

byteback

Bandwidth bandits bite the dust

Cyberskivers are costing companies dear, as employees use the internet as a virtual escape route from the office. Their number is up, though, says Guy Dixon

There was a time when office pilfering was limited to sneaking a pack of A4 paper, a few pens or a wad of envelopes into your briefcase as you left work. But in recent years stationery stashers have graduated from paperclips and sticky tape to a more insidious form of corporate theft.

These days they're too busy thieving bandwidth from their trusting bosses to bother with the Tippex or Blu Tack. They're browsing for holidays, booking flights, exploring alternative employment opportunities, checking the latest Arsenal signing, as well as logging on to Kazaa, Morpheus and other peer-to-peer sites to illegally download squillions of gigabytes worth of music. In the worst cases, they're forwarding pornographic images round the office. And all of this during working hours.

This techno skiving quickly adds up. Just 45 minutes of surfing per day over

the five-day working week equals four hours or a full half day of gainful employment lost.

But just as you could always lock the stationery cabinet, there are ways to stop such staff in their lazy ways. Spyware can help even the most PC-phobic manager to

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keep a wary eye on his or her feckless minions. Webspy, Blackbox and Spector Pro are just a few of the many reasonably priced software packages that can turn a mild-mannered manager into an all-seeing Big Brother figure, highlighting lost work time, poor employee habits and misuse of company computers.

It looks like we are going to have to get our noses back to the grindstone. Alternatively we can take advantage of high-speed connectivity networks to work from home where we can skive in peace. ■

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features

What next for your PC?

How will the PC evolve in the coming years? Will we always be tethered to our desks or will wireless technology win the day and set us free? And which of today's emerging technologies are likely to stay the course?

Command and conquer

Way back when, before operating systems became user friendly, getting a PC to do what you wanted meant telling it line by line. For those who want to control their PC down to the letter *PC Advisor* provides a step-by-step guide to programming.

Getting vocal

Will speech recognition ever replace the Qwerty keyboard as the main data input tool? What leaps forward would have to be made? Developers and real-life users explain the advantages and drawbacks of working this way.

workshops

Antivirus and encryption

We offer you practical advice on ensuring data integrity with firewall, antivirus and encryption measures. There are reviews of all the latest security software and setup tips to help you make the most of the products you choose.

Get more from your DV camera

Quick-start advice for those who have just got their first digital video camera plus how old hands can make the most of their model's features and functions.

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Six of the best

A look at the benefits and changes six months of high-speed internet access have brought some of our readers.

xp advisor

Windows Movie Maker 2.0

Microsoft has redesigned Movie Maker to be even easier to use. Here's what to expect.