

CornerStone Hints & Tips

| Issue | How to... |
|--|--|
| Bullguard settings | Settings: General, Main: tick <i>Minimize notifications</i> . Updates: Check for updates: select <i>Every hour</i> . Antivirus Tuning: tick <i>Scan only files loaded for execution</i> . Misc: tick <i>Preserve last access timestamp on files</i> . |
| Qihoo 360 settings | <i>Protection, Configure, Custom</i> tick all except <i>Avira</i> (unless ≥4GB RAM & ≥2.4GHz CPU). <i>Apply, Menu, Settings, Active Protection, System, USB Drive Protection</i> tick <i>When Inserted...</i> <i>Potentially Unwanted Program Blocking, Enable...</i> When sandbox prompts for unknown program, select <i>Run for</i> programs you know to be safe, else <i>Run in Sandbox</i> . |
| ZoneAlarm settings | <i>Firewall Details, View Zones</i> change <i>Public</i> to <i>Trusted</i> else blocks secure websites (e.g. banking, shopping, email, etc.). Do NOT install the Anti-Virus component... it'll conflict with Qihoo & heavily slow down Windows! |
| Maxthon MX5 settings | <i>Menu, Settings, General, search engine</i> (i.e. NOT Google!), <i>Keep Maxthon...</i> <i>Advanced, Show Favourite...</i> <i>Ultra Mode, Spell Check language, Customize UserAgent...</i> select browser (if website needs specific browser). <i>Menu, View, Status bar, Switch Core...</i> <i>ABP...</i> options. <i>Enable...</i> untick <i>Allow some...</i> . Copy URLs from easylist to for additional filters. |
| Opera settings | <i>Menu, Opera Turbo</i> (if slow internet). <i>Settings, Basic, Block ads...</i> <i>Manage Lists</i> choose. <i>Battery saver</i> : tick all (if notebook). <i>Cookies, Block third party...</i> <i>Browser, Settings, Search engine</i> (i.e. NOT Google!), <i>User interface...</i> <i>previews, Privacy & security, Send...</i> |
| Browser bookmarks & passwords | In case of system crash or HDD failure, to prevent loss of stored bookmarks, passwords & settings, most web browsers support creating an online account to sync local & online values, shared between each device running browser. |
| Klite Mega Codec Pack install settings | <i>Expert, Profile 9, Lots of stuff, Decoding Method, native</i> & tick all boxes. tick <i>Download subtitles automatically, Enable OSD, Use bicubic resizer, Enable volume normalization, Remember playback position</i> , decline offers. |
| Hard disc drive (HDD) problems? (not UEFI BIOS compatible) | ALL hard disc drives (HDD) fail, so if computer running slow for no apparent reason, a FREE diagnostic program can check status, test & (maybe) repair errors: <i>HDATA2 (hdat2.com)</i> , download latest ISO or EXE & write ISO contents to CDR (use <i>ImgBurn, Nero</i> , etc) or use <i>Rufus</i> (see page#2) to create bootable USB & copy file. Boot CD (you may need to change SATA/AHCI to IDE/ATA in BIOS (press F2/F10/Del before boot) first) & select HDD type or boot USB & type file name. Select HDD to test. <i>SMART Menu, Read Log Menu</i> & check for error details: READ or WRITE errors mean HDD is no longer reliable. <i>HDATA2</i> can perform <i>SMART short & extended</i> tests (<i>SMART Menu, Routine Menu</i>) to check if SMART errors are within tolerance. Check <i>Read Attribute Data</i> , look for current/pending sector errors - <i>HDATA2</i> can check these via: <i>Device tests menu</i> , select test ('most powerful' is the most thorough, but could take days!) - this 'surface repair' can possibly make an unreadable drive, readable again! Backup data files BEFORE running test. In Windows, <i>HDD Guardian</i> (hddguardian.codeplex.com) shows status & can run tests, but can't repair errors. HDD defrag will give no appreciable performance gains, but will help wear out drive & can actually make it slower! |
| HDD or RAM diagnostic CD only £2.50 each | If getting memory (RAM) errors or system is unstable, there's a FREE diagnostic program to run a thorough RAM check: memtest86.com, click <i>Download</i> , free ISO or USB, save & unpack ZIP file, write ISO contents to CDR (use <i>ImgBurn, Nero</i> , etc) or run included program to create bootable USB. Boot it & any errors indicate faults or incompatibility. |
| Memory (RAM) problems? | Dust clogs up fans & air vents causing components to overheat & burn out! This can often be a costly repair, sometimes more than computer is worth! Check regularly for dust build up & clean when necessary. Thermal paste (between chip & heatsink) should be replaced if dried out. We charge £20 for this service. If portable computers have air vents on base or contain mechanical (rather than solid state) hard disc drive, they MUST be used on flat & steady surface to limit overheating & drive damage. In addition, Windows licence sticker (XP/Vista/7) can wear off & costs over £80 to replace! Using fan cooler pad under computer will help keep it cool & extend usable life. Since battery is for portable use, after charging, remove it when mains powered (switch off first!) else over-charging will reduce battery capacity (it'll need to be 'topped up' about once a quarter as if it dissipates to zero, that'll kill battery quickly!) Alternatively, to prevent data loss on open files during a power cut, as most batteries only cost £15-£20, let it die & just replace it! |
| Portable computer use, cleaning & batteries | If you have important files (e.g. documents, pictures, videos, etc) then make sure they're kept backed up, ideally, EVERY time they change! Hard disc drives fail or infections can corrupt files! Use external hard disc, USB flash or on-line storage. If you can, keep multiple backups on different devices, in case of 'ransomware' encryption! |
| Data backup | If hardware isn't working in Windows, to confirm whether it's a hardware or software issue, boot from live Linux CD (see page#3) which supports almost all hardware... if it works in Linux, it's a Windows problem, if not, it's faulty hardware. |
| Hardware or software? | Before installing Windows, make sure only one hard disc drive is connected (so can't install to wrong drive) &, if possible, download & copy device drivers (not needed if have internet access on another computer or driver CD). |
| Installing Windows | Check link on browser status bar BEFORE downloading software/files & when installing, select <i>custom options</i> to exclude unwanted settings or other software! These are common methods for how adware/malware gets installed. |
| Downloading & installing | <i>WSUS Offline Update (wsusoffline.net)</i> quickly downloads updates for Windows 7/8/10 & can install while offline. Windows 7 can take days(!) for full updates: these security rollups & 'SP2' fix this: catalog.update.microsoft.com, download & install: KB3202369, KB3172605, KB3179573, KB4022719 & KB325574 (SP2). |
| Windows updates | Windows does NOT automatically create restore points when programs are installed, but if you create them yourself, before making any changes to Windows, you'll have known, working settings to restore to. |
| Windows restore points | If you use a <i>Microsoft account</i> (email address) to login to Windows, make sure you also create a <i>local account</i> as if you forget your password (or it gets corrupted), only a <i>local account</i> can have the password reset (we charge £5). |
| Windows password | Criminals use <i>port scanners</i> probing ALL internet connections. Your firewall should block these, but if you have a 'backdoor' software vulnerability, they can access your computer! To limit this, use a proxy server (e.g. <i>opends.com</i> or <i>cornodo.com</i>) where your internet is routed through another computer that filters attacks & caches web pages for safer & faster browsing. |
| Secure internet connection | <i>Google</i> themselves say they're NOT a search engine - they're a <i>content provider</i> . They list mostly sponsored links, including malicious websites. <i>Yahoo & Bing</i> find substantially more applicable hits & are far safer. |
| Search engine | Use webmail (e.g. <i>outlook.com</i>) so when you change ISP, you don't lose email address (e.g. <i>yourname@talktalk.net</i>). For SPAM email, NEVER unsubscribe else you've confirmed address is 'live' & you'll get far more & malicious emails! |
| eMail | Proper start menu: <i>Classic Shell</i> (classicshell.net). Select middle layout option for a Windows 7-like menu. |
| Windows 8/10 | If <i>AutoPlay</i> is enabled, infected USB flash drives can automatically infect Windows & Windows infections can automatically infect/corrupt USB flash drives when inserted! Disable <i>AutoPlay</i> via <i>Control Panel (use TweakUI in XP)</i> . |
| Auto play | Never buy a USB modem - get a MIFI router - no software, setup or cables & supports up to 5 WIFI devices. |
| 3/4G internet | To check if PSU is sufficient to power PC, add up each component's amps & check PSU's lowest *12v has at least minimum required. Graphics cards often need more than 30amps on their own & PSU will go bang if overloaded! |
| PC Power Supply Unit | If notebook getting no image on screen but back light illuminated, turns on but shuts off immediately, beeps & no display, has distorted video, works with external monitor but not on internal or failed to work after installing graphics driver, then it's most likely failing BGA chip & as repair costs £99-£129, it's only cost effective for high-end notebooks! |
| Failing (BGA) graphics chip | Older Epson printers can have ink chip reset so can print till ink runs out, rather than chip saying empty: <i>ssclg.com</i> , click Epson CS1C, English version, download & install, select printer & close. Right click icon for new reset & clean options. |
| Epson chip | Admiral Casino, Bognor Town, Brewers Fayre, Butlins, The Carlton Hotel, Costa, The Galleon, Hatters Inn, Howards Café, Lloyds Bank, London Road Coffee Shop, Macari's, Oxfords Bar & Grill, The Railway, William Hardwicke. |
| Bognor Regis WiFi hotspots | <i>sourceforge.net</i> huge library of free & trial software <i>sourceforge.net</i> biggest library of open source software <i>unblocked.cam</i> access to commonly blocked websites |
| Useful websites | <i>gametop.com</i> free, high quality arcade & puzzle games <i>saynoto0870.com</i> lists 'real' landline telephone numbers! <i>interparcel.com</i> UK's premier discounted courier delivery |

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| Item | Good (requires setup) | Bad |
|---|--|--|
| Anti-Virus, Anti-Malware, Anti-Phishing, Anti-SPAM, Firewall, etc... NOTE: 2 or more active security or firewall will heavily slow down computer & cause conflicts! See page#4 for recommended settings. | Bullguard Internet Security (bullguard.com) Blocks & removes viruses, malware, spyware, scams, PUPs, rootkits, phishing, ransomware & spam. Privacy protection, eMail & chat messenger scanning, parental controls with website content filtering, vulnerability checker, safe search & browser settings protection. PC tune-up, self-protection, gaming mode firewall, automatic upgrades & (hourly) updates. 24/7 online support & encrypted online backup to DropBox, OneDrive & Google Drive. Easy to use. 60 day FREE trial. Which? Recommended! 1 year. IPC=£17.99, 3PC=£20.50 (if bought with hardware). | Norton Internet Security/Norton 360 (symantec.com) Regarded by many as world's worst internet security - renowned for low detection & being slow & incompatible! Removal: ftp.symantec.com/public/english_us_canada/removal_tools/Norton_Removal_Tool.exe |
| | Qihoo 360 Total Security (FREE) (360totalsecurity.com) Blocks & removes viruses, malware, spyware, PUPs, phishing & ransomware. Webcam & key logger blocking, browser protection, vulnerability checker, game booster, remote connect, system cleanup & optimize. 5 engines & sandbox. Use with ZoneAlarm FREE Firewall (zonealarm.com). | Intel/McAfee Internet Security (mcafee.com) Low detection, high memory usage & extremely slow! Removal: download.mcafee.com/products/licensed/cust_support_patches/MCPR.exe |
| | WinPatrol (winpatrol.com) - use with any of above Monitors Windows Registry (settings) to allow or undo changes... can prevent infections from auto-starting. | AVG (avg.com) free & paid version! VERY low detection, very slow, no firewall (in free version), extremely high memory usage & they collect & sell user data! The worst antivirus we've ever seen, letting the most infections in (often requiring Windows reinstall!) Removal: download.avg.com/filedir/util/AVG_Remover.exe |
| | Crystal Security (crystalsecurity.eu) - use with any of above. Blocks unknown programs from installing/running via multi-engine cloud based scanning & application white listing. | Microsoft Security Essentials (microsoft.co.uk) Don't bother - they didn't! Like Defender, it's a complete waste of space (always comes last in reviews!) & has no firewall! Windows firewall stops no programs, so use a real one! |
| The automatic Windows 10 upgrade option ended in July 2016, but you can still use Microsoft's <i>Media Creation Tool</i> to manually upgrade or create media for fresh install, using a Windows 7/8 licence. Be mindful 10 is incompatible with a LOT of hardware & software, is slow, reports usage, contains adverts & isn't user-friendly! See page#4 for a better start menu. | Also 'less good'(!): (*) no firewall Ad-Aware(*), Avast(*), Avira(*), ESET, Malwarebytes(*), F-Secure, Panda, Sophos, Spybot(*), Trend Micro. | |
| Anti-Virus detection | Anti-virus will generally find nothing when scanning as anything it knows would have been blocked from getting in! Use anti-malware scanners (see below) & 'no virus detected' is not the same as not being infected - today's infections make great effort to hide themselves & malicious websites (mostly via Google search!), with auto-installing malware, are prime attack methods. | |
| Restricted & emergency access | Most (98%!) malicious software requires administrative access rights to allow it to install/run... Make a password protected 'administrator' account & then set all users to 'standard/limited' to prevent these installing! Or, create an 'emergency access' 'administrator' account that is only used if other accounts get infected/corrupted. | |
| Telephone scams | Callers claim to have detected problems/infections on your computer & charge £100's for a 'bogus' 'support' contract! If you've already been a victim of this scam, contact the police & report it to your bank - you've been robbed! | |
| Ideally, virus/malware scans should be run in 'safe mode with networking' - it's faster & more infections can be removed. | | |
| FREE '2nd chance' anti-malware scanners. Use with active security (above) to remove existing infections. NOT protect against new infections. | AdwCleaner (toolslib.net) Quickly removes adware, toolbars, hijacks & PUPs. | Spyware & browser plug-ins (in IE, Edge, Chrome & Firefox) are far more common & pose a greater threat to Windows security, performance & stability than viruses & will often corrupt Windows or pass on your personal details! Look out for the following scams: programs that pretend to be antivirus & show you're infected, when you're not; programs that claim to speed up or optimize Windows, but only slow it down; fake police messages that say they've detected illegal software/activity & 'fine' you &, most damaging, is ransomware that encrypts your files & demands £100s to decrypt! All are just trying to get bank/card details from you to steal money! Beware of fake reviews & always read user comments from more than one website, looking at both the good & bad reviews. |
| Software updates to help prevent security vulnerabilities | Emsisoft Anti-Malware (emsisoft.com) High detection rate & classifies risk level. Supports low level, heuristic & PUP removal. After trial, click 'try' for free mode. | HerdProtect (herdprotect.com) Cloud based with 68 scanners for high detection rate. Tick anything reported & unticked but in a 'temp' folder. |
| Internet browsers (see page#4 for recommended settings) | Maxthon (MX5) (maxthon.com) Fast, safe & secure browser with built-in pop-up & advert blocker, dual web engines for compatibility & speed, multiple tabs/startup pages/search engines, print preview, mouse gesture control, skins, multi-language spell checker, RSS sniffer, online favourites/notepad/settings, 5GB FREE cloud storage & sharing for Windows / Linux/ Android/iOS, built-in Adobe Flash & PDF support, HTML5, AES 256bit encryption, password manager, anti-spam virtual mailbox, GPU acceleration, split-screen mode, zoom, auto form fill, history cleanup, URL aliases, media sniffer (e.g. YouTube), screen capture, mute, undo, privacy mode, multi-page site thumbnails, download manager, customizable layout, many available plug-ins & available in 43 languages. | Internet Explorer (IE) (microsoft.co.uk) Very basic, slow, incompatible & renowned for poor security whilst browsing (Microsoft say they can't make safe & Edge isn't much better!) Can allow direct access to your computer, bypassing internet security: Google, Adobe & even the Australian government were all hacked via IE! Using IE is often said to be the quickest way to get infected! NOT required to connect to internet - your LAN, WiFi or modem connection does that! |
| | Opera (opera.com) Compresses data for slow internet (e.g. TalkTalk, BT/EE, Sky, 3G, etc), VPN to bypassing region blocking, built-in advert blocker & Facebook, WhatsApp & Telegram messengers. | Firefox (mozilla.com) Very basic, slow, incompatible, unsafe & high memory usage! Each version has 1000's of bugs, many beta releases & relies on 3rd party 'plugins' to provide functionality. |
| | | Google Chrome (google.co.uk) Basic, VERY high memory use & VERY unsafe! |
| | | We see IE, Edge, Firefox & Chrome infected daily (& have done for many years) - all are EXTREMELY unsafe! |

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| Item | Good (all software listed is FREE!) | Bad |
|--|--|--|
| eMail client | Mozilla Thunderbird (mozilla.org/en-GB/thunderbird) Safe email client with built-in spell checker, anti-SPAM, anti-phishing, automatic updates & customizable interface. | Outlook Express/Windows Mail (microsoft.co.uk) Both discontinued, basic email clients with no protection against anything, no built-in spell checker or anti-spam. |
| Office Suite (word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, database & drawing) | LibreOffice (formerly OpenOffice) (libreoffice.org) Easy to use & Microsoft compatible word processor, spreadsheet, database, presentation & drawing. Available for Windows, Linux & Apple & even supports Works & PDF documents! To Setup: click <i>Tools, Options, Load/Save</i> , set <i>Default File Format types to Microsoft 2003</i> . | Microsoft Office (microsoft.co.uk) Very expensive & not user friendly! For compatibility between other office suites (including Microsoft's!) use 2003 format. Office is NOT part of Windows, but trial versions are often included. There's a free 'starter' version of Office 2010 featuring basic Word & Excel with adverts. |
| Program uninstaller | IOBIT Uninstaller (iobit.com) (untick 'extras') Removes settings & files normal uninstall would leave behind. Remember to NOT restart after uninstall & check files first. | Add/Remove (XP) / Programs & Features (V7/7/8/10) Most programs leave files & settings after uninstalling which can cause conflicts, waste disc space & slow down computer. |
| Disc clean up | CCleaner (piriform.com) (untick 'extras') Removes Windows & application's temp files, clears browser history & removes redundant Registry entries. Better: Wise Care 365 (wisecleaner.com), optimizes too. | Windows Disc Cleanup (microsoft.co.uk) Leaves behind a lot of files that CCleaner removes, doesn't check applications or Registry & is VERY slow. Worse: System Mechanic - can corrupt Windows! |
| Backup | EaseUS Todo Backup Free (easeus.com) Easy to use backup for files, folders, partitions & drives. Simpler: Create Synchronicity (synchronicity.sourceforge.net) | Windows Backup (microsoft.co.uk) Basic backup that includes many extra/worthless files, creating huge backups with very little actual data! |
| Device drivers | IOBIT DriverBooster (iobit.com) (untick 'extras') Use to install or update device drivers & then uninstall. | Windows Update (microsoft.co.uk) Finds very few drivers & then are often out-of-date. |
| PDF readers & writers | Foxit PDF Reader (foxitsoftware.com) (untick 'extras') PDF reader & writer - small, fast, safe & easy to use. PDFCreator (pdfforge.org) also creates JPG/TIF/etc. | Adobe Acrobat Reader (adobe.com) Reader only & VERY slow, unsafe & unreliable - often can't display/print. Acrobat Creator writes, but isn't free. |
| File compression | 7Zip (7zip.com) Add & extract files from most archives (e.g. ZIP, RAR, etc). | Windows Explorer (microsoft.co.uk) Supports only ZIP & CAB & no 'solid' or 'recovery' options. |
| Hardware status | HWMonitor (cpuid.com) Shows CPU, graphics, motherboard, hard disc drive & memory temperatures & battery capacity & wear level. | Windows Power Options (microsoft.co.uk) Only shows battery charge level: 100% of nothing, is still nothing! No temperature monitoring of anything. |
| Windows Restore Points | Restore Point Creator (toms-world.org) Schedule system restore points to allow 'rollback'. | Windows System Protection (microsoft.co.uk) Not automatic & disabled by default in Windows 10! |
| CD / DVD / Blu ray read/write | Ashampoo Burning Studio (ashampoo.com) Reliable & easy to use with lots of features. Use ImgBurn (imgburn.com) for ISO read/write/verify. | Windows Disc Writing (microsoft.co.uk) Basic 'drag & drop' or 'send to' & unreliable - can't set write speed & no verify (except for ISO files). |
| Video player | Media Player Classic (codeguide.com) (untick 'extras') Install K-Lite Mega Codec Pack (see page#4) to support most audio & video formats in high quality. | Windows Media Player (microsoft.co.uk) Supports very little, but what it can play, it plays poorly! Also not good/unsafe: QuickTime, RealPlayer & VLC. |
| Music player / sync | MediaMonkey (mediamonkey.com) Easy to use music player, organizer, converter, recorder & synchronizer (Apple compatible). | Apple iTunes (apple.com) VERY slow, not user friendly & expensive to buy music! Be careful with 'sync' as wipes device to copy from PC. |
| Picture viewer / converter | IrfanView (irfanview.com) (untick 'extras') Very fast picture viewer/converter - supports most formats. | Windows Picture Viewer (microsoft.co.uk) Slow, very few options & doesn't support many formats. |
| Media Centre | Kodi (kodi.tv) (formerly XBMC) View video, music & pictures, Stream satellite TV, movies & sport (via illegal plugin!) on Windows, Linux, Android & Apple. | Windows Media Centre (microsoft.co.uk) Discontinued, but was compatible with very few video, music & picture formats & didn't play them very well! |
| Picture editing | GIMP (gimp.org) Feature rich & Adobe PhotoShop compatible. | Windows Paint (microsoft.co.uk) VERY basic, not many features or formats supported. |
| Video converter & editor | VSDC Free Video Converter (videosoftdev.com) Simple, easy to use interface & supports most formats. VSDC Free Video Editor (videosoftdev.com) Author video with effects & filters - supports most formats. | Windows Movie Maker (microsoft.co.uk) Very basic & supports very few video formats. Upgraded to Windows Live Movie Maker (included in Windows Live Essentials, now discontinued), but still very few features. |
| Audio recorder / editor | Audacity (sourceforge.net) Easy to use sound recording, editing & filtering. | Windows Sound Recorder (microsoft.co.uk) Ha ha ha - no! An absolute joke! Don't bother, they didn't! |
| Downloading music, films, etc | FrostWire (frostwire.com) (untick 'extras') Torrent client with built-in search & player. Unblocked.com or websiteproxy.co.uk can access commonly blocked sites. | Limewire / iMesh / Morpheus / BearShare / etc... Peer-2-Peer programs are often bundled with spyware & falsely claim 'downloading music & films is legal' - it isn't! |
| USB formatting | Rufus (rufus.akeo.ie) Supports multi-format options for USB flash drives, including bootable for diagnostics (e.g. HDAT2, page#4) | Windows Explorer (microsoft.co.uk) Supports very few formats, limits options based on drive size & doesn't support bootable. |
| Remote assistance | TeamViewer (teamviewer.com) Secure, remote computer control via access code & password. We offer remote support @ £5/15mins. | Windows Remote Assistance (microsoft.co.uk) Requires sending an email with a password to invite access & needs to open ports in the firewall. |
| Recommended Internet Service Providers (ISP) for ADSL/fibre broadband | Utility Warehouse (0333-777-3-212, quote B14690) Unlimited downloads & free wireless router... ADSL: No minimum contract, no connection fee, up to 16Mbit; £9 (LLU, e.g. Bognor Regis, else £16.99) per month. Fibre: 18 month contract, £30 connection fee, LLU only, up to 38Mbit; £14.99 or 76Mbit; £19.99 per month. UK's cheapest services: line rental £16.50 & unlimited FREE off-peak landline calls (inc. 0845/0870). Low price electric, gas, insurance, mobiles & new line installation. Replace all your home light bulbs for LED for FREE! UK based support & repeatedly voted best value services by Which?. | TalkTalk, Sky, BT/EE, Post Office The UK has some of the world's slowest & least reliable internet service providers & TalkTalk, Sky & BT/EE are officially (OFCOM) the worst, consistently coming bottom in reviews for speed, reliability & customer support! Despite repeated poor reviews, their services are often more expensive (currently, BT are the most expensive, closely followed by Sky) & their support isn't technical, with customers often reporting unresolved calls of over 2 hours! Some have very high contention ratios (how many people share the same line - often 300:1 as opposed to the standard 50:1) - meaning sometimes, you won't even be able to connect, sometimes you'll get disconnected & it'll be slow most of the time! |
| | Plusnet (plus.net) Don't be put off by their ad, it's a good, reliable service! | |

good software **Get 200+ programs & 10000+ media files on our CornerStone "Companion DVD" for only £5.00!**

| Issue | How to... |
|--|---|
| Remove virus & spyware infections from computer | As infections often run at startup, their files are in use & therefore possibly non-removable, so ideally, if you have another computer, remove hard disc drive & attach as secondary (or external via caddy/dock) & run virus & spyware scans using up-to-date & reliable scanners (i.e. Emsisoft with Bullguard or Qihoo (websites listed on page#1). Use AutoRuns (analyse offline system) to check startup programs & untick/delete anything suspicious. If you have only one computer, download Emsisoft Emergency Kit (you may need to do this on another computer), open & extract files to a DOS bootable USB flash drive (see Rufus , page#2). Boot USB (check/setup BIOS for boot key/order/legacy), update virus definitions & run scan. In either case, any infected programs will need to be reinstalled & if Windows itself is infected, backup any data files (e.g. documents, pictures, music, videos, email, contacts, favourites, etc - you can't backup programs) you want to keep first, else they'll be lost! You'd also need to install hardware device drivers & you'd need to re-setup internet connection, any peripherals & copy back data files you backed up! Delete any infections found & return drive (if it was removed). Next, or if scanning directly within Windows, turn on computer, press F8 before boot (not supported in Windows 8/10) & select SAFE MODE WITH NETWORKING (provides internet access & restricts running programs), login to an administrator account , download Emsisoft Anti-Malware , install, update, full scan & delete all infections. Logoff & do quick scans for any other users to remove infections from registries. After, download & run herdProtect (once) & AdwCleaner (per user). Restart Windows & if everything's working ok, then you've successfully removed the infections, else you'll need to reinstall Windows! Obviously, as Windows got infected, either your internet security isn't good enough, or you have security vulnerabilities, most likely via out-of-date software. See page#1 for good security, how to remove old & how to update programs. Remote scans generally take 1-2 hours, local scans about 1 hour for each full scan & 15 minutes for quick scans, per user. If preferred, we can do this for you: remote scan=£20, local scans=£20, data backup=£50GB=50p/GB & over=25p/GB (minimum £10), Windows install=£35 (product key required). |
| Quickly remove INFECTIONS WITHOUT(!) scanning | Boot from 'live' (doesn't affect existing Windows installation) Linux disc (see below) & you can delete any files as none are in use! The trick is knowing what to delete! As a good start, remove: pagefile.sys & hibernat.sys files in C:\ & all files in System Volume Information , Recycler , user's Temp & Temporary Internet Files folders (in Users or Documents and Settings) & the JAVA cache. Restart computer & see if problem has gone. If not, hopefully, you can now run scans, though this will NOT repair file corruption/bad settings/deleted files infections may have caused. |
| Linux - FREE Apple / Windows alternative | Linux looks like Windows, but is MUCH faster & safer, can run most Windows software (install Wine & PlayOnLinux) & it's FREE! It includes: Microsoft compatible office suite, email, firewall, games, video/music player, video/picture editor & much more! A 'live' Linux disc can access a non-booting computer to backup files. Recommended: Manjaro Cinnamon (manjaro.org): always up-to-date, Zorin Core (zorin-os.com): very Windows like or Mint Mate (linuxmint.com): for low spec. computers. Linux install with updates=£25 or £2.50 to make DVD for self install. |
| Setting up an ADSL modem router (cabled or wireless) | If you've just had Windows installed or have a new computer & your router was already setup, then no software/setup is required - just reconnect as before - else, to setup an ADSL router, load your internet browser (e.g. Maxthon, Chrome, Firefox), type router's (IP) address into the address bar (check manual, e.g. 192.168.2.1) if prompted, enter router's login username & password (e.g. admin/password), click internet/ADSL setup & for most routers, just enter your internet account username & password & click save. However, depending on make/model, you may first need to setup for UK: VPI=0, VCI=38, encapsulation=VcMux, protocol=PPPoA or PPPoE . To secure a wireless router, click wireless/WLAN , select WPA2 encryption (safer & faster than WEP/WPS) & enter a password to prevent others nearby from accessing your internet/computer, which would slow your browsing & use-up your download allocation - NOTE: this can cost you money, possibly £100's, if they cause you to go over your (usually 40GB) limit! It's illegal (fines & prison time) & you should report suspected attacks to the police. |
| ADSL broadband speed issues? | Apart from poor line quality & unreliable Internet Service Providers (e.g. TalkTalk, Sky, Post Office, BT/EE, etc), there are other, less well known issues that can affect internet speeds: 1) a faulty component in an electrical device (e.g. TV, set-top box, microwave oven, etc...) can omit more electrical noise than usual, reducing your line speed by up to 75%! To identify which item is faulty, tune an AM radio to 627KHz then switch items off/on, listening for crackle. However, a faulty CRT TV up to 200m away can still cause problems! An interstitial plate (iPlate) should rectify this. 2) Poor quality telephone wiring is the single biggest connection issue - plugging your router into the master telephone socket is easiest way to limit this. 3) Ask your ISP to use the Reactive Repair Tool to see a detailed line speed history to identify potential issues. 4) Updating your router's firmware can fix problems & incompatible speeds (e.g. ADSL instead of ADSL2+) will also limit speeds. 5) ADSL filters fail - try replacing them. 6) The magnet in a landline telephone can block wireless radio signals - move the telephone of router to another location. 7) Interference from another device (e.g. another router (if you have an Android mobile, use WiFi Manager to check signal strength & channel numbers), microwave oven, video sender, baby monitor & even Christmas tree lights!) try changing your router's position or wireless channel (like fine tuning a radio). 8) Wireless encryption - WEP can cause up to 30% performance loss(!) - use either WPA2 or MAC filtering! 9) Change the lease time on router, setup to fewer hours (i.e. 6 hours or less) so 'bad lines' are refreshed more frequently. 10) Ask provider (e.g. BT) to 'up the gain' on the line it increases the electric power & can make devices more stable/reliable. 11) To increase signal strength, take tin foil, fold in half, crimp edges then bend into parabolic curve & place behind router. 12) Lastly, a contentious fix, ask your ISP to turn on interleaving - this improves stability by preventing errors, but could actually reduce overall speed! |
| Windows loading problems? | If Windows doesn't load/run properly then start computer in SAFE MODE (press F8 at startup BEFORE Windows loads (NOT Windows 8/10)), press Windows key+R, type "MSCONFIG" , click Startup tab & untick anything that looks suspicious! Repeat for Services tab (click Hide All Microsoft Services first). It won't delete anything, just stop it loading when Windows starts, thus you can identify malicious/incompatible software & remove/uninstall it. |
| Windows internet & network fixes | If internet settings in Windows become corrupted, to fix: press Windows key+R & type CMD (for XP: Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, Command Prompt), NETSH INTERFACE IPV4 RESET, NETSH INTERFACE IPV6 RESET (for XP: NETSH INT IP RESET), NETSH WINSOCK RESET, IPCONFIG /RELEASE, IPCONFIG /FLUSHDNS, IPCONFIG /RENEW, Restart Windows & if not fixed, it's a bigger problem so bring in for further diagnosis. |
| Windows XP Support | Microsoft officially ended Windows XP support on 8 April 2014... it can be extended till 2019: run Regedit , browse to: HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\WPA , right click (on pane), New, Key , enter "PosReady" , right click (on pane), New, DWORD , enter "Installed" , double click & change value to "1" , exit, restart Windows & check for updates. |
| Internet connection issues | If getting no internet connection: 1) Make sure LAN/WiFi/router turned on. 2) Boot to safe mode with networking. 3) Reset networking (see above). 4) Uninstall LAN/WiFi device driver & reinstall. 5) Upgrade (all) device drivers to latest. 6) Uninstall/disable firewall. 7) Boot 'live' Linux CD (see above) & if not working, bring in for further diagnosis. |
| Master Boot Record virus? | There's a virus type which can survive Windows reinstall/recovery, even if partitions are deleted/formatted! To remove: boot from Windows disc, select Repair , at command prompt, type BOOTREC /FIXMBR (for V7/7/8/10) or FIXMBR (for XP). |