

Doctors Orders

Hello welcome to August.

Last month our shop sold more laptops than any previous month in the last ten years. I thought it would be worth popping open the champagne but the boss came around, patted us all on the head and said, "You've all done very well".

I suspect the pending increase in VAT at the end of the year has more to do with it than our imperfect sales skills as more customers want to spend their money on hardware rather than give it to the treasury.

So if you are looking to get the most bang for your buck, now's the time and we have more variety of laptops and towers than ever before.

More and more customers are getting the message and dropping of their PC's when they go on holiday. We can fix it while you are away, ready for your return. Don't forget to let us know whether we can ring you or not. Just in case you are halfway up a mountain in Venezuela. (I hear the roaming charges are even steeper than the mountains).

The school holidays is the time when your offspring are all downloading spyware toolbars and finding new ways to break their PC's. This means we are usually very busy finding new ways to mend them. So if your PC or laptop is starting to play up, get it looked at now before the damage gets worse and escalates into a large bill.

How many times have we heard, "It just won't start and I've got an important document on there that I must have today". "Yes, it's been playing up for a couple of weeks now!" D'oh!

Craig



<http://twitter.com/CraigtheTrainee>



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PC Basics - How to start Windows in Safe Mode

Many times in order to remove a piece of spyware or troubleshooting and diagnostic purposes, you'll have to start Windows in Safe Mode. While in Safe Mode, only specific programs and files needed to run the operating system are loaded. Some functions, such as connecting to the Internet, will not be active in Safe Mode and a standard video driver will be loaded causing a washed out look and a possible change in resolution.

However, because just the essential programs and files are loaded in Safe Mode, this allows us to remove some spyware, adware, viruses and such that cannot be removed in Normal Mode. Follow the instructions below to Start Safe Mode for your specific version of Windows.

Windows 7

Turn the computer on or Restart the computer

Start tapping the F8 key. The Windows Advanced Boot Options Menu appears. If you begin tapping the F8 key too soon, some computers display a "keyboard error" message. To resolve this, restart the computer and try again.

Ensure that the Safe mode option is selected, not Repair Your Computer

Press Enter. The computer then begins to start in Safe mode.

When you are finished with troubleshooting, close all programs and restart the computer as you normally would

Windows Vista

Windows Vista is similar to Windows XP for starting in Safe Mode.

Turn the computer on or Restart the computer

Start tapping the F8 key. The Windows Advanced Boot Options Menu appears. If you begin tapping the F8 key too soon, some computers display a "keyboard error" message. To resolve this, restart the computer and try again.

Ensure that the Safe mode option is selected (the top option)

Press Enter. The computer then begins to start in Safe mode.

When you are finished with troubleshooting, close all programs and restart the computer as you normally would.

Windows XP

If Windows XP is the only operating system installed on your computer, booting into Safe Mode with these instructions.

If the computer is running, shut down Windows, and then turn off the power

Wait 10 seconds, and then turn the computer on.

Start tapping the F8 key. The Windows Advanced Options Menu appears. If you begin tapping the F8 key too soon,

some computers display a "keyboard error" message. To resolve this, restart the computer and try again.

Ensure that the Safe mode option is selected.

Press Enter. The computer then begins to start in Safe mode.

When you are finished with all troubleshooting, close all programs and restart the computer as you normally would.

To use the System Configuration Utility method

Close all open programs.

Click Start, Run and type MSCONFIG in the box and click OK

The System Configuration Utility appears, On the BOOT.INI tab, Check the "/SAFEBOOT" option, and then click OK and Restart your computer when prompted.

The computer restarts in Safe mode.

Perform the troubleshooting steps for which you are using Safe Mode. When you are finished with troubleshooting in Safe mode, open MSCONFIG again, on the BOOT.INI tab, uncheck "/SAFEBOOT" and click OK to restart your computer

Windows as part of a multi-boot system

Use this method ONLY if you have multiple operating systems installed on your computer.

If the computer is running, shut down Windows, and then turn off the power

Wait 10 seconds, and then turn the computer on.

When the Boot loader menu (list of the available operating systems) appears, use the arrow keys on the keyboard to select the version Windows what you want

Press Enter, and then immediately begin tapping the F8 key. The Windows Advanced Options menu appears.

Scroll to and select the Safe mode menu item, and then press Enter.

If your PC won't start in normal mode but will in safe mode, there are some other useful options on the safe mode menu.

"Last known good configuration" remembers the settings that applied the last time that the PC started successfully and uses these again. If that cures the problem your PC will use these settings each time.

"safe mode with VGA" will load the basic video driver and allow you to change your monitor resolution if you get an "out of range" error message on the screen.

"Safe mode with networking" will start in safe mode but with your network (Ethernet) port working. If your PC is wired to a router, this allows you to use the internet to download antivirus programs and other utilities to help solve your problem.

Support Ends for some Windows XP and Vista Versions

When Does Support for Windows XP and Vista End?

Microsoft Support for Windows Vista (with no service packs installed) ends on April 13, 2010, while support for Windows XP (without Service Pack 3 installed) ends on July 13, 2010. Windows 2000 support will end on July 13, 2010 as well.

There is no Service Pack 3 for the 64-bit version of Windows XP. If you're running the 64-bit version of Windows XP with SP2, you have the latest service pack and will continue to be eligible for support and receive updates until April 8, 2014.

What Does It Mean When Support for My Operating System Ends?

If you are still running a version of Windows where support has ended, it means that version of Windows will no longer receive any updates from the Windows Update or Microsoft Update site. These updates are generally provided for security reasons to help protect the PC from harmful viruses, spyware, malware, and other malicious software.

Windows Update also provides new drivers for your hardware that can improve the reliability of Windows.

Hackers love to take a security vulnerability in Windows and exploit it to their advantage. So, if a vulnerability is found in Windows XP or Windows Vista and you are not running the latest service pack, you will not be protected and will be at risk.

How Can I Tell What Service Pack is Installed?

Follow these steps to discover what Service Pack is installed:

- 1) Click on the Start Button
- 2) Right-click on either My Computer or Computer (depending on your Windows version)
- 3) Click on Properties

On this window, it should tell you which version of Windows along with which service pack is installed. It should also tell you whether you are running a 32 bit or 64 bit version of Windows.

Where can I download the latest Service Pack for Windows?

For Windows XP, click on the following links for more info and to download service pack 3.

Windows XP Service Pack 3 info

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/help/learn-how-to-install-windows-xp-service-pack-3-sp3>

Windows XP Service Pack 3 download

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=5B33B5A8-5E76-401F-BE08-1E1555D4F3D4&displaylang=en>

For Windows Vista, click on the following links for more info and to download Service Pack 2

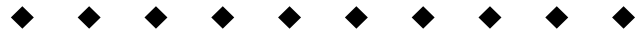
Windows Vista Service Pack 2 info

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-vista/Learn-how-to-install-Windows-Vista-Service-Pack-2-SP2>

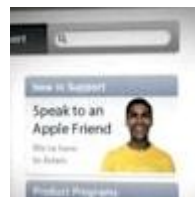
Windows Vista Service Pack 2 download

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/935791>

The value of the Microsoft service packs cannot be overstressed. You can have the best antivirus and anti-spyware programs installed, but with a gaping great hole in your system security, it's like leaving home with your front door wide open!



Got an iPhone but no Friends?



If you have bored your friends senseless with your new iPhone or iPad, then worry not.

According to Onion News, Apple in the US have opened a "Friends Bar", a new service for Apple users where they can talk for hours about their

latest Apple acquisition without getting a beer can thrown at them. If Apple fans flock to their new Nirvana, Apple intend opening "Friend Bars" in the UK and India.

<http://www.theonion.com/video/new-apple-friend-bar-gives-customers-someone-to-ta.17693/#next-page>

What is a Sucker List?



You might have come across the term 'Sucker List' since it was coined by the Office of Fair Trading back in 2005. The organisation has been trying to raise awareness of scams and scamming techniques ever since.

The Internet is the most lucrative market for scammers to compile their suckers lists, but mobile phone, home phone and text scams all operate the same way, with increasingly sophisticated tactics being used to encourage people to part with their money.

Put simply, a sucker list is a list of people that scammers consider to be gullible enough to fall for their tricks. Have you ever responded to one of those annoying 'you have won lots of money' e-mails without thinking? If so, did you notice an increase in the size of your spam mail folder afterwards? You wouldn't be alone. It's estimated by the OFT that 73 per cent of adults have received a scam e-mail in the past year. The scammers wouldn't bother sending these pointless e-mails if there weren't people out there who were gullible enough to fall for them, and when they find you, they won't let you go in a hurry.

It's not Just E-mails...

You might be very e-mail savvy, have every spam filter under the sun and never disclose your details over a dubious looking mail link – but would you respond to a text? That's another rich source of revenue for the suckers lists as the OFT research showed that around 12 per cent of people had received what they later realised was a spam text. Another place becoming increasingly popular with people willing to part you from your money before you can say, "Sucker list" are social networking sites – why would you actually want to pay an unknown website just to see what a 'friend' has said about you? Don't do it. If you're concerned about whether your friends think you are 'hot', why not just ask them...

An Expensive Mistake?

The OFT said that consumers were losing £3.5bn a year to this type of fraud. The sucker list is big business – people who genuinely believe they have won great sums of money in foreign lotteries they don't recall entering, and people who can be convinced to buy goods they don't need from dubious websites aren't as hard to find as you might think. Around two million adults admitted to responding to a scam in one twelve month period, and nearly half of them (49 per cent) had lost more than £50. Spare a thought for the five per cent had who had lost £5,000 or more.

The trouble is that once you've fallen victim to a scam, you will almost certainly be targeted again. There are legions of people with nothing better to do than buy details of people who have fallen for scams, just so that they can see whether they are trusting enough to do it again. Three in 10 adults heard more from the same scammer who had already ripped them off, with 54 per cent being asked to send them money, and 36 per cent being pressed for personal details.

How to Avoid the Sucker List

The most effective way to avoid appearing on one of these lists is to never give your personal or contact details to any company, unless you trust them or have approached them legitimately.

Of course, never ever follow a link from a bank or building society e-mail that asks you to 'log in'. This won't just give away your details, it will give away a lot of your hard earned cash. Banks are wise to scammers and as a result they never ask you to give them your log in details via e-mail.

Don't give your bank details to companies online unless they are recognised retailers.

Never give your details out to people you don't know on social networking sites.

Follow all this advice and with any luck, it won't be your details appearing on the next sucker list!

Reproduced courtesy of www.SafeFromScams.co.uk staying safe from scams

Computer Doctors comment.

It's easy enough to check a companies credentials on their website. You can see ours at:

www.computerdoctors.co.uk/pages/quilds.htm

That's not to say that they cannot be fake, but services like Trustkeeper check our site and systems independently every month. Scam websites would be unlikely to go to these extreme lengths.

A Free Online Tune up Trashed my System

Ask the Doctor*

A Customer tried a tool that promised to improve his Win7 networking speed. Instead, it trashed his networking setup.

"I recently purchased a new Dell Studio XPS 9000 computer with Windows 7 Ultimate. It worked fine when I received it, but I thought the network connection was a bit slow so I ran an Internet speed tester on it. At the completion of the speed test, I allowed it to change some of the networking settings to improve the speed. What it actually did was make the computer impossible to connect to the Internet after that.

"Unfortunately, the saved default settings were lost and I was not able to restore the original settings to the computer. Although I back up religiously, I did not back up prior to this fix and my existing backup was very outdated.

"Now, three months later, almost every download is still corrupt, especially if it is 10 MB in size or larger. Images are often corrupt as well.

"I have tried download managers, but they often do not help in this situation. I have also tried resetting WinSock and TCP/IP settings (netsh.exe), to no avail. Since both the older computers work on my network, I do not believe my router or any other part of the network is failing — only my tweak to improve Windows 7 seems to be the problem.

"Any help you could provide, would be greatly appreciated."

First, let's try to prevent other readers from having the same problem. Earlier versions of Windows (including XP) can sometimes benefit from a deep-geek tweak of their internal networking parameters. But Win7 and Vista automatically adjust themselves to network conditions. This means they usually can set themselves up as well — or better — than manual or third-party tools can.

In short, with Win7 or Vista, you usually don't need (and shouldn't use) third-party network-tweaking tools.

OK, now on to the repair. You may be able to reset Win7's network settings by following the steps in Microsoft's "Setting up a home network".

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Setting-up-a-home-network>

The article looks pretty shallow at first glance, but there's good info if you drill down through the article's many links.

Windowsnetworking.com also offers a nicely detailed walk-through of the Win7 network setup process in their article, "Windows 7: Understanding network administration and configuration."

http://www.windowsnetworking.com/articles_tutorials/Windows-7-Understanding-Network-Administration-Configuration.html

If still-stronger medicine is called for, sometimes the best and most-effective fix for any seriously messed up hardware subsystem or device (networking, video, audio, and such) is to make Windows completely forget all about the current device and to treat it as if it were a brand-new, freshly installed piece of hardware.

It's easy to do in all Windows versions. Under Control Panel/System, click on the Hardware tab. Next, open Device Manager, right-click the malfunctioning device, and select the Driver tab. Choose the Uninstall option and reboot. When Windows restarts, it will detect the device as new hardware and set it up from scratch. (See Figure 1.)

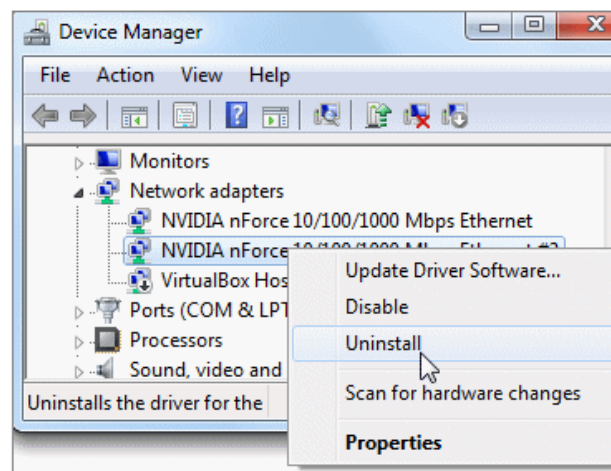


Figure 1. The Windows 7 Device Manager with one of the network cards selected and about to be uninstalled.

The specifics of accessing and using Device Manager vary a bit by Windows version. Here are links to the appropriate Microsoft instructions:

Support article 283658, "How to manage devices in Windows XP"

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/283658/en-us>

Windows Help & How-to page, "Open Device Manager" (Vista/Win7)

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-vista/Open-Device-Manager>

One of those approaches should do the trick for you.

* For new customers, "Ask the Doctor" is our free email support service and can be accessed from:

<http://www.computerdoctors.co.uk/pages/askthedoc.htm>

Please be specific and give as much detail as possible.

For great Deals, Don't buy new, buy REFURB!

Under the distance selling regulations a non business user can buy a laptop or PC via the internet, then a week later change their mind and send it back. This allows the purchaser to try the product and return it if it's not quite what they thought.



Acer Aspire 5542, Turion-2 M500 dual core processor, 4Gb RAM, 640Gb drive, HDMI, Radeon HD Graphics, surround sound, webcam, wireless -N network. Windows 7 64 bit Home Premium **£449 inc vat (Grade A)**

There is nothing wrong with that, it provides a cool off period where the purchaser can return the product for any reason.

This does give the retailer a problem however, what to do with a product that has torn packaging and covered in finger marks. They can't sell it as new, for obvious reason, so the manufacturers agree to take them back to check them over and sell them back to the retailer as refurbished.

Most items returned within the week and need little doing to them are classified Grade A. Generally the manufacturer will always replace the operating system image just in case the original purchaser input any personal information, but for the most part its just a clean up and repackaging that's required.

Grade A purchases are a great deal. You get up to 20% of the normal price and still get a brand new product with all the manu-

facturers warranty. We are always looking for grade A laptops and PC's as these offer best value.

Once passed grade A, refurbishment carries on down the line and can include laptops and PC's that are two years old. Various companies carry out refurbishments, but the best ones are carried out by the original manufacturer themselves and are usually sought after by retailers. We only stock manufacturer refurbished products.

Dell Inspiron, Pentium 2.2GHZ Processor, 2Gb RAM, 250Gb drive, Windows Vista Home Premium. Professionally refurbished by Dell. 6 months Warranty. **£199.95 inc vat**



Dell is well known for its refurbished PC towers. Its not so much a refurbishment, more a total rebuild. They test every piece of hardware and replace if necessary and always install a new Windows software image. Sometimes the packaging leaves a bit to be desired, but you can't beat the exceptional value.

They may not be the latest cutting edge technology, but for someone who just wants to surf the internet, check their emails and write a few letters, they are ideal. A quality manufactured product at a quarter of the price.

At the end of the day, no matter how good a deal it is, some people just do not want to buy a refurbished PC, even if its Grade A.

If you are one of those, then take a look at the rest of our PC's and laptops at our Northampton shop.

New PC's at: www.computerdoctors.co.uk/shop/desktop.htm or laptops at: www.computerdoctors.co.uk/pages/notebooks.htm.

We don't just sell out of the box. All our new PC's and laptops have been tuned by our engineers for maximum performance. We remove unnecessary software and startup items. Install antivirus and antispysware software. These are not trials that you have to pay extra for, but full products with 12 months free updates.

We connect to Microsoft's website and install the latest critical updates and service packs to make your new PC as protected as possible once you get it connected to the internet. If you want, we can transfer data from your old PC and set up your new PC at your home or office to integrate with your existing equipment.

A new PC user will take a while to get used to their new PC or laptop, so we include a month's free use of our remote support service, where our engineers take control of your PC remotely and sort out any problems you may have while you watch.

You could go to Tesco or PC World to buy a new PC or laptop, or come to us and pay a very similar price but know that overall, you have the best value for money that you can get.



Toshiba Satellite L500, Intel T6600 dual core processor, 3Gb RAM, 250Gb drive, Webcam, Windows 7 home premium, top build quality for: **£449 inc vat (Grade A)**

Four minute Boot-Up is easily fixed.

Ask the Doctor

A customer's PC has plenty of power, but it's taking forever to boot. They've tried all the normal speed-up steps, but none worked. (The PC is running XP, but the answer applies to all versions of Windows.)

"My Dell Inspiron, with 2.7GHz Quadcore CPU, 3GB RAM, and XP Pro, takes over four minutes to boot".

"I reduced the number of icons on the desktop, reduced to a minimum the start-up programs, and ran some commercial tune-up tools, all to no avail".

"I have Trend Micro AV and TurtleBeach audio running at start-up, and that's about it. During all that time, the hard drive is continuously running.

"Any suggestions?"

You've already done the most important first step — reducing the amount of software trying to run at start-up. But you can do more by reducing the amount of information Windows has to identify, index, check, parse, or otherwise deal with at start-up. Taken together, the following tweaks can make a noticeable difference:

Clean the Registry. Removing dead, obsolete, and broken Registry file references reduces the time Windows takes to load the Registry into memory and parse it. Probably the best of the free, easy-to-use cleaners is Piriform's **CCleaner** (Available from our download page).

Shrink the Recycle Bin. Windows sets up enormous Recycle Bins by default; they can consume hundreds of gigabytes on a large drive. Pare this down to a reasonable size by right-clicking the Recycle Bin and selecting Properties. Next, reset the amount of disk space used by the Recycle Bin. (See Fig 1) I usually use 500 MB (0.5GB) as a starting point on large disks and 250MB (0.25GB) on smaller ones.

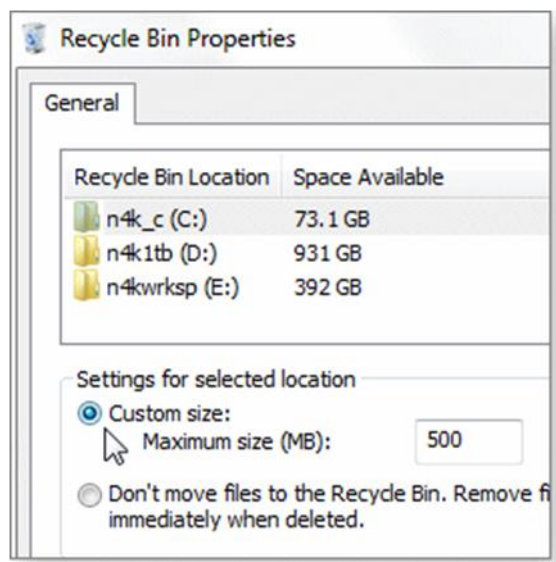


Fig.1

Trim the browser caches. Newer browsers don't retain as much content as older versions, but even they can have huge caches — and Windows has to track and manage it all. For each of the leading browsers, use the following steps to reduce cache size:

Internet Explorer: Click Tools and Internet Options; then, under the Browsing History section, click Settings. Once the settings are open, you can adjust the capacity of the cache to

a smaller amount. (See Figures 2) I typically use a 50MB Internet cache — plenty for normal surfing on standard broadband.

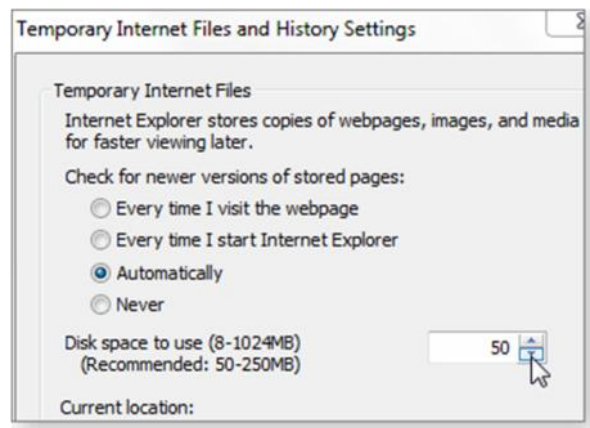


Fig.2

Firefox: This browser's cache-size adjustment is similar to IE's. Click Tools, Options; then click Advanced. Under the Network tab, look for the settings box in the Offline Storage section.

Chrome: The only way I've found to adjust Chrome's cache size is with a command-line switch, as described on a Chrome Help forum page. www.google.com/support/forum/p/Chrome/thread?tid=098d42a41aacdc6d&hl=en

Defrag, defrag, and defrag again. Hard-drive files neatly packaged into long, unbroken chains load faster than those whose segments are scattered all over the drive. Most defraggers also move the most-used or first-accessed files to the front of the disk, further speeding load times.

All versions of Windows have competent defraggers built in or available. For instructions on using them, click Start, open the Help system, and then search Help using the keyword defrag.

Try a different anti-malware tool. Temporarily uninstall Trend Micro and try a smaller, AV tool such as Avast (from our download page). If Trend Micro's software is causing your slowdown, you should see a big speed improvement with Avast.

After all that, if your boot times still aren't what you'd like, here are some resources for deeper tweaking.

For XP: TweakXP.com's index page of performance tweaks & tips www.tweakxp.com/performance_tweaks.aspx

Microsoft's article, "Restore your computer's performance with Windows XP" www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/setup/expert/northrup_restoreperf.msp

For Windows 7 and Vista:

Microsoft's article, "Optimize Windows Vista for better performance" <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Optimize-Windows-Vista-for-better-performance>

Our download page: www.computerdoctors.co.uk/pages/links.htm

The modern hard drive is a failure waiting to happen!

It's a known fact that as hard drives get larger and more data is crammed into the same space, drives get more unreliable. The number of read errors on a modern drive has increased a thousand fold in ten years.



The only reason that most modern drives are not now used as door stops is the huge improvement in error correction algorithms they now use.

Hard drive manufacturers can, and do, make very reliable drives for high end equipment costing 6-10 times the amount normally paid for the drive in the average home or office PC.

3 years ago a 1Tb drive cost £1,000 now you can get one for £65. As with all things these days, the public want CHEAP and they'll worry about reliability when it goes wrong!

Unfortunately, these cheap hard drives house our most treasured possessions, letters, emails, pictures of friends and family. So what do we do when things go wrong?

Well, backup, backup, backup. I am sure you've heard us mention this a few thousand times before. But with hard drives as they are, you can't afford to ignore your backups.

If you do have a problem then the computer engineer's favourite comes into play. No engineer worth his salt would not know how to use **CHKDSK** (checkdisk) properly as well as many users who've been saved from the brink by it.

For those not au fait with **chkdsk**, here's a quick intro. It is the Windows error checking program in local disk properties or you can just type it into a run command or command prompt.

Windows' **chkdsk.exe** is an odd tool. Crawling out of the primordial ooze that was early DOS, **chkdsk** could find and fix several types of errors that were all too common to disk structures based on the simple File Allocation Table (**FAT**) format.

As DOS evolved in the days of Windows 95 and later editions, **chkdsk.exe** was supplanted by the somewhat more-capable **scandisk.exe**. But when the NTFS (Windows NT's "New Technology File System") went fully mainstream in Windows 2000 and XP, an enhanced **chkdsk** retook centre stage as Windows' primary disk-repair tool. **Chkdsk.exe** remains a core element of Vista's and Win7's maintenance apps.

Chkdsk's default mode automatically finds and fixes simple disk errors, but you can activate several more-targeted and powerful repair modes via software **switches** — for example, command-line options such as

chkdsk D: /x /r

This command **dismounts** (deactivates) an NTFS-formatted D: drive; closes all open file handles to the drive to help prevent any software from interfering with the scan; fixes any errors found on the disk; and attempts to recover information from any bad sectors. This is far more than a simple **chkdsk** command will do on its own.

Microsoft's online XP **Chkdsk** documentation http://www.microsoft.com/resources/documentation/windows/xp/all/proddocs/en-us/bootcons_chkdsk.msp?mfr=true explains how it works, lists all seven available software switches, and provides information on how to use them.

That documentation is XP-specific, but **chkdsk** works essentially the same in Vista and Win7.

But despite the improvements, **chkdsk** is still not the ultimate disk repair tool. If it's your bad luck to encounter one of those more-stubborn errors, I suggest you try a disk diagnostic/repair utility such as Seagate's free "SeaTools" <http://www.seagate.com/www/en-us/support/downloads/seatools> which can work on many non-Seagate drives, too.

Use the DOS version of SeaTools, if you can, to avoid any interference from your Windows-based software.

If all else fails, we have two high end commercial programs at our Northampton workshop that we use to recover unreadable data and replace damaged hard drive sectors. Prices start at around £70.00 and can take a couple of days just to scan the drive.

Chkdsk will try just 50 times to try and retrieve data from a damaged sector, but commercial software will keep scanning and trying all its error correction techniques until it's absolutely sure it's got as much as it can.

This is one instance when a fast repair is definitely a poor repair. If your repairer says he can fix it in a couple of hours, then they are not using the best software available.

This can make a 50% difference in the amount of data recovered, so it pays to be patient.

Save money if you have a 3G mobile dongle.

If you use a mobile dongle for your broadband when you're out and about, and a normal broadband at home or work, it's worth minimising your data use via the dongle as it's more expensive. Here are a few tricks:

Turn off automatic updates. This is probably the most important way to save download allowance, and the easiest way to get caught out. Many programs, as well as operating systems themselves, routinely check for available updates and download them. Downloads can run to hundreds of megabytes; not ideal if that's all you have to play with. Turn them back on when you have the bandwidth though, or you might leave security holes open on your machine.

Turn off images when you surf. If you're content to do without pictures when browsing (even just temporarily) then it's usually easy to disable them. In Internet Explorer, click Tools, then the 'advanced' tab, and scroll down the list to Multimedia. In that section, uncheck the 'show pictures' box and while you're there, the Play animations in webpage's box. The procedure's similar in all browsers.

Change your email settings. If you currently manage your emails with a program like Outlook or Thunderbird (and you get a lot of unnecessary ones), you may save data by signing up to a web-based service like MS Live Hotmail, Yahoo Mail or Gmail. Re-direct some emails to the web-based account, and if a friend decides to send you party pictures when you're away in Spain, you can choose not to download them 'til you get back. You could also change your settings to download headers only, or else set up filters which cut out less important or larger emails. How to do so will depend on the software you favour, but most offer detailed guides.

Get rid of Ad/Spyware. Adware and spyware programs, which usually manage to sneak onto your machine without you noticing, can use up your valuable allowance by talking to their leaders out in cyberspace. They can also leave your computer prone to attack by all manner of other nasties, so it's worth downloading a free tool to get rid of them (on another connection if possible). See our download page www.computerdoctors.co.uk/pages/links.htm.

Grab special software and halve costs: OnSpeed
OnSpeed is special software which compresses data to improve website load times. It's ideal for mobile broadband, as it both increases speed slightly and reduces data use. You can set and amend the level of compression yourself, and the results are often impressive. Its website claims speed increases of 8 times and cost savings of up to 90%, and while these have to be seen to be believed, it's definitely worth considering. The software costs £24.99 for a 12-month subscription. It's not something that we would recommend for normal broadband use but it could save you money on a mobile connection.

www.onspeed.com

"No-Frills" PC tower a Hit

Even we were taken by surprise by the demand for our new "No-Frills" PC tower. Within a couple of days of release we had no stock, which was a bit embarrassing as we are assembling these ourselves and handling the 12 months warranty direct.

A bit of overtime all round, soon rectified the situation and now we are keeping up. Even some local PC repairers are buying them and selling them to their own customers. (But don't forget when you buy from us, you buy at trade price).



Our software supplier quickly pointed out that for us to install the customer's old Windows version, (a £40.00 option on purchase) their Windows would have to be a retail version and not an OEM version. (one supplied with the PC).

This is true, but I'm sure the finer points of the Windows licence agreements are completely ignored by most end users.

Suffice it to say that if we install your old Windows on a new No-Frills PC, then it will have to be a retail version. All our customers so far have either installed Windows themselves or opted for the Windows 7 option. Even with the latest operating system it's still great value at **£239.90** or if you want to install your old copy of Windows, just **£149.95** both prices include vat.

i3 Still thin on the Ground

Intel still cannot make enough of its new i3 processors to satisfy demand. At the moment only the big manufacturers are getting supplies and they are making hay while the sun shines by charging whopping prices.

If you don't want to pay through the nose, we have just got stock of Vipers new i3 so if you are looking for a class act, give us a call while stocks last.



The spec includes 4Gb of DDR-3 RAM, 1,000Gb (1Tb) SATA hard drive as well as the amazing Intel i3 processor. The on-board Intel graphics are the best we've seen but if you need the extra punch there is a 1Gb GF9800GT PCI-Ex card as an option.

<http://www.computerdoctors.co.uk/shop/desktop.htm>

View from the Backside



Being an "old git", I can remember my younger days, but I can honestly say that I absolutely, never, ever, thought about how I would manage in my dotage.

As time goes on however, important little questions start to pop into your mind. Like, why has my hair stopped growing on my head and instead is forcing its way out of my ears. And, who will wipe my chin and change my nappies when I'm completely gaga.

Well, David Cameron was told the answer by Gordon Brown in a dream... apparently.

When we finally go doolally, we each get to share a "care assistant" with 49 other incontinent hopefuls, on a time share basis. Our 5 available minutes a day will be spent being force fed porridge to keep our bowels "flexible".

And for this, you pay just £50,000!

Not got it?

No worries, David will cream it from the sale of your house when you finally hit the snooze button.

If you've got no house, then look away now!

We've been recycling car parts for years, so why not utilise any of your good bits left over. Why make the NHS pay £2,500 for a brand new stainless steel hip joint, when you have two perfectly good ones going spare. Your debt gets reduced which then gets passed to your descendants. (not quite the inheritance they were expecting).

Other suggestions for recouping the care costs are: cannibalism, actually suggested by an Austrian scientist, (the EU immediately opposed this on the grounds that it would decimate the European livestock industry), compulsory euthanasia at age 30, so that spare parts are worth more, and stringing up David Cameron, his cabinet and anyone that owns a castle, butchering them and selling them off for spare parts. (Although this last one is unlikely to get through the House of Lords)

So if you're an old git like me, with arthritis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, failing memory, we might be the lucky ones, we might not live long enough to be ensconced into the care system. Our last recorded words could be, "Blimey, hit by a truck, that's a bit of luck".

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If this has been passed to you from a friend and you would like your own regular copy, just go to:

www.computerdoctors.co.uk/newsletter



Map to our Northampton Workshop
www.computerdoctors.co.uk/pages/map.htm

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