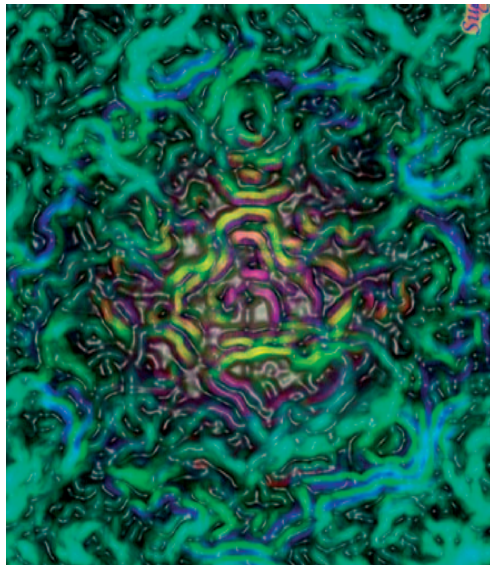


# Mydoom in your email



Mydoom became the fastest spreading worm in history in January, breaking all known records. It disseminated as an email attachment which, once opened, becomes a Trojan virus, taking control of the recipient's system and searching for further contacts to email itself on to.

Exactly how many computers have fallen victim to Mydoom is difficult to ascertain, but antivirus firm Network Associates estimates that between 400,000 and 500,000 computers were infected within the first week of its release.

And it didn't stop there. Within days a variant of the worm named Mydoom.B was hunting down Mydoom-carrying PCs to access and take control of files. The B variant prevented access to 65 antivirus websites and also generated a DoS (denial of service) attack against Microsoft's website.

However, the first victim was not the software giant but Unix software developer the SCO Group. The SCO website was knocked offline on Sunday 31 January. SCO immediately placed a \$250,000 (about £134,000) bounty on the virus author's head. Microsoft, which managed to escape a DoS attack, debated putting up a reward for information on the perpetrators as it did with the Blaster and SoBig viruses last year.

All major antivirus experts have updated their virus definitions to identify and protect against Mydoom.

## Moderating the mobile X-factor

UK operators have joined forces to sign a code of practice which will impose an 18 classification on all adult content streamed to mobile phones.

The code, developed by O2, Orange, Vodafone and T-Mobile, will require users to verify their age before they can access adult material. Its reach will extend to all videos, games, chatrooms and even internet access, but will not cover premium-rate or SMS services.

Icstis (the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services) will be responsible for regulating the new code.

The move was immediately commended by children's charities and there were calls for ISPs to follow suit. "This is going to make many people ask why, if the mobile industry can do it, the fixed internet people can't," said John Carr, internet consultant at NCH.

The code will come into force later this year. Regulators and operators have until the end of the year to determine how sites will be rated and content policed.



## Multivision moving on

Since the collapse of Multivision in January, few details have been forthcoming about what will happen to the company's assets. But good news could be on the horizon.

Administrator Griffin and King has confirmed it has a potential buyer who, if all goes to plan, will purchase both the Multivision name and take over management of its existing warranties.

As we go to press, the buyer's details had not been released, but we do know that it is an existing industry player. For updates, keep an eye on our online news section ([www.pcadvisor.co.uk/news](http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/news)).



## Tiny PCs, tiny prices, tiny profits

Time has relaunched the Tiny PC brand it acquired three years ago as a cut-price mail order and online supplier of desktop PCs and notebooks.

From now on, Tiny.com will serve as a cheap one-stop shop for experienced buyers, while Time will focus its efforts on selling through retail outlets such as Tesco and Toys R Us.

By moving its operations online, sharing Time's manufacturing and limiting its marketing budget, the company aims to deliver PCs with the same specs as other manufacturers but charge 15-25 percent

less for them. For example, a machine that might set you back £799 from a major manufacturer will cost just £599 from Tiny.com, with Tiny taking only £99 profit per machine.

Each machine will be supplied with a one-year onsite warranty but no technical support. Instead customers will have to purchase support packages as and when they are required.

All manufacturing will be carried out at Time's plant in Lancashire, which is capable of producing two million machines per year.

## Riaa ready for second round

The Recording Industry Association of America, a trade group representing music copyright owners, has filed a new round of copyright infringement lawsuits. The 532 computer users targeted are alleged to have illegally shared copyrighted material over peer-to-peer networks, according to Riaa president Cary Sherman.

After its legal defeat in December, however, Riaa has modified its approach, this time choosing to file 'John Doe' suits that identify alleged fileswappers only by the IP address of the computer sharing the file.

The Riaa will also file a motion to require the ISPs that own the addresses to provide the identity of the customers behind them. Sherman declined to name the ISPs involved in the suits and took pains to say that illegal fileswappers, and not ISPs, were the target of the legal action.



## Insider's view

Vince Braint

### What would your dream device be?

The interface equivalent of the Babel Fish - the translation device featured in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. It would translate commands for using any machine into one personalised language that you understand. So regardless of the product or its manufacturer, you would be able to programme your central heating or DVD player with the same actions.

### What technology would you like to see widely available by 2020?

Biometric registration would be a great way of cutting queues in all sorts of locations.

### What technology/product would you like to see resurrected and why?

The pager. Unlike mobile phones, they don't require an immediate response. The recipient can therefore manage their time more effectively, replying to a call when it suits them or when they have the necessary information available.

### Which of today's technologies will be most important in the future?

The ability to manage all the various sources of information available to us. Canon is developing voice recognition to help people retrieve documents and images instantly.

### What's in your briefcase today?

A digital camera, 32MB memory stick, my to-do book and a copy of *PC Advisor*.

*Vince Braint is the marketing director for Canon Business Solutions*

## Have your say

You can comment on any *PC Advisor* story by visiting our new online forum at [www.pcadvisor.co.uk/registered](http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/registered) and clicking on Newsroom





## Contract a PC

A partnership between Fujitsu-Siemens and Vodafone is set to provide businesses with the opportunity to buy subsidised computers, in a similar fashion to contract-based mobile phone agreements. Connect2Air packages will start from £89 per month, depending on levels of usage.

The deal includes full Wi-Fi access, 24/7 customer support and a laptop PC for a £99 deposit (normal price list £1,139-£1,478) with full warranty. Customers are tied in for a minimum of 12 months.

Fujitsu will offer notebooks and tablet PCs based on Intel's Centrino chip. Every computer comes bundled with a £100 Vodafone mobile connect card for GPRS.

The service will be available through Carphone Warehouse stores from 1 March 04.



## No siree Bill

The UK government has awarded software supremo Bill Gates a knighthood for his services to British enterprise. As an American citizen, Gates may not take the title 'Sir' but will instead receive a KBE.

Microsoft's software is installed on 90 percent of the world's computers. Gates set up Microsoft with his friend Paul Allen in 1975. Last year the company was valued at an estimated £28bn.

News of Gates' honour came in the same week as draft findings from the European Commission, which concluded that Microsoft may be guilty of abusing its monopoly in Europe.

Whether this is a case of bad timing on behalf of the Foreign Office or an attempt to divert attention away from the EC's initial findings is open for debate.



## Tax-free PCs

Trade and Industry secretary Patricia Hewitt has published a series of guidelines aimed at encouraging companies to partake in Home Computing Initiatives (HCI).

Under HCIs companies can purchase computer equipment to loan out to employees free from tax and National Insurance.

The benefits to companies include cost savings and having a more computer-savvy workforce. Further information can be found on page 46 in our ConsumerWatch section.

## Reduced charge for iPod owners

Concern over the lifespan of the Apple iPod's rechargeable battery has reached the House of Commons. Eleven MPs have put their names to a motion calling for Apple to ensure that replacement batteries are reasonably priced and in plentiful supply.

Labour MP for Chorley, Lindsay Hoyle, tabled the motion, stating his concern regarding the "difficulty people are having in replacing batteries for iPods". The motion comes days after Apple's announcement that its iPod battery-replacement scheme - which has been running in the US since last November - is now available in the UK.

UK iPod owners who are experiencing battery problems can replace the cell at the reduced price of £79. An Apple spokesman denied that the company has been inundated with complaints about the iPod's battery life.



## High hopes for broadband

A £3.5m (€5.6m) project involving 14 partners from across Europe and Japan hopes to make broadband available to remote areas via so-called Haps (high-altitude platforms).

Scientists at the University of York hope to permanently install giant airships or solar-powered aircraft at an altitude 20km above aeroplane flight paths but below current satellite orbits.

According to scientists, the project will deliver broadband connections which are 2,000 times faster than a traditional 56K modem can muster and 200 times faster than today's wired ADSL broadband.



The first objective is to deliver broadband connections to rural areas across Europe; the team hopes to achieve this within the next four years. The scientists also plan to deliver broadband to moving trains using smart antennae.



## They say we say



### Canon Digital Ixus i

➤ **They say** Ultra-chic and compact, the Digital Ixus i combines superb design and innovation. Extremely light and small enough to slip into any pocket or handbag, it is the camera you can take anywhere.

➤ **We say** We can only agree wholeheartedly with Canon's opinion of its new camera. The model we looked at had a dapper black finish, adding to the overall appeal. But if black ain't your colour, it is available in three other shades. Couple these design features with a compact size and the phrase 'ultra-chic' doesn't seem quite so pretentious.

➤ **They say** More than just sophisticated style, the Digital Ixus i has an impressive four megapixel sensor, which easily captures every detail for stunning results.

➤ **We say** Okay, 4Mp is pretty good but it isn't cutting edge and with a recommended retail price of £225 inc VAT there are cameras out there with better features for less money. Canon has created a nice snapper, but it could have been a world beater with a slightly more sensible price tag and an all-important optical zoom.

[www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk), £225



## Taxing your view

Monitors with DVI (digital visual interface) inputs should soon become more expensive.

Customs is to levy a 14 percent duty on screens that can be used with set-top boxes and DVD players, classifying them as luxury entertainment devices rather than business assets – on which tax is levied at zero percent.

Pete Gamby, director of European market research firm Meko, says that industry insiders expect the extra tax to be applied "within weeks rather than months".

Customs guidelines currently state that computer monitors must only be capable of displaying signals from a computer, a rule originally introduced to prevent low-cost TVs from the Far East flooding the European market, Gamby explains.

## Holding for help

Research has confirmed something that consumers have known for years but many businesses still fail to realise: call centres are crucifying company reputations.

As the first and last port of call for most customers, helplines play an extremely important role in representing the overall efficiency of large corporations. But instead of being greeted by the reassuring tones of well-informed staff, irate customers usually have to first listen to frustrating automated messages which offer them a myriad of confusing options.

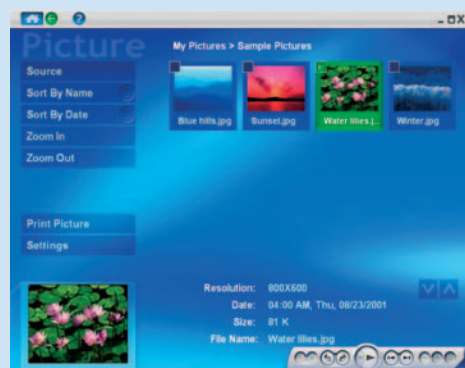
The study, undertaken by customer support solutions company Transversal, showed that more than half (54 percent) of respondents' opinions of a company had deteriorated after contacting its call centre. And *PC Advisor* forum visitors were, on the whole, against automated messages.

"Give me a human without a script every time," said one visitor. "Automated customer service should be banned," opined another. An interesting point that arose – and businesses should take notice of – was that a massive 76 percent of people said they'd be willing to pay more for goods if they knew that they could rely on better customer service.



## 30-second bootup

US software firm InterVideo has developed a media-based software package that enables PCs to boot up in just 30 seconds. InstantOn works by taking entertainment functions off the hard drive and placing them on an operating system called LinDVD, which runs alongside Windows on the PC. If successful, InstantOn could dent Microsoft's Media Center dominance. But hang on... how often do any of us turn our PCs off?



## Kodak drops film

Kodak has announced its intention to cease production of its APS (advance photo system) camera range. With most consumers now opting to purchase digital models, the company said it no longer made financial sense to continue production.

By the end of 2004, Kodak's APS cameras will no longer be on sale anywhere in the world. However the company will continue to produce film rolls as well as its range of disposable cameras. Kodak introduced the APS range in 1996. The then revolutionary system allowed a variety of picture sizes to be taken on the same camera with the same film.

## Prescott's speedy promise

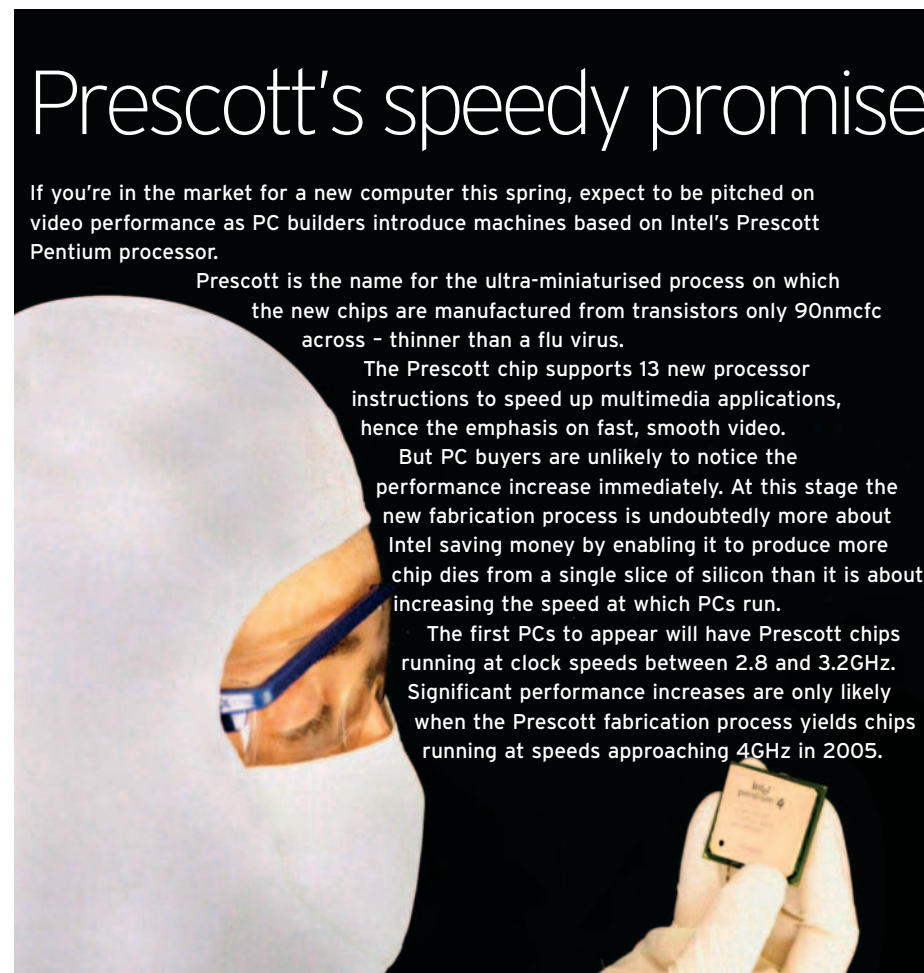
If you're in the market for a new computer this spring, expect to be pitched on video performance as PC builders introduce machines based on Intel's Prescott Pentium processor.

Prescott is the name for the ultra-miniaturised process on which the new chips are manufactured from transistors only 90nm wide across – thinner than a flu virus.

The Prescott chip supports 13 new processor instructions to speed up multimedia applications, hence the emphasis on fast, smooth video.

But PC buyers are unlikely to notice the performance increase immediately. At this stage the new fabrication process is undoubtedly more about Intel saving money by enabling it to produce more chip dies from a single slice of silicon than it is about increasing the speed at which PCs run.

The first PCs to appear will have Prescott chips running at clock speeds between 2.8 and 3.2GHz. Significant performance increases are only likely when the Prescott fabrication process yields chips running at speeds approaching 4GHz in 2005.



## Silver surfer

Toshiba's latest Portege, the A100, is a sleek, silver-cased laptop. For just over £1,000 the machine provides a Mobile Pentium M Centrino 1.4GHz processor, 256MB DDR RAM, an internal LAN card and an integrated Wi-Fi antenna for wireless internet access.

One of the cheapest models in the Portege range, the A100 will be marketed to a design-conscious business and consumer audience. The notebook offers a DVD/CD-RW drive and a variety of ports including a Secure Digital media slot, iLink support and four USB 2.0 ports.



## Sing while you ski

Gadget-loving skiers have something to celebrate: the European division of sports clothing retailer O'Neill is to sell a snowboarding jacket with a built-in MP3 player and a Bluetooth module for mountain-top mobile calls.

The jacket, called The Hub, has been specced-out by Infineon Technologies. The company has woven electrical conduits into the fabric to connect the MP3/Bluetooth chip module to a fabric keyboard and speakers built in to the hood.

Tested to withstand snow, rain and freezing temperatures, the jacket's stereo system works as the headset for phone calls, with an integrated microphone in the collar. The Hub should be available by September, priced at around £310. Initially only for men, a female version is expected the following season.

