helpline

Windows, this has to be done under real-mode DOS. So, exit Windows to MS-DOS then use the MS-DOS Copy command to copy the new driver files to c:\Windows\System.

Q **In April 02 I purchased an Adaptec USB 2.0 connect card for use with my Medion notebook running Windows XP. Although it seemed to be working correctly, I recently found that it was only operating at USB 1.0 speed.**

Although I had attempted to install the drivers for it they had not loaded. I tried to install the file usb2_win-drv_ v30.exe downloaded from Adaptec's website but received an exception error. How can I get this card to work correctly at USB 2.0?

A USB 2.0 drivers are included in Windows XP Service Pack 1, however this probably doesn't cover drivers for plug-in PC Cards. We checked Adaptec's support site (www.adaptec. com/worldwide/support) and found a file named usb2_win-drv_v31a.exe, which is a later version than the one you tried. We can only suggest that you download this file and try again.

Q **I'm having trouble burning CDs with my external USB Iomega Predator CD-RW drive. I always get buffer underruns, even at single-speed writing. The only way to create backup CDs is using the DirectCD utility supplied, but copying 300MB of data takes nine hours.**

My Pentium II 400MHz PC is pretty old so perhaps I shouldn't expect too much, but I've tried the drive on a lower-spec machine without problems. A couple of years ago I tried a friend's CD-RW on my machine, and I recall there were buffer underrun errors then. Is there a solution?

A By trying your CD writer on another PC, and trying a friend's writer on yours, you've pretty much proved that the problem lies with your computer and not with your CD writer. CD writers and USB 1.1 don't go well together anyway, as the data bandwidth (1.5 megabytes

↓ General

Q **I recently tried downloading new drivers for my nVidia graphics card in order to solve a problem I was having with Pinnacle Studio 7.0. The new drivers didn't help, however, and I eventually managed to fix the problem by reinstalling the drivers that came with my computer.**

The trouble is that now, every time I start the machine, I receive a message box entitled 'Rundll' which informs me 'Error in NvQTwK. Missing entry: NvCplDaemon'. My computer works okay, but I'd prefer not to see this message.

A The message appears to come from something left over from the updated drivers you tried to install. Reinstalling them would probably eliminate it, but in view of the trouble you've had, you're probably reluctant to try that now everything is working to your satisfaction.

The alternative is to stop this leftover bit of software from running. Click on Start, Run, type Msconfig and hit Enter. Select the Startup tab, then scroll down the list and clear the checkbox against any item named NvQTwk or NvCplDaemon. Click ok, then reboot the system.

Q **I recently reformatted the hard disk of my five-year-old computer and upgraded it to Windows 98 SE. It works perfectly except for one thing. To get sound to work I had to install the drivers for the CMI8330 sound card that came with the system, and they state that they are for Windows 95 only.**

When I shut down, I get a Msgsrv32 alert followed by an error in CMI8330. If I click ok the system displays the 'Windows is closing down' message but never gets to the 'It is safe to turn off your computer' screen. Is it possible to fix this?

A Yes, it is. The shutdown error is a known problem with the Windows 95 drivers for the CMI8330 sound chip when they are installed under Windows 98. You need drivers with version number 4.10.00.0152 or later to solve the error. You can download these from www.cmedia.com.tw/snddrv/8330v52.exe.

Run the downloaded file to extract the driver files to an empty folder. Then look at the files you have extracted. You should find files with the same names in your Windows System folder.

You must overwrite the Windows System folder files with the new ones extracted from the downloaded file but, because most of them are in use by

← Older Belkin hubs can misbehave under Windows XP. If yours is playing up, check Belkin's support site for the latest drivers

per second compared to USB 2.0's 60MBps) is barely sufficient to support even quad-speed writing.

Anyone who can reliably burn discs at that speed is lucky. If you have installed drivers for any other USB devices then, because of the way USB reserves bandwidth for each device, your CD writer may not even be using all the bandwidth of the USB connection which would just make the situation worse. USB 2.0, of course, is much faster and consequently doesn't suffer from these problems.

Try the suggestions in the tip *Become a better writer* on page 154. If all else fails, try installing a second USB hub in your computer. This could be a USB 2.0 hub, which, if your CD writer supports USB 2.0, would be a very worthwhile upgrade for your four-year-old computer.

Q My Belkin USB hub worked fine under Windows 98 and Me but not under Windows XP. It appears as 'Generic USB hub' in Device Manager. However, it only works when the printer is switched on or if something is plugged into the hub while the PC is booting. How can I solve this problem?

A We've seen several reports of similar problems getting Belkin USB hubs to work properly under XP. If your hub has been around since Windows 98, it's probably a fairly old device, so we'd question whether it really is compatible with XP.

One user was told by Microsoft that Philips, which makes the hub chip, did not submit any Windows XP approved drivers for it. Belkin's support site (www.belkin. com/support/tech/usbdownload.html) has the latest drivers for all its USB products,

such as the hub shown above, so your only hope is that you can find some better drivers than the generic ones your hub is currently using.

Q My PC has this really annoying problem that means I have to reboot the whole thing every time I press the Caps Lock key because my keyboard completely locks up. I have tried other keyboards on my computer and the same thing happens.

A You didn't provide us with any information about your system or the version of Windows you're using, but this was a known problem with certain

Intel motherboards when an MS-DOS non-United States keyboard driver is used. The solution used to be to upgrade the Bios. However, as the systems affected by the problem are four or more years old, a Bios upgrade for them may now be hard to obtain.

An alternative solution is to rename the files config.sys and autoexec.bat in the root directory, so that they aren't run automatically at startup. This removes the non-US keyboard drivers, but don't worry, it will not affect how the keyboard works in Windows.

If these configuration files contain elements essential for correct operation of your computer, just delete the 'Country=' and 'Device=...\display.sys' lines from config.sys, and the 'Mode con' and 'Keyb' lines from autoexec.bat instead, or turn these lines into harmless comments by adding 'REM' in front of them.

If it bothers you that some of the keys no longer display the correct characters when you're typing in MS-DOS, replace the 'Keyb UK' line with the freeware UKkeyb replacement from Tech-Pro (www.tech-pro.co.uk) or load it up from our cover disc.

↓ Windows

→ Find out the purpose of the tasks running on your computer
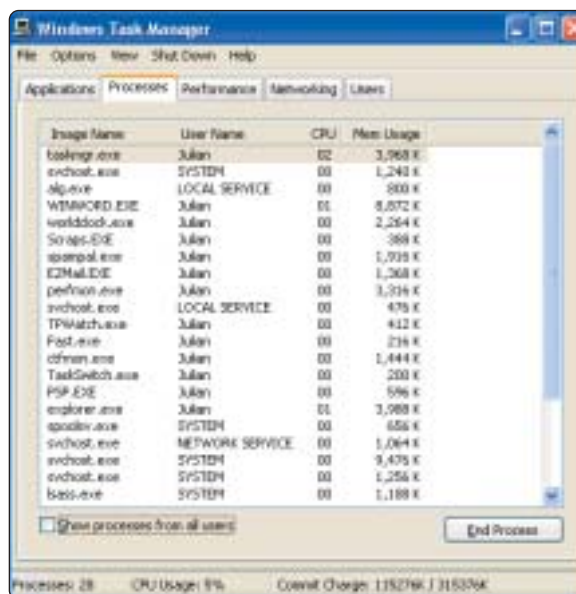

O Like everyone else, I suppose, I sometimes need to type Ctrl, Alt, Del to close a non-responding program. When I do, I'm always surprised at how many programs are listed in the Close Programs dialog box. Right now, it lists 13 different programs.

Are they all necessary, how can I find where they are loading from, can I do without any of them and would the system be any more stable in their absence?

A A lot depends on your definition of 'necessary'. For example, if you purchased a crash guard utility or a system monitor, you presumably felt that it would be useful. Many users, however, manage perfectly well without such tools, while others consider them a waste of processor time and memory.

Perhaps the best way to find out what's really essential and what's not is to start Windows, then close all applications and right-click and close all the System Tray icons. You should then be left with essential Windows system processes, including those that support any Windows options you selected. To check what's left running, hit Ctrl, Alt, Del, then click Task Manager and then choose the Processes tab, as shown above.

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.

Of course, there's a possibility that one of the processes listed might be a Trojan or other undesirable program that has been inserted without your knowledge into your startup list. To find out the purpose of the tasks that are running on your computer check their names against the Program (Executable) Name List found at www.lafn.org/webconnect/mentor/startup/ penindex.htm. This list is a more easily-used version of Pacman's Startup Page, which you'll find at www.pacs-portal. co.uk/startup_pages/startup_full.htm.

After you have identified the essential processes running on your system, it should be a fairly simple matter to associate the others that appear after you have restarted Windows with the icons in your System Tray and the applications on your desktop.

O When I insert my Windows CD as requested by my PC in order to complete an update, I am told after clicking ok that the disc was not found. What am I doing wrong?

A Possibly your CD is not in the drive that was used when Windows was originally installed. This could happen if you have added drives or partitions to your PC, changing the CD's original drive letter. It could also occur if the manufacturer preinstalled Windows and your CD drive letter is not the same as that used when the installation image file was created.

To check and, if necessary, rectify this, you'll have to use the Registry Editor. Click Start, Run, type Regedit and press Enter, then expand the folders Hkey_Local_Machine\Software\Microsoft, CurrentVersion and Setup. Select Setup, then check the value of SourcePath in the righthand window. If the drive letter differs from that used by your CD drive, double-click SourcePath and then change it.

If you're using Windows XP you'll also see a value named Installation Sources. If you double-click this, you'll open up a small editor window that allows you to specify a list of different paths where Windows will look for files when doing an update, one on each line.

O I have a secondhand computer running an upgrade version of Windows Me. I want to fit a larger hard disk and install the full retail version. The trouble is, I didn't receive any disks containing drivers for the motherboard. Is there a way to get hold of these, other than by trawling through Device Manager noting which files each thing uses?

A I wouldn't worry unduly about this. The chances are, Windows Me will have a driver for everything in your system, so you won't need any other disks. If you do encounter a problem after installing the operating system, just locate and download a newer driver from the internet.

After some problems, I upgraded my Windows Me PC to Windows 98 but now most games won't run properly and sound works only intermittently. Problems with DirectX 7.0 led to me downloading version 8.1 and now things are even worse – sound doesn't work at all. What should I do?

It's impossible to suggest anything other than to reinstall Windows Me. It is not advisable to install a version of Windows that's older than the PC. Many of the devices in your computer didn't exist when Windows 98 was written, so it is unlikely that they will be supported properly. Although it is possible to obtain newer drivers for major components, there are many small but important changes incorporated in major Windows upgrades that you will have lost by downgrading.

Before you can begin solving your game playing problems, you need to start with a configuration that you know should work, and that means using the version of Windows that your PC was supplied with.

I've been a user of your Print Directory tip for many years but can't seem to get it to work on my new computer to which my printer is connected via the USB port. The DOS command I'm using is: command.com /c dir"%1" /o/a>prn. I'm guessing that the 'prn' needs to be changed, but to what?

This is actually an example of a more generic question: how to print from DOS to a USB printer? It is not possible to print to a USB printer from real MS-DOS, since there is no USB support in MS-DOS. However, it should be possible to print from a command prompt running under Windows, which is the context in which your Print Directory command is running. You just have to get Windows to do the actual printing.

In fact, under Windows, there are several different possible solutions to the problem. First, see if you can create a virtual printer port. Open Control Panel, Printers, right-click the printer and select Properties, then select Details. Click 'Capture Printer Port' then choose a port identifier, such as LPT1. Your DOS command should now be able to print to the printer if you change 'prn' to 'lpt1'.

→ Use Capture Printer Port to print from DOS to a USB printer
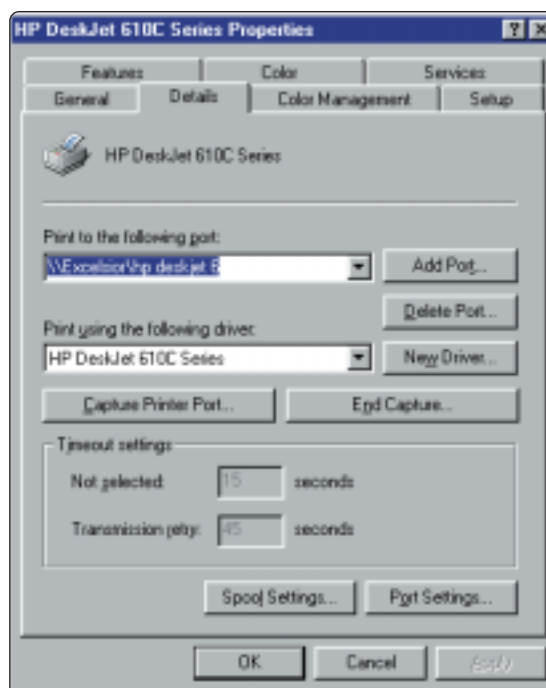
↓ PrintFile has many useful features to make printing easier
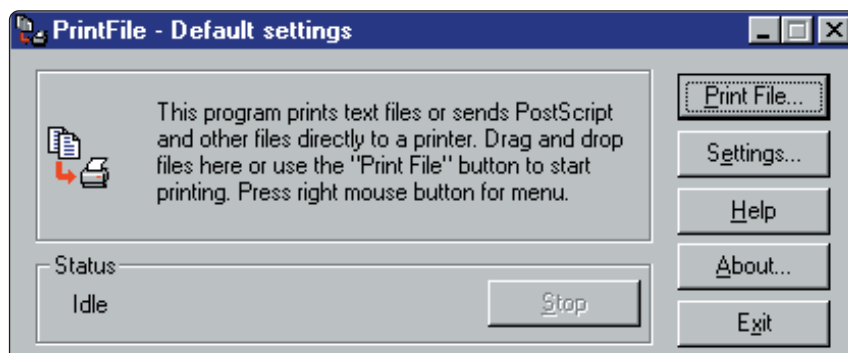
If this doesn't work, or if your printer driver doesn't have the Capture Port option, you can try sharing the printer. After you've done that, you can use the command: 'NET use LPT1 \\computername\printername /persistent:yes' to create a permanent virtual port LPT1 (you should insert your computer name and printer name where indicated.) As in the above example, you can print to it by changing the 'prn' in your Print Directory command to 'lpt1'. If your computer isn't on a network, you'll probably need to install the Client for Microsoft Networks software before you can try this method.

Another possible solution, which we've described before for this application, is to send the text from your DOS command to a file and use Notepad to print it.

This is slightly more tricky than it sounds, since Windows sometimes appears to start Notepad before it has finished writing the text file, so the Print Directory batch file ends up looking something like the three lines below, where the 'dir c:\Windows' command does nothing except create a delay before Notepad starts:

```
dir "%1" /o/a > "%temp%\dir.txt"
dir c:\Windows >nul:
notepad /p "%temp%\dir.txt"
```

Our final suggestion is to use the free utility PrintFile (from www.lerup.com/printfile) This tool has a great many handy features that make it useful for a lot more things than printing DOS text files on a USB printer. For this task, you can 'pipe' the output of the DIR command into it, so the Print Directory command would become 'command.com /c dir"%1" /o/a | prfile32'.

Look who's talking

A couple of years ago we advised that, while a firewall package is a good way to keep your system safe when surfing the internet, a better approach is to be sure there's nothing malicious running on your PC in the first place. We recommended using a command line tool 'netstat' to list the ports that are being used for internet communication. We've had a regular stream of emails from readers who have used this tool, discovered a particular port in use and then wanted to know what's using it.

Since our original tip we've found a much better utility for keeping tabs on who or what your PC is talking to. It's called TCPView and it's a small, free download from SysInternals (www.sysinternals.com) or from this month's cover disc. To install it, just extract the contents of the Zip file to a suitable folder.

TCPView shows every port that is open or listening on your system, as well as the remote address if a connection is in progress. But what's really useful is that it also shows which process – in other words, program – that's doing the listening or communicating, together with its icon.

You can right-click any process and get more information about it. If you're not comfortable that its purpose is benign,
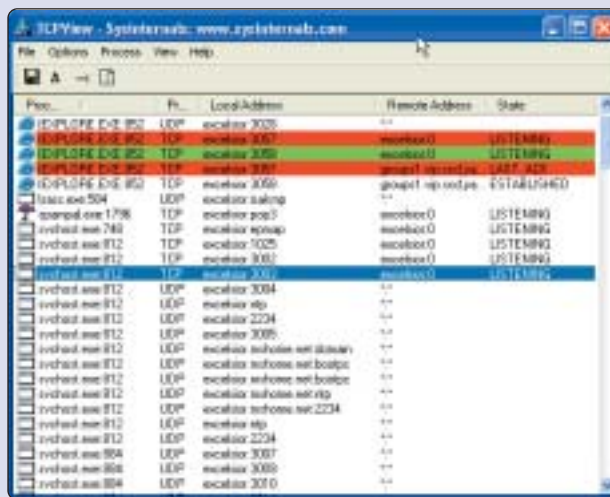
↑ Let TCPView keep tabs on who your computer is talking to

you can also close the connection or even terminate the program. TCPView is a valuable tool for anyone who wants to know what's really happening when they surf the internet.

Q I frequently pass databases and other files to my colleagues. When burned on to a CD the information becomes read only. This means that before my colleagues can use the disc it must be saved to hard disk and the read-only property reset. Is it possible to avoid this irksome problem by saving them in a non-read only form?

A We presume that it's the resetting of the read-only attribute that you find irksome? CD-R is still a read-only medium for normal file use; there's no way that a word processor, spreadsheet or database program can modify a file that is stored on such a CD.

It's quite reasonable for Windows to set a file's read-only attribute when it is on CD, in order that an application which opens

← Use Windows XP's Compressed Folders to store work copied to CD-Rs and you'll retain the read and write attributes of the files within them when they're copied from the disc to a hard drive

the file knows that it can't change it. The problem is that all file attributes, including the read-only property, are preserved when files are copied from CD to hard disk.

The only solution is to change the way you transfer files between hard disk and CD. The most elegant method is to put the files into a Zip archive and burn the Zip file to the CD. Although the Zip archive will be read-only, the files inside it will retain the attributes that they had on your hard disk. These attributes will also be preserved when the files are extracted to your colleagues' PCs.

If you all use Windows XP with its built-in Zip support, shown left, (this makes archives look like folders) then it is very easy to do. You can achieve the same result using a third-party tool like WinZip (www.winzip.com or access the shareware version on this month's cover disc).

Bear in mind, though, that a few more steps will be required by both you and your colleagues. To make copying the files back to hard disk easier for your colleagues burn them to CD as a self-extracting archive. Another possibility would be to use CD-RW media (if your colleagues' systems support it) as this won't cause the read-only attribute to be set in the first place.

↓ Internet

Q **I am using Microsoft NetMeeting to videoconference with members of the family in different parts of the world. This works fine, except with one of my sons. When he attempts to videoconference with me or other members of the family, he can see and hear us but we can't see or hear him. Can you help us resolve this problem?**

A When two people attempt to videoconference and one can't see or hear the other, the fault is usually in the hardware used to connect one of the computers to the internet. The problem commonly affects DSL users who are behind a NAT router or firewall, or are using a NAT device as a DSL modem.

These NAT devices do not have H.323 support. The consequences of this are that video and audio streams are one way (out only) and the computer behind the device cannot be called. If the fault is in your modem, it may be possible to reconfigure it to solve this problem, but others are just plain incompatible with NetMeeting. Consult the manual for your DSL modem, or speak to its supplier.

If the ISP is using a firewall or a proxy server, they need to open additional ports in order to allow NetMeeting to work. The NetMeeting Resource Kit (www.microsoft. com/windows/netmeeting/corp/reskit/ default.asp) contains full documentation about this as well as a copy of the latest version of Microsoft NetMeeting. However, if this is the problem, only the ISP can take the steps needed to resolve the it.

Your problem appears slightly different from usual, in that videoconferencing does work with other family members; the only fault is with receiving video and audio from your son. This suggests that everything at your end is okay, and that he is the one who needs to consult with his ISP.

Q **I had Internet Explorer on my PC but it seemed to get corrupted. When launched, the message 'Cannot find File: //c:/Windows/System/ms7531. html' appeared. After I click ok, Internet Explorer loads with a blank address bar and no home page. I reset the home page using Tools, Internet Options, but it still reverts to the missing ms7531 page. I uninstalled IE5 and installed Internet Explorer 6.0 from your cover disc but the error message continues to appear. How can I get rid of the error message and reset Internet Explorer to my chosen home page?**

A Somehow a Trojan has got on to your system. This Trojan resets your Internet Explorer home page settings to the file 'ms7531.html', which is why the browser always reverts to this page after you have changed it. The Trojan is usually obtained by visiting websites of ill-repute. Besides interfering with your home page it can also silently dial premium-rate numbers from your computer. We hope that you aren't going to receive a nasty shock when you get your next phone bill.

The trojan file is named MS7531.exe. To remove it, first bring up the Task List (Ctrl, Alt, Del), then look to see if a process named MS7531 is running. If it is, terminate it. Next, look in the Windows System folder for a file named ms7531.exe and delete it.

After that, start the Registry Editor, expand Hkey_Current_User\Software, Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run and delete the value MS7531. Once you've done all this, you should be able to change your Internet Explorer home page in the usual way, and it should stay changed.

The Trojan makes a few other changes to your system, which will be harmless after the MS7531.exe file has been deleted. We found a program specifically written to remove this Trojan at http://home.wanadoo.nl/fassen (it's called RemoveMS7531 – click on the Download button to find it.) There isn't much information about it the website, but the program is safe, so we've included a copy of it on the cover disc.

Q **My son persuaded me to network our two PCs together, so we installed a Realtek PCI fast ethernet adapter in my machine. Since then I have not been able to access the internet from my PC, even after uninstalling and removing the network card.**

The modem dials my ISP, and appears to log on as normal, but any attempt to access a website results in a DNS error message. Can you help?

Become a better writer

tip

If your attempts to create CDs usually result in coasters, here are some things that are worth trying to improve your chances of success.

• Disable power management on the computer **When it is enabled, the processor will slow down after a certain period without keyboard or mouse activity, and this may affect the system's ability to deliver the required data throughput.**
• Turn off the screensaver **This could cause a buffer underrun due to the sudden disk and processor workload when it starts up.**
• Defragment the hard disk **This will ensure the fastest performance reading the data to be written.**
• Enable DMA access **If it's supported by your hard disk, turn on DMA access for the hard disk controller.**

↑ Turn off the screensaver (right-click the desktop and choose Properties, then the Screensaver tab) to prevent the risk of buffer underruns when burning CDs

← For a standard ISP dialup, both the IP and DNS addresses should be obtained automatically

Q **My computer runs Internet Explorer 6.0 on Windows 2000. Recently, I have found that if I right-click on a hyperlink to open it in a new window, the system freezes until the page in the new window has loaded completely. The dialup icon in the System Tray shows that data is being downloaded, but nothing happens until the download is complete. What is causing this?**

A This behaviour suggests that some software is intercepting the flow of data that is being downloaded. This might be something as seemingly innocuous as a personal firewall application. Some users of ZoneAlarm have experienced similar symptoms, though the problems are usually cured by installing a newer version. If you have recently installed or upgraded some firewall software, try uninstalling or temporarily disabling it to see if it solves the problem. Another possibility is a pop-up stopper. Less likely, but still a possible culprit, is your virus scanner.

There is another class of programs that could be intercepting your browser traffic without you knowing it: so-called spyware programs that track your browsing habits and report them to a server so it can send you 'targeted' advertising.

A It looks as if the TCP/IP settings for your dialup adapter have been changed. These settings should not be touched, as they have no effect whatsoever on the settings used for a local network. The simplest remedy might be to delete the ISP dialup icon and then rerun the ISP setup CD to create a new one. However, a quick check of the connection properties will enable you to tell if anything has been obviously misconfigured.

From Control Panel, start Internet Options, click the Connections tab, select your ISP dialup entry and then click Settings. On the Settings dialog box click Properties. On the Properties dialog box select the Networking tab, select the TCP/IP protocol from the list and click the Properties button. On the General tab, both 'Obtain an IP address automatically' and 'Obtain DNS server address automatically' should be selected, as shown above.

Search *PC Advisor's* free online Helproom

The *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. Don't let the gremlins get you down – check out our Helproom instead.

www.pcadvisor.co.uk/helproom

Spam's not my pal, but SpamPal is

tip

Our mailbox shows that an increasing number of readers are being bothered by unsolicited commercial email, more commonly known as spam. Sadly, there's no simple way to stop the tide of spam: the only solution that works is to use a filtering package.

Over the last few months we've been testing a new anti-spam product from a British author. It's called SpamPal, and you can get it from www.spampal.org.uk. This program is highly recommended. It's easy to set up, very effective, and free! It's also on our cover disc so you can try it out.

After SpamPal is installed you need to make a couple of changes to your email program's mail server configuration. There are instructions in the manual which are so clear we won't waste space explaining how to do it. Setup may be trickier if you're using an email virus scanner, though not if you're using Norton AntiVirus 2002 or 2003.

In use, SpamPal checks every email to see if it has been sent from a server that's used by spammers. It gets this information from lists available on the web, which it updates every 14 days. If a message comes from one of these servers, the text **SPAM** is inserted into the subject line. That's all SpamPal does, so you'll still need to filter the messages out of your inbox as shown in these three steps.

We love SpamPal, and we think it will become your pal too. In a future Helpline we'll cover using a plug-in for SpamPal called RegExFilter which helps catch the few spams SpamPal misses, and which can spot many common email viruses too.

1 When you install SpamPal, you'll be offered a choice of Safe, Medium or Aggressive filtering options. If most of your mail comes from known addresses which you can whitelist (see later) choose the aggressive option, which will catch the most spam. SpamPal won't delete any mail so the worst that can happen is that a wanted message will end up in your spam folder
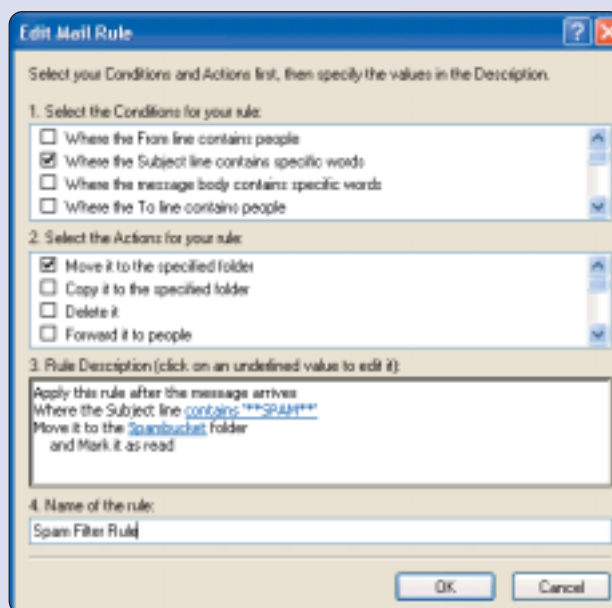
2 The best way to deal with this spam is to set up a message rule in your mail program to direct messages containing **SPAM** in the subject line to a separate spam folder and mark them as read. You should check this folder from time to time to see what SpamPal has caught, and then empty it. It would be possible to have the message rule delete the spam from the server, but it's best not to do that at first. The reason, as we mentioned earlier, is that a few messages that you want to see – usually advertising messages from sites that you have subscribed to – may get marked as spam

3 You can prevent this by adding the addresses they come from to SpamPal's 'whitelist'. Once you're satisfied that SpamPal is catching spam, and nothing but spam, you can change the rule to delete the messages from the server if you wish

You can pick up spyware by installing 'free' software that is paid for by advertising. It's worth checking to see if spyware is the cause of your problem before you start pointing the finger at legitimate stuff designed to keep your computer safe.

To remove a common spyware culprit, close Internet Explorer and look in the folder \WinNT\Downloaded Program Files (\Windows\Downloaded Program files if you're using Windows 9x, Me or XP). If you find a file called Tracker Class, right-click it and select Remove.

This program causes the symptoms you describe because the server it is attempting to report to no longer exists. While it tries, it hangs up the system for 30 to 60 seconds at a time. If you don't find Tracker Class, download and run the free utility Ad-Aware from Lavasoft (www.lavasoftusa.com or see the cover disc). This program will tell you if there is any spyware running on your computer.

An increasingly common cause of sluggish browser behaviour are badly-written (or an excessive number of) browser helper objects. These are bits of software that can add functionality to Internet Explorer and, as with spyware, they can get installed on your computer without you realising it.

To disable these helpers, open Internet Explorer and click on Tools, Internet Options, Advanced. Under Browsing, deselect 'Enable third-party

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.
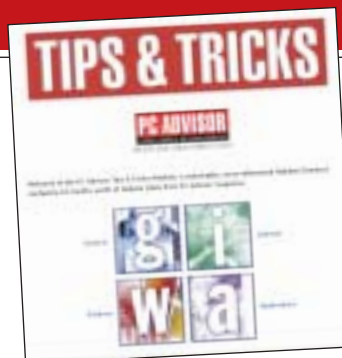
browser extensions', as shown below, then click ok and restart the system.

If this solves the problem but you are concerned about losing the extra functionality that browser extensions can provide, get yourself a copy of free utility called BHO Cop, shown below and available from www.pcmag.com/article2/0,4149,270,00.asp or follow the link on the cover disc. This tool will tell you which helper objects are installed on your PC and allow you to enable and disable them individually so that you can find the one that's causing the freeze-ups.

Q **I was sent an email supposedly containing an interesting screensaver. However it didn't work, so I ignored it. Now, every time I shut**

down my computer, I receive the message 'Runtime error 45. Can't find file icqmapi.dll' in a small window entitled 'Pentagone'.

I found a file 'gone.scr' in the Windows System folder the properties of which told me it was associated with 'Pentagone'. However, my system tells me that I don't have the authority to delete or remove it. What should I do?

A You have been suckered by a virus, I'm afraid. The email you received would have had the subject 'Hi' and read: 'How are you? When I saw this screensaver, I immediately thought about you I am in a harry [sic], I promise you will love it!'

Don't be taken in! If anyone sends you something like this, even if it appears to come from a friend, be suspicious. Reply to the friend asking if they really sent the file. Don't attempt to open any attachment in the message until they have confirmed that they really did send it.
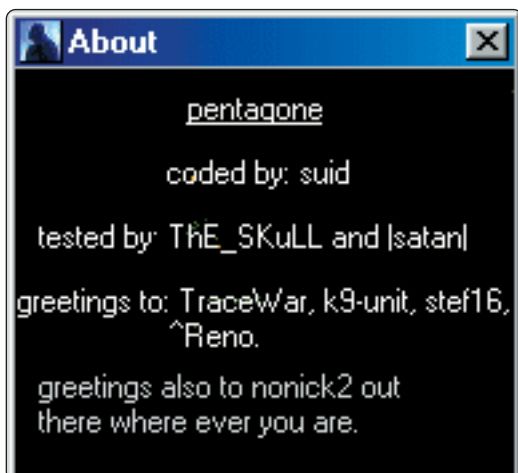
This particular virus is known as the Goner worm and unfortunately it is destructive. If you are running one of the popular personal firewall or antivirus
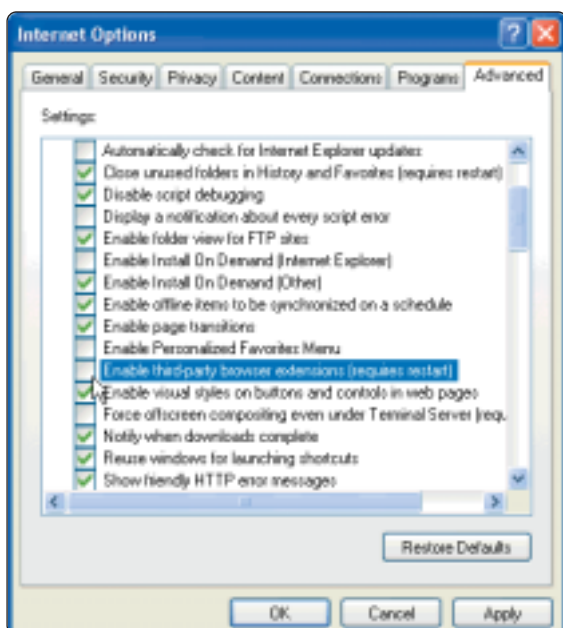
← Disabling third-party browser extensions can speed up Internet Explorer

↓ BHO Cop lets you disable Browser Helper Objects without uninstalling them
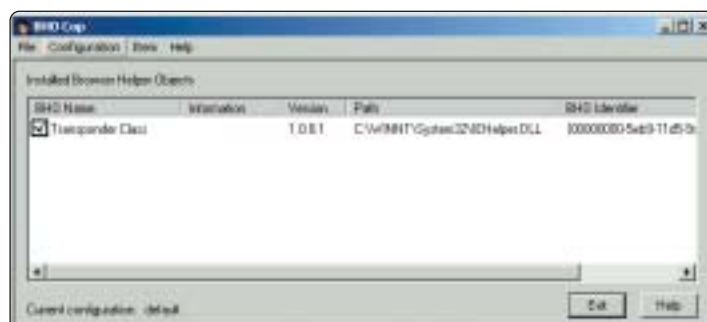
↓ Applications

packages, it terminates them and then deletes their program files from the hard disk leaving your PC unprotected.

If you were using one of these packages and it was up to date, it would probably have detected the virus before it had a chance to do any damage. Nevertheless, be prepared to have to reinstall software after getting rid of this worm, shown above. If you don't have any antivirus or security software, get some!

To remove the worm from your computer, press Ctrl, Alt, Del to bring up the Task List, then terminate the process named 'Gone' or 'Pentagone'. This will allow you to delete the file 'gone.scr' from your hard disk. This file may have the

hidden, system and read only attributes set, so you may need to change your Windows Explorer Folder Options before you can see it.

Now start the Registry Editor (click Start, Run, type Regedit, click ok) and expand Hkey_Local_Machine\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run. Select Run, then right-click the entry 'C:\Windows\System\gone.scr' (or similar) in the righthand pane and select Delete.

Use the Windows search tool to locate a file named remote.ini, and delete it. Finally, you should locate and delete the file mirc.ini, which if present is altered by the worm so as to use the mIRC client as a way to spread itself.

I was delighted to see the tip *Customise Word envelope settings* **on page 206 of the December 02 issue. However, no matter how carefully I follow the instructions, when I open a document afterwards and go to the Envelopes and Labels option, the preview window still shows my address text positioned to the right and bottom of an envelope! Any suggestions?**

We just worked through the instructions printed in the magazine in case something got lost in the editing, but they still work for us. Perhaps the problem is that you're expecting the changes you make to affect all documents. They won't.

The address position is a style, so it can be modified to apply to just one document, or (if you select 'Add to template') saved to a template so that it applies to all documents subsequently created using that template.

The address position is not a setting within Word itself, so the changes you make won't affect documents that were created previously, when you subsequently

Pass it on: tips from readers

Do you have any great workarounds or shortcuts you would like to share? Send your tips and tricks to Helpline, *PC Advisor,* Fifth Floor, 85 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4TQ, or email pcadvisor_letters@idg.com. To help us sort your messages, please use the words 'Pass it on' in the subject heading.

Kill the messenger, humanely
February's tip *Shoot the Windows Messenger* **prompted Nasr Hamid to pass on a way of getting rid of it that doesn't involve using the Registry Editor. Click on Start, then Run, enter the following, and then click ok:**

    rundll32 advpack.dll,LaunchINFSection %windir%\inf\msmsgs.inf,BLC.Remove

Note: this will remove Messenger permanently, so this tip isn't suitable for use by those who would like to retain the option of re-enabling it for occasional use. When we first tried

Nasr's tip, it didn't work, because he hadn't typed the command exactly. The command is case sensitive and the only spaces in it should be after 'rundll32' and before '%windir%'. To avoid errors, we've made a shortcut containing the command and put it on the cover CD.

Conjure up the Label Wizard
A note from Michael Tajfel directs us to a Microsoft Knowledgebase article giving more reasons why the Microsoft Access Label Wizard may fail to appear than we described in our response in February's Helpline (page 179.) This problem may occur if you don't start Access using one of the shortcuts created by the installer.

It may also occur if the files acwzmain.mde or acwztool.mde are missing from the Microsoft Office\1033 folder: replacements may be copied from the Pfiles\Msoffice\Office\1033 folder on the CD. But the most likely solution to the problem, says Michael, is to uninstall and then reinstall the Small Business Tools on Office 2000 Disc 2.

open them, nor will they be applied to new documents created using a template other than the one you saved the changes to.

Q My computer has an nVidia GeForce3 Ti 200 graphics card, and this seems to be the cause of my problem. The screen is too dark when I'm running any game. This is annoying if the game has no brightness controls.

The brightness and contrast on my monitor are turned up full. There is no problem with the brightness when running Windows. Is there any way of getting the game to use the same brightness settings I use for Windows?

A Unfortunately not. 3D games bypass the Windows graphics drivers, so the settings you use for Windows have no effect on games. The brightness and other settings are set by the game itself. While some games have brightness controls, others that don't may still allow you to change the brightness by altering a setting in a configuration file.

These settings are specific to each game, so contact the developer for details. Alternatively, search Google Groups using the name of the game and 'brightness' as keywords, because questions about this are asked on a regular basis.

Many nVidia GeForce cards come with a utility called 3Deep, shown above, which allows you to set the colour calibration and brightness for 3D applications and games. If you don't have this utility, you can buy it from the developers, Colorific (www. colorific.com). Try the 30-day demo on our cover disc before buying, to see if it solves your problem.

↓→ If your games are so dark you can't see to shoot straight, try brightening things up a bit using the 3Deep utility, shown below. There's a 30-day trial of 3Deep on our cover CD
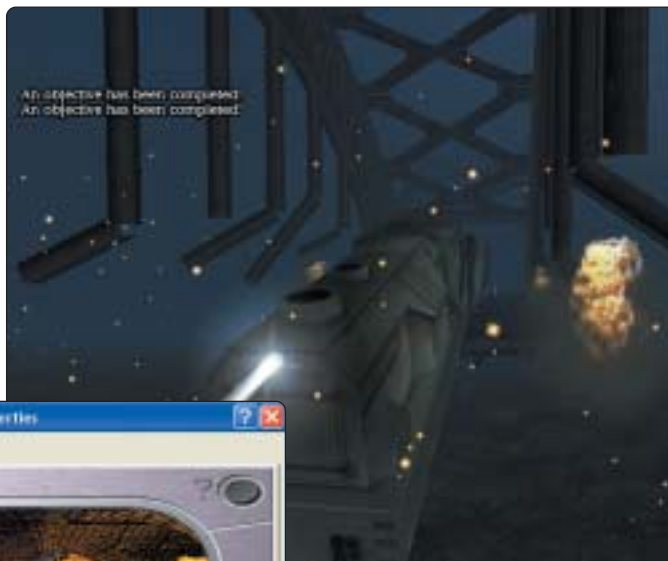
Q My PC runs Windows 95. I have a program called Sierra Publisher which was working perfectly until I installed Print Perfect Gold from your cover CD. Now, when I start the program I receive the error 'VBAJet32 32bit failed to initialise when called. Try reinstalling the application that caused the error'.

I have tried uninstalling and reinstalling both Sierra Publisher and Print Perfect but the error persists, although everything else on my computer works fine.

A This is a fairly well-known error. Its incidence isn't restricted to these two applications, so it's worth describing what has happened in some detail. Both of these applications make use of the Microsoft Jet database engine. However Print Perfect Gold uses a newer version, which has replaced the old one that Sierra Publisher used.

Uninstalling and reinstalling won't fix the problem. The new version of VBAJet won't be deleted during uninstallation because it is a shared file likely to be used by other applications. However, Sierra Publisher's setup program won't overwrite this problem version when you run it, because its own copy is older. This is a cardinal rule of uninstallers, which works because newer versions of shared files are supposed to be backwards compatible with older ones.

The obvious way out of this mess would appear to be to delete vbajet32.dll and then reinstall Sierra Publisher. Unfortunately, it isn't as simple as this.

Contact us

Besides VBAJet32.dll there is a whole bunch of related DLLs that all need to be the same version. There are also likely to be Registry entries related to the new files that must be removed before the old ones would work properly. The only practical way to get the computer back to its previous working state, therefore, is to do a restore from a full system backup taken before you installed Print Perfect. If you don't have a backup you could be looking at a clean reinstallation of Windows and all your software.

Fortunately, this may not be necessary. The main reason for this error occurring is because the newer version of VBAJet32 has a dependency on a file named expsrv.dll. This file ought to be distributed with any application that needs it, but because it was included with Windows 98 SE many software developers don't realise that they still need to include it with their applications.

If they don't, it's only the users of older versions of Windows who will experience a problem. A likely solution, therefore, is to get hold of a copy of expsrv.dll (there's a copy on our cover disc or download it from www.dictacomm.com/win_dll/98_2nd/e_dll _files.htm) and copy it into the Windows System folder.

Q My PC has been hijacked by a program that associated itself with more than half the file types on my system. Uninstalling the malefactor didn't help. Is there a way out of this dilemma?

A That depends on how well prepared you are. We'll offer some fixes in case you're not protected, and tell you how to prepare for the next time this happens.

You can restore individual associations pretty easily from the Open With dialog box. To get there in Windows XP, right-click a file of the associated type and select Properties, click the Change button across from 'Opens with', and then, if necessary, choose Select the program from a list.

In Windows 98, Me, or 2000, Shift, right-click a file of the associated type and then select Open With (or Open With, Choose Program). Once there, select the program you want that file type to be associated with, check Always use this program to open this kind of file, as shown below, and click ok.

You can restore all of your associations at one time by using a backup of the Windows Registry – though this will affect more than your associations. Just in case you haven't made a backup, Windows automatically backs up your Registry at regular intervals.

In any case, it's best to make a separate backup of all your associations before disaster strikes. To do this, select Start, Run, type regedit, and press Enter. Navigate the Registry Editor's left pane to My Computer\Hkey_Local_Machine \Software\Classes. Choose Registry, Export Registry File (File, Export in Windows XP). Name the file associations, and save it to My Documents.

If a program should happen to claim the wrong associations, simply open My Documents, double-click the associations file and click Yes. Your associations will return to their earlier state as of the backup. Best of all, only file types that were associated with something at the time of the backup will be affected. If you've added a new file type and association since the backup, they won't change.

Q Some time ago I remember seeing an article or tip explaining how to use a CD-RW like a floppy. Of course, now I want to do it, I can't remember where I saw the article. Can you tell me what software I would need?

A Nero Burning ROM contains a utility called InCD which lets you do exactly this. However, a CD-RW isn't exactly like a floppy. An error during writing could make the whole contents of the disc inaccessible and, unlike a floppy disk, tools such as Norton Disk Doctor are unable to retrieve data from it. If you do use this software, make sure you don't keep your only copies of valuable files on CD-RW. ■

➔ To change individual file's associated applications in XP, right-click the file in question then choose Properties and click the 'Opens with' button to bring up this dialog box