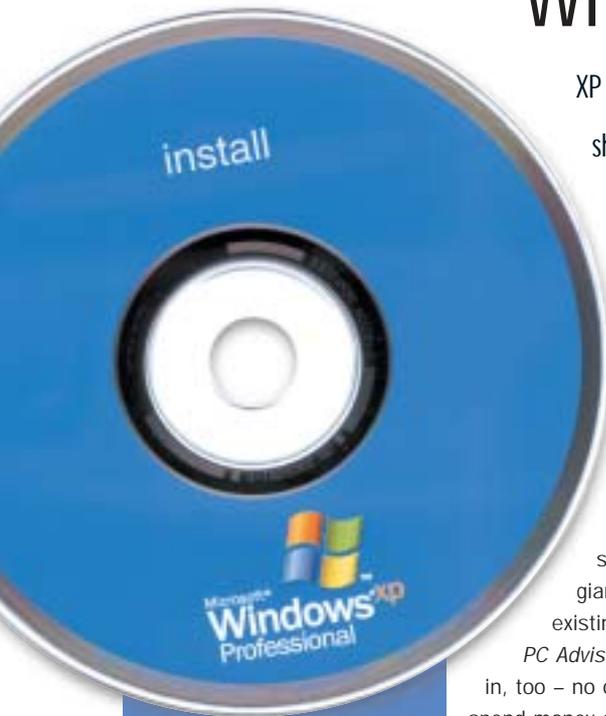


Why you should upgrade to XP

XP Advisor, our new section dedicated to Windows' latest and greatest OS, kicks off by showing you how to set up video-conferencing plus there's some useful XP tips



Five reasons to upgrade to Windows XP

1. You want to have the most comprehensive plug and play support, driver compatibility and program compatibility offered in an operating system.
2. You want a multimedia platform on which you can easily edit your music, images and videos.
3. You are sick of your Windows 9x system crashing and want the stability that Windows XP can provide.
4. You haven't upgraded your operating system since Windows 95 – upgrading to Windows XP can be your excuse for buying a new PC.
5. You're a novice wanting an operating system with a more intuitive tech support system, including remote troubleshooting.

Windows XP was released a year ago to a recalcitrant public intent on resisting its charms. People objected strongly to Microsoft's piracy prevention measure – the Product Activation system – and complained they felt forced to upgrade to the new operating system because the software giant's plan was to stop supporting existing Windows platforms altogether.

PC Advisor readers dug their heels in, too – no one was going to make them spend money on software they didn't want or need.

Change your mind

A year later and things look rather different. The tide of vitriol against XP has abated and a once defiant public has now almost meekly accepted the change sweeping over their desktops. Over a quarter of PCAdvisor.co.uk visitors tell us that they have made the upgrade and the number of forum threads complaining about the activation procedure have almost disappeared. Why? Because with Windows XP Microsoft has finally got it right and, despite their initial kicking and screaming, its customers have finally realised that.

While we wouldn't go so far as to say that Windows XP is the ultimate operating system – let's not forget the first XP service pack has just been released – compared to what went before it's a marked improvement. With XP, users get greater stability (goodbye blue screen of death) and a more intuitive interface fronting an operating system that has built-in help and support.

Other welcome features include some much-needed integrated functions, among them zip/unzip capabilities and drag-and-drop

CD burning; surely both prerequisites on any PC. There's also easier viewing, printing and editing facilities for digital still images as well as movies, a greater emphasis on music creation, support for video-conferencing and voice over IP within MSN Messenger.

In short, Windows XP is the biggest thing to happen to our PC desktops since the launch of Windows 95 seven years ago. Because it's been a long time coming there's a temptation to eulogise the operating system, but here at PC Advisor we've never advocated buying technology simply to keep up with the Joneses. Technology should fulfil a purpose or it's nothing but an expensive toy.

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Read on for XP advice

That's why from this month we're introducing a new section to the magazine. XP Advisor will tell you all you need to know about Windows XP, bringing you reader Q&As, workshops and features to show you how to troubleshoot and get the most from the new operating system. Whether or not you've upgraded, you'll

find XP Advisor an indispensable guide to using or choosing Microsoft's latest OS.

This issue, we have a video-conferencing workshop showing you how to make better use of MSN Messenger than simply sending insulting or humorous instant messages to your friends. Armed with broadband (or other fast internet connection), you should be able to use it to collaborate in real-time with colleagues and clients around the globe.

We've also compiled several pages of useful tips to help you decide whether XP is the right choice for you and how to get round some of its inevitable idiosyncrasies and glitches. At Advisor Towers we've found Windows XP a big step up from both Me and 98 – we think you will too. ■

Emma Northam