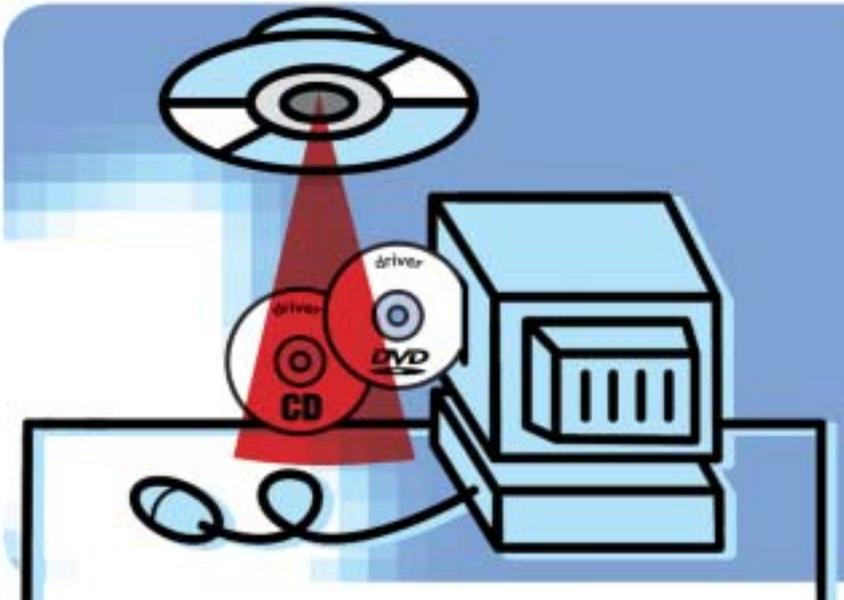




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↓ General

Q The icons for my CD-RW and DVD drives have disappeared from My Computer and I can no longer access the drives. In Device Manager I found that my CD-RW has a code 41 error – Windows successfully loaded the device driver for this hardware but cannot find the hardware device.

The DVD drive, meanwhile, has a code 19 error – Windows cannot start this hardware device because its configuration information in the Registry is incomplete or damaged.

The troubleshooter didn't work with either drive. I have checked for viruses and I have not installed any new hardware or software lately.

A Many things could have happened to result in this situation. Start by taking off the cover and checking the connections to the drives. Make sure that the ribbon cable connectors are firmly pushed in at the back of each drive and on the motherboard, and do the same for the power connectors.

Then delete the drives from Device Manager and allow Windows to redetect

the hardware and reinstall the drivers. If this doesn't solve the problem, there may be a hardware fault. In that case, disconnect one drive and try installing one device at a time. It's unlikely that both devices have failed, but if they are both on the same cable one may be affecting the other. This will hopefully pinpoint the problem, although there's always a chance that the IDE interface on the motherboard or even the cable is faulty.

Q My old printer failed, so I bought a Canon BJC-85 to replace it.

The computer I use it with runs Windows

3.11, so the driver disk supplied can't be loaded. How can I use Windows 3.11 and DOS with this printer?

A The BJC-85 can emulate the Epson LQ-510 and LQ-2550 printers, so if you install the drivers for either of those you should be able to use it.

Q I have an old system with a Gigabyte GA-6BXE motherboard and AwardBios. When I plug it into the mains it boots up automatically without waiting for me to press the power button. Can this irritating function be disabled?

A With many PCs, the action to be performed when power is restored can be set using an option with a name like 'Restore on AC Power Loss'. This is usually found under the Power menu of the Bios setup screen. However, having looked through the index of setup fields for AwardBios at www.phoenix.com/en/customer+services/bios/awardbios/setup+index.htm (shown below) we couldn't find one. PCs are designed to be plugged in all the time, so most users would only be troubled with this behaviour when there is a power cut.

Many readers may be interested to know that manuals for all AwardBios models from version 4.51 up can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat format from www.phoenix.com/en/customer+services/bios/awardbios/setup+information.htm.

→ The Phoenix website offers plenty of support for AwardBios owners



↓ Windows

Item 43 of your Top 50 Helpline queries (June 03, page 96)

mentions Messenger Spam. I am suffering from this annoyance although the Windows XP Internet Connection Firewall is enabled and so is the free version of Pop-Up Stopper.

How do I disable the Windows Messenger Service? It doesn't appear in the list of programs or Windows components in the Control Panel.

A We're puzzled as to why you are receiving messenger spam if the Windows XP Internet Connection Firewall is really enabled. The spam requires access to ports 135, 137-139 and 445, and these ports are blocked by the firewall unless they have specifically been opened.

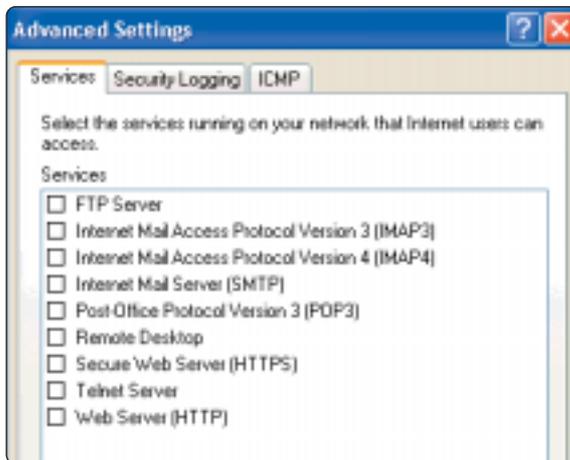
To check the firewall settings, open Network Connections on Control Panel, right-click the connection and click Properties, select the Advanced tab and click the Settings button. By default, no services listed on the Services tab should be enabled.

The Messenger program doesn't appear in the usual places because it's a service -- something that is normally started by Windows and nothing else. To locate it, open Control Panel, Administrative Tools, Services and locate the service named Messenger. Right-click it and select Properties. You can then set the startup type to Disabled.

If that doesn't go far enough and you would prefer to remove the Messenger service from your PC altogether. You can do this by clicking on Start, Run and entering the following command exactly as printed (the case must be exact and the only spaces are after 'RunDll32' and before '%windir%'):

```
RunDll32 advpack.dll,LaunchINFSection %windir%\INF\msmsgs.inf,BLC.Remove
```

By the way, Pop-Up Stopper and other similar programs won't have any effect on messenger spam at all, as they are designed specifically to prevent pop-up advertisements in web browser windows.



← By default, Internet Connection Firewall allows external access to no network services

When I start up Windows Me I receive the message: 'Error loading nvqtwk.dll. System cannot find the file'. When I press ok everything works fine. Can I stop this message from appearing?

I also see the outline of a window named Mixer Untitled appear on screen for a few seconds before vanishing. Can I stop this happening?

A From its name, we deduce that the file nvqtwk.dll is something

to do with nVidia graphics card drivers. Your display is working, so either the file is a leftover from an earlier graphics card that you've since upgraded or it's used by some Control Panel or configuration tool for your graphics card. Probably the best solution is to reinstall the software for your graphics card.

If the file isn't needed, use the System Configuration Utility (Start, Run, Msconfig, select the Startup tab) to determine the program that's trying to use the missing file by disabling things one at a time.

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PC ADVISOR EXPERT ADVICE HOTLINE

The Mixer window you describe seems like it belongs to a utility that normally runs hidden and is possibly represented by an icon in your System Tray. It may be one of the applications that came with your sound card.

If the window stays on screen for a few seconds before disappearing, it does so because the programmer wrote the code that way. You'll either have to live with the behaviour or do without the mixer utility altogether.

I'm running Windows 98, which is fully updated. On several occasions I close Windows Explorer and notice that the Recycle Bin icon has been replaced by something else. This icon remains in place until I reboot. The Recycle Bin still works normally and its caption is correct, but is something malicious running on my system causing this?

A This phenomenon isn't caused by anything malicious; it's just that Windows 98 (and 95/Me) is not very robust. For performance reasons, Windows maintains a cache, in memory, of all the icons it needs to display on the desktop

→ Change the icon size to force Windows to rebuild a corrupted icon cache

and in Explorer. This cache can become corrupted if a program doesn't behave correctly. The most common cause of the corruption is a memory leak: this occurs when a program doesn't release all the memory it used before closing.

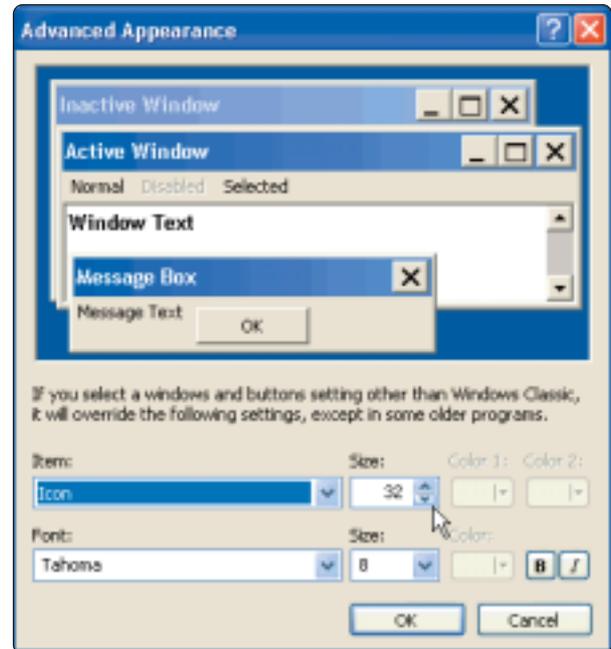
It's quite a common programming error. With patience, you might be able to

identify the culprit, as you should find that the icon change occurs only after one particular program has been used. However, the problem can only be cured either by not using the offending program or by obtaining a new version that doesn't have the memory leak. It isn't something you can fix yourself.

If you don't want to wait until you reboot to repair the icon, here's a workaround that will force Windows to rebuild its icon cache. Right-click the desktop, click Properties and select the Display tab. In the Item list box select Icon. Click the up arrow button beside the Size field to increase the icon size by 1, as shown above, then click Apply.

Wait, and Windows will redraw the icons. Now click the down arrow button to restore the correct size and click Apply again. Your Recycle Bin icon should now be correct.

Since we installed a home network, members of the family are often using their computers at the same time. If I want to give one of the others the address of an interesting site that I found or some other small bit of information, surely with all the technology available to us there's a better way than writing it to a file and saving it in the Shared Documents folder, sending them an email or scribbling it on to a piece of paper?

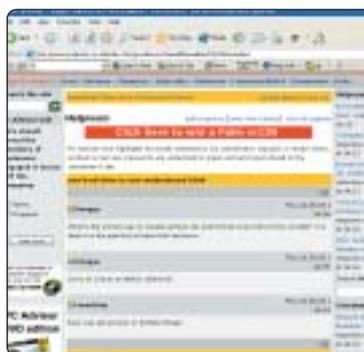


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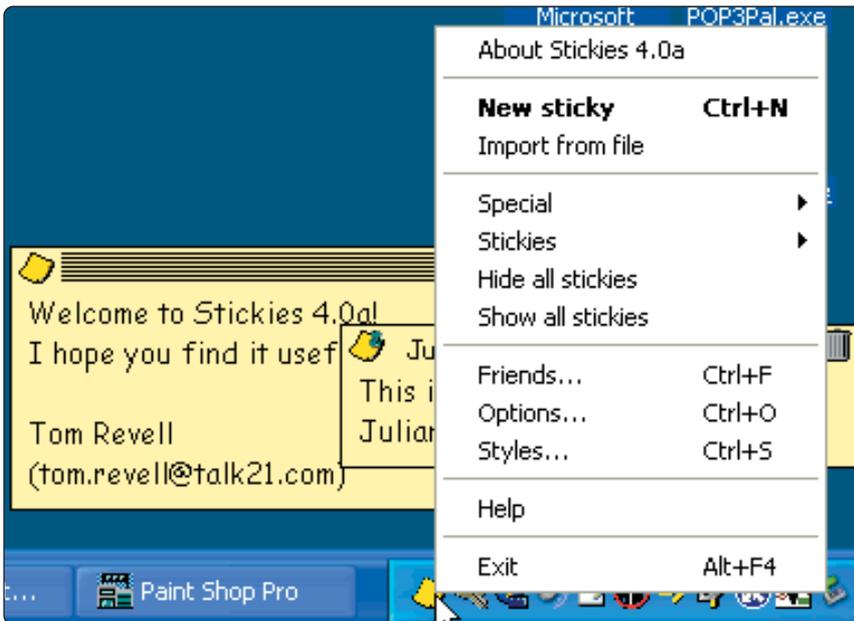
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If our online database can't solve your problem, try posting a question in the Helproom forum, where more than 200 queries are answered every day. The forum is manned by our team of Helproom angels who are ready and willing to lend a hand on anything from system crashes to virus alerts.



www.pcadvisor.co.uk/helproom



← Stickies: send notes to everyone on your network quickly and easily

A Indeed there is. You could use something like NetMeeting, but that's probably a bit over the top for a quick note. Our preference is for a program called Stickies, shown above, by Tom Revell (www.tom.revell.btinternet.co.uk). It's essentially a software implementation of Post-It Notes, but with the ability to send notes to another computer that's also running Stickies.

If the other computer isn't accessible, Stickies will send the note as an email, with the Sticky as an attachment, so you can send notes to people who aren't there, and even use it as an instant email program for brief messages. Stickies is beautifully implemented, well-documented and, astonishingly, it's free. We think you'll love it.

If you have the latest driver and you still receive the errors, you need to check for a conflict with other software or drivers by clean-booting the system. Click on Start, Run, type msconfig and press Enter. When the System Configuration Utility starts, select the General tab, select Selective startup under Startup selection, as shown below, and clear the checkboxes for the following:

- Process Config.sys File
- Process Autoexec.bat File
- Process Winstart.bat File
- Process System.ini File
- Load Startup Group Items

Note: it is important that you make sure you leave the win.ini file enabled, because without it the printer driver will not run. If the errors don't occur in this configuration then restore the standard configuration and selectively disable different applications (which you'll find under the System Configuration Utility's Startup tab) to find the cause of the error by a process of elimination.

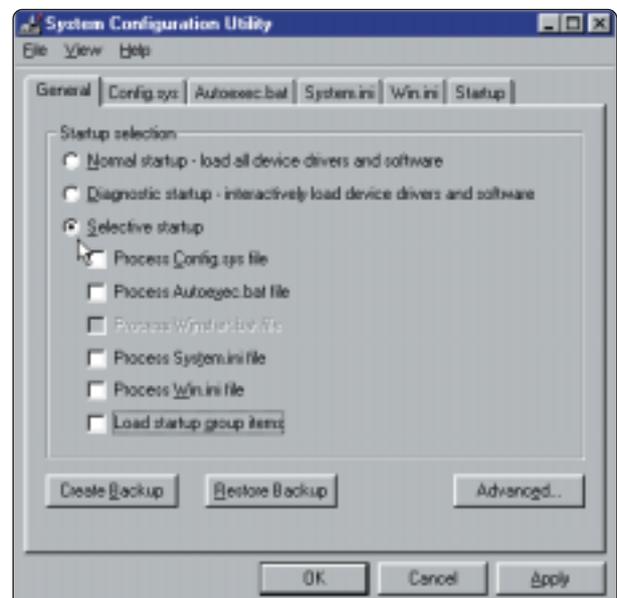
Should this search for a culprit prove fruitless then a further thing you can try is changing the spooling format from EMF (Enhanced Metafile) to RAW. Doing this will cause output to go directly to the printer instead of being spooled. It should eliminate the Spool32 errors because, of course, Spool32 won't be used. The down side is you may have to wait for printing to finish before you can continue using an application.

To change the spooling format, choose Start, Settings, Printers. Right-click the printer icon and select Properties. On the Details tab click Spool Settings. Select 'Print Directly To The Printer'. In the Spool Data Format box, select RAW then click ok twice and close the Printers window.

C I'm running Windows 98 SE and have a Brother HL-630 laser printer. The problem is that I regularly receive a message that spool32.exe caused an invalid page fault in kernel32.dll, after which I have to close down and reboot. Can you tell me how to prevent this from happening?

A There are many possible causes of Spool32 errors, so we can only suggest some things to try that may help identify the cause. The first step, which you may well have already tried, should be to ensure that you have the latest driver for your printer.

→ Perform a selective startup to test for driver or software conflicts



Resolving problems with mice

If your mouse pointer freezes when you try to use it, it probably just needs a good clean. Release the retaining ring holding the rubber ball, remove the ball and clean it using warm, soapy water. After drying it, rub it on your (clean) hand to remove any lint. Blow out any dust from inside the mouse casing and use a damp piece of kitchen towel to remove any dirt from the rotating parts.

Test that the two rollers spin freely: if they don't, the ball will slip against them instead of turning them, giving erratic pointer movement. If there is a problem with the rollers then, because it's hard to clean the bearings, it might be time to consider buying a new mouse.

If your mouse stops working when it is in bright sunlight, it may be that enough light is penetrating the plastic case and interfering with the optical encoders inside. Try moving your mouse to a shady place.

Software problems can also affect mouse operation. If the pointer is locked solid, especially right from startup, you probably have an IRQ conflict. Use the Hardware Conflict Troubleshooter to resolve this.

You should also check that you have the right drivers loaded. Under Windows 95, 98 and Me, click Start, Run and enter Sysedit. In config.sys and autoexec.bat, type REM followed by a space at the start of any line that contains the word 'mouse'. In system.ini, ensure that the mouse.drv entry in the [boot] section reads:

```
mouse.drv=mouse.drv
```

and the 'mouse' entry in the [386enh] section reads:

```
mouse=*vmouse, msmouse.vxd
```

Save any files you changed then reboot. If your mouse continues to play up, open Control Panel, System, Device Manager, expand the Mouse entry and remove any devices shown. Use Add/Remove Programs to delete any accessory mouse software such as Microsoft Intellipoint. Restart the computer, allowing Windows to redetect the mouse and reinstall its drivers. If all is well, reinstall the mouse software.

↓ Internet

 I'm a Freeserve Anytime user and I've been receiving emails from Freeserve advising me to download the Freeserve Connection Kit. I don't use the standard Windows dialup software, so do I need the Connection Kit?

 You don't need to use the Freeserve Connection Kit and it's of no use if you don't use the standard Windows dialler. However, you may still need to change your Freeserve dialup numbers. In order to provide the best service to customers, Freeserve needs to change the dialup numbers you use from time to time. But this is a daunting task for some Freeserve users, so Freeserve produced the Connection kit to automate the process.

The Connection Kit consists of a standard Internet Setup file that creates a new dialup connection containing the new default number, together with a 'microdialler' application that runs in the System Tray and changes the dialup number when an attempt to connect fails. The problem is it only works if you use the Windows dialup icon to connect to

Freeserve or if you connect by starting Outlook Express or Internet Explorer.

Even if you do, some users object to having another program running in the background, while others prefer to know just what numbers their PC is dialling at any time in order to resolve any charging disputes that might arise with their phone company.

It's a pity Freeserve didn't consider the needs of its more technically clued-up users by providing a link to a page containing the new numbers so that they could set them up manually. Because of this, if you don't want to use the Connection Kit you'll have to follow a process that is totally unsupported by Freeserve.

First, you need to download the Freeserve Connection Kit in order to find out your dialup numbers. It seems that there are different versions for users in different parts of the country. The trick is to download it without installing it.

When you click on the link to download the kit and the dialog box opens to ask whether to run or save the file, click Save to save it to your hard disk. After you have downloaded the file, which will have a INS file type, open it in Notepad.

Among other things, you'll notice the new phone number you're supposed to

be using. Make a note of it. Further down the file, in a section headed [Custom], you'll find a line named Run. Copy the web address in this line to your browser, hit Enter then save this file to your hard disk in the same way.

Use WinZip to extract the contents of the downloaded file (it's a self-extracting Zip file). If you don't have WinZip, install it (the software will install into the directory C:\Freeserve) and then uninstall it after you've performed the next step.

Examine the dialler program (it will have a name like atdialler1.exe) in an editor that can read binary files. We used FileAlyzer from <http://spybot.safer-networking.de>. Search for the string '0808' and you'll see the list of dialup numbers that are embedded in the program.

Make a careful note of them. Be aware that the 1470 prefix that most of the numbers have is only needed if caller line ID is suppressed on your telephone line. Only numbers starting with 0808 or 1616420845 are free Anytime numbers. The 0845 number without a 161642 prefix is a pay-as-you-go number.

Armed with this list of numbers, right-click your existing Freeserve connection icon, select Properties then insert the default number (from the INS file) in place of the original. If you're

using the latest dialup software you can click Alternates and insert the other numbers that you gleaned from examining the dialler program.

Select 'If number fails, try the next number' and 'Move successful number to top of list', as shown right, and you'll have the same functionality as Freeserve's dialler without the need to run the Connection Kit. If you use different software to connect to the internet, such as DUN Manager from www.magsys.co.uk, you'll need to update its own list of dialup numbers.

I'm using Internet Explorer 6.0. Before, when I clicked on a link that opened in a new window, the window used to expand to full screen. Now the window is always less than full screen. How can I restore its original behaviour?

A Here's how to make Internet Explorer remember your preferred window size. Ensure that Internet Explorer is not running then start it. Right-click a link on the displayed page and select 'Open in new window'.

Close the first browser window by clicking the Close button in the top right corner, so that you're left with just the new window. Drag the edges of the browser window until it fills the screen: do not click Maximize. Press and hold the Ctrl key then shut the browser window using the Close button. Restart Internet Explorer.

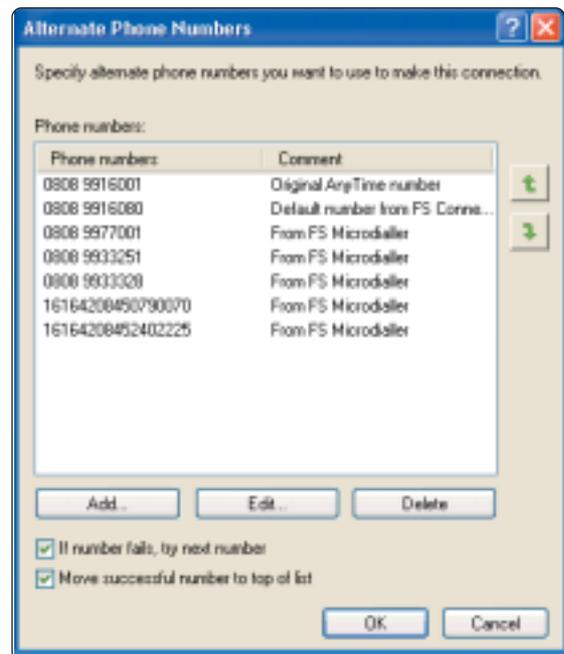
Glossary

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.



→ Set up Windows to use alternative Freeserve Anytime dialup numbers



You should now find that new browser windows open to the selected size.

If this procedure doesn't work, open the Registry Editor, expand Hkey_Current_User\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer, select Main, delete the value named Window_Placement then try it again.

I'm using a USB cable to link my laptop and desktop PC together. My desktop has a broadband connection and I hope eventually to use Windows 98 SE Internet Connection Sharing for the laptop.

The problem is that while the USB cable installation guide says that I have to enable file and printer sharing, almost every internet security article I have read advises turning this option off. Which is the correct solution?

A File and printer sharing is a major security risk that can be exploited, but a network isn't a lot of use without it. On some standalone computers it may be enabled when it isn't needed, but to suggest that it must be turned off if you want to access the internet is a bit like saying that to avoid catching a virus you should never go out.

What you have to do is to ensure that no one on the internet can find your file and printer sharing ports. If your internet gateway is a Windows 98 PC, that means installing a third-party software firewall

like Tiny Personal Firewall (from www.tinysoftware.com) or ZoneAlarm (both of which are available on our cover disc), or else using an external broadband router/modem with a built-in firewall.

After reading the review of the Linksys wireless router and PC Card on page 44 of the May issue, I decided to try to connect my laptop to our desktop so I could share the broadband internet connection. However, I can't figure out how to connect my Alcatel SpeedTouch USB ADSL modem to the wireless devices.

A The wireless modem that we reviewed was designed to be used with an ADSL modem that has an ethernet connection, not a USB modem like yours. You could use a combined modem, router and wireless access point, which would avoid the annoyances of Internet Connection Sharing and even allow the laptop to use the internet when the desktop is switched off.

But it's a bit of an expensive solution for just two computers and your ISP might not support it, which would be a problem if you can't get things to work by yourself.

It would be simpler and cheaper to use your existing modem and make your desktop the internet gateway for your wireless network. Your desktop probably already has a network adapter, so you

could simply buy a cheap network hub and a wireless access point that would link with either a USB or PC Card wireless network adapter on the laptop.

Some access points even have a switch that allows them to be connected directly to the PC, eliminating the hub. The network configuration is exactly the same as if you had a wired network, with the wireless link taking the place of a length of cable.

Q Whenever I try to send email using Outlook Express it displays an error message and disconnects.

The error I receive is: 'The message could not be sent because one of the recipients was rejected by the server. The rejected email address was 'mail@support.expedia.co.uk', Subject 'Map questions or comments', Account: 'mail.totalise.co.uk', Server: 'mail.totalise.co.uk', Protocol: SMTP, Server Response: '550 <mail@support.expedia.co.uk>... Refused to relay on behalf of <my.name@totalise.co.uk>', Port: 25, Secure(SSL): No, Server Error: 550, Error Number: 0x800CCC79.'

Because of this, I have to send email using Yahoo or IncrediMail XE, but some recipients reject these messages because they contain an advertising attachment.

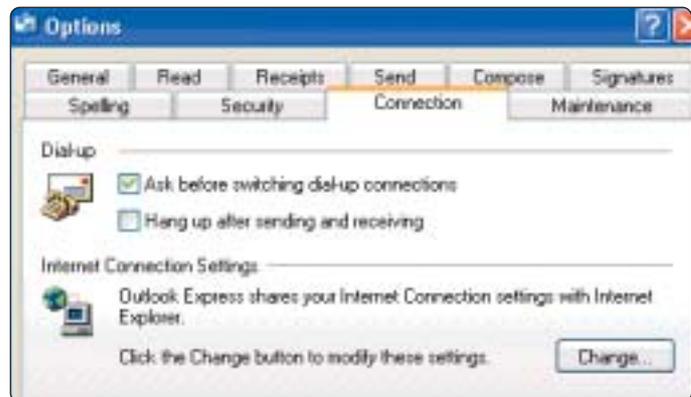
A It isn't clear to us whether you always receive this exact error or whether it was just example of the type of error you receive. The address 'mail@support.expedia.co.uk' looks invalid to us: it should probably be support@expedia.co.uk, which may be why it is being rejected.

The message will be stuck in your Outbox repeatedly generating the error until either it is sent or you delete it. Opening the Outbox and deleting the message should cure the trouble.

If mail to any address produces the server response '550 ... Refused to relay' then the usual reason is that you are trying to send the mail using your ISP's server (mail.totalise.co.uk) while connected to a different ISP.

ISP mail servers usually reject attempts to send mail by anyone not connected to that ISP to prevent misuse by the senders of spam email. We would

→ Outlook Express should use the same connection settings as Internet Explorer



expect IncrediMail to have the same trouble unless it is used when connected to Totalise, under which conditions Outlook Express should work too.

If you have more than one ISP account, or have had a different account in the past, check the Connection settings under Outlook Express Tools, Options (shown above) to ensure that it is using the same settings as Internet Explorer and not dialling a different ISP.

Q I use MSN Messenger and Windows Messenger to have voice conversations with friends, but suddenly for no apparent reason they can still hear me but I can't hear them. We all have Windows XP and we've tried disabling the firewalls to no avail. We have also tried the Audio Wizard, which says that everything is okay. Have you any advice for us?

A You have eliminated the two most common causes of communications failure: firewalls blocking the audio stream and incorrect mixer settings. That leaves misconfiguration

of the router that connects you to your ISP as the most likely cause of the problem. You will have to get on to your service provider's support people, as there is nothing you can do to change this.

Q I'm having a slight problem when printing pages from the web. When I use Print Preview the whole page appears correctly but when I print text is cropped from the righthand margin. When working offline, printing works as it should do. Is there a setting I can change to fix this?

A This is the first time we've seen the suggestion that printing behaves differently depending on whether you're online or offline, but apart from that your complaint is a common one. Internet Explorer has never been very good at printing, although it has got better with each new release. If you aren't using Internet Explorer 6.0, we'd advise that you update straight away using the version on our cover disc.

If lines still get truncated, open Page Setup and enter zero in both the left and

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.



right margin fields. If that isn't enough, print in Landscape mode to increase the paper width for printing.

Another solution might be to use a different web browser. Netscape users are fond of crowing that they don't have printing problems using their browser. However, Netscape is far from being the only alternative web browser. If you'd like a good, lightweight, free web browser, try K-Meleon, shown right and available from <http://kmeleon.sourceforge.net> or our cover disc, which is based on the same open-source Mozilla code as Netscape Navigator.

The only drawback is that it's currently a 5MB download plus a 200KB service pack, and you'll probably also want to download the 8MB Sun Java plug-in once you've started using it. K-Meleon will automatically import your Internet Explorer Favorites, so it's very easy to switch. We think it's worth trying even if you don't have printing problems.

I know I should never open an attachment in a suspicious email, but could I get a virus just by receiving an email? My PC got a virus, which turned out to be I-Worm Opaserv-I, and I'm trying to work out how I got it.

A Just viewing the message in the Preview pane of older versions of

→ K-Meleon: a lightweight alternative to Internet Explorer



Outlook Express was enough to activate some viruses, but this exploit has been prevented in the latest, fully security updated version. If you aren't using the latest version, we'd advise upgrading for this reason alone.

However, the virus you got, Opaserv-I, spreads by exploiting unprotected network file shares, not via email. If you have File and Printer Sharing enabled on your computer and ports 137 and 139 are unprotected (you can check the latter by visiting <http://grc.com> and taking the ShieldsUP 'Probe My Ports' test) then

your computer is vulnerable to infection by any idiot with a port scanner.

If you don't need to share drives or printers then remove File and Printer Sharing. If you do need it, you can stop miscreants out on the internet from getting unauthorised access to your drives by protecting them with a password.

However, this particular virus even tries to guess the password, so if you're running Windows 95, 98 or Me and want to rely on passwords to secure your network shares you should install a Microsoft security patch (available from www.microsoft.com/technet/treeview/default.asp?url=/technet/security/bulletin/ms00-072.asp) that prevents this.

Alternatively, you could set up your network so that it uses only the TCP/IP protocol and not NetBeui, which is the cause of ports 137 and 139 being open. This isn't a suggestion we make lightly, as networks can be hard enough to configure at the best of times and, if you do remove NetBeui, things may stop working. It's possible to set up a network without NetBeui, so if you want to try you can find more information about why it is a good idea, and instructions on how to do it, at <http://grc.com/su-bondage.htm>.

The simplest solution, though, is to use a firewall so that no one on the internet can see your NetBeui ports. If you're running Windows XP, the built-in Internet Connection Firewall is quite adequate for this. If not, you'll need a third-party product.

Pass it on: tips from readers

tip

Flight Simulator cleared for takeoff

Dave Macfarlane had the problem installing Microsoft Flight Simulator 2003 mentioned in our Windows XP Q&As (June issue, page 147). His PC supplier was at a loss: both the PC and the CD were new and perfect. Another customer who was in the shop at the time advised changing the RAM. This fixed the problem, although the old RAM was flawless. Dave thinks some motherboards prefer particular makes of RAM and we can't think of a better explanation...

Speed spanner in the works

John Hughes felt that readers deserve to be told the identity of the update that causes a serious speed degradation after applying Windows XP Service Pack 1. The culprit is Security Update Q811493 and removing it will restore normal performance. Thanks, John.

No more lockups

Bill Croughan has the answer to the problem of lockups with an E7205 Granite Bay motherboard and Radeon Pro 9700 graphics card. He advises to turn off fast writes in the Bios Setup and in the ATI Control Panel.

↓ Applications

Q After using Microsoft Office 2000 for a while, the message 'OSA9 not responding' appears and I'm unable to open any Office files. The only solution seems to be to restart the computer. How can I solve the problem?

A OSA9 is the Office 2000 Startup Assistant. Similar problems with this program were fixed in Office 2000 Service Release 1a (SR-1a). You can download this update by going to <http://office.microsoft.com/downloads/2000/o2ksr1ddl.aspx>. Be warned, though: the download will be between 26MB and 40MB, depending on what Office options you have installed.

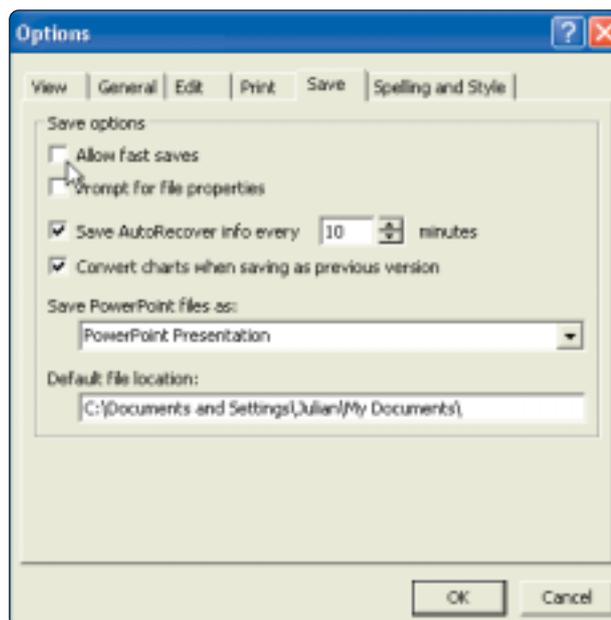
This update could also be obtained on CD from Microsoft UK but as Office 2000 is now an obsolete product it may no longer be available.

It's still possible to use Microsoft Office without the Startup Assistant, so for an easier solution try deleting its shortcut from the Startup menu folder which will prevent OSA9 from running.

Q I created a PowerPoint slideshow. When I run it, some slides are missing and it's not always the same ones each time. Help!

A There are several things that can cause problems when a PowerPoint slideshow is played back. To try to avoid them, first, turn off fast saves by clicking Tools, Options, selecting the Save

→ Turning off fast saves can avoid problems when PowerPoint presentations are played back



tab and clearing the checkbox marked 'Allow fast saves', as shown above.

If you're reading this and have never had this problem, we'd still advise you to do this as it's a frequent cause of trouble.

Second, use a photo editor to save copies of your images shrunk to the size that they will be displayed in PowerPoint. Don't rely on PowerPoint to resize them. (For more tips on optimising images for use in Powerpoint, see www.powerpointbackgrounds.com/powerpointgraphics.htm.) Third, ensure that images are embedded, not linked.

We can't guarantee that these three steps will solve the problem, as we haven't yet found a PowerPoint expert who knows exactly what causes it, but we're pretty sure that they will help.

Another cause of missing or blank images is the use of transition effects.

This can be a particular headache if you're creating slideshows that will be run on other computers of unknown specification. Transition effects can be too hard for some graphics cards (or their drivers) to handle.

If you can, ensure that the latest graphics drivers are installed, or try reducing graphics hardware acceleration a notch. If you can't then to be sure your slideshow runs as you intended it's safest to avoid the use of transition effects.

Q I use AOL and have no desire to use Internet Explorer. However, some programs and CDs refuse to run because I don't have it on my computer. What do you suggest?

A A surprising amount of software requires Internet Explorer – just type 'requires Internet Explorer' into your favourite search engine and you'll see what we mean! Most people think Internet Explorer is just a web browser, but it's also a software component. All of its main features are exposed via interfaces that any program can use. And since 99 percent of Windows PCs have it, many programs take advantage of it.

The only solution to your problem is to install Internet Explorer. There's no requirement, having done so, to use it for surfing the web.

Q When I click on the Address Book button on the toolbar of my

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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.

Speed-up tips for an old PC

tip

Does loading files on your old PC seem slow and deleting files take absurdly long? Here are some ideas for speeding it up a bit.

- Take out the trash **A full Recycle Bin will make file deletion slow, so try emptying it. You could even try disabling the Recycle Bin altogether.**
- Run ScanDisk and Defrag **If all is well, these simple, routine housekeeping tasks should restore normal performance of the file system.**
- Safe and sound **If deleting files still takes a long time, try restarting Windows in Safe mode (hold down Ctrl during startup then select Safe mode from the menu) and then deleting some files. If the deletion is now faster, some driver or utility that is being loaded during a normal startup is causing the slowdown.**
- DMA or reinstall? **If you haven't reinstalled Windows recently, it might be worth doing so in order to clean things up. But before you do, here's an idea worth trying. Open Control Panel, System, Device Manager, expand the Disk Drives entry and check the property settings for your hard disk. On the Settings tab, see if the DMA checkbox is ticked. If it is, clear it, close the properties dialog box and restart the PC.**

Microsoft Outlook, I want to see the same entries as I have in my Contacts folder. Is this possible?

A No, unless you manually update both of them, as they are separate databases. The Personal Address Book is only included in Outlook 2000 and 2002 for backward-compatibility with older versions of Outlook, saving users who upgrade the trouble of migrating the addresses into Contacts.

In Outlook 2002, there's nothing you can do in the Personal Address Book that you can't do in Contacts, so the best plan is to migrate your entire PAB and use Contacts all the time.

To do this, right-click the Contacts folder, select Properties and click the Outlook Address Book tab. Ensure the 'Show this folder as an Address Book' box is checked then click ok. To migrate your Personal Address Book to the Contacts folder, determine the path of the PAB file by clicking on Tools, Services and opening the properties for Personal Address Book.

Now click File, Import and Export, 'Import from another program or file' and click Next. In the Import a File dialog box, select Personal Address Book and click Next. Navigate to the PAB file and hit Next again. Select Contacts as the destination folder then click Next again. Click Map Custom Fields and, in the dialog box that appears, click Default Map.

Expand the E-mail entries under both From and To, then drag E-mail Address on the From side and drop it on E-mail Display on the To side. Click ok and then Finish to perform the import. Some of the steps described will be slightly different if you use an earlier version of Outlook.

C I tried the VBScript Quizmaster in your programming feature (June issue, page 105) and was surprised how easy it was to create. I searched the internet for more information but was overwhelmed by the results.

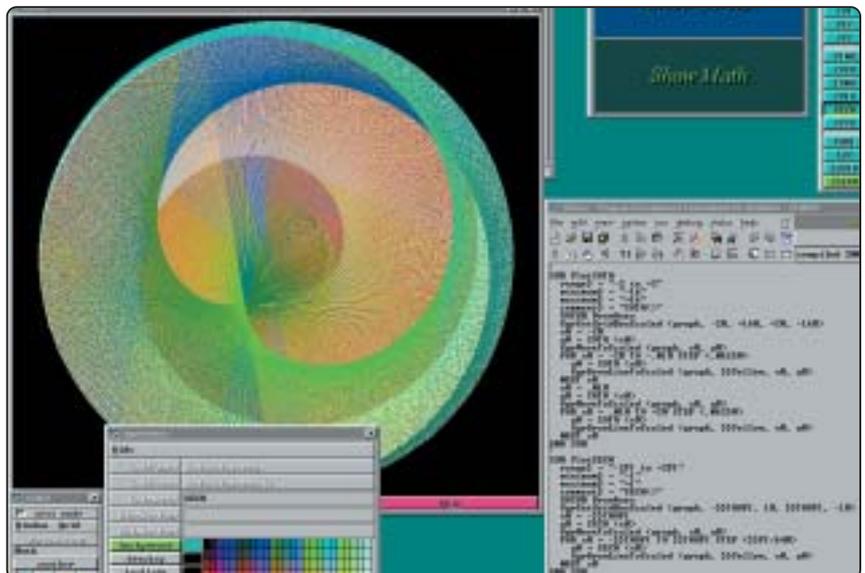
Are you going to run any more articles about VBScripting? I'd like to create a series of multiple-choice questions. Could this be done using VBScript or should I use a different program?

A It's easy enough to create a multiple choice quiz in VBScript just by specifying the choices after the question and then testing for the right answer. However, most tutorial material online relates to using VBScript in web pages or for system management, so it's not surprising you found it confusing.

The main disadvantage of VBScript is its inability to create a user-friendly interface. A better choice would be Microsoft Visual Basic, which uses the same language syntax. The Personal edition of this is not too expensive. There are good links to beginners material at www.vb-bookmark.com/vbbeginners.html.

If you don't feel ready to spend money on this then the freeware XBasic (shown below) that's available on our cover disc or from www.maxreason.com might be worth a try, although the syntax it uses is more traditional than that adopted by Microsoft.

The author's website is worth visiting for a look at his list of accomplishments alone. But if you come away with an inferiority complex, don't blame us! ■



→ XBasic: a freeware Basic development system that runs under Windows and Linux