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↓ General

Q After buying a CD burner for my main computer I was pleased to find that my other PC could read both the CD-R and CD-RW discs that I created. However, after a problem reading a CD-R, I noticed that it won't read CD-RW discs anymore either and even has trouble with commercial CDs (although I can often get over this by going into Device Manager and clicking refresh on the CD-ROM). I reinstalled Windows but it made no difference. How can I fix this?

A It isn't easy to diagnose hardware problems remotely, but what your symptoms suggest is that the CD-ROM drive in your other computer is failing. It might just need cleaning or it might need replacing. Reinstalling Windows, however, was unnecessary.

Q Why does my computer have more than one network card? I opened up Network Adapters in Device Manager and found the following listed there: 1394 net adapter connection; nVidia nForce MCP networking controller; 3Com 3C920B-EMB integrated fast

ethernet controller; and DPX USB cable modem adapter.

A These days TCP/IP (transmission control protocol/internet protocol) is the method used by almost all computing devices to communicate – it's no longer just for connecting PCs together. So anything that transfers information using TCP/IP is effectively a network adapter. In your case, your IEEE 1394 FireWire interface, graphics card, 'real' network card and broadband cable modem all speak TCP/IP, so that's why these devices all appear under Network Adapters.

→ PC won't boot? Change the jumper setting on your hard drive and install it in another PC in order to copy files off it



Q I have an old VTI computer that worked perfectly until the battery on the motherboard started losing power, after which the computer would take 30 minutes to boot up from cold. Now it won't boot up at all and I can't access the data on the hard drive. The old battery is soldered in. Can you advise me where I could get a new one or, if not, how to retrieve my data?

A A failing battery won't make a computer take a long time to boot and a dead battery won't stop it booting at all. It will simply make it forget its Bios settings plus the time and date.

So the most likely explanation for your problem is that your hard disk has died. It's a pity you misdiagnosed the symptoms or you could have backed up your data before it was too late.

If, however, the hard drive is working, the simplest way to get the data off would be to change the jumper at the back from Master to Slave (as shown below) and put it in another computer. It should come up as D (or whatever the next drive letter is) and you can then copy your files to a backup medium.

Just in case the problem really is the battery, here's what to do about that. Getting an exact replacement is probably impossible and likely to cost more than the present value of the computer. But motherboard batteries are usually three volts (at least on older PCs like yours) and any old 3v battery will do, as long as you get the polarity the right way round. Some

motherboards have a jumper that allows you to disable the internal battery, so you can use an external one. If not, you can snip the old one out using side cutters and solder wires from an external 3v source to the bits of wire that are left.

I bought a La Cie D2 external DVD writer to back up my slide library. This is connected to an IEEE 1394/FireWire PCI card. I also have a La Cie FireWire 120GB external hard drive on which to store the scanned-in TIF images. This is plugged in to the other FireWire port on the same card.

The first two DVDs I created were fine. Now whenever I try to burn I always get a buffer underrun error. The disc continues to rotate in the drive and I have to switch the power to the drive on and off to eject it.

This also usually crashes the computer. I have disabled the screensaver, my antivirus software and have tried different brands of media. I have successfully created DVDs using this drive on a friend's PC. Please help.

A Buffer underrun errors occur because the DVD writer doesn't receive the data as quickly as it is being written to disc. This isn't a common problem with external FireWire drives, but we have never come across anyone using them for both the source and target of a burning task and suspect that this is the root of the problem.

To avoid buffer underrun errors we always advise optimising the hard drive used to hold the source data by defragmenting it and ensuring that the controller is using the fastest transfer rate.

We also recommend that the source and destination drives use separate IDE controllers. Defragmenting the source drive might be enough in your case since you have successfully burned DVDs before, but you are always going to have less of a margin for error because a hard disk on a FireWire interface isn't going to be as fast as an internal drive connected to the PCI bus. And to make matters worse, both your drives are using the same FireWire controller.

The fact that you had no trouble burning a disc using a friend's PC (when, presumably, the source files were on his

→ For more reliable burns, transfer a disc's data to your PC's hard drive before burning it to another DVD



hard disk) would tend to confirm that there's nothing wrong with the drive itself – it just needs to be fed with data faster.

We recommend transferring images to your freshly defragmented hard drive before burning. If that isn't convenient, reduce your DVD drive's appetite for data by using a lower burn speed.

My Time Athlon 1700+ XP PC with 256MB of RAM has started to run very slow. Once switched on, the mouse moves jerkily across the screen and the clock constantly fails. A support assistant at Time suggested removing some programs from Startup then running ScanDisk and Defrag.

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Help for small businesses

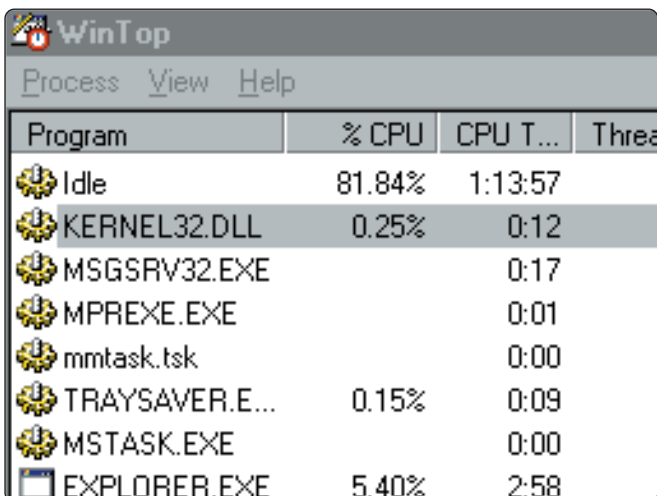
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PC ADVISOR EXPERT ADVICE HOTLINE

None of these things helped, so he advised me to back up my data and phone again so he could talk me through reformatting the hard disk. When I called back, however, I spoke to a different person who told me that reformatting was unnecessary.

This second chap removed everything he could from Startup and suggested that doubling the RAM would cure it. The PC now works reasonably well, but the mouse is still a bit shaky at times and the longer the computer is on the worse it gets. So should I reformat the disk or double the RAM?

→ WinTop, one of Windows' so-called 'kernel toys', will tell you which programs on your system are using up processing power



Program	% CPU	CPU T...	Threa
Idle	81.84%	1:13:57	
KERNEL32.DLL	0.25%	0:12	
MSGSRV32.EXE		0:17	
MPREXE.EXE		0:01	
mmtask.tsk		0:00	
TRAYSAVER.E...	0.15%	0:09	
MSTASK.EXE		0:00	
EXPLORER.EXE	5.40%	2:58	

A We don't think doubling the RAM is the cure for this problem. And although reformatting the disk and reinstalling Windows might do the trick, it probably isn't necessary. The trouble is there's no obvious solution and without sitting in front of the computer there is no way to get a feel for what the trouble is.

The symptoms you describe suggest that interrupts (signals from a device like the mouse or the timer that updates the clock) are being lost. This can only occur if some other device whose interrupts have a higher priority is generating interrupts to the exclusion of all else.


This, however, shouldn't happen on a PC with the specification of yours to any extent, unless something is wrong with the hardware or some very badly behaved software is running.

The hard disk may be malfunctioning, perhaps because of overheating, or one of the cooling fans may have failed causing the processor to overheat and run slowly. It may be none of these things, but there's at least a chance that the problem

is being caused by a hardware fault, in which case reformatting the hard disk will be no help at all.

We think you should check the hardware and see if it all seems cool enough. You should also check the hard disk controller settings in Device Manager to ensure that the drive is running at its optimum speed in DMA mode.

To see if something is using all the processor time, Windows 98 and XP users can try a tool like Task Manager (press Ctrl, Alt, Del), while Windows 95 users can download WinTop, shown above, from www.webtree.ca/newlife/wintop_info.htm (or see the cover CD). If something is hogging all the power you'll need to find out what it is and why. If you're still no wiser, either take a chance on a reformat or have the system looked at by a qualified engineer.

 **Should I turn off my PC when I'm done using it for the day or leave it on overnight?**

A Some people argue that leaving a computer on is bad for it. Others take exactly the opposite view. We find neither argument convincing, but one fact is absolutely certain: turning off your PC saves electricity – and money.

But then again, so does hibernation, which is faster. When you set a computer to hibernate, Windows copies everything in RAM to the hard drive and then shuts down the hardware. When you turn the PC back on, Windows restores your system to the state it was in when you started hibernation. From the hardware's point of view the computer has been off, but to Windows you never left.

To enable hibernation, select Start, Settings, Control Panel. (In Windows XP, select Start, Control Panel; if you see Switch to Classic View at the top of the Explorer bar, click it.) Next, double-click the Power Options icon. In the Power Options Properties dialog box, click the Hibernation tab. (If there is no Hibernation tab, your system doesn't support hibernation.) Check Enable hibernation or Enable hibernate support, depending on your version of Windows, and click ok.

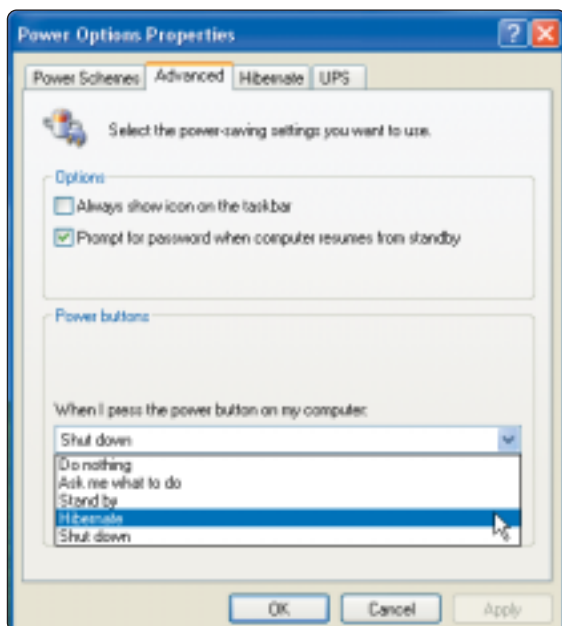
Once you've enabled hibernation, you can make your computer hibernate via its shutdown options. In Windows 98, Me or 2000, select Start, Shut Down. Choose Hibernate and then click ok. In Windows XP, select Start, Turn Off Computer. While the 'Turn off computer' dialog box is open, either hold down the Shift key to see the Hibernate button or just press H.

For an even easier way to make your system hibernate, click the Advanced tab in the Power Options Properties dialog

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.





← Set hibernate options fast by choosing Hibernation from the Power Options drop-down list under the Advanced tab

and then restarted, whereupon a message appeared that said 'Unable to process the Registry. Run ScanReg /Fix'. Next, a message: 'NAV AutoProtect. Unable to determine the location of the configuration files' came up. It had an ok button that does nothing when you click it. I am stuck at this point. Can you help at all?

A Your system's Registry is badly corrupted. How this happened we can't tell, but we would advise that you run ScanDisk at the earliest opportunity.

Windows actually told you what to run to fix the problem. To do it, you have to start Windows Me in Safe Mode by holding down either the Ctrl key or F8 while Windows starts. A text mode menu should appear; move the cursor down to the Safe Mode entry and hit Enter.

Once Windows is running in Safe Mode you can click on Start, Run and type the command 'ScanReg /Fix'. If this doesn't solve the problem you can try running the command 'ScanReg /Restore' instead, which will allow you to revert to an earlier copy of the Registry.

If Windows Me won't even boot to Safe Mode, boot to DOS using an emergency recovery disk and try the same commands from the command prompt. If you don't have a recovery disk, get a copy of WinRescue Me shown below and available from <http://regvac.com/frescuem.htm> or load it up from our cover disc. WinRescue Me comes

box. In either the 'When I press the power button on my computer' (as shown above) or 'When I press the sleep button on my computer' drop-down menus, select Hibernation then click ok.

Hibernation's all very well but there are good reasons why you may want to turn your computer off instead, especially if you're using Windows 98 or Me. With these versions of Windows, the longer you go between reboots, the more unstable the environment becomes.

If you only hibernate Windows never actually closes down and restarts. It therefore becomes more prone to crashes. This isn't a problem with Windows 2000 and XP, however.

Q Whenever my old Windows 98 PC's hard drive wouldn't boot I used to reach for a bootable floppy disk. I've now upgraded to Windows XP. My problem is that bootable floppies run the old DOS operating system which doesn't recognise hard drives formatted in the NTFS (NT File System) that Windows XP uses. Is there a solution?

A Yes. Try downloading the free NTFS Reader for DOS 1.0 from www.ntfs.com (or see our cover disc). Put the program on a bootable floppy to view the folders and files on an NTFS-formatted hard drive. You can also use NTFS Reader for DOS to copy these files to a FAT-formatted or networked drive.

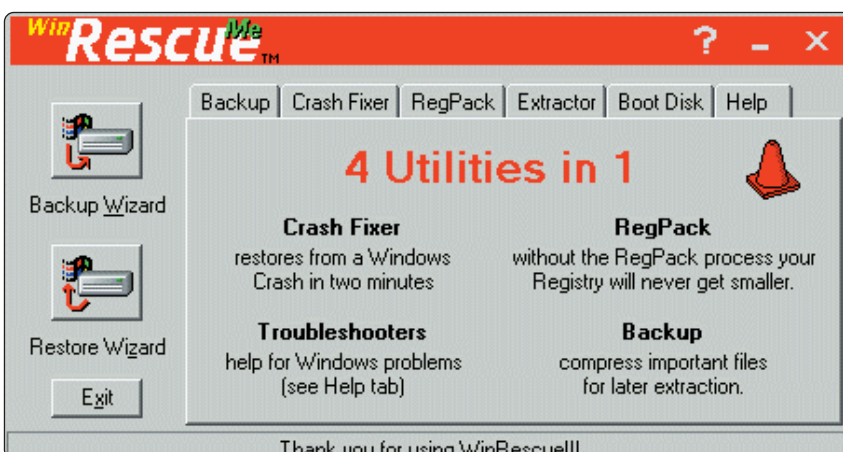
↓ Windows

Q The search facility in Windows Me has stopped working. When I type a name and click on Search Now, nothing happens.

A This is probably a result of tinkering with the Microsoft PowerToy Tweak UI. Start Tweak UI, select the Desktop tab, ensure the Search Results option is checked and click ok. That should cure it. If you have uninstalled Tweak UI you can download it from www.microsoft.com/networkstation/downloads/power-toys/networking/nttweakui.asp.

Q My computer runs Windows Me. I downloaded critical updates

↓ This utility could be just what you need if Windows won't start



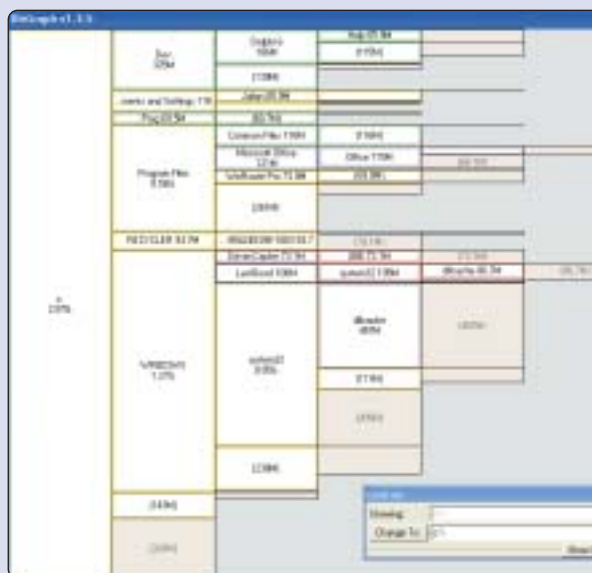
Find out where those gigs have gone

tip

Your PC has a multigigabyte hard drive that you never thought you'd use and suddenly it's starting to look a bit full. Where has all the space gone? If you've ever tried to find the answer to this question, you'll wish that you had DirGraph, a brilliant disk space visualisation tool by David James Spillett (www.spillett.net).

Download the tiny Zip file (or load it from our cover disc) extract the program to a suitable folder and run it. Click the 'Change to' button (you can enter a different drive if you wish) and DirGraph will build a graphical representation of all the folders on your hard disk, indicating the amount of space used by each folder. When it has finished, point at different folders and pop-up tool tips show more information, or you can click on a folder to zoom in for greater detail.

There's no help with the program, but James' website provides an explanation of the program and usage tips. DirGraph requires the Visual Basic 6.0 runtime which most people will already have. If you don't have it, follow the link on our cover disc to <http://download.microsoft.com/download/vb60pro/redist/sp5/win98me/en-us/vbrun60sp5.exe>.



↑ Let DirGraph find the space-hogs on your hard disk

with a DOS utility that enables you to perform recovery procedures when Windows won't start.

Q When I open My Computer and look at the properties of the C drive it tells me that 6GB of space is used. When I open the C drive and select all the folders, apparently only 2.5GB is being used. Where on earth has the other 3.5GB gone to?

A Windows Explorer probably isn't set to display hidden or system files, so they aren't being shown when you select them. Hidden folders include the Recycle Bin, the System Restore folder and possibly a copy of your Windows installation files if your supplier didn't provide you with a Windows setup disc. You can change this by clicking on Tools, Folder Options and selecting the View tab.

Q After I installed some software, the icon shown in My Computer for one of my hard drives changed. The 'alternative' icon is still there, even after restarting the computer. How can I get rid of it?

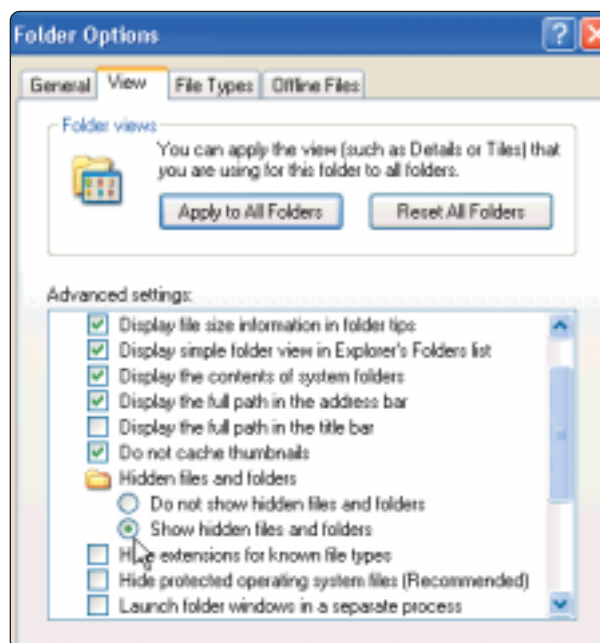
A Look in the root folder of that drive where we reckon you will

find a file there called autorun.inf. It probably got copied by accident from the CD you were installing. Delete it and the regular hard disk icon should be restored.


Q I'm using Windows 98 SE. I installed the software for a Twinmos seven-in-1 card reader, which works fine. However, the icon for my lomega Zip 100 drive in My Computer has now changed. How can I restore it?

A The Zip drive icon is created by one of the lomega Tools programs called imgicon.exe. Check your Startup menu group where you should find an entry named lomega Disk Icons, which is a shortcut to this program. If you can't see it, search for imgicon.exe on your system and, when you find it, add a shortcut to it in the Startup menu group. If you can't find imgicon.exe try reinstalling the lomega Zip software.

→ To select everything on your hard disk, enable 'Show hidden files and folders'



↓ Internet

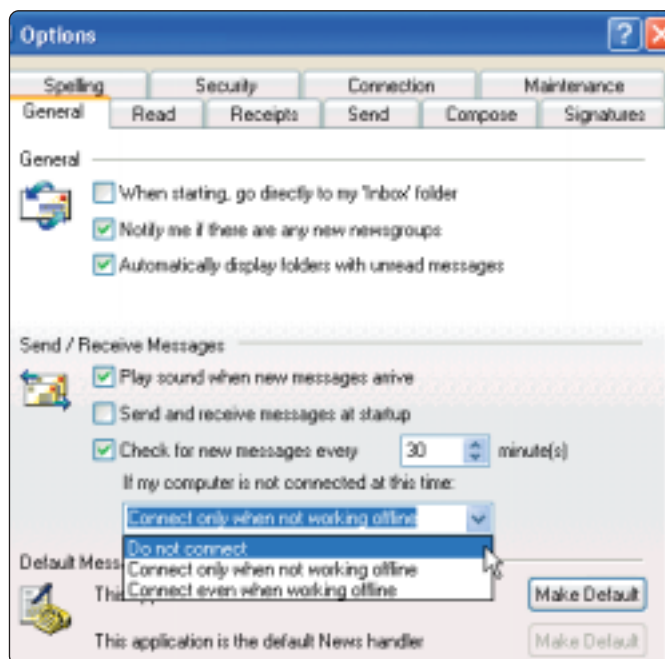
 I recently upgraded to Windows XP and use Outlook Express 6.0 for email. When I click on a hyperlink in an email, nothing happens. Is there an option disabled somewhere?

A There are several possible causes of this problem. If you're using a pop-up ad blocker this may be preventing the linked pages from opening. Try disabling it. If that does the trick look for an alternative such as AdShield (www.adshield.org). Sadly, AdShield is no longer free but you can download a trial version from the website or follow the link on this month's cover disc.

Another possibility is that Internet Explorer is not set to be the default web browser. Open Internet Explorer, click on Tools, Internet Options, select the Programs tab and ensure that the 'Internet Explorer should check to see if it is the default browser' box is checked. Close Internet Explorer then re-open it and click Yes when you see the message: 'Internet Explorer is not currently your default browser. Do you wish to make it the default?'

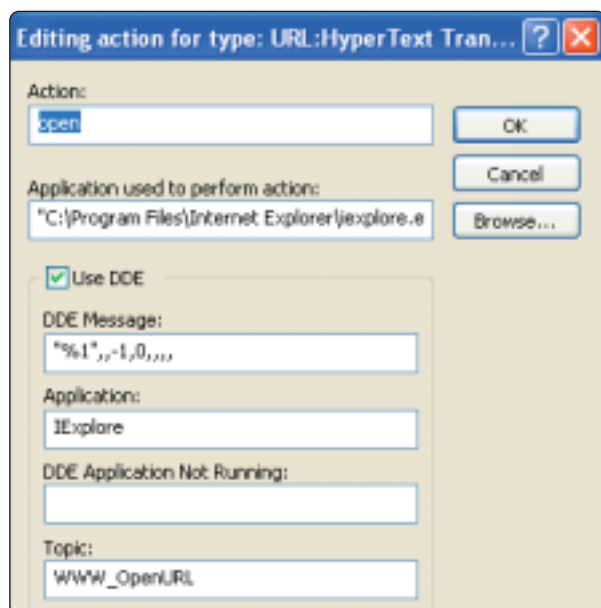
The other possibility is that a Registry setting has become corrupted. In Windows Explorer click on Tools, Folder Options, select the File Types tab and locate the

→ Outlook Express can cause regular dialups unless you tell it not to




entry named URL:HyperText Transfer Protocol. Click Advanced then select Open in the dialog box that pops up and click Edit. 'Application to perform this action' should contain: "C:\Program Files\Internet Explorer\iexplore.exe" -nohome as shown below (note that the quotes round the program path are critical).

The 'Use DDE' box should be checked. 'DDE Message' should be '%1', '-1,0,...'. 'Application' should be IExplore. 'DDE Application Not Running' should be blank, and 'Topic' should be WWW_OpenURL.



← Check the Registry settings if hyperlinks don't open when you click them

 My computer runs Windows XP and is connected to another PC to share printers. The problem is that the computer dials the internet every 10 minutes. I have set the connection properties to 'never dial a connection' but this didn't help. I've had to physically disconnect the modem to stop it happening. I updated the virus scanner last week and it shows no viruses. Should I be looking for a Trojan on the system?

A Setting the connection options to 'never dial' only thwarts programs that try to access an internet site while you are disconnected. However, some programs are capable of initiating a dialup themselves if you aren't connected. While a Trojan could be to blame, the most likely culprit is one that's so obvious you probably didn't think of it: Outlook Express, which has probably been set to check for new messages every 10 minutes.

Open Outlook Express and click on Tools, Options, as shown above. On the General tab, under 'Send/Receive Messages', look for the option 'Check for new messages every xx minutes'. Either clear the checkbox to disable the option or change the value of xx to a more acceptable interval.

Below this you'll see a drop-down list for selecting what to do 'If my computer is

not connected at this time'. If you choose 'Do not connect' then Outlook Express won't initiate a dialup, but it will still check for mail at the specified interval while you're online surfing the web.

If Outlook Express isn't causing the problem, you'll have to discover what else might be initiating the dialups. SpyBot Search and Destroy (available from <http://security.kolla.de/news.php?lang=en> or this month's cover disc) should reveal if there are any malicious diallers hidden on your system.

If the cause is something more benign try running TCPView (from www.sysinternals.com or click the link on our cover disc), which displays all the TCP/IP connections being made by software on your computer. When a new connection appears on the list just as a dialup starts, you've found the culprit.

I will shortly be connected to BT Broadband using the USB modem BT supplies. I have another computer with which I would like to share the broadband access, but I don't want to have to network them. I understand I can connect the two computers using an ADSL cable router

and share broadband only. Is this correct? And where can I purchase one from?

A You're effectively networking the computers by connecting them to the router. Whether the two PCs choose to share files or printers is a separate issue entirely: you aren't compelled to do so just because you have a network.

You can connect the two computers using the network cards they probably already have, and share the broadband connection through the BT-supplied modem using ICS (Internet connection sharing). And by using BT's recommended modem you'll be able to get BT support in the event of any problems.

The only thing you'll gain by using a modem/router is that the PC with the modem won't have to be turned on when the other one wants to use the internet. The router will also give you some firewall protection which could be a plus and it will save having to run a software firewall on the PC. On the down side, the router firewall won't be so easy to configure if you need to open up ports for things like webchat. If you're still convinced that an external router is the best solution, you can tell BT you don't want the USB

Glossary

tip

Un sure 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. To navigate the Glossary you'll need to install Acrobat Reader, also on the CD.



modem and get a cost reduction which you can offset against the cost of the router.

As to where to buy one, many of our advertisers will supply suitable devices. Alternatively, go to www.google.co.uk, type in 'broadband modem' and see what comes up. You could also check out news://uk.telecom.broadband for advice on what products work well with BT Broadband.

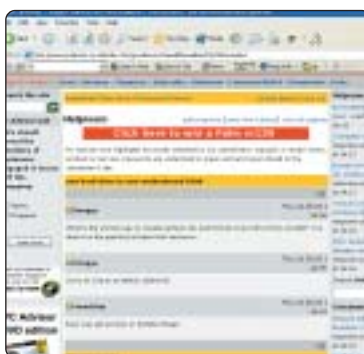
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www.pcadvisor.co.uk/helproom

I have a Belkin eight-way power strip, which has one input and two surge-suppressed outputs for the telephone line. I use one of these outputs for my own PC. My son wants to access the web using his own computer and a different ISP. Can we share the one line with two systems and two ISPs if we use the line at different times?

A Yes, you can. The only thing that might cause a problem is if this results in too many devices being connected to the phoneline. The line may not work correctly if the total REN (ringer equivalence number) of all the devices connected to it is greater than four.

Most modern telephone devices – phones, answering machines, modems, Sky Digiboxes and so on – have a REN of 1, so you can usually connect up to four devices to one line. To be more precise, you should find out each device's REN – a figure which is usually specified in the supplied booklet.

I I have a Tiny PC running Windows XP with an Askey CNR V92 modem and I can't run AOL 7.0 or 8.0 on it. AOL claims it's Tiny's fault because it doesn't provide the correct drivers, while Tiny blames AOL's software. Where can I get the right drivers?

→ Rather than storing user data online, Yahoo Mail relies on information stored on your PC's hard drive to access email addresses

A Either AOL or Tiny could have been more helpful and pointed you towards the correct drivers. The problem is documented on AOL's Help pages at www.aol.co.uk/help/faqs/modem_not_detected.html. Drivers for all models of Askey modems can be downloaded from www.askey.com/html/driver.html. However, you do need to know the exact model.

On the Q&A page it states that the firmware upgrade utility is designed to run



Pass it on: tips from readers

tip

Every last drop

Frequent correspondent John Ash wrote to describe the procedure he recommends for using all the ink in his inkjet cartridges. Take a rigid styrene tray – the ones that supermarkets use for packing poultry will do – and five single-portion milk or cream pots found in tea shops and cafeterias. You'll also need a selection of refill syringes/concertina bottles rinsed with distilled water. Line the tray with card, glue the pots in place and label them Red, Light red, Blue, Light blue, Yellow.

Take off the back of the old cartridge (furthest from the nozzles) using a junior hacksaw. Hold a nozzle over the appropriate pot and squeeze the foam using an old Biro, which will cause ink to flow. If the foam appears dry, moistening it with the merest drop of distilled water will encourage flow. John claims to have full syringes after squeezing four cartridges using this method, which as he says is as good as 'buy four get one free'. We haven't tested his claim, and your mileage may vary, but if you're keen to get the utmost value for money from your ink cartridges this may be worth a try.

Masterfile Professional

Malcolm Shifrin writes to point out that the Masterfile DOS database mentioned in July's Helpline, page 145, is also available direct from its developer Campbell Systems (<http://mpro.campbell-systems.co.uk>). Malcolm mentions that he has just transferred his database to Biblioscape (www.biblioscape.com), the only Windows database that does what Masterfile does, but it is slower and creates far larger files. The price of progress!

Defrag speeded up

Reader Colin Lee's PC has also suffered from Windows 98 Defrag stalling, as mentioned in July's Helpline page 140. He solved the problem by installing the defragmenter from Windows Me, which he found at www.sandylee.net/computers/defrag.html. It's a pity this isn't available as a update from Microsoft, as it probably isn't legal to use an Me utility if you don't have Me. But it does work, so we thought we'd pass the tip on.

under Windows 98 or Me, and that if you use XP and the upgrade fails "take the modem to your reseller who we believe will repair it as quickly as possible". We had a good laugh over that one.

Since you're running Windows XP it might be safer to click on the link on the AOL help page which takes you to SmartLink's site (www.smlink.com). Click on the Download link then download the Windows XP driver for CNR modems and install it. This should work with AOL 7.0 and hopefully with AOL 8.0 as well.

I I use Yahoo mail (shown above). When I typed the first letter of an email address, a drop-down list of all my addresses beginning with that letter was displayed. Following a complete reinstall of my hard drive, this feature has stopped working. How can I reactivate it?

A We're afraid you can't – or more precisely, the feature is already working but the list of addresses you built up was lost when Windows was reinstalled. It used to function properly because Internet Explorer stored the addresses you typed in the Registry.

When Windows was reinstalled you started again with a clean Registry, so all that information was lost. However, as you use Yahoo, Internet Explorer will start building up the list of addresses again so all is not lost in the long term.

↓ Security

Q At www.keir.net I found a utility called Firehole which claims to show that personal information can be sent from my computer to another site even though I am using a firewall. How can this be prevented?

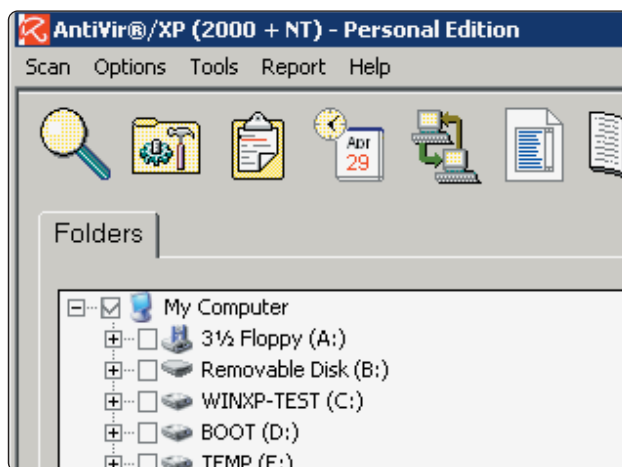
A Firehole bypasses the protection afforded by your firewall as it makes use of your web browser to send information out. Since your web browser is trusted and allowed to send information to the internet, there's no way your firewall can intercept this data.

What this really shows is that it is wrong to expect a firewall to protect you from Trojan software. The real purpose of a firewall is to stop people outside on the internet from accessing things inside your computer or network.

Much is made of the ability of certain personal firewall products to block things inside the system from calling out – a bonus usually given as a reason for not relying on Windows XP's built-in firewall, which doesn't stop such activity. However, a more sensible approach to protection is not to let rogue programs take up residence on your PC in the first place. After all, you wouldn't consider your house to be secure if burglars were able to get in, but were then prevented from taking your possessions out.

Trojans can be detected using the same methods for weeding out viruses and many antivirus packages will detect them. We recommend the excellent AntiVir

→ AntiVir provides some of the best free antivirus protection around



Personal Edition shown above and available from www.free-av.com (or click the link on the cover disc) but note that its option to detect Trojans is disabled by default. We would also recommend regularly running SpyBot Search and Destroy (available from <http://security.kolla.de/news.php?lang=en> or the cover disc) which will detect and remove Trojans including any that exploit the loophole demonstrated by Firehole.

Q A friend sent me a warning about a virus that is not detected by Norton or McAfee. Apparently it sits and waits for 14 days before damaging files on the system. The file was `jdbgmgr.exe` and the email gave detailed instructions on how to remove the virus. It also told me to pass the warning on.

I thought I had heard about this before so I did nothing. Sure enough, I soon received a second message saying it was a mistake and that the file was actually required by Windows. However, my friend wasn't so lucky – he deleted the file. How can he restore it?

A As you discovered, this is not a virus but someone's idea of a joke. And a not very funny joke at that. By carrying out the instructions in the email you are performing all the actions of a virus: replication (by copying the email to all your friends) and destruction (deleting the file).

This would not happen if people treated all such warnings with suspicion and checked their antivirus vendor's site for information first. In any event, it's always best to get virus removal instructions direct from the experts.

Even if the warning relates to a real virus, the advice given by a well-meaning friend may not actually be the correct way to remove it and that could cause other problems. The good news is that the file `jdbgmgr.exe` isn't required by Windows. It's part of a now-obsolete Microsoft development tool and your friend is most unlikely to need it.

Next time you receive a virus warning, check first at a virus hoax page such as McAfee's (<http://vil.nai.com/vil/hoaxes.asp>) or Symantec's (www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html). Finally, please pass this advice on to all your friends and colleagues to help stop these hoaxes.

Q A friend suggested that to avoid the risk of a virus spreading to all the contacts in my address book I should add an 'X' to the address to make it invalid. When sending an email I am then supposed to delete the 'X' from the address. However, I can't make this work as when I create an email only the contact name appears in the address field, not the actual address.

Contact us

Please send your Helpline questions to 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.

Boost Access

tip

Microsoft Access 2002 saves database files in Access 2000 format by default, for compatibility with other Access users. If your database is large, however, you'll get better performance by converting it to Access 2002 format. To do this, select Tools, Database Utilities, Convert Database, then click on 'To Access 2002 File Format'. Access 2002 will create a new database file in the new format, leaving the old one as a backup.

A This idea, in one form or another, has been around for a couple of years but we've never heard of anyone actually using it. It isn't really the good idea you think it is and we say that not just because, for the reason you discovered, it's impractical.

First of all, if you could use it, there's a very good chance that you would often forget to delete the 'X' and end up sending email to an address that didn't exist. Second, your address book isn't the only place a virus can obtain addresses. Some of them look at your emails, which would contain the correct addresses. So at best this idea would only offer partial protection.

If you're concerned about spreading email viruses then you can't beat getting a good virus checker and keeping it regularly updated. If you're still worried that a virus which evades detection could spread using your address book, try using a different address book that the virus won't know how to read.

For example, you could try Borderline Address Book, a powerful, though now unsupported, free program still available from www.borderline.freemove.co.uk. As an alternative, the beta of Virtorio Address Book 2003 from www.winsite.com/bin/info?5500000036181 looks promising.

An even better solution – although it will set you back \$24.95 – would be Secure Address Book from Brady & Associates (www.y2kbrady.com/firewallreporting/sab/index.htm or click the link on the cover disc). There's a trial version that you can download for free.

↓ Applications

Q My PC runs Windows 98 SE and has 128MB of memory. I'm using Pinnacle Studio 8.5 (upgraded from 8.0) for video editing. My problem is that no matter how long the footage is, the program will only capture 17 minutes of it before an error comes up and the program closes. Do I need to upgrade my computer's memory to solve this?

A Upgrading the memory won't help in this case. The reason your video captures are limited to 17 minutes or so is because a 17-minute, 55-second PAL video file on disk occupies 4GB. This is the largest possible file it can have under the FAT file system used by Windows 98.

Some video-capture programs are able to work around this restriction by creating multisection captures, where one capture may be made up of a number of separate files on the disk. But Pinnacle Studio can't. The only way to break the limit is to upgrade to Windows XP and format your hard disk as NTFS. You can then create capture files as large as the free space on your hard disk if you want to.

If upgrading to XP seems like an extreme solution to your problem, there are a couple of workarounds. One is to get a copy of AVI_IO, shown below, from www.nct.ch/multimedia/avi_io (or see the cover

disc for a link) and use this to capture the video to disk. It allows you to capture and play back video by seamlessly joining multiple AVI files that can even be located on different hard disks.

The other solution is simply to change the way you go about editing. Capture your video in 17-minute segments, rewinding to the start of the last scene after each one so that you don't miss anything and so that you can make the join at a place where it won't be noticed.

The editor allows access to multiple segments in a single project, so there is no real limitation. During output the editor can combine clips from different segments without dropping frames, so there shouldn't be a problem when sending to video tape. Output to disk will be subject to the 4GB restriction, but if the output format is Mpeg a 4GB file can hold a pretty long video.

Q My Microsoft Access record collection database now has more than 15,000 records and I want to make searching easier. However, when I try to filter by form the drop-down that should list, for example, all composers' names, simply contains two items: 'null' and 'is not null'. Can you help?

A This problem has foxed many people but the solution is simple. Microsoft Access has an option to suppress the display of values in a field if the number of records is large. The default value is only 1,000. To change this, click

→ AVI_IO allows you to capture and play back video by seamlessly joining multiple AVI files that can even be located on different hard disks

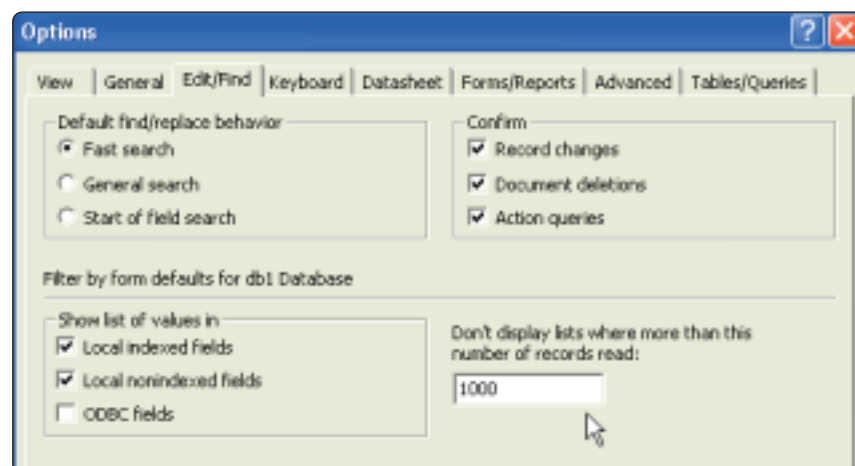


on Tools, Options and select the Edit/Find tab, as shown right. In the field below the caption 'Don't display lists where more than this number of records read' enter a value greater than the number of entries in your database.

I I have been using Word 2000 uneventfully for years. But not anymore. All of a sudden, whenever I type the letters F, J and M followed by a space the letter changes to a dash. I can find no apparent AutoCorrect entry that would do this and I have uninstalled and reinstalled Word to no avail. I don't want to delete normal.dot and lose my extensive customisations.

A We can't think what would cause this effect other than a rogue AutoCorrect entry, so we suggest you turn off 'Replace text as you type' to see if the problem goes away. If it does, you either need to look harder at your AutoCorrect list to spot the errant entry or you need to start afresh.

AutoCorrect entries that don't have formatting are stored in an ACL file; entries with formatting go in normal.dot. The path to the ACL file will depend on what operating system you have, but it should be found in the Office folder. Under Windows 2000 or XP, the path to



that folder is C:\Documents and Settings\\Application Data\Microsoft\Office. Under Windows 98 or Me you'll need to navigate to C:\Windows\Application Data\Microsoft\Office.

Assuming you're working in UK English, the file Word uses will be called mso2057.acl. You would have to delete this file and reinstall Word to get back to the original default AutoCorrect list.

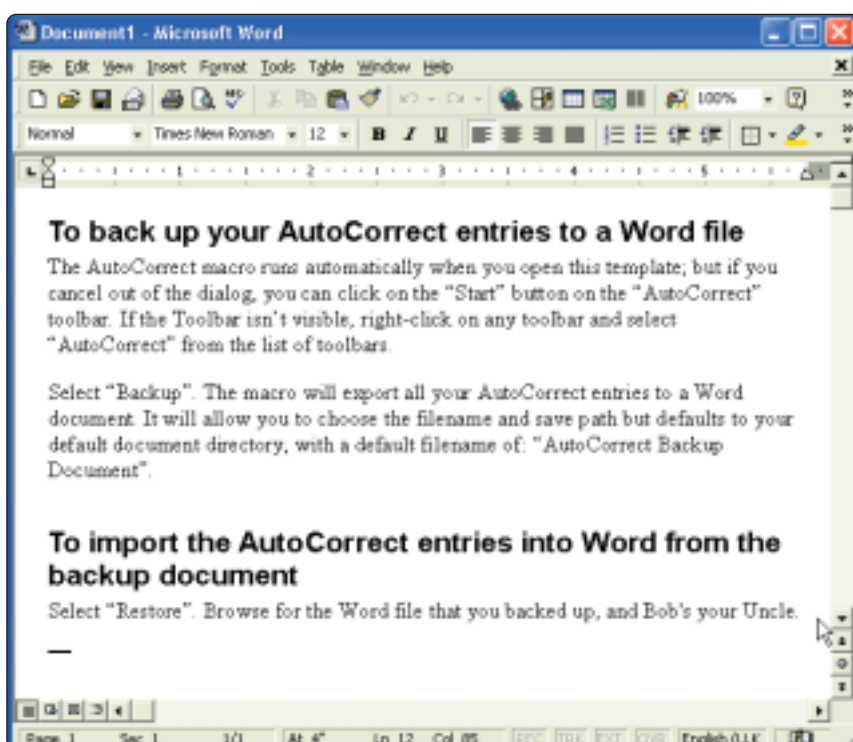
The file isn't directly editable, but the clever folks at mvps.org have developed a macro (shown below) that backs up AutoCorrect entries to, and restores them from, a Word document. To get it, download www.mvps.org/word/downloads/autocorrect.zip (or see the

↑ Microsoft Access won't display selection lists if a database contains more records than this

cover disc for a link) and unpack the archive. Then open autocorrect.dot and follow the instructions in the document. Note: if you have disabled Word macros for security reasons you will have to re-enable them temporarily to run this.

I I use AutoCAD LT2000 to produce design drawings and my problem is that I am unable to open one particular drawing that I have been working on. When try to open the file I receive the error: 'AutoCAD LT Error Aborting U:\coreacad\ Include\ abqspace.h@386eDwgObjectImproperly Read'. I can't afford to lose this file – can you help?

A Computer-aided design software is a bit too specialised for Helpline, but our searches of the AutoCAD internet knowledgebase at www.autodesk.co.uk turned up several lengthy articles that would probably be useful. Take a look. If they don't help, then the site also has an online discussion group where you can post a description of your problem and get assistance from other AutoCAD experts. ■



← Use Word macros to back up and restore your AutoCorrect list