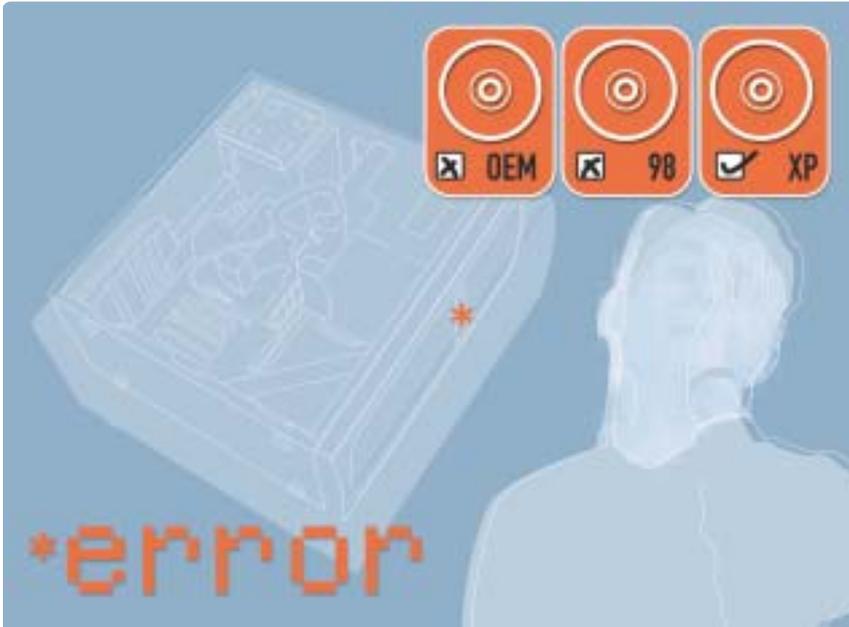




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## ↓ General

**Q** I built two PCs, which each use a Gigabyte GA-7ZXE ATX motherboard and an Athlon XP1700+ processor, and installed Windows 98 on both. Unfortunately the systems keep freezing, most often when opening or closing Explorer.

When running applications they seem to work okay. I've checked the processor temperatures, disabled DMA on the hard drives, replaced the AGP graphics card with an old PCI, reduced the clock speed and tried the failsafe Bios defaults, but all to no avail. I am at my wits' end.

**A** The fact that your applications run perfectly well suggests that there's nothing wrong with either PC. It would be surprising for two identical systems to have the same hardware fault unless, as you've already considered, it's a compatibility issue.

The problem may lie with the version of Windows you're using. It isn't advisable to install an old OS on new hardware. If it's an OEM version, the licence agreement probably doesn't allow its use for anything other than the PC it came with.

Microsoft will have made countless improvements over the years to take account of faster speeds, newer chipsets and so on. These changes won't be available as updates for Windows 98 – an operating system that was superseded long before your hardware was manufactured.

We're not giving any guarantees, but we're pretty sure that if you install a current version of Windows on both PCs they will run perfectly.

**Q** A colleague has given me a Pentium III processor and an MSI MS-6147 motherboard from his PC. The board works perfectly apart from one of the USB sockets. It has an extra port for a single USB socket on the front of the case. I don't have any manuals for this computer but a label on the case states that it has two USB sockets. Is it possible to enable this extra socket so all three work?

**A** We think not as three is an odd number of USB sockets for a computer to have. The information we found about this MSI motherboard on the manufacturer's website ([www.msi.com.tw](http://www.msi.com.tw)) confirms that it supports only two USB ports.

**Q** My new Multivision computer has an AMD Athlon XP 2100+ processor. On bootup it says it is an unknown CPU type, 1.73GHz. Why?

**A** Most probably the Athlon XP 2100+ processor didn't exist when your computer's motherboard was made. It probably needs a Bios upgrade in order to recognise it. Upgrading the Bios may not make any difference to your PC's performance, but it still ought to have been done by the manufacturer.

**Q** I have just bought a new PC and already own a Microtek ScanMaker E3, which I purchased in 1995 and up until now has worked perfectly. It came with a SCSI Adaptec AVA 1502E card, which I cannot use as it needs an ISA expansion slot and my computer has only PCI slots. Can you advise on this?

**A** SCSI is an industry-standard interface, so it is possible to buy a SCSI adapter for PCI slots. We'd recommend getting an adapter from Adaptec, as over the years the company has proved the most compatible and reliable manufacturer. A potential problem is that your new PC probably runs Windows XP and the software that came with your old scanner may not run under it.

If this is the case then get a copy of ScanWizard for Windows XP from <http://support.microtek.com/~admin/pce3wxp.html>.

**Q** Since installing a DVD writer I can't get Windows Media Player to write to blank media. I can burn a DVD using any other software and playback of home-recorded discs is okay. I've upgraded to Windows Media Player 9.0 and uninstalled anything that might conflict with it, but it still won't work.

**A** You don't specify what DVD writer you have, but we suspect that the reason you can't burn discs using Windows Media Player 9.0 is that Media Player doesn't support it. The CD burning capability in Media Player uses an Adaptec

plug-in, but the one shipped by Microsoft is a cut-down version with limited hardware support. To obtain support for your drive you'll need to upgrade to Roxio EZ-CD Creator Deluxe or the latest Nero Burning ROM software with a WMA plug-in.

If you have Windows XP but don't have Media Player 9.0 then you can only burn discs from Media Player if your drive is supported as a recording drive by Windows.

To check this, open My Computer, right-click the drive and select Properties. If the recorder is supported by Windows you'll see a Recording tab. If the tab is present, select it and then check that the 'Enable CD recording on this drive' option is selected (as shown right).



← If your CD/DVD writer is supported by Windows, its Properties dialog box will have a Recording tab

## ↓ Windows

**I'm using Windows Me and when I click the Programs menu only about half the programs appear. At the foot of the menu is a small chevron and I have to click on this to see the rest of the programs. I also notice that some of them are highlighted in a darker grey. How can I remedy this?**

**A** This is occurring because the Personalized Menus option is enabled. This is a useful feature if you have a large number of programs installed on your computer but only use a few of the applications frequently. It hides the menu items that haven't been used recently, making the ones you often use easier to find. Clicking on the chevron displays all of the programs, while the colour highlighting distinguishes those that would normally be hidden from those that are always displayed.

To disable this option, click on Start, Settings, Taskbar and Start Menu. On the General tab clear the checkbox beside Use Personalized Menus.

**Why do System Tray icons often appear in a different sequence?**

**A** Windows starts the applications that display System Tray icons almost simultaneously. After that, it's

a matter of luck how quickly each program icon is loaded into the System Tray. The time will vary depending on disk activity, memory loading and how quickly any devices used by the software respond to interrogation.

It's therefore inevitable that the order in which the icons appear will vary. It's annoying if you often need to view your System Tray applications and have to hunt for the icon each time, but unfortunately we don't know of a solution.

### Looking for help with your PC problems, and want to speak to someone direct? YOU CAN, with PC Advisor's Expert Advice Hotline



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**0906 906 0274**

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When you subscribe to our special Full System Cover service, you can have as many calls as you like of unlimited length. For an annual fee of £169 per system, this service is the perfect solution for home or small business users. Call 0870 739 7602 for details.

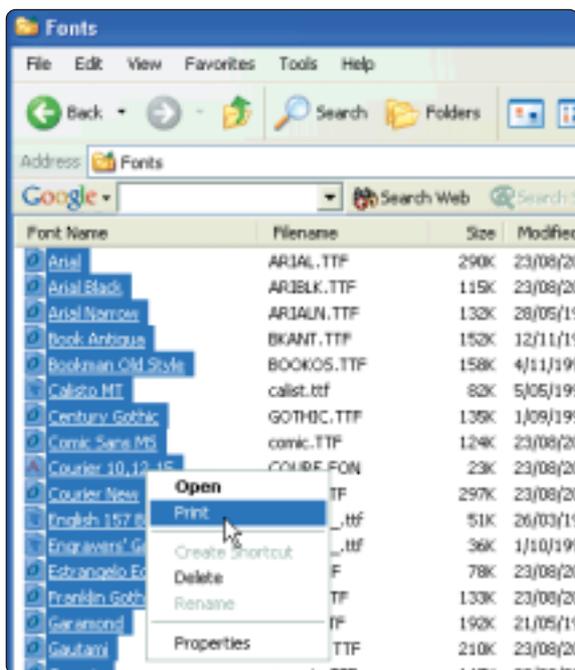
**PC ADVISOR EXPERT ADVICE HOTLINE**

**Q** I accidentally deleted a file from a Zip disk. It was the only copy and, of course, as it's a removable disk there's no Recycle Bin to restore it from. Is it possible to recover it without having to buy a data recovery utility?

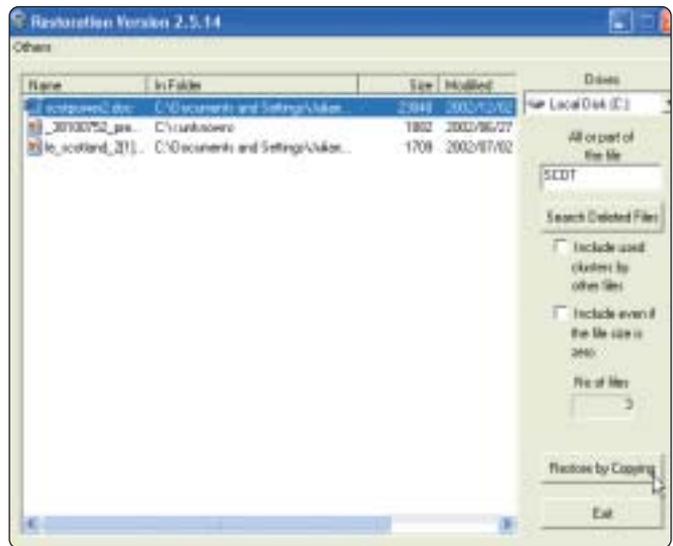
**A** If you haven't written anything to the disk since you deleted the file, there's a good chance it can be recovered. If the data is important, don't take chances with it and use a professional data recovery tool. Type 'undelete' and 'windows' into your favourite search engine and you'll find plenty of candidates.

If you want a free undelete tool, your choices are more limited. Try a utility called Restoration (shown above) which you can download from <http://hccweb1.bai.ne.jp/~hcj58401>. Restoration works under all versions of Windows, on both FAT file systems and NTFS. This utility isn't as capable as a commercial product and sometimes the files it recovers are not correct, but as it's free it's still worth a go.

**Q** I have a lot of fonts installed on my computer, but I have difficulty choosing the best one for each job. Is there an easy way to print out examples so I can see what they look like first?



→ The free Japanese utility Restoration may be able to recover a recently deleted file from a Zip disk



**A** Yes, there is. Open Control Panel and double-click Fonts. Select the fonts you want to print by holding down Ctrl and clicking to select individual fonts or clicking and dragging with the mouse to select a block of them. Right-click one of the selections and click on Print (as shown below).

**Q** In March 03's Readers' writes, Bob Ford is relieved not to have upgraded to XP because of its 'snooping software'. I'm wondering if the same thing is present in Windows 98 SE? In Msconfig on the Startup tab there is a program named ptsnoop.exe which

runs from the Windows folder. Should I deselect this to stop it running?

**A** The 'snooping software' this reader is referring to is the Microsoft Windows XP copy protection. It checks for changes to the system in order to prevent users bypassing the scheme by copying an installation from one PC to another. As we've mentioned before, even a hardware upgrade can be enough to trigger a request for reactivation.

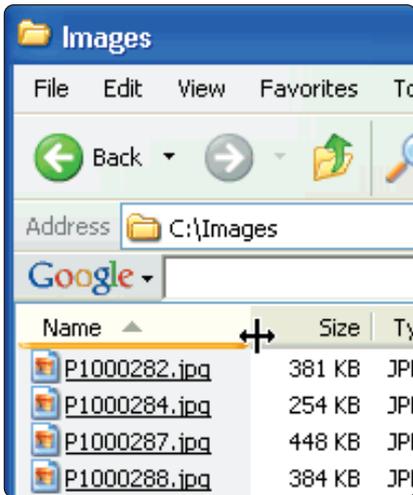
You aren't the first reader to get concerned on spotting the unfortunately-named ptsnoop.exe but we're glad to reassure you that it is nothing harmful. It's part of the driver software used by your modem, so it would certainly be a bad idea to disable it.

**Q** Until recently all my files in Windows Explorer were listed in alphabetical order from A to Z. They are now, however, listed from Z to A. How can I restore the original order?

**A** You'll probably find the answer in the Windows tutorial. Files in Windows Explorer can be shown in any order you like. You can select how the files are shown – for example, thumbnail, icons, list or details view – using the View menu or by clicking the View button, which is usually to the far right of the toolbar.

To change the order, right-click the window showing the list of files and select 'Arrange icons by' then choose Name.

← Use the Control Panel Fonts window to print samples of your system's fonts



← Change the column size in Explorer details view by clicking and dragging between the column headers

If the files are listed in Details view, with columns showing different information, you can also change the order by clicking on the header of the column you want the list to be sorted by.

The first time you sort the files they will be listed in alphabetical order (or date or numerical order if you are sorting by date or file size). If the files are already in order then the sort order will automatically be reversed. So you may have clicked on an Explorer column heading by mistake.

You can also change column widths in Details view by positioning the mouse over the dividing line between the column headers until the cursor changes into a double-headed arrow (shown above) then dragging the column divider left or right.

It's possible for Explorer to resize the columns to fit the size of the data by holding the Ctrl key and pressing '+' on the numeric keypad. Add and remove columns from the Details view by right-clicking the column header to display a menu of options and setting or clearing an item's checkmark.

**In Device Manager under Standard 101/102 Key Keyboard the driver idvkd.sys shows 'Driver not installed'. Is this correct?**

The Microsoft Knowledge Base mentions nothing about this, though a search of the web and technical newsgroups shows that it's a common problem. However, the keyboards of those who reported a problem seemed to be working and we couldn't find a solution.

There is a keyboard driver called hidvkd.sys, which was installed on many of the problematic PCs. We suspect that this message is because of a typing error in a driver information file. As long as your keyboard works, you needn't worry about it.

**I regularly see in your magazine hints and tips that call for changes to the Registry. These are usually accompanied by dire warnings about what may happen if you aren't sure what you are doing, which make me too nervous to try any of the suggestions.**

**What exactly is the Registry, how does it benefit the user to tweak it and why is it so dangerous to meddle with?**

The Registry (shown below) is a central repository for all kinds of data used by Windows and the applications that run under it. Microsoft didn't intend that users should meddle with it and most of the time it isn't necessary.

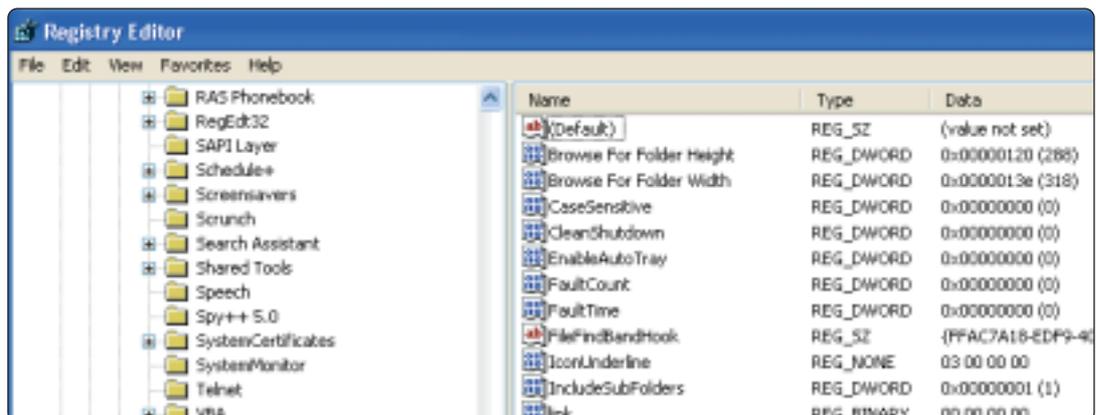
Unfortunately, Windows and its applications aren't perfect and sometimes making manual changes to information in the Registry is the only way to solve a problem. There are also a few features of Windows that are controlled by settings in the Registry that can't be changed using the standard Windows user interface.

The problem with editing the Registry is that there is no undo facility. If a user changes or deletes something they shouldn't, it's possible that the damage can prevent Windows from loading. This wouldn't matter if everyone backed up their entire system before making Registry changes – but most people don't.

The purpose of our warnings is to emphasise that readers must take the responsibility for having an adequate backup before following our advice. We've never heard from a reader whose system was damaged after following our advice so you shouldn't be too frightened of trying the occasional Registry tweak. It's simply good practice to take a full backup before making any major system change, including installing or removing software.

If you have Windows XP, using System Restore is the next best thing to system backup. However, we highlight some possible adverse effects of it in our Windows XP Q&As on page 146.

If you have Windows 98 or Me, then running 'scanregw' will force a backup of the Registry. This can be restored by booting to a command prompt and running the DOS version 'scanreg'.



→ Windows' Registry Editor: safe only for use by experts?

## Copy a file without opening two windows

tip

If you usually open two Explorer windows so you can copy files by dragging them from one folder to another, here's an easier way to do it.

Right-click the icon of the file you want to copy and then select Copy from the pop-up menu. Now select the folder you want to copy it to, right-click in the pane showing the folder contents and select Paste. To move a file instead of copying it, use the Cut and Paste option.

## ↓ Internet

**I'm concerned about the advice given regarding the question on antivirus conflict from page 125 of the Winter 02 edition of *Tips & Tricks*. Surely if you untick the POP3 scan option, you disable one of the main benefits of PC-Cillin?**

I use this product and had exactly the same problem after setting up a second ISP connection. The reason was that the service provider FreeUK uses specified name server addresses for DNS instead of server assigned. I now use this ISP only as an alternative dialup for web surfing. Wouldn't it be better for your reader to change ISPs?

**A** Changing ISPs – which would result in changing your email address – just to overcome an antivirus conflict sounds like a case of throwing the baby out with the bath water.

It is really up to the antivirus product developers to create software that works without interfering with the ability to retrieve mail. Until they do, we sometimes have little choice but to advise readers to disable mail scanning in order to gain access to their email.

Disabling POP3 scanning isn't as dangerous as it may sound. The majority of email viruses work using attachments which must be saved to disk and then executed. Any good antivirus package will detect the infected attachment and block access to it at this stage.

→ Use PingPlotter to find out where intruders are coming from

If POP3 scanning is turned off, the only risk of infection is from viruses that exploit a vulnerability in Outlook Express. This would allow the execution of active script content within an email. In this case it is the Internet Explorer web browser component – used by Outlook Express to display the message – that runs the virus code. This risk can be avoided by installing the security patches that have long been available for Outlook Express, by using the latest version of it or by using a different, non-Microsoft mail client.

**How can I stop my computer from transmitting my address and how can I find out other addresses? When my firewall reports an intrusion attempt it gives only the numeric address. I would like to find out whether it comes from a genuine site or a hacker.**

**A** You can't stop your computer from sending your address.

When writing a letter you must include your address in order to receive replies. The internet is no different in that respect. The job of a firewall is to allow only replies

to information requests initiated by you to pass through and to block all others.

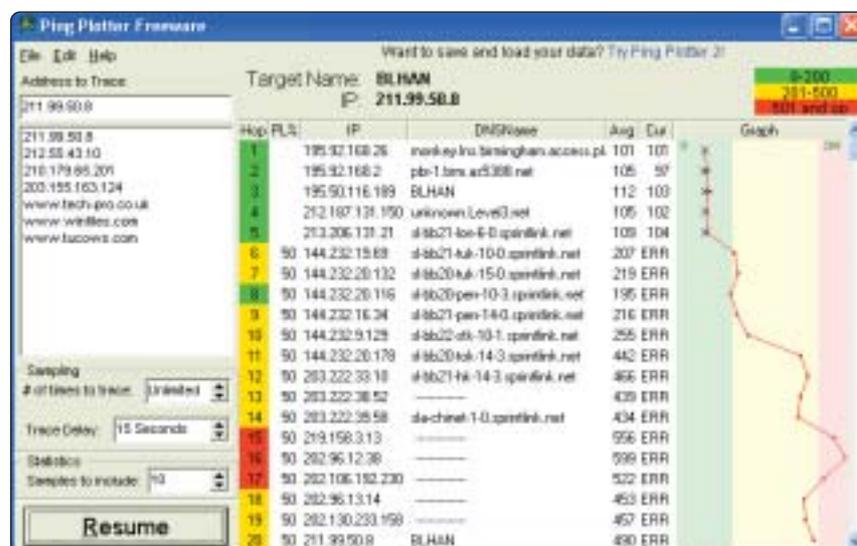
As for intruders, our advice to readers is to turn off the intruder alerts, enjoy using your computer and leave your firewall to get on with its job of excluding them. If you have to, though, there are a great many websites where you can look up numeric IP addresses to find out who they belong to. To locate them, simply type Reverse DNS Lookup into your favourite search engine.

If you'd prefer to use a Windows-based tool to look up addresses there are a number that will do just that, but we recommend Ping Plotter. This tool does a lot more than look up an address. It traces the route between your computer and the target address, so even if there is no name associated with the address (or the hacker is using a false address) you may still get an idea where the intrusion attempt is coming from.

Ping Plotter also records the time taken for each hop on the route so you can see where any holdups are. This makes it a very useful tool for general internet performance troubleshooting, which is what it is really designed for.

Download Ping Plotter from [www.pingplotter.com](http://www.pingplotter.com). There's a freeware version (shown below) that's more than adequate for casual use as well as a more fully featured shareware version.

**When I close Internet Explorer or Outlook Express I no longer receive a message box asking if I want to disconnect. How can I reinstate it?**



**A** There's a Registry key you can check to see whether the message box should be appearing. Start the Registry Editor then expand the folders Hkey\_Current\_User\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion and select the subfolder Internet Settings. In the righthand pane EnableAutoDisconnect should have the value 01 00 00 00. Double-click and change it if necessary.

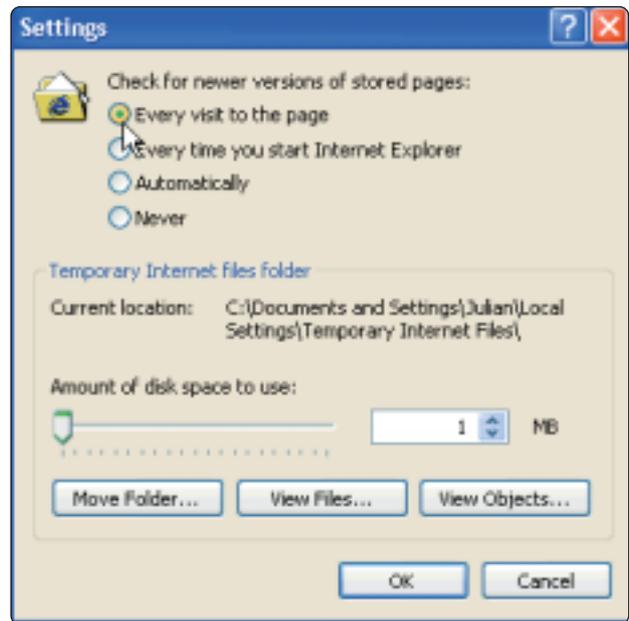
If this value doesn't exist – and it probably won't if you're using Windows XP – right-click in the Registry Editor's righthand pane and select New, Binary Value. Name the new binary value EnableAutoDisconnect then double-click the new value and set it to 01 00 00 00.

You could also do this automatically by running the file EnableAutoDisconnect.reg on the cover disc. For those who wish to disable the feature we've also included a companion file named DisableAutoDisconnect.reg.

If this doesn't do the trick then try checking two values in Hkey\_Current\_User\RemoteAccess\Profile\<ISP name>. The values concerned are named EnableAutoDisconnect and EnableExitDisconnect and both of them should have the value 01 00 00 00. If the Registry Editor shows these two values are of type Reg\_dword, select and delete them and then recreate them as binary values using the method described above.

Unfortunately, as the folder location depends on the ISP name we can't provide a REG file to do this for you.

→ If a web page loads but doesn't work correctly, check your browser cache settings



The disconnect prompt won't appear if Windows detects that something else is using the connection. This may not be obvious – it could be something like Windows Update, Active Desktop or Internet Explorer updating offline content.

**Q** I use IE 6.0 to access Hotmail with Net Passport by clicking on the icon on my ISP's home page. The Hotmail page appears to load but won't function and I sometimes have to redial three or four times before it will work. What causes this? I'm using ZoneAlarm and Net Accelerator.

**A** Click your browser's Refresh button to reload the non-working page. If that doesn't help, check your browser cache settings by going to Tools, Internet Options, Settings. Select 'Every visit to the page' under 'Check for newer versions of stored pages' (shown above).

If you're still having trouble try removing Net Accelerator. If you're using your service provider's proxy server (check Control Panel, Internet Options, Connections tab, Settings button) then that is also a possible culprit, so try disabling it too.

**Q** Sometimes friends send me a funny message accompanied by an appropriate background sound. I can save all the pictures to a folder on my hard disk easily enough, but is it possible to save the sound file?

**A** This is possible if you're using Outlook Express, although the method is clumsy. Click on Tools, Options and select the Send tab. Deselect 'Reply to messages using the format in which they were sent' and set the mail sending format to Plain Text. Ensure that 'Include message in reply' is selected. Close the Options dialog box to return to your message then click the Forward button.

All the attachments, including the sound file, should now appear in the new message from which you can save or drag and drop them to a location of your choice. When you're done, close the new message, reopen the Options dialog box and restore the original settings.

## Glossary

tip

**U**nsure of a technical term? Want to check exactly what that acronym means? Load up our searchable Glossary which you'll find on the cover disc. Requires Acrobat Reader, which is also on the CD.



## ↓ Applications

**Q** How can I back up my email account settings in Office XP? I know how to back up my messages and addresses but I can't find a way of saving my account details, although I'm sure it was possible in the previous version.

**A** The facility to back up account settings independently was removed from Office XP. In previous versions account settings were stored in separate IAF files. Now they are stored in the file outlook.pst, along with your



## Create a Personal Reminder Wizard

If your memory isn't what it used to be, it would be a good idea to have the computer remind you when it's time to perform a certain task. With just a few lines of VBScript and the Windows Task Scheduler you can create a Personal Reminder Wizard.

You'll need the Windows Script Host, which is present on all computers since Windows 98. You will also need Microsoft Agent 2.0 and the character Merlin, which you'll already have if you're running Windows Me, 2000 or XP.

If you don't have any of these components then download them from <http://activex.microsoft.com/activex/controls/agent2/msagent.exe> and <http://agent.microsoft.com/agent2/chars/merlin.exe>.

If you want the wizard speak your reminder message then you'll need to download the Lernout & Hauspie TruVoice Text-to-Speech Engine from [http://activex.microsoft.com/activex/controls/agent2/tv\\_enua.exe](http://activex.microsoft.com/activex/controls/agent2/tv_enua.exe).

If you have Windows XP you'll also need the Microsoft Speech Application Program Interface 4.0a from <http://activex.microsoft.com/activex/controls/sapi/spchapi.exe> Windows XP has a newer version but Microsoft Agent doesn't work with it. Fortunately, it's okay to install both at the same time.

Next, you need the Visual Basic Script code that runs the wizard. It's long and needs to be typed in correctly so we've included it as the file `agent.vbs` on this month's cover disc. Copy it to any convenient folder - the `Windows\MSAgent` folder is as good a place as any.

To schedule a reminder, select **Add Scheduled Task** from the Task Scheduler main window. To select the program to run, click **Browse** then locate the file `agent.vbs` in whichever folder you copied it to. Choose when you want the reminder to run then close the wizard.



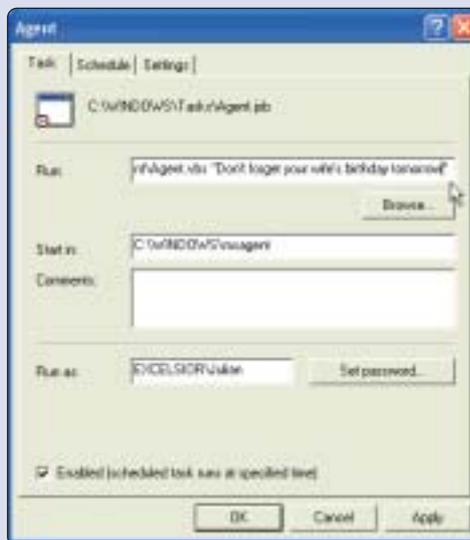
← Create personal reminders so you never need worry about missing important dates again

After you've done that, right-click the task you just created and select **Properties**. In the **Run** box, place the cursor at the start of the script filename

and type `wscript.exe` followed by a space. Then move the cursor to the end of the filename and type a space followed by your reminder message in double quotes. The line should finish up looking something like this:

```
wscript.exe C:\Windows\MSAgent\agent.vbs "Time for tea"
```

Click **ok** when you're finished. To make sure your reminder will work at the appointed time you can test it by right-clicking the task and choosing **Run**.



← Move the cursor to the end of the filename and type a space, followed by your reminder message in double quotes

messages. Back up that file and your account settings will be backed up at the same time.

**Do you know where I can get hold of a good assembler that runs under MS-DOS and covers the MMX, SSE, SSE2 and 3DNow instructions of the Pentium 4 and Athlon processors? Back in the 1980s there was a good shareware disassembler called A86/D86 written by**

**Eric Isaacson. Is this still available? I'd prefer software on disk as I don't have internet access.**

Your choice will be limited without recourse to the internet, as hardly any shareware authors these days supply programs on floppies. The Public Domain Software Library still supplies disks (phone 01892 663 298 for more information) but many excellent

free and shareware programs aren't in its catalogue.

You would be better off using a friend's computer or an internet cafe to download what you need on to a floppy.

You won't find any assembler capable of supporting the latest processor instructions that will run under MS-DOS. All the assemblers that do this are 32bit programs and run from a command prompt under Windows or Linux.

Eric Isaacson's famous assembler/disassembler is still available at <http://eji.com> but the version you want that supports the latest processor instructions (A386/D386) isn't shareware and can't be downloaded. It must be purchased directly from the US (see the website or phone 00 1 812 339 1811). With a printed manual, this will set you back around \$100 (about £64).

A few minutes surfing the internet and you could download the freeware Nasm assembler (<http://nasm.sourceforge.net>) together with the Alink linker (<http://alink.sourceforge.net>) which is required to create EXE files. The main problem with these programs is a lack of decent documentation and there is no related assembler or debugger.

A better choice might be the Go suite of tools ([www.godevtool.com](http://www.godevtool.com)), comprising an assembler, resource compiler, linker and debugger. The supplied documentation is excellent. However, the most recent version, supporting the latest processor instructions and running on Windows NT, 2000 and XP, isn't free.

Another alternative is Spasm (<http://betov.free.fr/spasm.html>). This free program has its own Windows-based integrated development environment, though it is one of the quirkiest and least intuitive programs we've seen for a long while. Once you've got the hang of it, Spasm can create EXE files in a flash using its own built-in linker. It also supports a high-level syntax that saves a lot of programming time.

For anyone interested in writing assembler programs under Windows Spasm is definitely worth a try.

## Contact us

**P**lease send your Helpline questions to [pcadvisor\\_letters@idg.com](mailto:pcadvisor_letters@idg.com). To help us sort your messages, please use the word 'Helpline' in the subject header. Alternatively, you can post your queries to Helpline, *PC Advisor*, Fifth Floor, 85 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4TQ.

We aim to give you the best assistance we can. However, given the limitations of this type of advice, we can't guarantee that what we say will work, and we can't accept responsibility for any damage arising as a result of this advice. Always back up your system before you make any changes. If you send us software disks, make sure they are not original copies as we cannot return them. We regret that we cannot answer technical queries over the phone except via our Expert Advice Hotline on 0906 906 0272. Calls are charged at £1.50 per minute.

## Search *PC Advisor's* free online Helproom

**T**he *PC Advisor* online Helproom contains an indispensable database of answers to common questions, regarding all aspects of PC software. This ranges from general Windows issues to problems with specific applications and covers all types of PC hardware and software, including system components and peripherals.

Alternatively, you can ask for help from one of the visitors in our online forums. Sign up as a registered user (which is free) and then browse to one of the discussion forums. In the Helproom your first stop should be the searchable database of frequently asked and previously answered queries. With almost half a million postings, you'll almost certainly find the answer you need in this archive of queries, simply by entering a couple of keywords.

If our online database can't solve your problem, try posting a question in the Helproom forum, where more than 200 queries are answered every day. The forum is manned by our team of Helproom angels who are ready and willing to lend a hand on anything from system crashes to virus alerts.



[www.pcadvisor.co.uk/helproom](http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/helproom)



**O** I was delighted to discover how to back up my emails in your XP workshop on page 120 of the Spring 03 issue. From following your advice everything worked as described until the step 'copy these files on to the CD' at which point I was told that access was refused. Outlook was not in use and the output disc was not full. However, I managed to copy the files to My Documents and from there I was able to copy them to CD.

After that, I tried to open the backup copy from the CD and again I was refused

access. I tried with Wordpad but all I saw was gobbledygook. If I need to restore my backed-up files, what should I do?

**A** Last things first. If you try to open a Microsoft Outlook PST file with anything other than Microsoft Outlook, you will see gobbledygook. The reason is that it is a database file written in a format that only Microsoft Outlook knows how to interpret.

Access was denied when you tried to open the backed-up file with Outlook because files on CD are read only. Microsoft Outlook requires read/write access when it opens its data files. You must first copy the file back to your hard disk. However, when you copy a file from CD to hard disk it retains its read-only attribute. To remove it, right-click the file, select Properties then clear the Read Only checkbox. Only then will you be able to open the file.

You shouldn't have been denied access when trying to copy your Outlook PST file to CD. We can only guess that some application had the file open. A problem with the method given in the article for locating the PST files is that it might locate files belonging to other users

## Windows XP Q&As



**U**grading to a new operating system can result in a steep learning curve. As well as getting to grips with a different looking interface and a host of features, you have to contend with software glitches and incompatibility problems caused by older packages and peripherals.

In XP Advisor we deal with your questions every month (see page 132) but if you haven't paid a visit to this section before, here's a taste of what you're missing out on.

**I recently got into a mess while making some configuration changes, so I decided to use System Restore to put the Registry back to the state it was in before. The latest restore point was a couple of days earlier but I hadn't installed or removed anything since then, or made any other changes, so I thought it would be safe.**

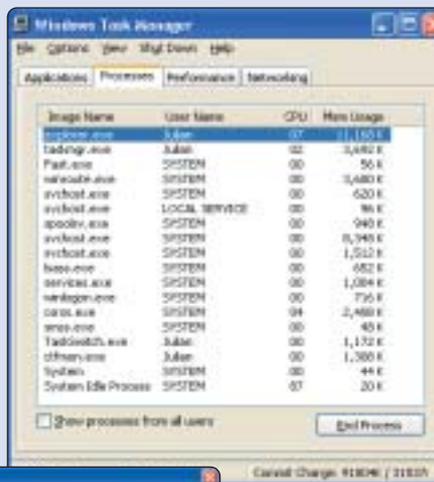
Some time later I discovered that several data files I had been working on had also reverted to an earlier state. A folder I had created had disappeared, along with its contents, and messages in my mail server's outgoing mail queue was lost.

I used a backup to restore my data files to the state they were in the night before, but I lost the work I had done between doing the backup and using System Restore. Could you explain what System Restore does? I thought it only tracked changes to Windows and application files.

**A** System Restore (shown below) tracks changes to a large number of file types (see [www.pcadvisor.co.uk/printplus](http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/printplus) for a

full list of the extensions monitored). It tracks these files wherever they are on a monitored partition unless they are within the My Documents folder. Our guess is that your data and email spool files have extensions that are on this list and that they were not located in My Documents.

We can't find any way to change the list of file types monitored by System Restore, nor do we know of a way to tell it to leave certain folders alone. It seems that the only way to avoid this problem is ensuring that all your data files are kept in the My Documents folder.



↑ To get rid of an undeletable file, use a command window after using Task Manager to kill Explorer

← System Restore: it can lose your work if you aren't careful

This is easier said than done if you're using an application that manages its own data files and doesn't give you a choice of where they go.

The only solution (apart from giving up on System Restore altogether) is to create a new partition, ensure that it is not monitored by System Restore and install those applications there.

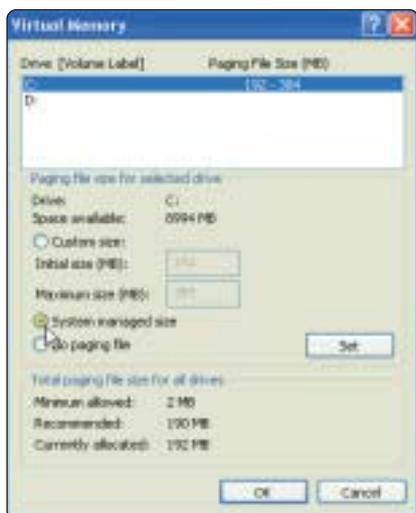
**There's a 4.27GB DVD file on my hard drive whose extension is XMF. When I try to delete it I'm told that the file is in use and access is denied. I've tried rebooting and booting in Safe Mode to delete it, but that doesn't work either. Any ideas?**

**A** Try opening a command prompt and navigating to the folder containing the problem file. It's easiest if you've installed the free Microsoft PowerToy 'Open Command Window Here' from <http://download.microsoft.com/download/whistler/install/2/wxp/en-us/cmdherepowertoysetup.exe>. If you don't want to do this click Start, Run, type CMD and press Enter. Use the CD (Change Directory) command to navigate to the correct folder.

Close all programs except the command window – and we mean all of them – including the applications running in the System Tray. Press Ctrl, Alt, Del to bring up the Windows Task Manager. Select the Processes tab, locate the task explorer.exe (see top left), select it and click End Task. This will close down your desktop. Remember to leave Task Manager open. Now go back to the command window and try to delete your undeletable file using the command 'DEL filename'.

With luck this should do the trick. Go back to Task Manager, click on File, New Task, type explorer.exe and press Enter. This will restart the desktop. You can now close Task Manager.

To download a list of file types monitored by System Restore from Print plus, go to [www.pcadvisor.co.uk/printplus](http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/printplus)



↑ Allow Windows to manage virtual memory settings to avoid memory errors when the paging file fills up

## Pass it on: tips from readers

tip

### Extracting blocked attachments

Reader Alan Cox wrote to say that the method used by Outlook Express 6.0 to block access to certain attachments, which we mentioned in the Spring 03 issue, is even more brain-dead than we thought.

If you want to open an attachment that Outlook Express has denied access to, simply click on Forward, as if you were going to forward the message in question. The attachments will be included in the new message, from where you can open them or drag them to a folder for later viewing.

### Spool32 problem unravelled

Colin Hershey was intrigued to read about the Spool32 error as discussed in Spring 03's Helpline on page 138. He had experienced an identical error, right down to the memory address.

The problem began occurring after changing from an HP 600 Deskjet to an Epson Stylus printer and then downloading the latest Stylus drivers from Epson's website. The download installed a second driver file instead of upgrading the old one: two Stylus icons appeared in the System Tray and everything froze.

After uninstalling both Stylus drivers and then reinstalling the original one, the Spool32 errors started appearing. On the Startup tab of the Msconfig utility Colin found two Epson Stylus entries both referring to the same file: C:\Windows\System\e\_s10ic2.exe. He disabled one of them and also scoured the hard disk and removed a few leftover HP DeskJet files. So far, thankfully, the error has not recurred.

which you don't have permission to access. Those files might even be opened by a copy of Outlook running under another username.

The location of your personal PST file can vary depending on how the system is set up, but you will usually find it in C:\Documents and Settings\\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook. You may need to change your Windows Explorer folder options to 'Show hidden files and folders' in order to see it.

If you locate the file in this way you can be sure that it is your file you are

trying to back up and you shouldn't have any trouble copying it.

### Whenever I try to install Microsoft Flight Simulator

2002 I receive the following error: 'Setup failed to extract files from E:\fs2002.cab. This is most likely caused by low memory space or a corrupted cabinet file. Please restart your machine and run Setup again'. My system exceeds the memory specification for the game and has 120GB of hard disk space, so what could the problem possibly be?

Given that your system has more than enough memory and disk space to install Flight Simulator 2002, the most logical explanation for this error message is that the cabinet file (the file fs2002.cab which contains the software files in a compressed format) is corrupt. This would occur if the CD was damaged and that is certainly a possibility.

However, this error has been known to occur even in cases when users have verified that the cabinet file is intact by copying it to their hard disk and viewing its contents using Explorer or WinZip. So there are a couple of other things you should check.

Using the System Control Panel, check your virtual memory settings as shown above. Change them if necessary so that Windows is managing the swap file (it's called the paging file under XP). You should also locate the folder used for storage of temporary files and completely empty it (including any subfolders) as the installer may be trying to create a file with the same name as one that already exists.

Finally, we'd advise closing all other applications, including your virus checker, while you run the installation program. ■

## Helpline FAQs Directory

Ever have a problem with your PC and feel sure you once read about the solution in a past issue of Helpline? The FAQ Directory can help you. Comprising 18 months worth of questions and answers from Helpline, the Directory is a searchable database of almost 400 questions and answers. It covers common Windows dilemmas, plus bugs and glitches in software, hardware errors and web troubleshooting. Whatever your problem, our Directory can almost certainly provide you with the solution. The FAQ Directory is available with *Tips & Tricks*, on sale now at all good newsagents.

