described below, we noticed a Registry value that looks as though it might solve the problem.

To try this, double-click on ameula.reg which you’ll find on the cover disc. If that doesn’t work either, you’ll have to try the more tedious method. Since it involves some fairly drastic deleting of files and Registry entries we’d strongly advise that you back up everything first, just in case you make a mistake. For instructions on how to do this see point your browser to www.pcadvisor.co.uk/printplus.

From Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs, uninstall all Works Suite 2002 applications (you can leave Encarta if you like, as it doesn’t seem to share anything with the rest of the Works Suite). Open the folder c:\Program Files and delete the Microsoft Works folder. Open the folder c:\Program Files\Common Files\Microsoft Shared and delete the Works Shared folder. Start the Registry



↑ Use of PIO transfer mode is not recommended if you’re trying to make DVD movies

Editor (Start, Run, Regedit) and expand the folders Hkey_Local_Machine, Software, Microsoft. Delete the folders Works and Works Suite. Now expand the folders Hkey_Current_User, Software, Microsoft and delete the folders Works and Works Suite there, too. Now you can reinstall AutoRoute and it should start, displaying the pesky licence agreement, and then work normally.

Q My system has an Athlon 1500 processor with 512MB of RAM, two 40GB hard drives and dual-boots with Windows XP/Me. It also has a Pioneer DVD writer and an Acer CD writer. I have tried using Instant CD/DVD, Ulead’s DVD Movie Factory and Sonic’s DVDit, but each time I create a DVD the lip sync is badly out. I have captured using AVI, Mpeg-1 and Mpeg-2 with the same results in each case. But if I make a VCD with any of the files they come out okay.

A Lip sync problems occur even when playing back commercial DVDs though it is usually only noticeable with a PC that is short of processor power, which isn’t true in your case. The problem is that a PC running Windows, despite its apparent power and sophistication, is a general-purpose system and not designed for this task.

Video and audio are handled in software by separate autonomous processes called threads. Since your PC only has one processor, only one thread can actually run at a time. There’s no mechanism for synchronising the threads, so accurate lip sync can only occur if each thread gets all

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the processor time it needs to process all its audio or video data at the right time.

Since your PC ought to have enough power for this task, we need to find out where the processor time is going or what is holding things up. The most likely culprits, say the experts, are the IDE drives. Despite improvements in speed, IDE is a pretty crude and unsophisticated interface. If DMA access isn’t enabled – assuming your motherboard and drives can support its use reliably – then processor time is used to transfer every byte of data to and from every drive. The data rate when reading or writing DVDs is very high, so this is a big task for even the most powerful processor. To check what is happening, examine the property settings for the primary and secondary IDE

channels under Control Panel, System, Device Manager. If PIO mode is being used for either of your hard drives or the DVD writer, this is very likely to be the cause of your problem (see above left).

The only other solution we can suggest is installing hardware upgrades, which are likely to be expensive. A dual-processor motherboard running under Windows XP Professional would help to solve thread sync problems, but only if the DVD mastering software has been written to take advantage of it. A less drastic, but still pricey, solution would be to switch to SCSI drives and use a high-specification SCSI interface. Professional multimedia developers always specify systems with SCSI hardware, and they always consider it worth the extra cost. ■

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