



General

Q The picture on my Tiny 7S730 monitor suddenly became smaller and shaped like a flowerpot. I can't correct it using any of the buttons. Can you help? *Astrid*

I'm afraid not, Astrid. It would be worth checking that the cable connections are tight, but the symptom you describe is almost certainly the result of a component failure within the monitor. You'll either have to get it repaired or replace it.

Q My Windows Me Evesham PC shuts down and restarts several times a day. In fact, it happened while I was in the middle of composing this email to Helpline.

I have had the electrics checked and use a surge protector. Evesham says it can't find a problem and won't help under the warranty. What can it be? *Jacqui Brunger*

There are many things that can cause this to happen, but an intermittent fault like this isn't an easy problem to solve even for an engineer who has the computer in the workshop. It's hard to know what the trouble is at this distance. Faults with no obvious cause can take a long time to diagnose and are generally only found by a process of elimination.

On the hardware side, the elimination is performed by replacing parts until the problem stops



occurring. On the software side, it's usually done by reformatting the hard disk and doing a clean reinstall of Windows (or using the manufacturer's recovery disk) so as to eliminate software bugs and conflicts from the equation.

In my opinion, software is less likely to be the cause of this trouble than hardware. A bad instruction causing the computer to reboot would normally result in a blue or black screen error message. However, a clean reinstall is one of the few things that are within the capabilities

of many PC owners. As there are so many unknowns on the software side of things, many experts would recommend it in the circumstances.

Faulty memory is one of the hardware possibilities and it ought to be investigated before taking the drastic step of reinstalling Windows. Try downloading MemTest86 from www.memtest86.com (or see our cover disc), making a bootable disk and running it. If it finds any errors, get back on to Evesham.

Another likely culprit, assuming that the mains supply is as blameless

as you suggest, is a faulty power supply. This can only be proven in practice by swapping the power supply with a new one and trying it.

You really need an engineer to do this as. Even if you feel capable of replacing the power supply yourself, it would be a waste of money to buy a new power supply, do the replacement and discover that it made no difference.

→ If a USB hub reports a power surge with nothing connected, it's probably faulty

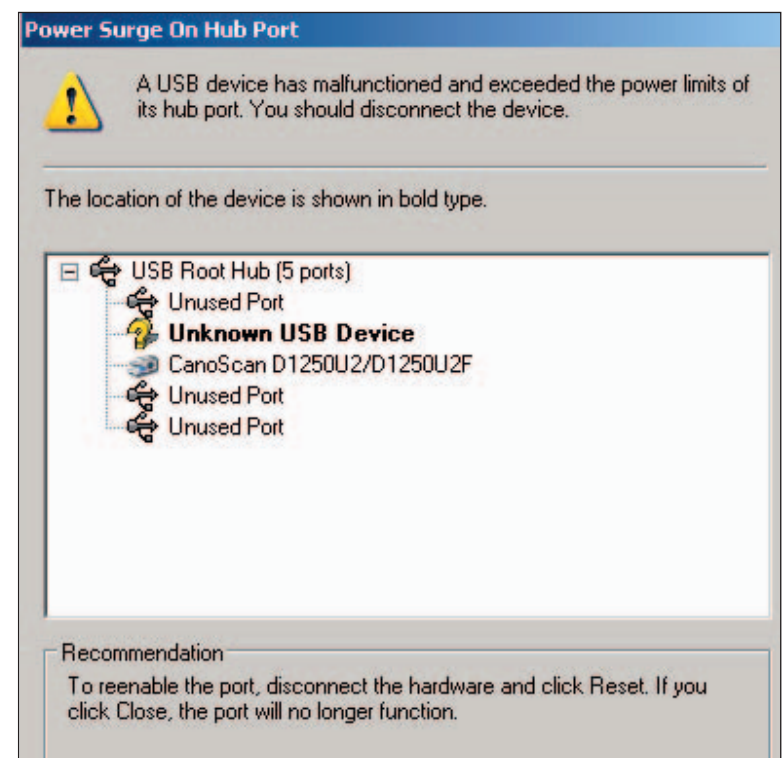
Q After browsing some back issues of *PC Advisor*, I decided to install PC Booster from the Spring 03 cover disc. I had to reboot after installation and now the bootup process halts with the message 'Error Hidden Sectors Checksum'. What should I do next? *Rachel Stockton*

That issue came out over a year ago and I have had no reports of similar problems, so I guess you were just unlucky. You provided no information about your computer or what operating system it is using.

However, the error message isn't that common and has been seen most often on Packard Bell PCs running Windows 98. Start your computer in Safe Mode then run the System Configuration Editor (click on Start, Run and enter the command 'msconfig').

Look at the contents of autoexec.bat. If the file contains a line that runs a command called chkboot.exe, either delete the line or disable it by inserting REM followed by a space right at the start of it.

Save the changes and hopefully Windows will then boot up normally. If you can't boot in Safe Mode, try booting from an emergency recovery



disk then edit autoexec.bat using an MS-DOS editor. Alternatively, renaming it to autoexec.xxx should get the system going again.

Q My new Canon scanner highlighted the inadequacies of USB 1.0 so, when I spotted a dirt-cheap PCI USB 2.0 board at a computer fair with no drivers or instructions, I thought it was worth taking a chance on it.

To my surprise, Windows XP detected it and my scanner is now working happily at full speed. However, at bootup I receive the message 'Power surge on hub port'. It doesn't go away even if I click Close. Is there anything I can do? *Glyn Foster*

This message is intended to warn you that a device connected to the hub is drawing too much current from it. This can occur if the device is meant to be powered from an external supply and this is disconnected or switched off.

If the warning occurs with just the cable plugged in, and no device, it may indicate a short circuit in the cable. If you get the message with nothing connected at all, or with a device that you are sure does not draw too much current, the fault must be in the hub itself.

There's nothing you can do, unless you can rewrite the drivers to ignore the warning signal! I'm afraid that you have probably discovered the reason why the device was being sold dirt-cheap at a computer fair.

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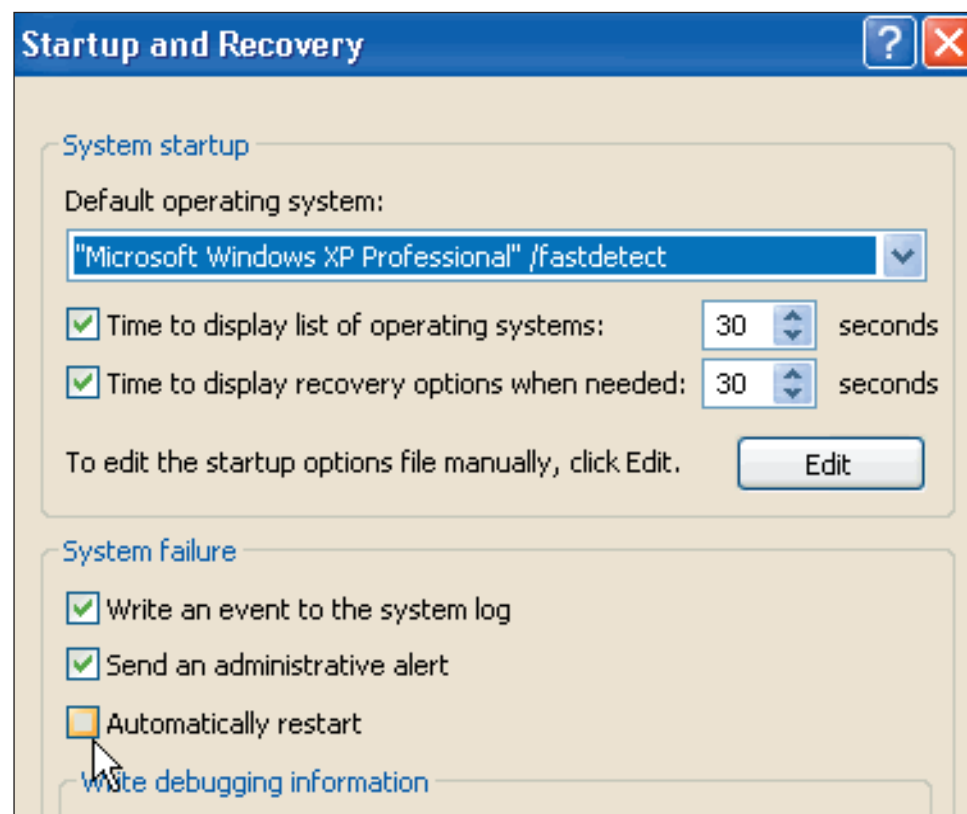
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www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/home/howtobuy/upgrading/advisor.asp

Q I'm using Windows 2000. I normally keep a CD-RW disc in my CD writer for backups. If I want to burn a CD-R, I eject the CD-RW and insert the blank disc. I then start Nero Express but the moment I click the Add button the PC reboots. Can you help? *Bob Cowell*

The reboot is occurring because Windows 2000 is usually configured to restart automatically after a fatal error. This error could be occurring in the CD writer drivers or the packet-writing software that you use to access the CD-RW, which is presumably InCD as you're using Nero. All I can suggest is that you update the CD drivers or try a newer version of Nero.

It might be convenient to stop Windows 2000 rebooting when an error occurs. (This feature is really for server administrators who don't want to have to drive to work at two in the morning just to restart a crashed server.) To do this, open Control Panel, System and select the Advanced Tab. Click the Startup and Recovery Button. Clear the Automatically restart checkbox as shown above then click ok.

Q My computer runs Windows 98. After I downloaded an update to McAfee VirusScan, several problems occurred. The computer now takes 20 minutes to start up, the screen resolution changed to 800x600 and always reverts to that resolution on startup despite the fact that I changed it, and the printer has stopped working. Have you any suggestions? *Lesley Easterman*

It isn't obvious how this problem occurred and so the solution isn't obvious to me either. I can suggest a few things to try, but some problems really need to be tackled by someone actually sitting in front of the computer.

The easiest solution would be to restore the PC to the state it was in before the trouble occurred. But for that to be possible you need a backup. If you don't have a backup, and if my suggestions don't help, it will probably be necessary to reinstall Windows.

First, the slow starting. Given your suspicion that the McAfee update was the cause of the problem, it would be worth uninstalling McAfee altogether. If that doesn't help, start the System Configuration Utility (click Start, Run and enter the command msconfig), select Diagnostic Startup and click ok.

Restart the system, after which you will be asked to confirm every command that Windows runs at startup. From this it may be possible to determine what is causing the slowdown, so that you can either uninstall or reinstall it.

The following procedure can usually resolve the problem of being unable to change the display settings. Start the System Configuration Utility and select the System.ini tab. Expand the [boot] section then right-click Display.drv=Pnpdrv.drv. Select Clear and click ok, as shown below.

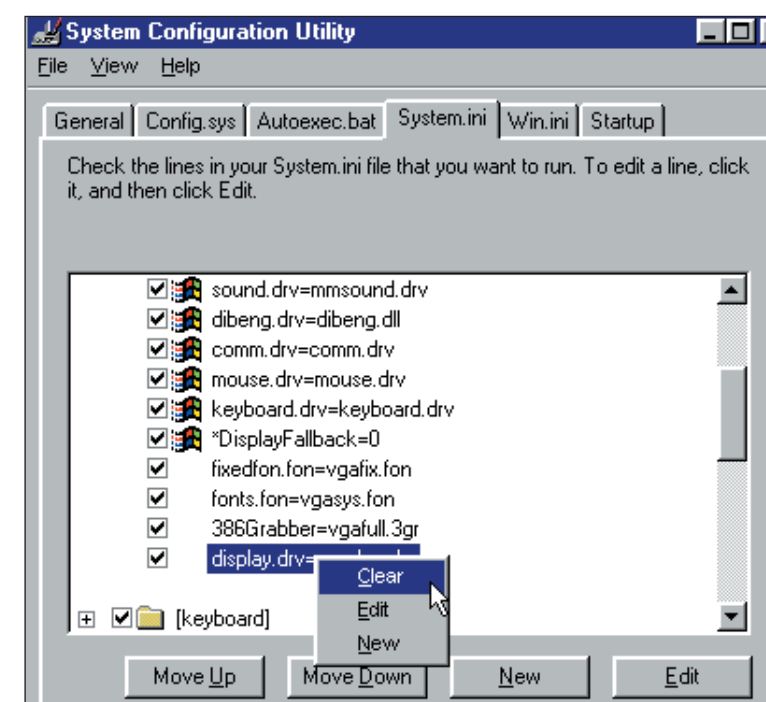
Restart the system, which will come up in 640x480 resolution, then repeat these steps, this time

choosing Select when you right-click 'Display.drv=Pnpdrv.drv'. Don't restart the computer immediately when prompted, but instead open Control Panel, Display, select the Settings tab and click Advanced.

Select the Adapter tab and verify that the drivers are correct for the graphics card in your computer. Click Change to locate and install the correct drivers if they are not.

Select the Monitor tab and check whether your monitor has been correctly identified. If not, clear the 'Automatically detect Plug & Play monitors' checkbox if it is selected then click Change, Next. Choose 'Display a list of all the drivers in a specific location so you can select the driver you want', click Next, Show All Hardware and select and install a driver for your monitor. Upon restarting the computer you should be able to set the display resolution you desire.

Regarding the printer problem, all I can suggest is that you try deleting the printer drivers and then reinstalling them. While I hope that these suggestions are some help, I can only repeat that when things start to go badly wrong the only solution is often to completely rebuild the system.



→ You can use the System Configuration Utility to resolve a display problem

Windows

Q I inherited an old computer which I have upgraded to Windows 98. I am planning eventually to upgrade to Windows XP. The trouble is, I don't have the original discs for any of the applications on the system including Microsoft Office and Photoshop. How can I transfer these applications to Windows XP when I get it? *Kenneth Broom*

With few exceptions, there is more to an application than just the files in the software's Program Files folder. Most applications install files in the Windows folder and often in other locations as well. And almost all applications add or update information in the system Registry that is needed for everything to work properly.

It isn't realistically possible to identify all the files and the Registry changes made during software

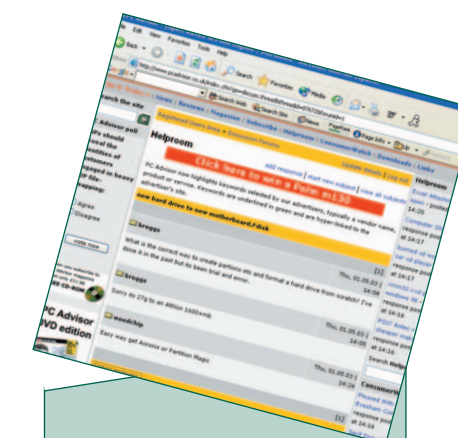
↑ If you are not a server administrator, it isn't very useful to have Windows restart after an error

installation in order to transfer them to another system. Therefore, the only way to move an application to a new system is to reinstall it from the original distribution media using the setup program provided by the program's developer.

As you don't have the application discs, the only way to avoid doing this would be to install Windows XP as an upgrade over Windows 98. But if the original computer is as old as your remarks suggest, it's likely that many of the applications on it are equally old.

Some of them may not work under Windows XP and few of them will get any benefit from the newer operating system. You could well be spoiling the good ship XP for a ha'porth of tar. If you want to upgrade to XP, you should also upgrade the applications you intend to use under it.

If you don't want to buy newer versions of your existing software you might as well stick with Windows 98. You can find out which, if any, of your applications are compatible with Windows XP by downloading and running the Upgrade Advisor from



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www.pcadvisor.co.uk/helpproom

Q I backed up my system using the backup facility of Windows XP and then decided to try to save it to CD. As the file was more than 1GB I tried to open it so as to split it into two parts, but Windows didn't know what to open the file with. Can you advise me? *Ron FitzHenry*

Splitting a file into two isn't as easy as you'd think. Unfortunately, using XP Backup to back up directly to CD won't work either because the program can't create backups that extend over multiple CDs.

The simplest solution is to create several backup sets, each backing up different parts of your system (for example, the Windows folder, Program Files, My Documents) separately so that no single backup file exceeds the capacity of a CD.

If you'd still prefer to create a single full backup, try a tool like JR File Split (shown above and available from www.spadixbd.com/freetools/jsplit.htm or the cover disc) to split the file that's created into CD-sized parts. If you use this tool, it creates a BAT file containing the commands to reassemble the parts so remember to include this on one of the CDs.

Bear in mind, though, that you'll need a working system to perform this reassembly. You won't be able to restore your system to a completely blank hard disk using a backup that has been split in this way.

Q I am using Internet Explorer and Outlook Express 6.0. When I try to print a web page or an email I receive the following message:

'An error has occurred in the script on this page
Line 639
Char 1
Error Invalid argument
Code 0
URL
res://C:\windows\System\32\shdocl.dll/preview.dlg'

Do you know of a solution?
Frank Whittaker

This is quite a common message, Frank. To stop it appearing, select Tools, Internet Options and click the Advanced tab. In the list of settings, under Browsing, tick the checkbox beside 'Disable script debugging' then click ok.

Q My computer has been trouble-free for more than a year, but now I have a problem when I use the internet. For example, if I use Kazaa, after about five minutes a message appears saying 'Explorer caused an error in mshtml.dll, restart the computer'. When I do, the same thing happens again. Can you help? *Andy Patterson*

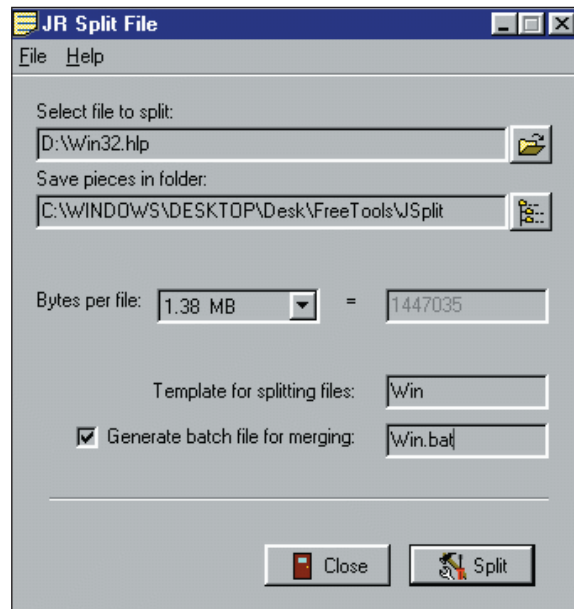
This error is usually caused by the activities of adware or spyware - software designed to display adverts that's often included in 'free' programs. In fact, an example that commonly causes the trouble you're experiencing comes with Kazaa.

Run Spybot Search & Destroy from www.safer-networking.org or our cover disc. It will get rid of whatever is causing these errors.

Q I maintain a website for a friend. As webmaster I've recently received a couple of emails from people calling themselves 'quality link builders', offering to exchange links with another site. They won't divulge the details of this other site until I respond. Is it worth answering or is this just another form of spam? *Pete Smith*

It isn't spam but I'd guess it isn't worthwhile responding to either. If you agree to exchange links, you'll probably be asked to put the link in a specific format and place on your site, whether it suits you or not. It's unlikely to make much of a difference to your search engine rankings or the number of visitors to your site.

The main beneficiary will be the other site, since it will presumably have many such links pointing to it. But the ones who really stand to gain from all this are the 'link builders'



↑ Use JR File Split to split up large files into CD-sized chunks

themselves, who charge a high price for providing this 'service' to clients who have been persuaded that it will transform their fortunes.

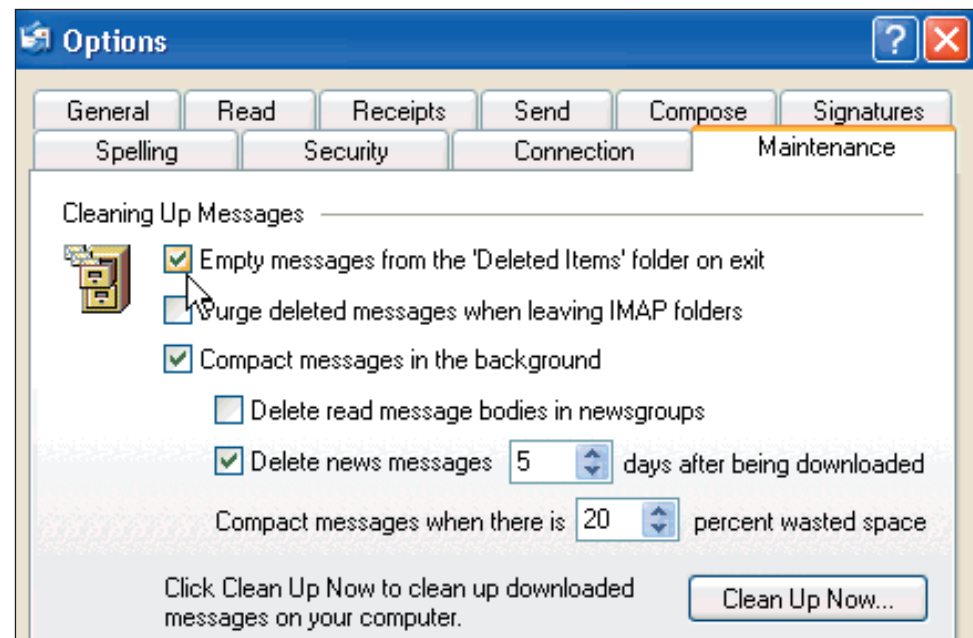
Q Is it possible to recover erased emails or are they lost forever once I click Delete? *Ian Tasker*

You don't say which email program you're using so I'll assume that it's Outlook Express, although with most programs you'll have a similar problem. Each folder in Outlook Express is a single DBX database file. Emails are not stored as individual files.

When a message is deleted, it is moved to the Deleted Items folder which (as its icon suggests) is a Recycle Bin for emails. While the emails are in the Deleted Items folder, it's a simple matter to recover them by dragging and dropping them to another folder.

Once they have gone from there they can't be recovered from within Outlook Express. And it's only a matter of time before the database is compacted and the space that the deleted messages occupied in the Deleted Items DBX file is overwritten.

The options affecting deleted messages are found under Tools, Options, Maintenance. If you have selected 'Empty messages from the Deleted Items folder on exit' then any



deleted messages will be removed as soon as you close Outlook Express.

The actual data will still be there, but only until the file is compacted. The options relating to compacting messages determine how long before Outlook Express will reclaim the space occupied by the deleted messages. It normally waits until the amount of space reaches a certain threshold, so the compaction might start immediately or not for several weeks. Once compaction has occurred, there's no hope at all of recovering the messages.

Until the database has been compacted, there's still a chance of recovering the deleted mails. However, although the blocks containing the message data may remain, the links that tie them together into complete messages are lost. This makes recovery a far from certain process that can't be automated.

There's a free tool called DBXtract (available from www.oehelp.com/dbxtract or our cover disc) which has an option to recover deleted messages from the Deleted Items folder. It extracts what it can to a series of files and then you have to pick through the bits. Message headers and text are usually recovered intact, but images and other attachments are likely to be incomplete and hence unusable.

↑ How long deleted emails remain recoverable depends on your Maintenance settings

Q Whenever I start Outlook Express 6.0 I receive the error message: 'The host pop.freemove.com could not be found. Please verify that you have entered the server name correctly. Account pop.freemove.com. Server: pop.freemove.com, Protocol POP3. Port 110, secure (SSL): No Socket Error. 11004, Error Number 0x800CCOD'. Everything works fine after that, but I'd like to get rid of the annoying message if possible. *Miles Griffiths*

To be more certain in my diagnosis I really need to know what software you're using and by what means you access the internet. There's nothing wrong with the host name because I just checked it.

The problem might be caused by virus-checking software that checks email for viruses on the fly. If your virus checker does this, try disabling the email scanning feature to see if the error message goes away.

This error may also occur if you access the internet via dialup and there are problems establishing a working connection. It's caused by the timeout of the DNS (domain name service) lookup which converts the host name into an IP address.

This is a fixed setting and is unrelated to the server timeout options in Outlook Express (which are only worth increasing if you tend to get failures during the actual sending or receiving of messages).

This is a particularly common problem for computers that access the internet via a dialup on another computer running ICS (Internet Connection Sharing). If it occurs on the computer that dials the connection, it is probably because there is something wrong with your Internet Connections setup.

Open Control Panel, Internet Options, Connections. Select the dialup entry and ensure that it is set as the default. Then select 'Always dial my default connection' or 'Dial whenever a network connection is not present'.

Now open Outlook Express and under Tools, Options, Connection ensure that OE uses the same settings as Internet Explorer.

Q When I print emails from Outlook Express, the text is very small. Can you tell me how to enlarge it? *John Knox*

Outlook Express uses the Internet Explorer text size settings for printing. To change them, select View, Text size from the Internet Explorer menu.

Q If I click the drop-down button in the Internet Explorer Address Bar I see a list of the web addresses I've typed in and visited. However, many addresses that I visited only a few days ago aren't present. If I start to type the address, a list drops down showing the address I want, and I can click it to put it in the address line. Why wasn't this address in the drop-down list in the first place? *Alan Greenfield*

What you're seeing is the result of two different features: the Address Bar MRU (most recently used) list and AutoComplete. I've never seen the criteria for why addresses get

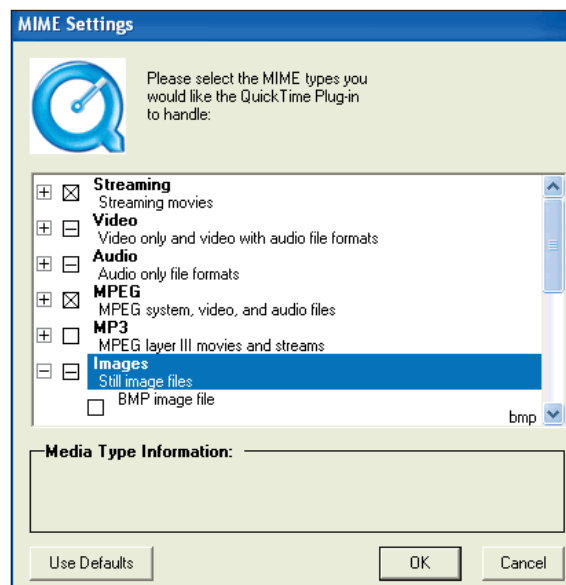
added to the MRU list documented anywhere, but it seems to me that they get added only if you typed the address in or opened it in a new Internet Explorer window.

This is about as near as the web browser can get to determining if the page is important enough that you're likely to want to go back there.

The AutoComplete list is populated with the addresses of every page you've visited in the past month and as you can imagine it would fill up the MRU list (which has a limit of 25 entries) pretty quickly.

Typing the first few letters is probably the only reasonable way of accessing an address in such a large list. But you can also access it by clicking the History button on the toolbar, which will open the full history list in a pane on the lefthand side of the browser window, as shown below. There, you can see all the pages you've visited grouped under the main site address and the date of that they were accessed. To revisit one, just click on it.

Q A website that I visit has Tiff files on its pages. I used to view these with a plug-in called AlternaTIFF that allowed me to rotate, pan and zoom in on the images. Suddenly, the images have started appearing squashed into a fixed space. At the same time, a window about



Apple QuickTime opened. I can't find a browser setting to change this. Julie Smethwick

QuickTime is notorious for hijacking image file associations. To restore your previous Tiff image viewer, open the QuickTime icon in Control Panel, click on Mime Settings, shown above, click the plus sign beside Images to expand the list of entries and untick the box beside 'TIFF image files'.

Now try to view a Tiff image. If you now see a 'broken link' icon in place of it, browse to the AlternaTIFF reinstallation page (www.alternatiff.com/install/reinstall.html) or see the cover disc to reinstall it.

↑ Use the QuickTime control panel to choose which file types use the QuickTime plug-in to display in your web browser

↓ AutoComplete offers an alternative way to access the addresses in IE's History list

Security

Q I have two computers which are networked, one running Windows Me and the other XP Home. The XP computer is connected to the internet via a USB Motorola broadband modem and the Me computer accesses the web through it. The XP system has ZoneAlarm installed, but the Me one has no firewall. Does it need one? Kevin Banks

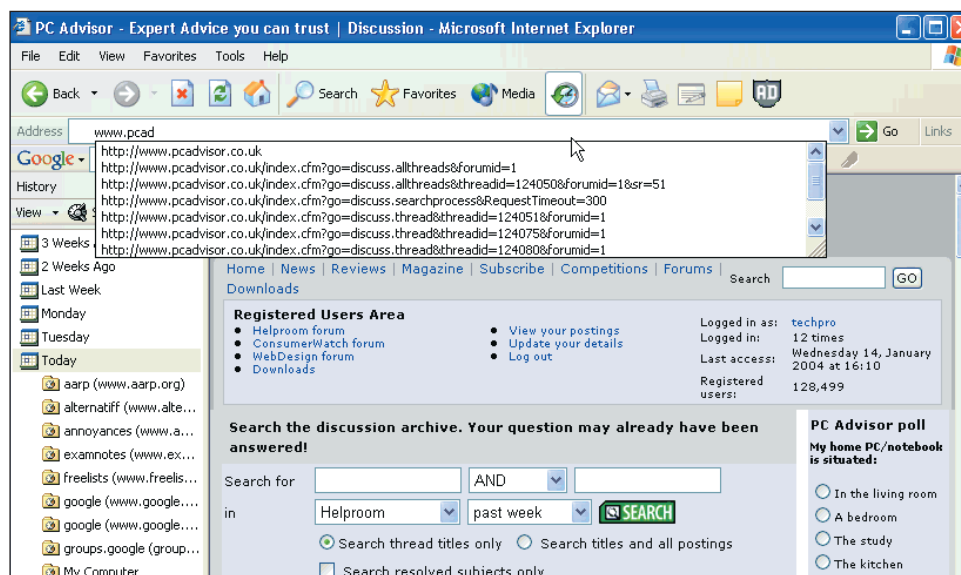
No, it doesn't. The firewall on the system, which is your internet gateway, prevents anything nasty from getting through to either system. In fact, as far as the internet is concerned, your network is a single system as both computers share the same IP address.

Q Many thanks for recommending the useful program Spybot (from www.safer-networking.org). It worked well until I tried to update it, whereupon the program hung and I had to terminate it using Ctrl, Alt, Del.

After trying to reinstall it, I started it in Advanced mode and saw that there were no options ticked in the Web update section under Settings. This seemed to solve the problem - the program didn't know where to go! Hope this helps someone else. Harry Leeming

I hoped it would help me, Harry, as after I received your email I experienced the same problem. But although I tried your solution, the program still hung. What did solve the problem was to choose a different mirror server by clicking on the Mirrors button on the download page. I picked a US mirror and got the updates in no time at all.

From comments I've seen, Spybot's servers often have problems. The program's download code isn't very well written and that's



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why everything seems to hang if the server it has chosen fails to respond. If you wait long enough, it will eventually report an error.

Q Some weeks ago my computer began displaying a message suggesting a memory violation. It was just a minor irritation until I updated Norton AntiVirus, after which the message appeared whenever I tried to access Norton, making virus checks impossible.

At about this time I also found that I couldn't access my

email using Outlook Express. A friend showed me page 196 of the January 04 issue of *PC Advisor*, which showed I had the symptoms of the W32.Swen virus. We decided to switch off Norton and install AVG. It reported a virus-free system.

I called the *PC Advisor* Hotline and staff there suggested downloading Windows 98 updates. But I checked and there were a total of 12MB of essential files that would have taken hours to get on to my system.

I still can't use Outlook Express. When I try to, the error message reads: 'The connection to the server has failed, Account pop3.lineone.net Server 127.0.0.1, Protocol POP3, Port 110, Secure (SSL); No, Socket Error 10061, Error Number. 0x800CCOE'. Is there a solution? *Ken Searstone*

Older versions of Norton were notorious for causing errors like the one you're getting when attempting to receive email. From your question, it's unclear whether you uninstalled Norton or just disabled it.

If you're using AVG now you should definitely uninstall Norton, as the two programs have the potential to conflict even if one of them is currently not operational.

Although I understand your reluctance to follow the advice given by the *PC Advisor* Hotline to download 12MB of patches, surfing the internet with an unpatched and unprotected PC, even using a dialup connection, is just plain dangerous. The long wait and increased phone bill might be worth your while in the long run. Whatever the cost, it's got to be cheaper than a new PC.

Microsoft's refusal to allow magazines to put these critical updates on their cover discs is crazy as large numbers of people still access the internet on pay-as-you-go, using modems instead of faster broadband connections. If you can't patch your system you must at least protect it from intruders, which in the case of Windows 98 means installing a personal firewall.

Q I sent an email to a friend using the IncrediMail package. He was not very pleased and asked me not to contact him using this program again, claiming that the IncrediMail format is an easy virus carrier. That's news to me! Are you aware of this? *Reg Porcas*

No, I'm not. If it's true then it is also true of Outlook Express, Microsoft Outlook and any other email clients that are capable of generating messages that use HTML formatting.

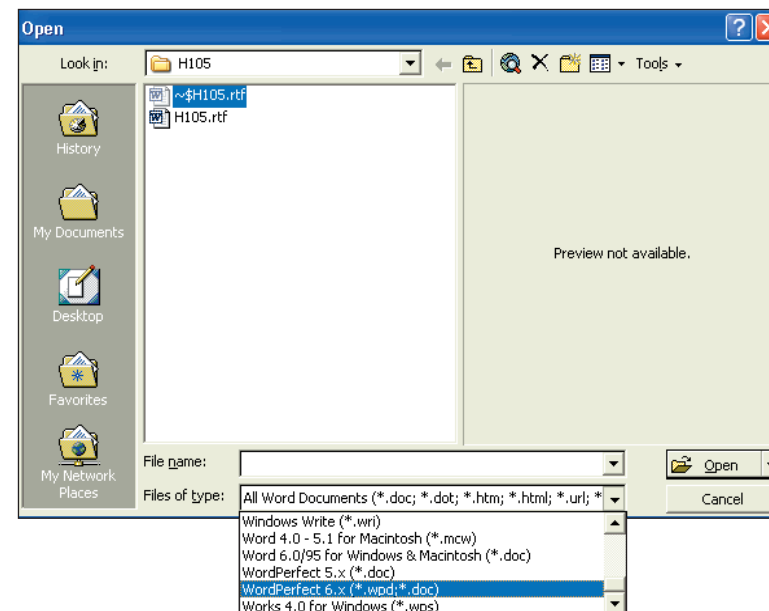
IncrediMail doesn't have any special capabilities in that respect; it simply exploits the ability to create attractive messages using this format. Since HTML has become the standard for formatting email, anyone who refuses to accept mail in this format is in the same position as King Canute trying to tell the tide not to come in.

If your friend is concerned about viruses hidden in the message, he can choose to view the message as plain text. In the current version of Outlook Express this choice can easily be made by clicking Tools, Options, Read and selecting 'Read all messages in plain text'. Anyone concerned about viruses should certainly be using this version, so tell your friend to upgrade to 6.0 if he hasn't already.

However, it's a waste of resources sending formatted messages to people you know are only going to view them as text. So you should consider it a matter of courtesy to write to people using the format they prefer.

It's a simple enough job to configure IncrediMail so that it can send messages in plain text format when you want it to. Click Tools, Options and select the Advanced tab. Under Message select 'Enable Plain Text in style box'. When sending mail to correspondents who prefer it, select Plain Text from the Style box.

If you like to add a handwritten signature to your emails, deselect the option on the Compose tab to automatically insert it.



← To convert WordPerfect files to Word format, just use the import filters Microsoft provided

select the features you want. Easier still, download Acrobat Reader 5.1 for Windows 98 from www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/alternate.html. This may lack the new features of version 6.0 but you many never use them anyway and it will certainly install a lot quicker.

If you need to install Adobe Reader 6.0 on more than one PC, you may be interested in this tip that I found while searching for solutions to this problem. After the setup wizard has finally started, look in the Windows folder under Cache\Adobe Reader 6.0\Enubig and you should see a complete set of installation files in uncompressed form.

Burn this Enubig folder to a CD then run the setup.exe on it whenever you need to install the Adobe Reader again.

Applications

Q I tried installing Adobe Reader 6.0 from your cover CD and the process took nearly 30 minutes. A Window titled 'Netopsystems Fead Optimizer' took 18 minutes to 'recompose setup data' and the first window of the setup wizard offered only Remove or Repair.

I chose Repair and this took a further 12 minutes to complete. But when I tried to run Adobe Reader from the icon that had been put on my desktop it performed an illegal operation and closed down.

My system is running Windows 98 SE and has an AMD K6-500 processor with 374MB RAM, so it is above the minimum system requirements. Can you help? *Roger Britton*

I'd never heard of the Netopsystems Fead Optimizer until Adobe started using it, but it has certainly been causing a few headaches. Apparently it's a third-party utility that is designed to reduce the size of applications that are intended to be downloaded from the internet.

One of the commonest problems that users have experienced with this

is that it freezes during installation. This is caused by a download file that's corrupted or incomplete. However, that's unlikely to be the case for readers installing Adobe Reader from the cover CD.

Your problem appears to be due to slow decompression. This also seems to be a common issue and the source of many complaints to Adobe. One solution recommended by Adobe is to increase the size of virtual memory (the Windows swap file, or paging file under XP).

However, if you let Windows manage the swap file, as Helpline has always recommended, you shouldn't have a problem with swap file size unless you're running short of disk space, in which case you're stuck anyway.

In my opinion, it would be better to try another solution suggested by Adobe instead. Go to www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html, ensure that 'Do Not Use Adobe Download Manager' is unchecked (deselected) and then download the Adobe Reader 6.0 installer. You could also choose to install only the basic version of the Adobe Reader (deselect Download Full Version).

If you do that, you can add other features from the full version (though not the Search feature) after the basic version has been installed. Simply click on Help, Updates and

Q A friend of mine has researched and written up his family tree and now wants to get it published. Unfortunately, he has used WordPerfect and the publisher wants it on disk in Microsoft Word format. It's a sizeable document which took months to prepare, so is there a simple way to convert it without having to reformat the whole thing in Word? *Danny McQuilkin*

WordPerfect should be able to export the file into rich text (RTF) or Microsoft Word (DOC) format, either of which should technically be acceptable to your friend's publisher. However, if he is spending a lot of money on printing, we wouldn't advise this approach.

It isn't unusual for text formatting to be wrongly converted when exchanging files between word processing packages. You really need to look at this document in Microsoft Word before sending it to the printers so that you can correct any errors in the formatting.

You can import the WordPerfect file directly into Microsoft Word, as shown above, although before you can do this you may need to install the import filters if you chose not to do so originally. ☒