



138	General
140	Windows
142	Internet
146	Pass it on
148	Applications



## ↓ General

**Q** I bought a spindle of black DataWrite CD-R discs. When I try to write to them, even at reduced speed, I receive the following message: 'Medium Speed Error, Invalid Write State, Could Not Perform End Track, Burn Process Failed'. The supplier told me that my computer doesn't like the discs and that my copy of Nero, less than a year old, is out of date. Any comments?

**A** Your copy of Nero isn't the culprit. Your CD writer, whose make and model you didn't tell us, is. It's a fact of life that some CD writers don't work with some cheaper discs. The problem is in the drive's firmware – the embedded software in the drive controller that dictates how the data is written.

Some frustrated users suggest that there is collusion between certain drive manufacturers and big-name media makers. It's more likely that well-known brands don't cause trouble because their disc specification is known to drive makers and are therefore used as prototype discs during manufacturing.

The only advice we can offer is that when you find a brand of disc that works well in your CD or DVD writer, stick with it. If you want to use low-priced media, try a single disc to see if it works before buying in bulk.

**Q** For as long as I have had my PC whenever I try to write an email, use Microsoft Word or any text-input software, the computer inserts spurious text anytime it feels like it. The system sometimes locks up after a random text string appears. I then have to wait an age before the PC decides it's my turn and I can erase the unwanted text and continue typing. Have you got a solution?

**A** Many years ago we encountered a similar problem, where a computer would press the Enter key all by itself at random intervals whenever it was placed in a particular location. Replacing the keyboard didn't help, but the problem didn't occur if we put the PC somewhere else. We never did get to the bottom of it. While it was tempting to believe this was the ghost of a former typist, the problem was more likely caused by electromagnetic interference from the building's wiring.

We mention this because sometimes the obvious explanation isn't the reason for a problem. Then again, it could simply

be a faulty keyboard. If possible, arrange a keyboard swap with a friend. This will let you see whether the keyboard is knackered before buying a new one. If that doesn't help, it might be a faulty keyboard controller on the motherboard – something you can't easily replace.

But before resigning yourself to a new motherboard consider moving the PC to a different location or obtaining the services of an exorcist!

**Q** My original printer setup was as follows: parallel port to Mustek scanner to Belkin data switch with an HP LaserJet on one port and a Canon BJC 250 on the other. Last week I replaced the Canon with an Epson Stylus Photo 830 printer. It self-tests okay but I can't print anything, even when it is connected directly to the parallel port.

During software installation the following message appears: '(Enum\ACPI\\*PNP0400\0) SUREgCreateKey failed. High speed port driver could not be installed'. According to Epson's support site, the printer doesn't like being connected via intermediate devices, so why won't a direct connection work?

**A** The warning about not connecting via intermediate devices applies to most modern printers. Unlike older models, these machines interact constantly with their drivers – it doesn't matter whether they are daisy-chained or use a T-switch.

The new printer's drivers assume that no other device will ever be connected to that parallel port and the presence of anything else causes problems. The error message you received when installing the printer software was probably caused by a conflict with the driver for one of the other parallel port devices. This will still be active even if you temporarily disconnected the device and is most likely holding the parallel port open.

Even if you got past the software installation problem it's unlikely that the printer would work correctly with your daisy-chained, T-switched configuration. In the past, many readers have

encountered similar problems. The solution is to install a second parallel port for the new printer, use a USB-to-parallel adapter or replace some of the parallel port devices with new USB models.

**My PC has an 8GB Seagate Medallist hard drive. I wanted more capacity, so I obtained another 13GB Seagate drive. Both devices support UDMA33, but when I connect the new drive the computer doesn't recognise it at all – even when connected as a Master in place of the original disk. I tried accessing the Bios in order to change the settings, but it is protected by a password that I don't know.**

**A** Just about all systems of this vintage use autodetection of hard drives, so it shouldn't be necessary to change anything for the disk to be recognised. The most likely explanation is that your new hard drive is faulty. It won't hurt to go into the Bios and check, though. For more advice see *Beat a Bios password* on page 140.

**My PC has an 8GB Seagate Medallist hard drive. I wanted more capacity, so I obtained another 13GB Seagate drive. Both devices support UDMA33, but when I connect the new drive the computer doesn't recognise it at all – even when connected as a Master in place of the original disk. I tried accessing the Bios in order to change the settings, but it is protected by a password that I don't know.**

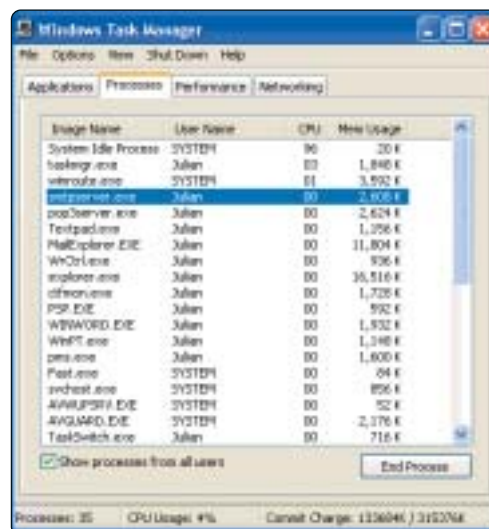
**A** It's unlikely that updating the driver will eliminate the DMA controller error and we're not sure if an update even exists. If the system appears to be working normally we'd be inclined to ignore the error. It's unlikely to have anything to do with the slowdown you are experiencing and was probably there for some time before you noticed it. In the few cases we've come across, the DMA controller error was resolved by a clean reinstall of Windows.

However, it's quite common for users to report slow running after installing the software for an HP multifunction printer. The solution to this is much simpler. Bring up Task Manager by pressing Ctrl, Alt, Del.

→ Let the Windows Task Manager show you which program is using the most CPU time

You'll probably see a number of programs with names beginning HP. Try terminating these one at a time to see which program is causing the slowdown. If you're running Windows XP the Task Manager (shown right) even shows you the processor usage of each task, which will help identify the one that's causing your PC to run slowly.

There's a good chance that you'll find the troublemaker is a program called hpzipm12.exe. This has been found to be the cause of system slowdowns as well as conflicts with other applications. Users have reported that permanently disabling it using the System Configuration Utility's Startup tab (click on Start, Run and enter msconfig) seems to cause no noticeable harm to the printer's functionality.



**My Primax scanner stopped working after I tried to remove the extra programs that came with it. Now, even after reinstalling the bundled packages, the scanner still won't work. Whichever image-editing software I use I receive the error: 'Pmxdpower caused an invalid page fault in module avifil32.dll at 0187:7f672caf'. Any ideas? I'm using the Windows 98 SE operating system.**

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**0906 906 0274**

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**A** This looks like a simple case of a file version conflict. Try reinstalling the files avifil32.dll and avifile.dll from the Windows 98 SE CD. Click Start, Run type sfc.exe and hit Enter. Select 'Extract one file from installation disk' then type avifil32.dll into the Input dialog box. The destination location should be C:\Windows\System. Click Start, ensure that the location of your Windows CD is specified in the Restore from field of the next dialog box then click ok. Repeat for the other file.

## Helpline FAQs Directory

**E**ver 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.



## ↓ Windows

**Q** At startup my computer displays the error: 'Unable to load the dynamic link library msnp32.dll. Some or all of the following feature is not available: Microsoft Network'. After I click ok the computer works normally. It isn't networked, so what does this mean?

**A** Your computer may not be networked but the networking software could still be installed. To resolve the problem, open Control Panel,

double-click Networks then select and remove 'Client for Microsoft Networks'. As your computer isn't networked, that's all you need to do.

Readers with networked computers who experience this problem should also remove the client as described above then install it again. To do this select Add, Client, Add. Choose Microsoft from the list of manufacturers and 'Client for Microsoft Networks' from the list of network clients, then click ok.

**Q** In *Windows workout* (September 03, page 106) you showed how to remove the shutdown option from the

Start menu. Is it possible to disable access to the Control Panel using a similar method?

**A** Yes it is, but you need to consider your reasons for doing this. If you want to simply limit a user's access to the Control Panel then it's probably best to give the person concerned an ordinary user account without administrator rights. This will restrict what tasks can be performed through the Control Panel but not prevent changes that will affect the user account – for example, changing passwords and setting date and time format preferences.

## Beat a Bios password



**A** question we're often asked is how to access the Bios settings when they have been protected by a forgotten password. There are several ways you can do this.

One method is to disconnect the backup battery and wait 24 hours or more. This will cause the Bios memory to be lost so it will restart using defaults. You may need the motherboard manual to find out how to disconnect the battery and on some systems it won't be possible to do so.

Some systems store the password in Eeprom (electrically erasable programmable read-only memory), in which case it won't matter how long the power is left disconnected as the password won't be lost.

### Jumpers for passwords

Another way round the problem is to change a special jumper on the motherboard that clears the passwords. Not all motherboards have such a jumper though – again, you'll need the motherboard manual in order to identify it.

Another method that doesn't involve opening your PC case is to use a backdoor password. These are extra passwords programmed in by the Bios manufacturer that will work

whatever password you set. There are too many possibilities to list here – use [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk) to search for 'backdoor Bios passwords' and you'll find several relevant websites.

### Get cracking

If none of the above methods work try using password-cracking software. Some people may be unhappy about our suggesting this, as such tools may not be written with purely legal uses in mind. But if you're locked out of your own PC we think you're entitled to try it. Again, a Google search will unearth some tools or try [www.password-crackers.com](http://www.password-crackers.com).

These same methods should also allow access to a system that has been protected by a Bios bootup password. Please don't write and complain that it's irresponsible to publish this information – a Bios password is not a suitable tool for protecting sensitive data and you shouldn't be relying on it. A hard disk can easily be read just by taking it out and putting it in another computer.

A word of warning: if you own an IBM ThinkPad don't use password-cracking software. These notebooks are designed to be tamper-proof and you could lose access to your data altogether.

## Type easy euros in Windows and Office

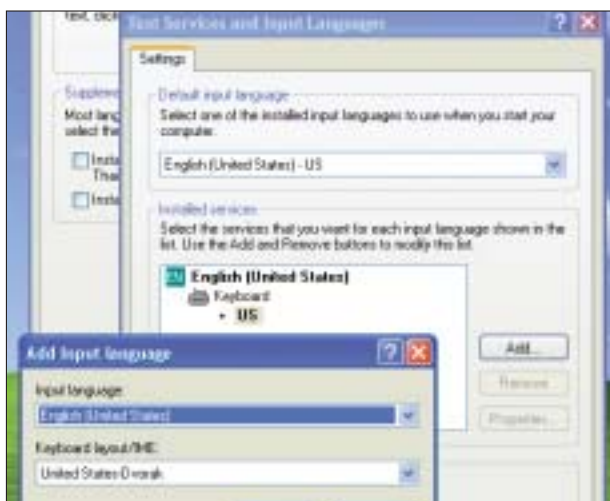
tip

Here are two simple ways to assign the euro symbol to your keyboard. Note, however, that not all fonts support the euro symbol (€). If you have Windows set to use the United States keyboard layout, you can make a euro by pressing Ctrl, Alt, 5 (use the 5 on your keyboard's number row, not the one on the numeric keypad).

To switch to this layout in Windows XP, begin by selecting Start, Control Panel. If the Control Panel window says 'Pick a category', click Switch to Classic View. Double-click Regional and Language Options, click the Languages tab, choose Details and click Add. Finally, in the Keyboard layout/IME drop-down list, select English (United States), as shown right.

In Windows 98, 2000 and Me, select Start, Settings, Control Panel. Double-click Keyboard, click the Language tab (it's called Input Locales in Windows 2000) and select Properties. In the Keyboard layout drop-down list, select United States-International.

The second option works only in Office applications, but doesn't involve changing keyboard settings. In Word or Excel, select Tools, AutoCorrect or Tools, AutoCorrect Options, depending on your version of Office. In the Replace field enter a symbol such as a tilde (~) that you rarely use. In the

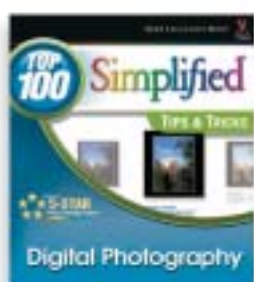


With field, hold down Alt while you type 0128 on the numeric keypad (with NumLock on, of course). Release the Alt key and click ok.

Now you can enter a euro symbol in your Office apps by pressing your chosen key. To type the original character instead of the euro symbol, press the key then Backspace.

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## Secure your emails with Folder Lock

tip

**G**raham Nelson wrote to share his solution to the problem of securing and backing up emails. The method uses an application called Folder Lock (go to [www.newsoftwares.net/folderlock](http://www.newsoftwares.net/folderlock) or see this month's cover disc). It's cheaper than alternative products, Graham claims, and it doesn't create a virtual drive, which Outlook Express won't let you use for its message store.

Set up Folder Lock so that it boots during startup – that way you must enter the password at the beginning of every session. Place the Outlook Express message store in the Folder Lock folder by choosing Tools, Options, Maintenance, Store Folder (see right). Schedule your backup program to check for changes to this folder every 30 minutes or so (Graham uses Iomega Backup to back up to a Zip drive).

If your PC goes for repairs, your emails are now password-protected. Plus, if the hard disk dies you can quickly restore your messages from the backup.



↑ Keep prying eyes away from sensitive emails by using Folder Lock to password-protect your messages

If you really want to prevent a user from accessing the Control Panel, here's what to do. Log in as the user you wish to restrict, start the Registry Editor and expand Hkey\_Current\_User\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies. Select Explorer and, in the righthand pane, right-click and then select New, Dword Value.

Name the new value NoControlPanel, double-click it and set its contents to 1. To re-enable Control Panel access simply change the contents to 0. You'll need to log off and then log back on again before the change will take effect.

To make it easier we've prepared two REG files, ControlPanelOn.reg and ControlPanelOff.reg, which you'll find on this month's cover disc. Simply run these files to turn access to the Control Panel on and off. Note that they must be run by the user you wish to deny Control Panel access *not* from your own Administrator account.

**I'm running Windows Me and have started to receive messages saying 'Not enough memory'.**

**According to the statistics, 89 percent of my memory is used. What is using it and how can I get some back? I have several imaging suites installed.**

**A** It's normal for Windows to use two or three times the amount of memory that is physically installed. Memory is 'shared' by writing data that is not currently being used to the swap file, so a physical memory usage figure close to 100 percent is common.

Out of memory errors can occur if the size of the swap file is restricted – either because you have set a maximum size for it or because your hard disk is running out of space. If you regularly use image-editing software this is quite often the case – picture files take up a lot of space, both on disk and in memory when they are being edited.

Keep an eye on your free disk space instead of your memory usage. You should also let Windows manage the swap file instead of setting minimum and maximum amounts. To check this, open Control Panel, double-click the System icon, select the Performance tab and click the Virtual

Memory button. If you have more than one hard disk partition and the C drive is short of space, select 'Let me specify my own virtual memory settings'. You can then specify an alternative drive to use for the swap file.

## ↓ Internet

**I'm being bombarded by emails from people claiming to want penpals. It isn't possible to reply direct, only via a website. This appears to be at Yahoo GeoCities, but the link from there points to Absoluteagency.com. I contacted Absolute Agency and it claims not to have my address on its database. How can I stop this?**

**A** This looks like a scheme devised by spammer vermin to verify whether addresses on their lists are active or not. By clicking on the link that took you to the GeoCities site you have shown that your email address is active, thereby increasing its value when sold on to other spammers. The link to Absolute Agency, a legitimate penpals site, is probably there to make everything look genuine.

You could complain to GeoCities and try to get the site shut down but it will just open up somewhere else. The lesson to be learned is that the best thing to do with spam is ignore it. It takes just a second to hit the Del key, so you can erase a lot of spam in the time it takes to choose, buy, download, install and configure an antispam package. If you really don't want to see these unwanted messages, though, an antispam tool is the only way to go.

**I recently upgraded from Outlook 97 to the 2000 edition. Since then I often can't send email, although I can always receive it. I receive the following error: "The message could not be sent because one of the recipients was rejected by the server. Server Response: 553 Sorry, that domain isn't in my list of allowed rcpthosts". This condition can persist for days. Can you help? It's frustrating having to use Hotmail to send emails.**

**A** We don't think this problem is anything to do with your Outlook upgrade. Because of the scourge of spam, ISPs have to lock down their outgoing mail (SMTP) servers so that they only pass on messages that are either sent by their own customers or addressed to their customers.

Sender email addresses can easily be forged, so servers determine whether you are one of the ISP's customers by one of two methods. They might look at your IP address to see if it belongs to one of the service provider's allocated blocks. Alternatively they may require you to use authentication – in other words, log on to the server with a name and password.

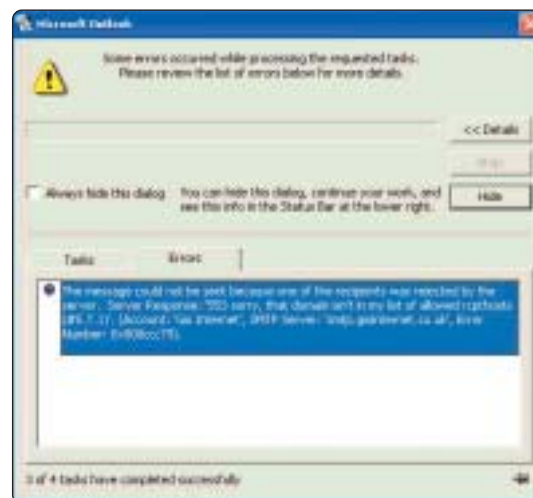
Although you must always use a name and password to access the POP3 server and see your incoming mail, this method isn't often used for outgoing mail (though it's becoming increasingly common). Most servers therefore use the IP address method.

The error message you are receiving (shown right) means that your ISP's mail

→ If outgoing mail is rejected, your ISP's mail server may be wrongly configured

server doesn't believe you are one of its customers. This could easily occur if the service provider's support staff hasn't provided the server with a complete list of allowed IP addresses. This seems the most likely answer in this case, as we have seen a query from another user of your ISP with exactly the same problem.

Get your ISP to fix its server authentication. Alternatively find out if you can use a username and password to avoid further problems.



I found that all the addresses had been wiped out. I began to enter some of my favourites but I made a few mistakes. I'd like to get rid of them to tidy things up.

**Q** Is there a way to delete unwanted websites from the Internet Explorer address bar? After reinstalling my NTL broadband connection

**A** There isn't a way to edit or delete individual entries, or even the entire contents, except by editing the Registry. A number of utilities will clear the

## What you see is what you get

tip

**W**hen Windows first appeared and word processors that could accurately display fonts on screen came on to the scene, they were described as 'what you see is what you get'. This feature is so common now that we take it for granted. But if you create documents using different fonts and send them to other people, what you see may not be what they get.

Windows programs usually use the fonts installed on your computer to display a file on screen and print it. If you create a document using fonts that didn't come with Windows, or with the application used to view it, other people will see a different font than the one you intended. This font will be Windows' best guess at the nearest equivalent, which often isn't anything like the one you used.

When creating documents you intend to send to others it's best to stick with the standard Windows fonts: Times New Roman, Arial and Courier New. But if you're in an organisation and the documents will only be distributed internally, you may know of other fonts that are installed on all company systems and are therefore safe to use.

If you need to use a different font, don't send the font file with your document and ask recipients to install it. Many of them may not know how to and, anyway, it's illegal. Fonts are copyright material just like software and must be properly licensed for each user.

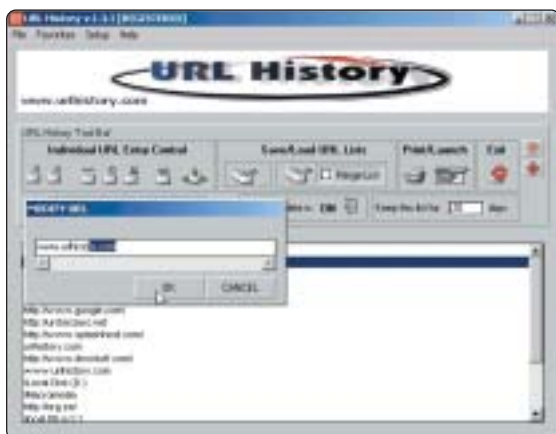
What you can do, though, is embed a copy of the font in the document so that it can be used only to view and

print it. To do this click on Tools, Options. Select the Save tab and check the box beside 'Embed TrueType fonts'. If you're only using a few letters of the font, perhaps in a logo, check 'Embed characters in use only' as shown below. Finally click ok. Word will now save a copy of the font along with your document.

Although it's easy enough to do, use embedded fonts sparingly. They increase the size of your document files so they will occupy more space on recipients' systems and take longer to download.



→ Ensure that others can see your Word documents as you see them



entire contents, although you can do this by selecting Tools, Internet Options and clicking the Clear History button. There is only one tool we know of that lets you edit the contents, though – URL History (get it from [www.urlhistory.com](http://www.urlhistory.com) or load up our cover disc). Shown above, it costs \$13.99 – a lot to pay for something you'll only use occasionally to perform a simple task.

If you don't mind editing the Registry, the address bar entries are stored at this location: Hkey\_Current\_User\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\TypedURLs. You can edit the individual values under TypedURLs, but make sure all copies of Internet Explorer are closed before trying or it will overwrite your changes.

Deleting or rearranging the entries is more difficult, though. The names of the values 'url1' to 'url<n>' determine the order in which they are displayed and there mustn't be any gaps in the numbers.

← URL History lets you edit your Internet Explorer address bar – at a price

**At startup my computer tries to dial the internet twice just as the boot sequence is ending. The last two services to load are Norton AntiVirus and Firewall, so I'm pretty sure that one**

**of these is causing the problem. I have turned off automatic updates in both programs but this hasn't helped. Do you know of any other solutions?**

**A** Symantec is aware of an issue affecting Norton AntiVirus 2002 and 2003 that can cause this problem.

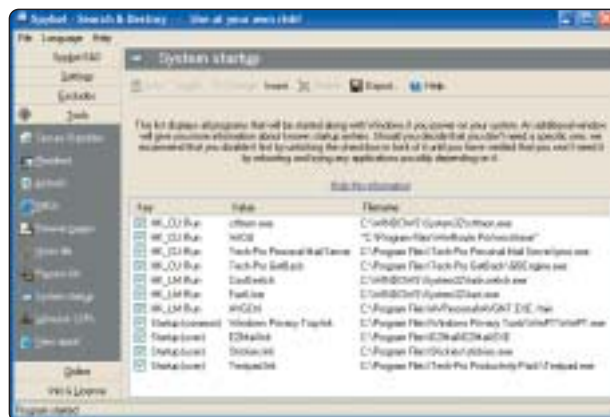
It suggests that the trouble may be resolved by doing the following: start Internet Explorer,

→ Spybot's System startup tool can help identify the cause of unwanted dialups when booting Windows

click on Tools, Internet Options then select the Advanced tab. Under Security clear the boxes beside 'Check for server certificate revocation (requires restart)' and 'Check for Publisher's certificate revocation'. Click ok and restart the computer when prompted.

The other likely cause is an installed adware program is trying to update its list of adverts. Running Spybot Search & Destroy (go to <http://security.kolla.de/news.php?lang=en> or see the cover disc) should fix this. If neither of these things helps, disable all the automatic startup entries then start them manually to see which one causes the dialup. Spybot's System startup tool (shown below) will help you do this.

You could also try installing TCPView ([www.sysinternals.com](http://www.sysinternals.com) or see the cover disc) as a startup item. This will show any programs that are attempting to dial up and enable you to identify the culprit.



## Pass it on

tip

**D**o you have any great workarounds or shortcuts you'd like to share? Send your tips and tricks to Helpline, PC Advisor, Fifth Floor, 85 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4TQ. Alternatively email [pcadvisor\\_letters@idg.com](mailto:pcadvisor_letters@idg.com). To help us sort your messages, please use the words 'Pass it on' in the subject heading.

### CD data recovery

Several readers have asked how to recover data from unreadable CD media. Kevin Edyvean recommends a product called CD Data Rescue from Naltech Software (visit [www.naltech.com](http://www.naltech.com)). You can download a trial version from the website or access it from this month's cover disc.

Thanks for the tip, Kevin. The last time a reader wrote in about lost data on CD we were going to recommend IsoBuster,

but after it fatally crashed Windows XP and caused us to lose several Helpline answers we decided not to. This one seems a safer bet.

### Video capture warning

Maurice Archibald sent a cautionary note regarding the advice in September's Helpline about capturing video in 4GB AVI files. He did this using Pinnacle Studio 7.0 and Windows 98, but found that the files were corrupt when he tried to edit them. He then found an article in the Microsoft Knowledgebase (Q19365), which stated that AVI files created by video for Windows that exceed 2GB in size may appear invalid or damaged. This issue may not apply to more recent versions of Windows. Maurice captures video in eight-minute clips, giving a file size of less than 2GB, and experiences no problems.



**C** I recently received an email from PC1click.com, offering me a free program that would check for problems on my PC. I downloaded it, ran the program and it came up with more than 900 errors. I found this hard to believe, as I'd never noticed anything wrong before. I clicked the website link which promised more information about the problems and found that the company was offering to sell me software to fix the issues. At this point I started to smell a rat. Do you think there is really anything wrong?

**A** We're not suggesting that PC1click is a scam, but if you're selling a product to fix PC problems and want to make it look like it's really doing its job, you might have a different idea of what constitutes a problem. For example, a Registry entry belonging to an uninstalled program won't cause any harm. It certainly isn't worth paying money to fix it.

We're not suggesting PC1click is a virus or Trojan either, but it could easily have been one. Installing software just because someone emails you inviting you to do so is like giving the freedom of your house to a stranger who knocks on the door.

→ FreshDiagnose: a useful diagnostic tool – and it's free

Never download anything from an unknown source without getting verification that it is safe. It's easy enough to check. Type the name of the product, or the company that makes it into Google, and check both the Web and Groups results. In the unlikely event that you can't find anything about it at all, play safe and let someone else be the guinea pig.

There are plenty of good system utilities available. Here are a few free ones worth trying: Belarc Advisor (system profiling tool, [www.belarc.com](http://www.belarc.com)); FreshDiagnose (diagnostics and benchmarking utility, [www.freshdevices.com](http://www.freshdevices.com)); Fresh UI (system configuration tool, [www.freshdevices.com](http://www.freshdevices.com)); Tweak UI (system configuration tool, [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)); and AntiVir Personal Edition (virus-checking program, [www.free-av.com](http://www.free-av.com)).



For other nasties we recommend Spybot Search & Destroy (<http://security.kolla.de>). We also like JV16 Power Tools, a powerful cleanup utility and Registry fixer. It's no longer free but you can get a trial from [www.macecraft.com](http://www.macecraft.com).

You'll find a selection of these utilities on this month's cover disc.

## ↓ Applications

**C** I'm attempting to transfer VHS video tapes to Mpeg and then VCD format. I am connecting my VHS Scart to composite input on the graphics/capture card, but when I watch the video on the PC the picture quality is very poor. How can I improve it?

**A** You're using the composite video input, which gives the lowest picture quality of all. It may be the only method available to you, though, if your video recorder doesn't have better quality outputs. For the highest quality video transfers, use a direct connection from the VCR to a dedicated DVD recorder. You can also get good results transferring the video to a digital camcorder with an analogue input and then via FireWire to the PC. Both these methods cause the video image to be resampled at a higher resolution, which is why the quality is better.

If you don't have a digital video recorder or camera, transfer using an S-Video connector from the VCR to the capture card. If that isn't available use a cable with RCA (phono) connectors, although you'll lose some of the quality of the original tape.

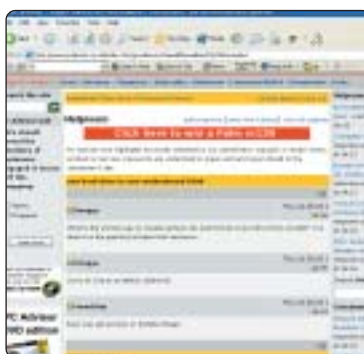
## Search PC Advisor's free online Helproom

**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 over 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)



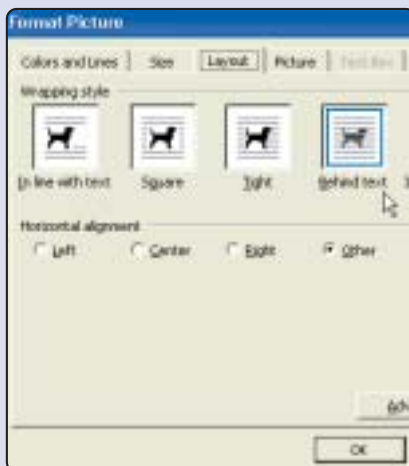
## Use background images in Word

tip

**T**o make documents more attractive, or to create covers for books and reports, you can place an image behind the text. To do this click on Insert, Picture, From File. Locate the image file you want to use and then click Insert. Select the image you inserted then click on Format, Picture.



**1** If the picture has strong contrast so that it would be hard to read superimposed text, select the Picture tab. Under Image Control pick Watermark from the Color drop-down list. This lightens the image to make it more suitable for use as a background. Alternatively, manually adjust the brightness and contrast to the level that looks best



**2** Select the Layout tab, click on Behind text under Wrapping style then click ok. Now use the sizing handles at the corners of the image to position and resize it so that it fits the page



**3** You can now start to add the text. Use Print Preview to check that you have the right balance between image and text

Although you haven't yet got to this stage, the video encoding method used to convert the captured video to Mpeg will also make a big difference to the final VCD playback quality. Use a hardware-based encoder if possible. If not, TMPGenc (from [www.tmpegenc.net](http://www.tmpegenc.net) or see the cover disc) is reputed to give good results.

**I'm registered blind and use ZoomText Extra (screen magnification software) to read text on screen. I use X4 magnification but for years have had to put up with poor resolution, especially with text -- the edges of letters are jagged. Would a flat-panel display improve matters?**

**A** A TFT screen is likely to make the deficiencies of your magnified text look worse, as it is clearer and sharper than a conventional CRT monitor. This led us to wonder why magnification software doesn't use a technique called anti-aliasing to smooth the edges of

enlarged fonts. In fact, a description of the current version of ZoomText claims that "edge smoothing enhances all Windows fonts by eliminating the jaggies". Perhaps you don't have the latest version. However, the screen resolution support still seems to be stuck in the dark ages with mention of requirements for a "16 or 256 colour display driver at 800x600 or 1,024x768".

The RNIB is better qualified than us to advise on screen magnification software. Remember to look at your software's capabilities before considering a monitor upgrade. Otherwise it could be a waste of money.

**I have an unwanted program called Web-Guard which I can't uninstall. It keeps giving an error saying that the program is missing some files. The uninstall routine fails and a report states the file twglog.txt is in use so close it then retry. I can't even find this file. Please help.**

**A** We presume that Web-Guard is being started automatically at bootup, so the first thing to do is to stop it from running. If you start the Windows Task Manager you may be able to identify this application from the Task

## View Internet Connection Firewall logs

tip

**I**f you're using Windows XP's Internet Connection Firewall and would like to see a log of what it's doing try using XP Log Reader, says Robert McBride. (Go to [www.majorgeeks.com/download.php?det=3307](http://www.majorgeeks.com/download.php?det=3307) or see this month's cover disc.) It's easy to use and comes with a Word document file explaining how to enable the firewall logging.

List and then terminate it. Once you have done that, try running the uninstall routine again.

If this fails start MSConfig, select the Startup tab, identify the entry that starts this application and disable it by clearing the checkbox. Click ok and restart Windows. This should put a stop to the error messages. After that, try running the uninstaller again. If it still fails, locate the Program Files folder containing the application and delete it manually.

**A** After receiving my new Mesh PC I installed my applications and then backed everything up using Nero. After I had done this I discovered that you cannot restore from Nero: you have to boot to DOS and have the DOS drivers for the CD-ROM drive. This seems a bit primitive. Isn't there a better way? Could I use the Iomega Ditto Easy 800 tape drive, which I use on my other PC running Windows 95?

**A** The Iomega Ditto Easy 800 is an obsolete product and Iomega no longer makes tape drives so there are no drivers that allow it to be used under Windows XP. One Ditto user keeps a small Windows 95 partition which he uses to perform backups. If you try this you'll have to use the FAT file system for your Windows XP partitions instead of the much-better NTFS.

Just about any current dedicated backup application (which Nero isn't) will have an automated restore option that avoids the need to boot to DOS, partition and format a blank drive before restoring.

→ This error message could mean that the application is missing or corrupt



**A** I created many family trees in Novell PerfectWorks using the Sans Serif 17cpi font of my Epson LQ-1050 printer. I could just fit each branch on a line of 130 columns continuous paper and it was easy to draw vertical lines using the '|' character, which will only line up when using a monospaced font. I now have a new computer with Microsoft Word installed.

I would like to distribute the trees to other family members in this format, as most of them have this program. However, Word doesn't allow me to use the 17cpi font. Can you suggest an alternative?

**A** The Sans Serif font is a printer font. Word will only display printer fonts if the driver for the printer is installed and it is made the default printer. However, even if you overcome that problem there's a flaw in this approach. Even if you can display the Sans Serif 17cpi font in Word, your relatives are unlikely to be able to unless they all install the Epson printer driver. Nor will they be able to print the trees correctly on their own printers. For compatibility with your relatives' systems you need to create your family trees using fonts that they have on their computers.

There's only one non-proportional font that comes as standard with Windows:

Courier New. As this is a scalable TrueType font it should be possible to reduce the size to fit the width of your paper. As the height will be reduced as well, it might be hard to read. You could format the trees so that they will print on A4 sheets in landscape mode, which will give you longer lines to play with and which can be printed using any modern printer.

If you want to use the Sans Serif 17cpi font then unfortunately there's no direct equivalent in TrueType format. The closest we could find is Letter Gothic. You might find this font included with a software package you already have. If not, go to [www.myfonts.com/fonts/urw/letter-gothic](http://www.myfonts.com/fonts/urw/letter-gothic).

Most fonts aren't free, though, and it's illegal to make copies. You are, however, allowed to embed the font in documents so that recipients can display them correctly. To find out how to do this, see *What you see is what you get* on page 144.

**A** I have lost the ability to open JPG images in Microsoft Photo Editor. When I click on a JPG file I receive a message saying that 'The file is not a valid Win32 application'. I tried re-associating Photo Editor with the JPG file type but when I click ok I receive an error that says 'Access to the specified device, file or path is denied' (shown above). Can you help?

**A** It's fortunate that you sent screenshots of all the error messages. From those we could see in the Open With dialog box that the icon for Microsoft Photo Editor is incorrect. It's a default icon used for DOS programs and others that don't have a Windows icon. Windows displays this icon if the program referred to is missing or corrupt – this is what's happened to Photo Editor. The problem is easy to resolve. Go to Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs. Use the Microsoft Office setup program to remove Photo Editor then reinstall the program. ■

## Contact us

Please 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.