

# Box clever

A product reviewer's lot isn't always a happy one, as Ben Camm-Jones explains. While testing the latest PC kit might be fun, getting the devices in and out of their packaging certainly isn't

Reviewing the latest hardware for *PC Advisor* is a great job though it takes its toll, especially on my back. But despite repeated requests to the management, I don't have a team of trained monkeys to unpack and repack boxes for me. This is a shame as it can be an infuriating task, even when you don't have a temper as short as mine.

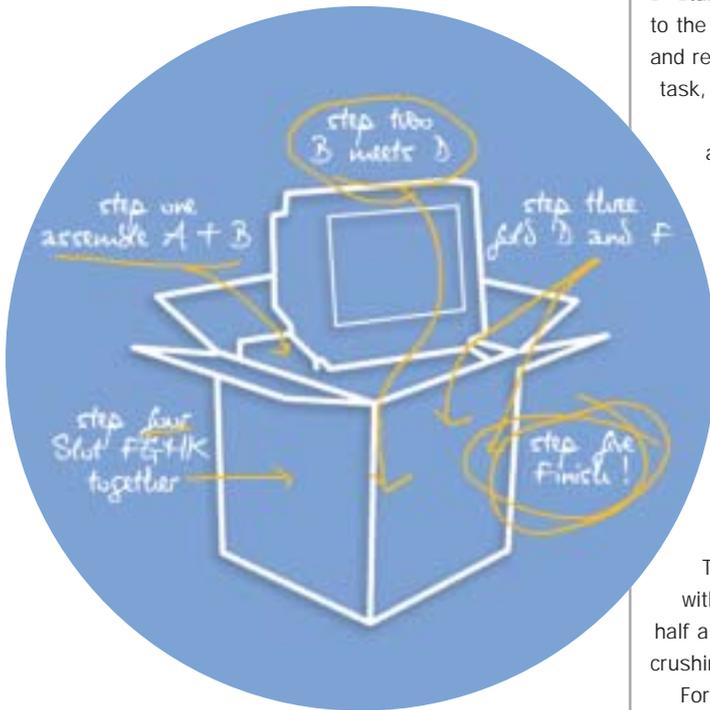
Polystyrene has this annoying tendency to disintegrate as soon as anyone so much as breathes on it, leaving a fluffy mess that doesn't please the office cleaners one little bit.

And even if you're careful enough to keep the packaging in absolutely pristine condition, when you come to box up the product again it's often a challenge to get everything slotted neatly into that tiny space.

The item in question has obviously grown in size – not considerably, just a couple of inches or so. And no matter what you do it won't fit comfortably back into its box. This often results in me making a few minor adjustments to the original packaging.

Many a courier has looked at me with raised eyebrows while collecting oddly misshapen packages from *PC Advisor Towers*. I just walk away whistling pretending it has nothing to do with me, all the while keeping my fingers crossed and hoping that half a roll of parcel tape will prevent the kit falling out the bottom and crushing the courier's toes in the process.

For all the technological advancements we've made over the years, it seems odd that we still can't produce user-friendly packaging. So until we can I'm going to have to work out a way to claim for those monkeys on expenses. ■



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### features

#### PC security

From firewalls to power supply protectors, we explain everything you need to keep your PC and office secure.

#### PDA software

Slinkier and smarter than ever, a handheld can help you with all sorts while on the road. We showcase the best PDA software.

### broadband advisor

#### Surf in secret

Stop spyware and other assaults on your privacy with our remedies for keeping nosy parkers out of your online affairs.

### workshops

#### Digital camera troubleshooting

Proper camera configuration, setting up the perfect shot and how to fix an unco-operative digicam.

#### Create your own home entertainment PC

Drag your PC into the living room and turn it into a digital jukebox and video recorder complete with remote control.

#### Install a second OS

How to partition your hard drive and dualboot your machine plus advice on the right operating system for your needs.

### reviews

#### Top 10 charts focus

- **Power PCs** These almighty beasts are able to handle almost any task imaginable. We salute the latest, greatest number crunchers and multimedia giants.
- **Notebooks** We've just slashed the cut-off price for our Power notebooks chart to £1,200, so which are the best Budget and portable high-spec machines?

#### Technofile: security software

We look at how to secure your PC with software, the technology behind such apps and which antivirus and firewall packages afford the most protection.