helpline

↓ General

My Pentium III based PC that runs Windows 98 SE has recently started rebooting shortly after switch on. It doesn't happen every time, but when it does I usually get the dreaded blue ScanDisk screen. Can I trace the cause?

This could be the result of a hardware warm-up fault, power supply glitch or some kind of software or driver conflict that occurs during the device initialisation stage. Try booting to a DOS prompt using a floppy or, if you have Microsoft's Tweak UI installed, disable the Boot GUI option so you boot to a command prompt. If the system still reboots it's probably a power supply or hardware problem. If you disable Boot GUI, start Windows from the command prompt by typing WIN.

If the reboots occur only when starting Windows, we'd suspect a software or driver conflict. Try starting Windows in Safe Mode. Hold down the Ctrl key during bootup to get to the Startup menu. Once there, choose Safe Mode. If you never see the problem while starting in Safe Mode this will confirm that it's something being loaded during normal startup that is causing the problem.

The easiest way to resolve the situation might be to back up your data files, reformat the hard disk and reinstall Windows. If you want to avoid this, there's a Microsoft Knowledgebase article on how to troubleshoot Windows 98 startup problems (number Q188867) at http://support.microsoft.com.

Is it possible to connect the TV-out port of my graphics card to a coaxial cable for input to my television?

No. The signal expected at the coaxial input of a TV is at RF (radio frequency) so you would need an RF modulator. The TV-out port of a graphics card usually produces an S-Video signal, the same as many camcorders.

If your TV has an S-Video input you should be able to connect the PC directly using an S-Video cable, which you can get from Dixons, Currys, Comet, Keene Electronics (www.keene.co.uk) or Sapphire Systems (www.sapphiresystems.co.uk). If not, you'll also need an S-Video-to-Scart adapter, which you can buy from Maplin (www.maplin.co.uk).

Why do most of the latest scanners have a 48bit colour depth? Given the increased file size and the fact that most PC software won't work at that depth, I can't see an advantage.

The answer can be summed up in one word: marketing. If a product can boast 48bit colour depth then many buyers will think that it must be better than one with a depth of 32, 36 or 40 bits. As you surmise, there's no practical benefit – at least, for ordinary PC users. Most PC graphics file formats are only able to save images with a maximum bit depth of 32, so you won't even see an increase in file size.

In Helpline August 02 (page 186), you recommended using Info-Zip's Zip and Unzip utilities to automate backups. I have downloaded WinZip and PKZip but can find no way to create a programmed backup using a batch file.

WinZip is a Windows-based utility so it isn't suitable for automation using a batch file, although it can be used in its own right for backups. PKZip can be run using a batch file, but it's a 16bit DOS program that doesn't support long filenames so it's not very useful nowadays. You should use the Win32 version of Info-Zip Zip and Unzip, as we originally suggested.

To create an automated backup batch file, use Notepad to create a file named 'backup.bat' containing one or more lines similar to this:

```
c:\Utils\zip.exe -r -S -b %temp%
'e:\My Documents' 'c:\Documents and
Settings\Julian\My Documents'
```

In this example (which should be all on one line), user Julian's My Documents folder (under Windows XP) would be backed up to a file named mydocuments.zip on the E drive, assuming that zip.exe has been placed in a directory named c:\Utils. Add more lines to the batch file to back up other folders and their subfolders to similarly named zip archives if you wish. As an extra refinement you can use 'if errorlevel' to test that zip.exe returns an exit code of zero after each backup. If it doesn't, something went wrong such as the output disk being full.

My Canon MV100 DV camcorder lets me take a photo by saving a five-second still image to tape. However, when I transfer this to the PC and view it on screen it is not as clear as when viewed on my TV. When I print such an image the quality is poor, too. How can I improve the quality?

We think your eyes are deceiving you into thinking the picture quality is better on the television than the computer screen. The resolution of a camcorder video frame is even lower than that of a TV screen – much lower than a PC monitor. When viewing a moving image

← If you wish to transfer still photos to your PC, invest in a cheap digital camera – still images recorded from a camcorder simply can't compete on quality

this hardly matters, as moving objects in the frame will be slightly blurred anyway.

Even when viewing a still image on the TV, the relatively poor quality will be hardly noticeable because the low resolution of the TV picture tube helps mask the faults in the image. Also, unlike on your PC monitor, your eyes aren't accustomed to seeing a sharp image on the TV screen. The PC monitor shows just how poor the quality really is.

If you want to take still images for transfer to a computer the only acceptable solution is to buy a digital camera. Even the cheapest models selling for around the £50 mark should be capable of giving better results than camcorder stills recorded on tape. Take a look at our Top 10 Digital cameras chart on page 130 for a selection of recommended models.

I am thinking of buying a new monitor. Which has the sharpest display and why: CRT or flat-panel?

A flat-panel display will be the sharpest. The reason is that each pixel is made up of three individually controlled light emitting devices that are always in exactly the right place, so the whole screen is always in perfect focus.

In a CRT (cathode ray tube) each pixel is produced by the energy from three cathode ray guns hitting dots of phosphor deposited on the surface of the screen. The sharpness of the picture depends on the focusing and alignment of these three guns, which is never absolutely perfect.

On the plus side, CRTs are a lot cheaper so you can afford a bigger screen, which may make small fonts and fine detail in an image easier to see. This may outweigh the benefits of a sharper picture.

↓ Windows

I've just built my own computer but now have a problem. When booting with a startup floppy in the A drive I get the message 'Bad or missing command interpreter. Enter correct name of command interpreter (for example, c:\command.com)' followed by the prompt C>. No matter what command is entered the same message is displayed. Do you know the solution?

It would help to know how you prepared the bootup floppy and what you have on your hard disk. Assuming there is nothing on the hard disk, what appears to be happening is that after the autoexec.bat on the floppy switches to the C drive, DOS can no longer find the command.com that is on the floppy.

Another possibility is that there is a copy of command.com on the C drive, but one for a different version of Windows or DOS than was used to create the boot floppy. Either way, the solution is to add the following commands to the start of autoexec.bat:

'shell=a:\command.com a:\ /p'; then 'path=a:\'

I recently installed a Siemens Pocket Reader on my PC running Windows 98SE and it appeared to work. On starting the computer the following day it went into Safe Mode. After restoring the normal desktop I rebooted and found that I received the following error message on a black screen: 'Microsoft Workgroups ODI/NDIS3 Mapper Version 3.0. Error: cannot find LSL'. How can I restore this file?

The software that is being loaded to cause this error is related to the use of NetWare networks. Therefore our first question is why is it being loaded on your computer? If your computer isn't connected to a NetWare network, you don't need it. In which case, simply renaming config.sys to config.xxx and autoexec.bat to autoexec.xxx will almost certainly solve the problem.

If, though, certain software or hardware later asks for something that is set up in these files, rename them back then edit autoexec.bat and turn the line that is causing the error – the one that says c:\windows\odihlp.exe – into a comment by inserting REM in front of it.

If your computer is on a NetWare network and you need this network software to work, you probably have access to a network administrator who can solve the problem for you. The file that is apparently missing is called lsl.com. If it really isn't on your hard disk, you'll have to reinstall the NetWare network drivers provided with the network adapter that is in your computer.

The file lsl.com isn't part of Windows 98SE. If the file is still on your hard disk then it may be that your Siemens Pocket Reader setup program modified config.sys or autoexec.bat in such a way that lsl.com is no longer being loaded. Whatever it did, you'll have to edit one or other of these files to fix the problem.

I need to reinstall Windows 95, but when I run Setup I receive a message that says: 'Some Control Panel or device settings have changed since you last started Windows. Close all of your programs, restart Windows, and then run Setup again'. I followed this advice, but it made no difference. Can you help?

This error message occurs if you try to run Setup from within Windows in certain circumstances. The simplest solution is probably to try booting the system from a floppy and running Setup directly from the Windows CD. If this isn't convenient, you need to address the cause of the error. It is known to occur if Diamond InControl Tools (a graphics card configuration utility) is running on the computer. Close InControl Tools before running Setup if this is the case. The error can also occur if a Control Panel utility named winmodem.cpl has been installed. Locate the file (it will probably be in the Windows or Windows\System folder) and rename it temporarily to winmodem.bak.

The other known cause is if you have a modem connected to a Hayes ESP high-speed serial port which uses a configuration tool named espcfgmg.exe. Bring up Task Manager by pressing Ctrl, Alt, Del and then terminate espcfgmg.exe to resolve the problem.

I seem to have deleted the file msvcrt40.dll. Now when I start Windows 98 the computer reports that the file is missing and locks up. Is it possible to restore the system without losing my data?

It's to resolve problems like this that you should have an emergency recovery disk. You can then boot from the disk and restore the missing file from the Windows CD using the command prompt.

Here's how to go about restoring msvcrt40.dll under Windows 98. After booting from your recovery disk, change to the Win98 folder on the CD by typing 'D:' and Enter followed by 'CD Win98' and Enter (where D is the letter of your CD drive). Then type the following:

extract /A win98_21.cab msvcrt40.dll /L c:\windows\system.

This basic method can be used to restore system files under any of the older versions of Windows too. Just find the folder on the original Windows CD that came with your system containing the program extract.exe and the cabinet (CAB) files – these are a type of compressed archive similar to Zip files.

The name after the /A is the name of the lowest numbered winxx_??.cab file – for example, it is win95_02.cab for Windows 95. The filename after that is the name of the file you want to restore and the folder name after the /L is the location you want it restored to.

The Extract command searches all the consecutively numbered cabinet files starting from the one you specified, so you don't need to know which cabinet file contains the file you want to restore.

In September's Helpline (page 192) you explained how to create individual icons for CDs. Is it possible to replace the standard folder icons used for the cascading menus of the Windows Start menu? Individual programs have their own icon, so why not a program group folder?

If you have Windows XP then this is easy to do. You can change the 'folder closed' icon of any folder using the Customize tab of its properties. Since program group folders on the Start menu are no different from ordinary folders, this works for them as well. Just right-click the entry on the Start menu, select Properties, click the Customize tab and you're away. See the tip *Change Windows XP Folder Icons* on page 195 for more information.

If you're using Windows 95, 98 or Me, though, you're out of luck. If you scour the software download sites you'll find some programs that claim to let you change the icons of standard folders. What they really do is create a shortcut to the folder, change the icon of the shortcut and then hide the folder.

Unfortunately, a shortcut to a folder doesn't behave in exactly the same way as a real folder. If you try this with one of the folders in the Start menu you'll see an entry with your chosen icon, but when you click it the folder will open in an Explorer window instead of a cascading menu.

The August 02 *PC Advisor* CD contained a program called BatchRun, which appeared to work within Windows and eliminate the need for batch files. It is freeware, so I suppose I shouldn't have expected too much. However, it seemed to lack some basic features such as error checking, branching to a label, testing if a file exists or a window is showing and has

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Test your antivirus software   [TIP]

Have you ever wondered whether your antivirus software is really working? Would you like to see what happens when it detects a virus? Here's a safe way to test your computer's virus protection that doesn't require you to have a real virus.

First, open Notepad. Then type into it the text below (it should all be on one line):

x5o!p%@ap[4\pzx54(p^)7cc)7}$eicar-standard-antivirus-test-file!$h+h*

Now click on File, Save, select All Files for the file type, and save the file as eicar.com. The result should look exactly like the screenshot shown above.

If your virus checker's really on the ball, it may put up a warning when you try to save the file. In that case, you'll need to temporarily disable the virus monitor while you save the file. To see what happens when your virus scanner finds a virus, scan the folder where you saved eicar.com.

[Notepad window: eicar.com - Notepad]
`X5O!P%@AP[4\PZX54(P^)7CC)7}$EICAR-STANDARD-ANTIVIRUS-TEST-FILE!$H+H*`

↑ Fancy finding out if your antivirus software is worth the money? Type this text into Notepad and save it as eicar.com. Don't worry – it won't damage your system

Now see what happens if you try to run a file that contains a virus by double-clicking eicar.com to open it.

The file you have created is completely safe – it is not a virus. This standard test file was developed by the Eicar (European Institute for Computer Antivirus Research). All antivirus products are programmed to detect this file as if it was a real virus. You can safely use it to test whether your antivirus software works, without fear of infecting your computer. However, to avoid causing a panic at the pressing factory, we decided not to include a copy of this file on the cover CD.

Thoroughly uninstall a program   [TIP]

If you're a regular Helpline reader you may have noticed how often, when a reader has trouble with an application and tries to resolve it by uninstalling and reinstalling the program, this fails to solve the problem. It isn't so surprising when you take a closer look at how most uninstallers work. Most uninstallers remove only the files and Registry settings that were created when the Setup program was run. This may be a deliberate policy to avoid the risk of deleting files or settings a user might want to keep.

Whatever the reason, it makes uninstalling and then reinstalling a fairly ineffectual way of solving application problems, since these are often caused by files or configuration settings made after the application was installed.
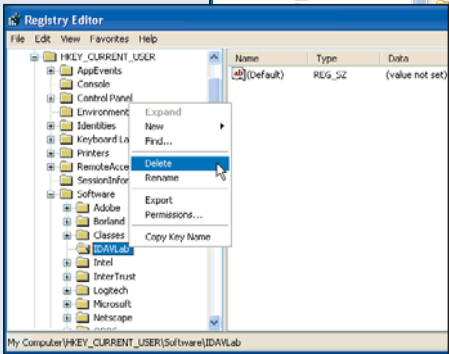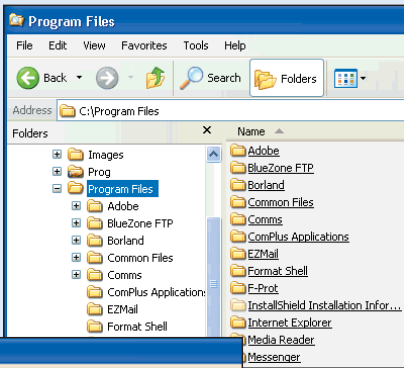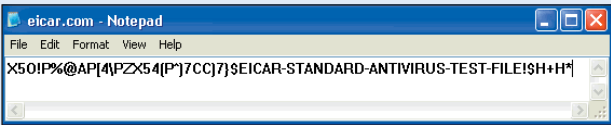
To remove an application as completely as possible, you'll usually need to do some extra work after running the uninstaller. First, look in the Program Files folder to see if the folder in which you installed the application still exists (as shown top). If it does, you'll probably find a couple of files in it. Unless you see something you recognise and want to keep, delete the application folder.

Next, start the Registry Editor and expand Hkey_Current_User, Software. Look for a folder named after the application you uninstalled. It might be inside a folder named after the application developer. When you find this Registry folder, select it and delete it (as shown bottom). Repeat this for Hkey_Current_Machine. Not all applications store information in this part of the Registry, but a few do.

Once you have finished this, most traces of the application will have been removed. If you want, you can now try to

→ Unsure if the application you uninstalled has completely gone? Search the Program Files folder for the name of the software program in question

← If it still exists in the Program Files folder, open the Registry Editor, find the folder and click on the Delete option

reinstall it. Note that shared files which have been modified by another application won't be removed by the uninstaller, nor will they be replaced by the installer if the modified versions appear newer than the ones on the application setup disc. If this is the cause of your problem you'll have to find a way to manually copy the correct versions to your hard disk.

focus, or the ability to send key presses to a window. BatchRun seems like a good idea that hasn't been thought through. Surely there are better solutions.

A There are a number of possible solutions, though most of them aren't free. The obvious choices, since they come free on any PC with Windows 98 or later, are VBScript or JavaScript running under the Windows Scripting Host. However, the cryptic error messages, difficult syntax and lack of a good integrated editor and debugger mean that these script languages are the best solution only if you are already a fairly accomplished user of Visual Basic or Java.

As for the alternatives: WinBatch (from www.winbatch.com) has been around almost as long as Windows itself and can do just about anything you want in the way of automating other programs. It's also worth taking a look at 4Dos from JP Software (www.jpsoft.com) if you merely want a more powerful command-line scripting tool. Alternatively, if you'd prefer a Windows-aware version, Take Command is an option. You might also like to take a look at Visual DialogScript (www.dialogscript.com). None of these products is freeware, however.

We haven't tried it, but if you're determined to use a freebie then you might consider trying FBSL which stands for free

basic script language. You'll find this at http://gedd123.free.fr/fbsl.htm and on this month's cover disc.

For some reason, Windows Me has decided that it requires a password at startup. As advised on the dialog box, I entered a null password to avoid being asked for it again, but this made no difference. In addition, when I connect to the internet the Save password and Connect automatically checkboxes are disabled. I have not enabled user profiles on the machine.

A You must click ok or hit Enter, not Cancel or Esc, to close the logon password dialog box. If you don't, anything you type in the password box is ignored and the password file for the default user is not opened. Without a password file, Windows can't remember or save any passwords, which is why the dialup Save password box is disabled.

Having said that, it does appear as though something has occurred to cause Windows to think that a user profile has been set up. To try to remedy the problem open Control Panel and double-click Network. On the Configuration tab ensure that the Primary Network Logon is Windows Logon then click ok. Don't restart the computer when prompted.

Now double-click Passwords in Control Panel. Select the Change Passwords tab,

click Change Windows Password, select any of the checkboxes that apply and click ok. In the Change Windows Password dialog box type the current Windows password in the Old Password field. Leave the New Password and Confirm New Password fields blank then close the dialog boxes by clicking ok. On the User Profiles tab, ensure that the 'All users of this PC use the same preferences and desktop settings' option is ticked then click Close.

Next, click Start, Find (or Search) and select For Files or Folders. Enter *.pwl in the Named field, select Local Hard Drives in the Look in field and hit Enter. When the search is complete, delete the files found. You can now restart the computer.

↓ Internet

Is it possible to send text messages to mobile phones using email, perhaps by including the phone number within an address?

A Unfortunately not. In the early days of text messaging it was possible to do this on some phone networks. However, as the sender did not pay to send the message, the recipient had to. It was also soon realised that this would provide an easy and cost-free way for advertisers to send unsolicited text messages, so perhaps it isn't so unfortunate that you can't do this after all.

It is possible to send text messages to mobiles from your PC, but using a web-based form, not your email program. For the most comprehensive list of web-to-SMS (short messaging service) sites, visit www.textmefree.com. Note that most free services require registration and the information you provide might be used for marketing purposes such as sending you, or the recipient, unsolicited messages. There's no such thing as a free text message.

You can use email to send text messages to those who have registered with an email service that provides SMS notification of incoming mail. If you register for a free O2 email address at www.o2.co.uk you can create filter rules that will send details of new messages,
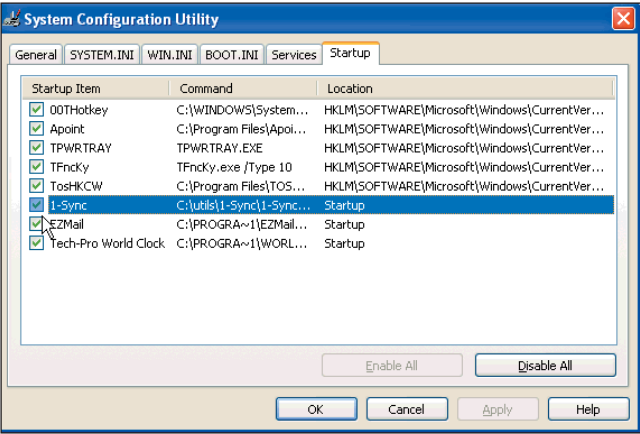
including the first 140 characters of the message, to your mobile phone. Unfortunately this service appears to be suffering from technical problems at the moment, and many users report that the SMS alerts are unreliable. It's also possible that by the time you read this the O2 service will no longer be free.

Orange offers a similar service at www.orange.net although the SMS alerts it provides show only the subject of the message and none of the text. You can work around this by getting the sender to write all that they want to say in the subject line of the email. If you have a WAP phone, of course, you can read the full text of emails sent to this address using your phone and even reply to them via your mobile.

Whenever I boot my PC and use Internet Explorer I find that a Dutch porn site has replaced www.tiscali.co.uk as my home page. I change it back, but this lasts only until the next reboot. Can you help? This is really aggravating.

A This is quite a common problem and may not even be the result of visiting the offending website. If you're using Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express without the latest security updates, it could happen just by viewing or clicking a link in an unsolicited email. Or it could result from downloading and running some bit of software from a disreputable source. Almost certainly, a script or program has been installed on your computer so that it runs whenever Windows starts and resets Internet Explorer's home page setting.

The generic solution to this is to run the System Configuration Utility (click Start,

← If a rogue program insinuates itself into your Startup Items list, use msconfig to disable it

Run, type msconfig and press Enter) and select the Startup tab. There, you'll see a list of all the programs that are configured to run automatically at startup (see above). If you can spot the one that's causing the aggravation, you can disable it by clearing its checkbox. Confirm that this really was the cause of the trouble by restarting the system to see whether the problem is still present. If it isn't, you should delete the file from your system to prevent it from being run again accidentally in the future.

Unfortunately, we can't tell you the name of the program you need to get rid of. Its exact identity will depend on the site concerned, which you neglected to tell us. Sadly, there are many of these nuisances in circulation. We would recommend that you go to http://groups.google.com and type into the searchbox the exact URL of the website. You'll then find links to Usenet postings from other people whose PCs have been similarly afflicted. If you read the replies to these postings you should find more specific removal instructions from people who have also had the problem and who have identified the file that causes it.

My internet account is with Freeserve. As far as I know, all email I send arrives at its destination and all mail sent to me is received – with one exception. Whenever a French contact sends mail to be, either as a new message or a reply to one of mine, it is returned. Mail sent by this contact to a different ISP address was delivered okay. Where is the problem?

A It's impossible to answer that question without seeing one of the

messages that was bounced back, in particular the message headers which aren't normally displayed. Usually the reply received from a mail server when a message is returned gives a good indication of why it could not be delivered. Without this information, all we can do is suggest some common reasons why mail that has apparently been addressed to you may be bounced.

First, it's surprising how many people mistype their email addresses when setting up their mail software. This is a very common reason for email failing to be delivered, so check the account settings carefully. Usually it isn't necessary to enter a reply address when setting up an account (replies will go to the address in the From field), but if you do make sure that this field also contains a valid email address.

Another possibility is that a virus infects your contact's PC or that every message that has been rejected contains an attachment of a type that is suspicious. An increasing number of ISPs virus-check incoming and outgoing mail. Although Freeserve doesn't, it has been rejecting messages containing executable attachments for a long time now in an attempt to reduce the number of viruses in circulation.

A third possibility is that there is something that the receiving mail server considers suspicious about the sender. To reduce the amount of spam, some mail servers validate the sender address. There are several reasons why this check might fail. Finally, if the sender is using a badly managed mail server that has no security in place, resulting in its abuse by people who send spam, an ISP may put a block on all mail from that server until the security problem is resolved.

I have accounts with Tesconet and BT Internet but recently went over to broadband with NTL. I can download emails with no problem, but I cannot send messages from my BT Internet address using the NTL cable. When I try I get the message: 'The connection to the server has failed. Account: BT, Server: mail.btinternet.com, Protocol: SMTP, Port: 25, Secure(SSL): No, Socket Error: 10060, Error Number: 0x800CCC0E'. I have no trouble sending from my


Customise Word envelope settings (TIP)

If you don't like the position Word chooses when it prints a delivery address on an envelope, you've probably noticed that you have to change the position every time you print an envelope as the changes you make aren't stored from one envelope to the next. Well, you can make Word remember your envelope printing preferences.

Envelope addresses are a style, like Normal, Heading 1 and so on. You change the style of an address, including its font, line spacing and position, by editing the Envelope Address style. The settings you see when you bring up the Envelope Options dialog box are in fact the current settings for that style. If you change them here, the alterations only apply to one envelope.
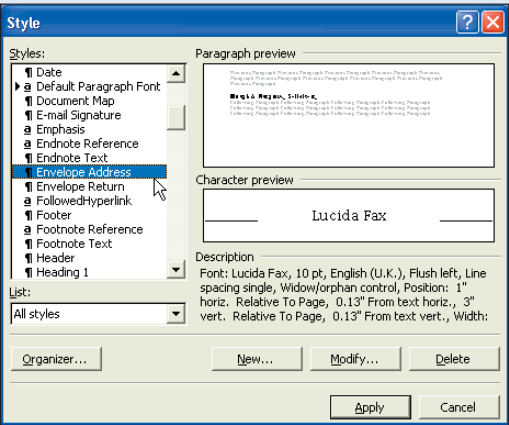
1 To make permanent changes to the envelope address style, click Format, Style. In the List: drop-down select All styles. Select Envelope Address from the list of styles, then click Modify
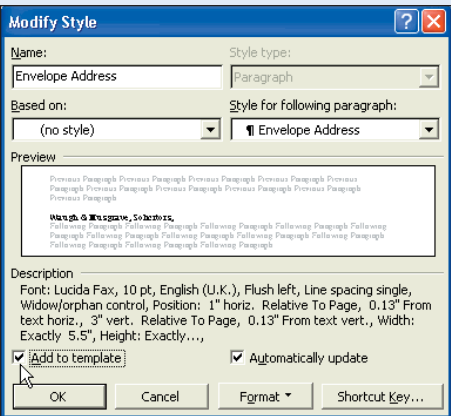
2 To have the changes you are about to make apply to all new documents created from the template used to create the document you are editing, check the box marked Add to template. Click Format. You can make changes to the font and line spacing (Paragraph) if required. Addresses are contained in a borderless frame. To change the position of the address on the envelope select Format, Frame
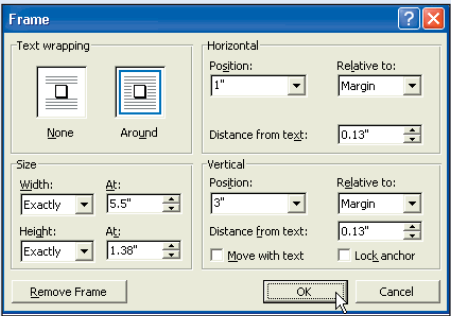
3 In the Horizontal box, below Position, type the distance you want the address frame to be positioned from the left and in the Vertical box enter the distance you want it positioned from the top. Click ok twice and then Close to shut all the dialog boxes

If you now click Tools, Envelopes and Labels, Options, you'll see that the From Top and From Left positions reflect the settings you made. When you close the document, Word will ask if you want to make these changes to the template that was used to create it. If you click Yes, these envelope settings will apply to all new documents created from this template.

Tesconet addresses. Am I stuck with sending BT Internet mail using BT's dialup number?

A The server 'mail.btinternet.com' is BT Internet's outgoing mail server. Most ISPs won't allow you to send mail using their server unless you are logged on to their network. This is to prevent abuse by people who want to send unsolicited emails, or spam.

When you are logged on to BT Internet, the network knows who you are and BT can close your account if you abuse it. However, an ISP has no control over people using a different network to connect to the internet

The only practical way to prevent abuse of a server is to disallow access to anyone using a different network. The fact that you can send emails using your Tesconet account may simply be the result of a happy coincidence that the Tesconet service is provided by NTL and is therefore seen as part of the same network.

The solution is obvious once you realise that it makes no difference whose outgoing mail server you use to send your outgoing email. You don't have to send mail from your BT address using BT's server. When you opened your NTL account you probably received an NTL email address and details of its mail servers. All you have to do is replace 'mail.btinternet.com' with the name of NTL's outgoing mail server.

Unfortunately, mail clients such as Outlook Express force the outgoing mail server to be linked to an email address instead of the ISP being used. If you still wish to use BT dialup access sometimes then you'll probably find that NTL's server won't send mail when you're connected to BT. In that case, the best solution is probably to set up two accounts for each BT address: BT and BT via NTL, each of which will be identical apart from the name of the outgoing mail server.

Our computer runs Windows XP and Outlook Express 6.0. Like several other readers we have been unable to get Outlook Express to disconnect from the internet after sending and receiving email. We have followed your advice and disconnected

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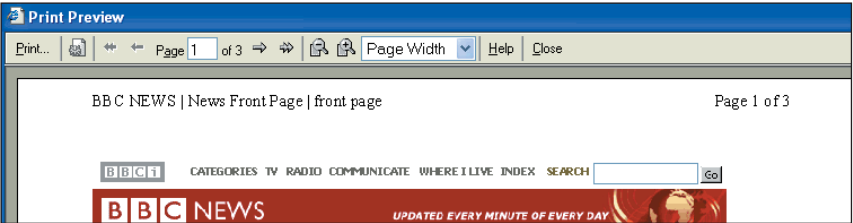
↑ Use Internet Explorer's Print Preview to scale a web page printout so that it fits the page width

by right-clicking the icon showing the two computers in the System Tray. Unfortunately, however, in our System Tray we have a different icon showing two small red lights in a black frame, which go green when we are online. Right-clicking them does not bring up an option to disconnect.

A The icon you describe is nothing to do with the Windows dialup software. It is displayed by the driver for your internal software-based modem to show that it is working correctly. Most modem drivers don't display such an icon.

The Windows icon showing two computers is not always displayed under Windows XP. You have to choose to see it. Unfortunately, locating the correct place to change any internet setting in Windows is like finding your way round a maze. Follow these directions:

From Control Panel, double-click Internet Options and select the Connections tab. Choose your ISP in the list box and click the Settings button. When the Settings dialog box appears, click the Properties button to the right of the username. At the foot of the General tab of the Properties dialog box you will find a checkbox captioned 'Show icon in notification area when connected' (see right). Place a tick in the checkbox then close all the dialogs by clicking ok.

We hope this finally solves your problem and allows you to disconnect from the internet more easily.

When I print from the internet, sometimes the text is wider than the printed page so that I lose some of it. How can I prevent this?

A If the text on a web page doesn't wrap to fit the paper when printed, all you can do is print the page at a

smaller scale so that it fits within the margins. If necessary, use landscape orientation. The best way to get good results is to print from the Print Preview screen. Change the print scale in the drop-down list just right of centre on the toolbar to Page Width (shown above). If you need to change the orientation as well, use the Page Setup button near the left of the toolbar.

The reason some web pages wrap automatically to fit the page and others don't is that it is dependent on the way the page has been designed. If the page has very simple formatting or has been laid out using tables, the size of which has been expressed as a percentage of the page width, it should be printed to fit the page. Many web designers, however, think only about how the page will look onscreen and lay it out in tables whose sizes are specified as a fixed number of pixels. In that case, Internet Explorer will print the page exactly as it appears on screen and will not wrap text to fit a narrower printout. Scaling is the only way to change the size of the printout in this case.

↓ Applications

I have been working on a project using two computers. I now have many files on each PC, some with the same name but different dates and I want to synchronise the two systems so that at least one has all the latest files.
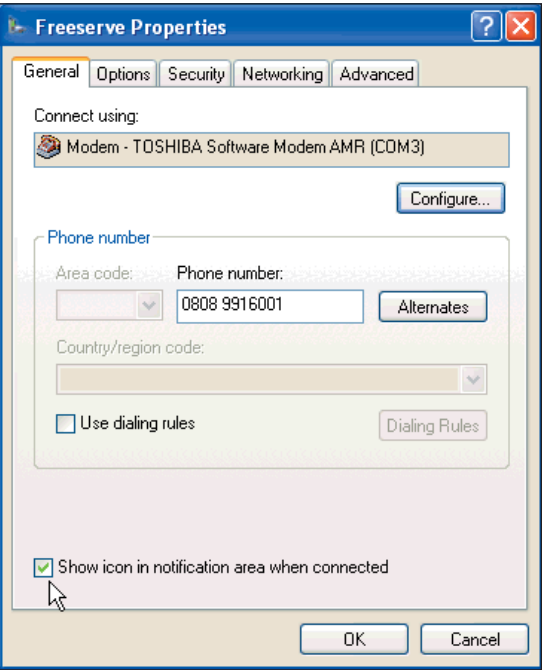
I thought it would be relatively straightforward and used PCSync 2.0, but this just came up with a list of conflicts and expected me to resolve which computer has the newer file.

Can you suggest a different syncing program that can tell which is the most recent file automatically?

A If you look at the many file synchronisation utilities available on the web you may come to the conclusion that software developers are so obsessed with 'adding value' that they have made what should be a simple task into something absurdly complex. There's still a lot to be said for a method that savvy users have employed for years: a simple batch file using Xcopy.

Open Notepad and create a file containing the following two lines:

```
Xcopy  "%1"  "%2"  /d  /i  %3
Xcopy  "%2"  "%1"  /d  /i  %3
```

→ To see an icon in the System Tray when you're connected to the internet, tick this checkbox

Pass it on: tips from readers `TIP`

Do you have any great workarounds or shortcuts you'd like to share? Send your tips and tricks to Helpline, *PC Advisor,* Fifth Floor, 85 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4TQ, or email pcadvisor_letters@idg.com. To help us sort your messages, please use the words 'Pass it on' in the subject heading.

Print photos with captions

Christopher Green wrote to pass on his own answer to the question of how to print two or three photos on the same page (Helpline, August 02, page 191.) He uses Microsoft Word, so it's easy to import photos, resize them and place them wherever you want on the page. It's also easy to add captions, something the Windows XP picture viewer can't do. And if you want to make greetings cards, for example, you can even overlay a picture with text. Thanks for the tip, Christopher.

AOL firewall warning

Brian, a reader who is also an AOL subscriber, wrote in response to our advice in the August 02 issue to use the Windows XP firewall (page 175). He was told by staff at the Microsoft helpline that, if you use AOL, the Windows XP firewall will not work. So if you're an AOL user and feel that you need some extra protection, you'll have to look for a third-party solution.

Name that track

A question about CD databases prompted reader Alan Povey to write in with a recommendation for VisiTrax (shown below) from www.synapsa.com. There's a freeware version with a limit of 1,000 entries, but the licensed version costs only $18 to register, with the benefit of free upgrades. You can create multiple databases and retrieve track information from the online CDDB.
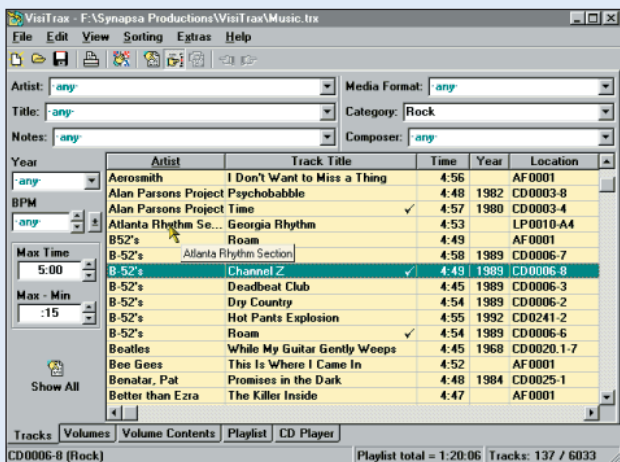
↑ Pop in your music CDs to VisiTrax and let it fetch the track titles for you automatically from CDDB, an extensive internet music database you can use free of charge

→ SiSoft Sandra is a set of system diagnostic and benchmarking tools designed to help you keep your PC running at peak performance
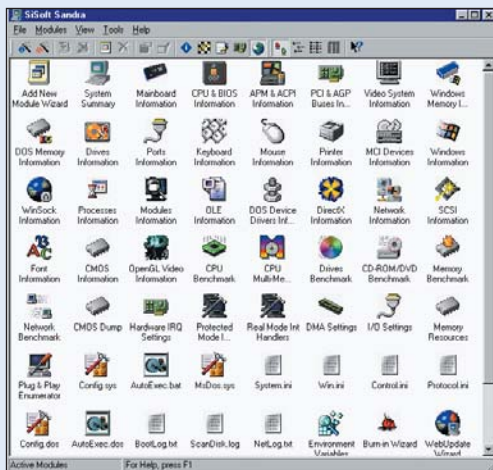
Better border printing solution (for some)

Janet Peebles wrote to pass on her solution to the problem of page borders not printing in their entirety. Instead of adjusting the border margin or Measure from text options, as we suggested, Janet recommends doing the following: select File, Print, Properties, Paper. In the Printable Area panel where there are three choices – Standard, Centered and Maximum – select Maximum. Then print the document and the border should be complete. The only problem with this suggestion is that it uses options within the printer Setup dialog boxes. If you don't see the options Janet describes you haven't done something wrong, it's just that your printer uses different drivers.

Runtime Error 200 fixed

John Pendry wrote to pass on a tip for readers who find that their favourite old DOS programs don't run on their fast new computers. John was distressed to find that a couple of programs he uses for his business would only display a 'Runtime Error 200' message when run on his new 1.7GHz Athlon PC. After some searching, he found a program, PatchCRT, from www.kennedysoftware.ie/patchcrt.htm which fixed his DOS programs and allowed them to run again. We've covered this problem before in Helpline. A good site with explanations of the problem and other fixes can be found at www.brain.uni-freiburg.de/~klaus/pascal/runerr200.

More on RAM speed query

Michael Coultas wrote with some further advice for the reader in the September issue, page 189, who was unsure whether he had been sold the correct memory modules. His suggestion was to try changing the latency (usually called CAS Latency or something similar) in the Bios. Some PC133 RAM won't work at a latency setting of two cycles but will work at the lower setting of three. Michael also recommends using the utility SiSoft Sandra (shown above), which can provide information about RAM modules in some detail – though only if the system is stable enough to run in the first place, of course.

Send emails everyone can read `TIP`

Do you regularly write emails in Microsoft Outlook using special formatting, but find that many recipients are getting these messages in an unformatted form accompanied by an attachment called winmail.dat?

The problem arises because Microsoft uses a nonstandard, proprietary method to preserve formatting in an email that only works if the recipients are also using Outlook. This extra formatting information is contained in the winmail.dat attachment. However, the information is of no use to other email clients.

To prevent the winmail.dat attachment from being sent, and ensure that all recipients receive your emails, select Plain Text for the mail format. This is the only format that is guaranteed to be received by all mail clients. However, it is not suitable for sending text that is formatted.

If it is important that the documents are received in a formatted form then you will have to send them as an attachment of a type that can be viewed correctly by all possible recipients. There is really only one standard format that can accomplish this and that is the Adobe PDF (portable document format).

Purchase a copy of Adobe Acrobat and use this to create a PDF file from your finished Microsoft Word document, then

→ If you want to ensure that every recipient of your email can read it, no matter which email client they use, select Plain Text under the Format heading in Microsoft Outlook
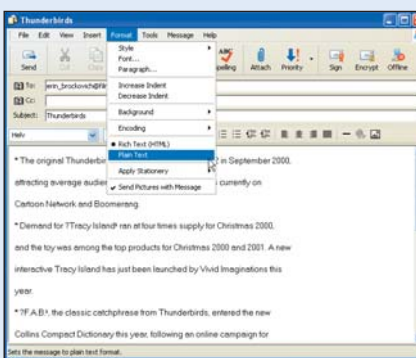
send it as an attachment to an email. If your recipients don't have Acrobat then they can use the free Adobe Acrobat Reader that can be downloaded from www.adobe.com or accessed from this month's cover disc.

One down side, though: Adobe Acrobat is expensive. A cheaper solution would be to send Word DOC files. Free DOC file viewers are also available for those who don't have a copy of Microsoft Word on their system. However, you may find that some recipients' mail servers block email containing DOC file attachments owing to the fact that these files are often used to spread viruses.

Save it in your Windows folder as sync.cmd (this is for Windows 2000 or XP. If you are using Windows 95, 98 or Me, replace Xcopy with Xcopy32 and save the file as sync.bat). The two Xcopy commands copy new or newer files from one folder to another in each direction.

To use the batch file, open a command prompt and type sync followed by the paths of the two folders you want to synchronise, each in quotes. If you want to synchronise subfolders as well, add /S to the command line before pressing Enter.

For example, suppose your project is kept in a folder called My Project on both your local PC and one with a network name of Dell. To synchronise this folder, including any subfolders within it, type the command:

sync   "c:\my project"   "\\dell\my project"   /s

We recommend that you test this on something unimportant before trying it on valuable work files. Note, too, that the two-line batch file has no idiot-proofing, so it will happily try to synchronise entire hard disks if you tell it to. We accept no

responsibility for the mess caused by trying to synchronise two computers' C drives (including the Windows folder). If you want to terminate sync before completion type Ctrl, C.

I use Microsoft Word 2000 and whenever I select Insert, Picture, the submenu shows an enormous list of Clip Collection items, all of which open the same collection of clip art. The number of these items is growing, so that I now have to wait several seconds to scroll the menu until the From File item appears. Can I cure this?

⚠ This fault occurs when you obtain Microsoft Word as part of the Works Suite but you are launching Word on its own and not from within Works. It's a known problem with the somewhat buggy Works Suite add-in for Word.

You can probably manage without the add-in, so open Control Panel and use Add/Remove Programs to uninstall it. After doing that, start Word 2000, click on Tools, Customize, select the Commands tab and delete all but one of the Clip Collection items.

My PC runs Windows Me. Following an abortive System Restore, Microsoft Word (which came as part of the Works Suite) became corrupted so that I can neither delete it nor reinstall it from the CD. When I attempt to do either, Windows Installer tries to read from the floppy drive, fails, then displays a message box saying: 'An error occurred and this feature is no longer functioning properly. Please run Setup and select Repair to restore the application'. Which, of course, is precisely what I'm trying to do! Please help.

⚠ It's difficult to know what to suggest except to run the Windows Installer Cleanup Utility. This is a utility that removes Windows Installer settings that may be causing a problem. There are two versions of the utility: one for Windows 95, 98 and Me, and one for Windows NT and 2000. This utility is not supported on systems such as Windows XP, where Microsoft Windows Installer 2.0 has been installed. Hopefully in the new version it won't be necessary.

You want the file msicu.exe – get it from http://download.microsoft.com

/download/office2000pro/util22/1/w9x/en-us/msicu.exe. After running the file to install the Cleanup Utility, click on Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Information.

You should find the utility listed on the System Information program's Tools menu. When you run it a warning message will appear, followed by a dialog box which will list all the programs you have on your system that have been installed using Windows Installer. Select the program giving you problems and click Remove. Hopefully this will remove the settings that are causing the trouble and allow you to repair or reinstall Microsoft Word.

I built a new PC and installed Windows 98SE and Microsoft Office 2000. Then I replaced Internet Explorer 5.0 with IE 6.0 using a *PC Advisor* cover disc. After I had problems receiving email I uninstalled IE 6.0 and reverted to version 5.0. Now I cannot open Microsoft Outlook as I receive the message: 'An OLE registration error occurred. The program is not correctly installed. Please rerun Setup'. I've tried rerunning Setup but it made no difference.

For some reason Microsoft Outlook requires the presence of Outlook Express 4.01 or later. This error can occur if you install Internet Explorer without the corresponding version of Outlook Express. It also occurs if you revert back to an earlier version of IE/OE. The problem is that information in the Registry which tells Outlook how to use Outlook Express is updated when you install a newer version, but is not changed back if you revert to

the old one. Unfortunately there is no way to fix this by hand.

We don't know what problems you had with IE 6.0 that were fixed by reverting to version 5.0. We're pretty sure, though, that reinstalling IE 6.0 will solve the problem with Outlook 2000. If you really want to stick with Internet Explorer and Outlook Express 5.0 then the only way to get rid of the incorrect OLE registration entries is to start again from scratch by reinstalling Windows.

I use Microsoft Word 2000. I was inserting a symbol into a document from the Insert menu when I must have clicked a mouse button or pressed an incorrect key and suddenly the Symbol item was no longer available. I tried repairing Office 2000 and uninstalling and reinstalling it without success. How can I get this item back?

We're not sure exactly what happened to cause this, although

similar problems are not unheard of. Microsoft Word is almost entirely software configurable. This is very useful if you want to do things like completely change the menu structure – if you know how. Unfortunately it also means that a bit of wrong information in a configuration file can disrupt the whole program.

To try to find the cause of the problem click on Start and Run, type winword /a and then press Enter. If you can now find the missing menu option then the problem is being caused by something in the global template normal.dot.

To resolve it, close Word and use the Search tool to locate any copies of this file. Rename any found to normal.xxx and restart Word. It will create a new, default normal.dot. Although this may fix the problem you will lose any customisation you have done to the global template.

If winword /a didn't solve the problem then there is probably corrupt data in the Registry. To get rid of it, start the Registry Editor (click Start, Run and type Regedit), then expand Hkey_Current_User\Software, Microsoft\Office, 9.0\Word. In the Word folder you should see a folder named Data. Select it, choose Edit, Rename from the menu and rename it OldData. Close the Registry Editor and start Word.

Again, this will result in the loss of some of the changes you have made to Word settings, but if it doesn't solve the problem you can recover them by deleting the newly created Data value and renaming OldData back to Data.

Be careful when using the Registry Editor. If you're prudent, you'll take a backup or create a system restore point before you start. ■

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 Helpline FAQ Directory can help you locate that information. Comprising 18 months worth of questions and answers from the Helpline pages, the Directory is a searchable database of almost 400 questions and answers. It covers common dilemmas caused by Windows, plus bugs and glitches in software, hardware errors and internet troubleshooting. Whatever your problem, our Directory can most probably provide you with the solution, and it's available with *Tips & Tricks* magazine, on sale now.