

Take stock and keep your information safe

Crash catastrophe! Everyone likes their computer to be 'just so'. In other words, all their favourite programs working, passwords stored, icons in the right place and so on. With that in mind it is a good idea to know what you use from day to day. I'm often involved in recovering and re-installing customers' computers after a hard drive failure or similar disasters. In these sort of unfortunate instances it is important to know this sort of information, so we can recover the correct data, and know which programs to re-install. Programs cannot be transferred from one disk to another. For instance, which program do you use for your email? It could be Windows Live Mail, Thunderbird, Incredimail, Outlook or emClient. All these programs store their data in different locations. And if you ever have to start again you will need to know your email username and password. What is your favourite web browser? Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer. You may have website passwords like Amazon or other shopping sites 'remembered' on your existing set up, but do you have a note of them if you ever had to type them in? Start making a list just in case.

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Back it up! With all the above in mind, we come back to a favourite subject that everyone probably knows about and has all good intentions of, but do you put it into practice? I have encountered a few cases recently of customers who have had software to do the job of backing up for them, only to discover that it hasn't been working for a long time, or the external drive has failed. So the moral of the story is, do you know if you have backup software running? What is it, how often is it backing up, do you know where to? Have you checked your files on the backup device (external hard drive, memory stick etc) to see if they are the most recent versions? If you have any doubts, then contact us to arrange a home visit to set up a suitable back up plan.

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Google Earth is a brilliant program that lets you look at just about anywhere in the world right down to street level. If you've never tried it, just download it free today from <https://www.google.com/earth/download/gep/agree.html> It is available for computer, tablet and smart phone. Also, did you know you can now view not just the Earth, but our Sky, the Moon and even Mars (but not in street view)! Just click on the small 'planet icon' on the top toolbar.

Window too big! You may have found on certain occasions, like filling in a form for instance, that the window you are working on seems to fill the whole screen and you cannot get to the OK button located at the bottom. In this instance try re-sizing the window by dragging in the corners. Just move your cursor to any one of the corners and wait for it to turn to a double headed arrow, then drag to decrease the size to try and make it fit your screen.

Window too small! If you're struggling to read page, a good trick that works with most programs particularly when you're online, is to use the zoom function. To do this hold down the CTRL key and press the + key in order to increase the size of a page. Press the - to go back down again.

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Tab key. This key is a leftover from the old typewriter keyboard, and doesn't get much use nowadays, but it can come in handy. In the sort of scenario mentioned above, you can use the *tab* key to jump from one box to another, and even down to the OK button which you can then just press the enter key on the keyboard to complete, if you can't click on it.

Switching between programs. Here is another use of the *Tab* key. If you have a few program windows open at the same time, you can hold down the *Alt* key and press *Tab* to see all the open windows and switch between them each time you press *Tab*.

Ergonomic Mouse. Visiting a regular customer recently who uses an ergonomic pointing device reminded me just how many different types there are on the market. So, if you have any dexterity or repetitive strain issues with your hands and find a normal mouse difficult to control just search online for an ergonomic mouse, they come in all shapes, sizes and prices.

Security Central:

If you haven't already upgraded to ESET Internet Security, now is the time to do it. And for anyone who hasn't tried ESET yet, don't just take my word what an excellent product it is, go to the website <https://www.eset.com/uk/home/free-trial/> and download a **free one-month** trial! Just make sure you uninstall any existing anti virus you may have, even if it has expired. For prices, upgrades and licences – just give us a call.

Telephone scam – yes, I must mention this again. There has been another spate of unsolicited calls to computer users in this area purporting to be from Microsoft (who they are not) offering to fix problems with your computer (which they won't) and then fraudulently taking money for their non-existent services. If you get such calls, and they can be very persistent, tell them you are not interested, or that you have a local computer specialist, or that you don't have a computer!

Remember to look on my website for copies of the current and previous two articles where they can be read, downloaded or printed. And if you are considering investing a new computer you will also find on there my popular article on 'things to consider when buying a new computer. Or if you would like a copy sent by email, just drop me line.

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