

Winter Newsletter 2011

This is our first newsletter for some while and I hope you find it interesting and informative.

2010 was a busy year for us, with a lot of new customers. We built a record number of PCs for customers and supplied a record number of laptops. Broadband connection problems and maintaining PC security, especially from viruses and spyware, were the major problems customers faced during the year, especially for those still running Windows XP. Whilst Vista and Windows 7 are less susceptible to viruses, they can still be infected and are often more difficult to repair when they are. PC Health checks continued to be popular.

Which is the best Anti-Virus Software?

As a result of our recent experience we have changed our advice on Anti-virus products. We now recommend Norton Anti-virus 2011 as our standard anti-virus package. It has improved significantly over previous versions and is now recognised as being the most effective on the market. Using less system resources than previous versions, it is less likely to slow your PC down than it's sister products, Norton Internet Security and Norton 360 (which can slow older PCs down to a crawl). The free edition of AVG is still available as a download on the Internet, although we only recommend it where cost is an issue - it's a case of 'you get what you pay for...'.

Beware of Telephone Scams...

We have heard of a growing number of cases where customers have been telephoned by someone claiming to be from Microsoft (or Windows) who says they have noticed that the PC has been infected with viruses and offering to repair the damage. Most customers who have reported this to us politely put the phone down on the scammers but several were caught out. In those cases, the scammer spent several hours supposedly fixing the problem at the cost of £120.

From what we can tell the whole idea was to scan the PC for credit card details, user names and passwords for email and on-line store accounts, as well as for any personal information that they could use to 'clone' the target's identity. In one case, they were remotely controlling the PC for 4 hours, plenty enough time to copy all correspondence, documents etc. to their server. Our clients had to reset all their passwords and notify their banks and credit card companies of the breach. The scammers immediately cloned their email accounts and began sending spam email to people on their address list. As a result, the clients had to discontinue their email accounts, open new ones with new email addresses and tell all their contacts of the attack, warning them to ignore any emails from their old address and tell them of their new address.

This was an expensive experience for the two customer's involved. Not only were they conned out of £120, but as the scammer could have installed hidden software, to capture credit card details for example, we had to reformat the hard drives and reload Windows etc. We also had to install the latest security software.

The reality is that Microsoft (or indeed anyone else) do not monitor your PC and, consequently, will not know if it is either infected with a virus or has another problem. The scammers seem to be based in India or Pakistan and are very clever and very persuasive. It is easy to be fooled if you are not on your guard. This is becoming an international problem with reports of people being scammed as far away as USA and Australia.

PC Health Checks...

Given the current economic climate most users are holding onto their PCs for as long as they can. We find that regular PC health checks can keep your PC going for longer by removing unnecessary clutter and optimising the hard drive. We also check anti-virus status and PC security, and make sure you have a back-up process in place. Current price of an on-site Health Check is £55 + VAT. *However, if you book a call before the 1st March 2011 we will throw in a copy of Norton Antivirus 2011 for £19.99 + VAT.*

New PCs etc...

Clearly, there is only so much that we can do to keep an old PC going. It comes to a point where it is more cost effective to replace an old PC. We can custom build your new PC, deliver it and transfer data from your old one. We only use well tested, quality, components to ensure reliability. Despite that, we are often very competitive with the big store chains. Prices for a replacement system box (i.e. retaining your old screen etc.) start at £299 + VAT. A good 'business grade' PC, suitable for home or office use, starts at £399 + VAT. Each PC comes with a 12 months on-site warranty. Please contact Bob or Roger for a quotation – 01275 857990

Monitor prices continue to fall, with 22" monitors available for as little as £99 + VAT. We can also supply wireless keyboards and mice, Wireless Routers, 3G broadband dongles and a wide range of other PC related equipment.

Software Prices...

Norton Anti-virus 2011 (single user version) - £24.99 +. VAT,
Norton Internet Security 2011 (single user version) - £29.99 + VAT.
Microsoft Office 2010 - Professional Edition - £269.99 + VAT
Microsoft Office 2010 - Home and Business Edition - £189.99 + VAT
Microsoft Office 2010 - Home and Student Edition - £99.99 + VAT

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