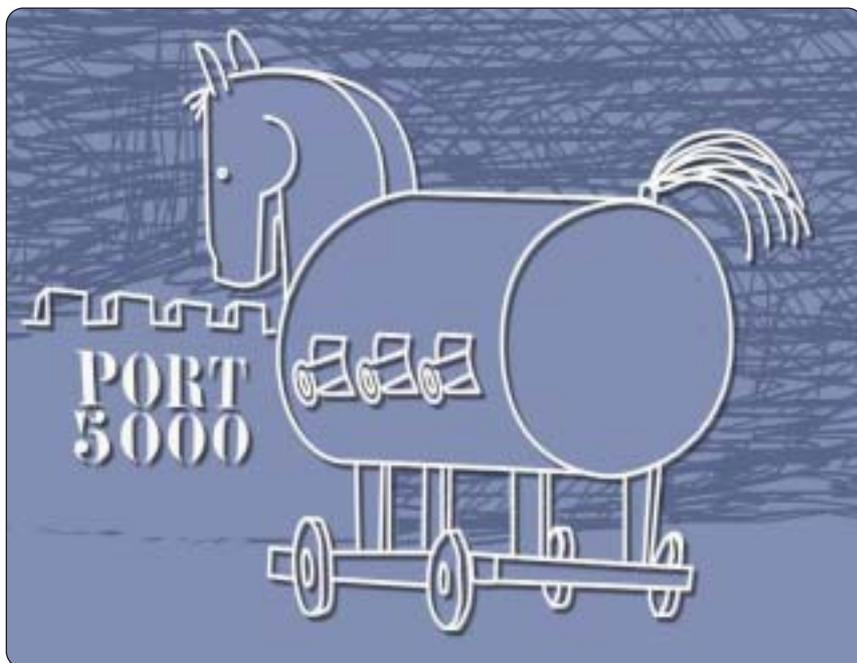


Windows^{XP} Q&As



Q My computer runs Windows XP. In an old issue of *PC Advisor* you recommended using the command 'netstat' to check for trojans in the system. I did that and found that port 5,000 is open. According to every website I checked this port is used by the 'Sockets de Troie' trojan. Norton AntiVirus says that my system is clean. Should I be worried?

A The good news is that you almost certainly don't have a trojan on your system. What you do have is the Universal Plug and Play service, which is started by default in all versions of Windows XP.

The bad news is that this service could be used to compromise your system's security, although if you're using XP's built-in firewall you should be sufficiently protected.

Universal Plug and Play allows PCs to easily make use of hardware devices installed on other computers within a network. There's a distinct lack of hardware that supports it, though, so there's no reason at present for anyone to run this service even if their PC is networked which, of course, many aren't.

To disable this unwanted service, open Control Panel and select Performance

and Maintenance, Administrative Tools, Services. Scroll down the list until you find the entry 'SSDP Discovery Service' then right-click it and select Properties. Under Service Status click Stop.

Change Startup type to Disabled (shown below) then click ok. This will stop the service and also prevent it from starting up again the next time you start Windows XP.

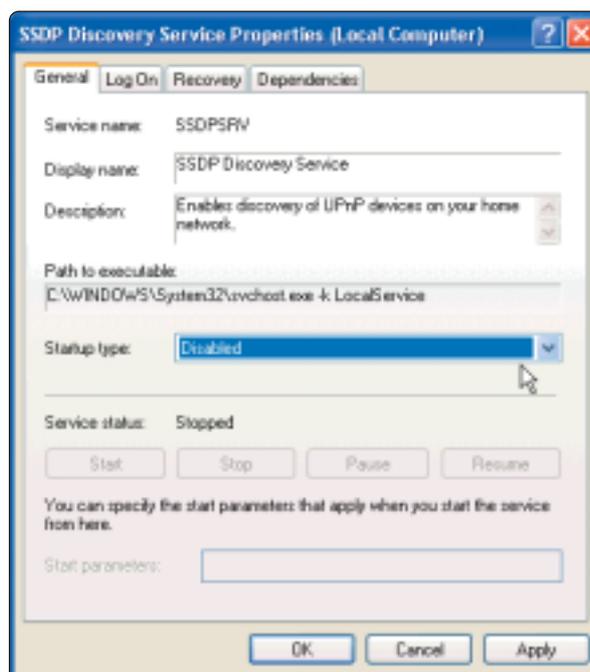
→ Disabling the unnecessary SSDP Discovery Service will make your unnetworked Windows XP system more secure

You'll probably also notice a service called Universal Plug and Play Device Host. This isn't the one that uses port 5,000 but it's equally unnecessary and it can be disabled in the same way.

Q I am trying to change the setup of my Windows XP Home system so that there is an administrator (me) and a guest user (for the family). However, I keep getting an error message: 'Exception: OpenExclusive failed config TBD. Access is denied, error 4516432' when Windows starts up. What does it mean?

A There's nothing in the Microsoft Knowledgebase about this and the only report we've seen came from a user who believed that the error started appearing after he installed Roxio Easy CD Creator. 'OpenExclusive' is a function used by CD software to gain exclusive access to the CD drive, so there are strong grounds for suspecting that the problem lies in this area.

If any such software is installed on your PC we would advise that you remove it and see if that solves the problem. If it does and you aren't content to make do with XP's own CD writer support, make sure that you have the latest



Customise your AutoPlay list

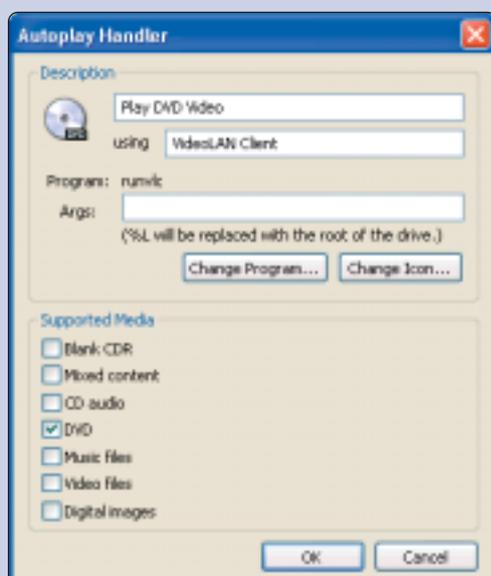


When you insert a disc in your CD or DVD drive Windows XP may automatically start to play or it may display a dialog box offering you a choice of things to do. This behaviour is called AutoPlay. If you would like to change the AutoPlay behaviour for a particular type of disc, this is what to do.

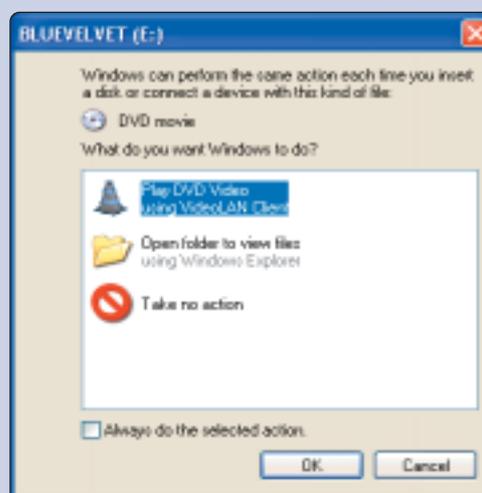
First, you'll need Tweak UI 2.0 for Windows XP. If you already have Tweak UI you can check whether it is version 2.0 by clicking the About option. If it isn't, or you don't have a copy at all, download it from www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/downloads/powertoys.asp or access it via the link on this month's cover disc.

Once Tweak UI is installed, start it then expand My Computer and AutoPlay. The Drives panel lets you specify which drives AutoPlay should work for, while Types lets you specify which types of drive to use. Handlers lets you change the actions Windows will take or the choices it will offer when a particular type of media is placed in a drive.

You can't delete the standard handlers, but if you select one and click Edit you can clear all the checkboxes beside the types of media the handler is used for, so it won't appear at all. To add a new program to the list of choices for a media type click Create.



1 When the AutoPlay Handler dialog box appears, enter a description. Model it on the existing ones – for example, 'Play DVD Video using VideoLAN Client'. Click the Change Program button to select the application that will run when this choice is used and click Change Icon to select a different icon if you want one. Command line arguments can be entered in the Args field if required. Don't forget to click the checkboxes beside the types of media this program is to be used for. Then click ok



2 You should now find that the new AutoPlay handler appears when you insert a disc of the appropriate type into a drive

XP-compatible version of the software and reinstall it as administrator.

Q My new notebook runs Windows XP. When I am online I often receive the message 'You have just ignored an incoming call. Press ok'. When I do I am disconnected.

A Your notebook probably has a SmartLink modem or some other make of V.92 modem that supports the 'modem on hold' feature. This message appears if the modem detects a call waiting beep, so one solution would be to disable call waiting.

It can also appear if another family member picks up the phone and starts to dial, so get them to check whether you're using the internet before picking up the

telephone. The noise caused by someone picking up an extension while you're online can be enough to break the connection.

The error message you receive isn't very useful so it's probably worthwhile disabling it, but there's no specific option in the Windows XP user interface to do this. If you have a SmartLink modem then we're told that the problem is solved by installing the latest drivers.

Even if you don't it would still be a good idea to check that the drivers installed on your notebook are the most recent available. If you still see this message then there should be a command string you can send to the modem to turn it off. However, this will be specific to your make and model of modem. You'll need to contact your PC or modem vendor to find out what it is.

Q I was astonished to discover that the backup utility in Windows XP Home is not designed to back up to a CD-RW. I have searched for freeware but none of the utilities I found is compatible with XP. Can you help?

A The backup utilities supplied with Windows have always been of limited use, which is why so many third-party backup software developers are still in business. We don't advise backing up to CD-RW discs anyway unless you are careful to keep more than one copy, as they are not a very reliable storage medium and it's practically impossible to recover data from a damaged or corrupted disc.

We also think that backing up your system is important enough to warrant buying a proper backup utility. However,

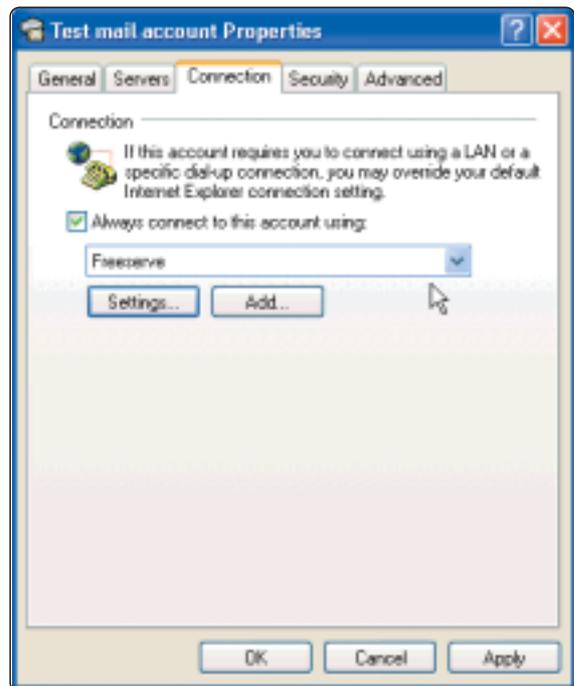
with Windows XP's built-in support for writable CD media it's possible to back up your important files with minimal effort.

To back up the contents of your My Documents folder highlight everything in the folder then right-click and select Send To, Compressed (zipped) folder. Once this is done, locate the Zip file that Windows created and drag it to your CD drive. Right-click the drive icon and select 'Write files to CD'.

There are several advantages to using Zip archives for storing your backup files under Windows XP rather than some proprietary file format. One advantage is that the built-in Zip file support makes it very easy to browse the contents of your backups and restore deleted files.

 Ever since I had my new computer with Windows XP I have experienced a problem sending

→ To avoid errors ensure Outlook Express knows which ISP to use when sending and receiving mail



Security alert

One of the nice things about Windows XP is the much improved Help and Support Centre. Unfortunately, this turns out to have an undocumented feature that would allow a file to be deleted just by clicking on a link in a web page or an email. Malicious hackers have already started to exploit this feature, so if you use Windows XP it's vital that you close this loophole.

If you've already applied Windows XP Service Pack 1 you can relax and put your feet up as a fix for this vulnerability is already included in the Service Pack. If you've been put off applying the Service Pack by the size of the download then go to www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/MS02-060.asp. Here you can read more about the problem and download a standalone copy of the fix – at a more reasonable 1.3MB.

Alternatively visit the excellent Gibson Research site at <http://grc.com/xpdite/xpdite.htm> which details the loophole and offers Steve Gibson's own fix, XPdite at a mere 30K. We've included XPdite on the cover CD, but visit Steve's site anyway – it's worth the trip.



← Steve Gibson's XPdite utility prevents a hacker deleting your files

mail from Outlook Express. When I write a message and click Send and it goes into the outbox as it should. However, when I click Send and Receive it comes up with the message: 'An error occurred while establishing the dialup connection'.

I have to quit Outlook Express and restart in order for the Connect window to appear and allow me to connect to my ISP and send my mail. How can I upload emails normally and avoid this lengthy rigmarole?

 This error message used to appear if you tried to send and receive mail while Work Offline was selected. However, with Outlook Express 6.0 and Windows XP you should see a more informative message reminding you that you are working offline and asking whether you would like to go online now.

It's more likely that Outlook Express isn't clear about which connection to use in order to send and receive mail. Click on Tools, Accounts, select the Mail tab and double-click your mail account.

Select the Connections tab then check the 'Always connect to your account using' box and ensure that your ISP is selected. Now open Control Panel, launch Internet Options and select the Connections tab (shown above). Ensure that your ISP is set as the default connection then select 'Always dial my default connection'. ■