

byteback



She's got a ticket to ride

Fed up with queuing for tickets for longer than the duration of the journey they cover? Join the club. Rosemary Haworth has found a great alternative. She pockets her spare change and hails the electronic ticket machine

Ah, the joys of commuting. It's something we London-based professionals never tire of moaning about though, needless to say, we wouldn't dream of working anywhere else. But there's something that has made travelling in the Big Smoke far more bearable of late. Delayed trains, congestion charges and non-existent Underground services notwithstanding, there's been a subtle improvement to my post-commute mood. The reason: electronic ticketing.

For the past two or three years it's been possible to bypass the queues at mainline rail stations by approaching an electronic booth, debit or credit card in hand, and receiving a ticket, destination anywhere, in return. It's fantastic and I've never yet had to queue to use one. Some Underground stations have cottoned on to the fact that such a setup results in fewer

impatient customers fed up with waiting for 20 minutes to buy a ticket for journey half that length and fewer beggars hanging around asking for spare change. Again, it's blindingly obviously a great idea.

Some airlines are just as canny and have introduced electronic check-in procedures for those who have tickets and no hand luggage (though I don't think I made myself too popular with BA when I managed to jam their self-service check-in kiosk at Milan airport. But my propensity to crash electronic equipment with a single touch is another story).

Now if only these electronic ticketing machines at my local tube station were not preset to close and cash up without fail the second I approach, I might even become a truly contented commuter... I said might. ■

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features

Great upgrades under £100

It's neither tricky nor expensive to upgrade your PC and make it work the way you want. *PC Advisor* has sourced heaps of low-cost kit and tells you how to use it to give your system a useful makeover.

Make money from the web

During the dotcom boom, the web seemed like the perfect place to make money. These days, we're far more realistic about returns on our online investments, but there's still plenty of ways to capitalise via the internet. *PC Advisor* runs you through the options.

workshops

Advanced Word workshop

Longer documents such as in-depth reports and manuscripts need advanced navigation cues and more structured formatting than letters and other small files. *PC Advisor* explains how to annotate, index and organise your word processed documents with aplomb.

xp advisor

Compatibility guide

Windows XP isn't great buddies with some applications and has proved a challenge for hardware manufacturers too. We look at how glitches have been ironed out.

consumerwatch

Complete the PC picture

When buying a new PC system it's easy to concentrate on processing power and specs but there's a few must-haves you should also check on before you leave the store.

reviews

Top 10 charts

Our Power PC category gets the refresh treatment this month, along with CD drives and DVD writers.

Technofile

Graphics card technology explained.