

CornerStone Hints & Tips

| Issue | How to... (NOTE: shaded heading indicates recent change to document) |
|---|---|
| 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, tick When Inserted...</i> Potentially Unwanted Program Blocking, <i>Enable...</i> When sandbox prompts for unknown program, select <i>Run</i> for programs you know to be safe, else <i>Run in Sandbox</i> . |
| Kaspersky settings | Settings: Performance: tick <i>Postpone computer scan...</i> Additional: Threats and Exclusions: tick <i>Detect other software...</i> |
| ZoneAlarm settings | <i>Firewall Details, View Zones, change Public to Trusted</i> (if home/work/etc) else blocks shared devices & could restrict banking, shopping, email, etc. Do NOT install Anti-Virus component... it'll conflict with existing & heavily slow down Windows! |
| Maxthon settings | <i>Menu, Settings, General, search engine</i> (i.e. NOT Google!), <i>Keep Maxthon...</i> Advanced: <i>Show favourite...</i> Ultra Mode: <i>Spell Check language, Customize UserAgent...</i> select browser (if website needs specific browser). <i>Menu, View, Status bar, Switch Core...</i> ABP: <i>options, Enable...</i> untick <i>Allow some...</i> Copy URLs from adblockplus.org/en/subscriptions for additional filters. |
| Opera settings | <i>Menu, Settings, Basic, Block ads...</i> Manage Lists, choose <i>Battery saver</i> , all (if notebook/laptop). <i>Cookies, Block third party...</i> Browser: <i>Show advanced settings, search engine</i> (i.e. NOT Google!), <i>User interface, Show tab previews, Start page, Adjust Speed Dial...</i> Enable <i>Opera Turbo</i> (if slow internet connection). <i>Privacy & security, send a do not track...</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 using same browser & account. |
| 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, decline any offers.</i> |
| LibreOffice settings | click <i>Tools, Options, Load/Save set Default file format type to Microsoft 2003</i> . For Microsoft-like ribbon, instead of easy-to-use menu. Click <i>Tools, Options, Advanced, Enable Experimental Features</i> , restart. <i>View, Toolbar/Layout, Notebookbar.</i> |
| Hard disc drive (HDD) problems? (set UEFI BIOS to CSM/Legacy) | 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>HDAT2 (hdatt2.com)</i> , download latest ISO or EXE or write ISO contents to CD/USB using <i>ImgBurn, Nero, etc</i> or use <i>Rufus</i> (see page#2) to create bootable USB & copy EXE file. Boot CD (you may need to change SATA/AHCI to IDE/ATA in BIOS (press F2/F10/Del/etc before boot)) & 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>HDAT2</i> can perform <i>SMART short & extended tests (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>HDAT2</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! |
| Memory (RAM) problems? | 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 CD/USB using <i>ImgBurn, Nero, etc</i> or run included program to create bootable USB. Boot it & any errors indicate faults or incompatibility. |
| Portable computer use, cleaning & battery | 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, then they are a <i>notebook NOT laptop</i> , MUST be used on flat & steady surface to limit overheating & drive damage. In addition, Windows licence sticker (<i>XP/Vista/7</i>) 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 completely!) 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! |
| Data backup | 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! |
| Installing Windows | Before installing Windows, make sure only one disc drive is connected (so can't install to wrong drive) & download & copy device drivers (not needed if have driver CD & also possible Windows 8 or 10 could auto-detect). |
| Downloading & installing | 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. |
| Windows updates | <i>WSUS Offline Update</i> (wsusoffline.net) quickly downloads updates for Windows 7/8/10 & can install while offline. Windows 7 updates can take days! (these security rollups & Service Pack #2 fix this, catalog.update.microsoft.com , download & install: KB3020369, KB2125574 (SP2), KB3172605, KB3177467, KB3179573 & KB4056894. Disable Windows updates (Control Panel, Windows Update, Change settings), disconnect internet & restart BEFORE installing & then re-enable both afterwards. |
| Windows XP Support | Microsoft officially ended Windows XP support on 8 April 2014... it can be extended till at least 2019: run <i>Regeadit</i> , browse to: <i>HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\WPA</i> , right click (on pane), <i>New, DWORD</i> , enter <i>Installed</i> , double click & change value to <i>1</i> , exit, restart Windows & check for updates. Alternatively, go to softpedia.com , search "Windows XP SP4", download & install 10+ years of updates quickly & in one go! |
| Windows restore points | 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. See page#2 for automatic scheduling. |
| Windows password | If you use a <i>MICROSOFT LIVE ID</i> (email address or PIN) 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). |
| Search engine | Google themselves say they're NOT a search engine... they're a <i>content provider</i> , listing mostly sponsored links, including malicious websites. You'll often see "did you mean...", <i>Yahoo & Bing</i> find substantially more applicable hits & are far safer. Use webmail (e.g. outlook.com) so when you change ISP, you don't lose email address (e.g. yourname@talktalk.net). For SPAM email, NEVER unsubscribe else you've confirmed address is 'live' & you'll get far more & malicious emails! Webmail never needs to be backed up, you can access it from anywhere on world & you can't get infected from malicious attachments! |
| eMail | Proper start menu for Windows 8/10: <i>Classic Shell</i> (classicshell.net) or <i>Start Menu X</i> (ordinarysoft.com) - both offer ease of use similar to Windows 7 with extra or enhanced functionality & selectable colours & layouts. |
| Start menu | 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: ssclq.com , click Epson CSIC, English version, download & install, select printer & close. Right click icon for new reset & clean options. |
| Epson chip | softpedia.com huge library of free & trial software sourceforge.net biggest library of open source software zamazr.com online file format converter (1200+ types) wallpaper-gallery.net 1000's of free HD desktop pictures |
| Useful websites | gametop.com free, high quality arcade & puzzle games saynoto0870.com lists 'real' headline telephone numbers! interparcel.com UK's premier discounted courier delivery giveawayoftheday.com free licenced software for PCs & phones |

CornerStone Hints & Tips

| Item | Good (requires setup) | Bad |
|--|---|--|
| Anti-Virus, Anti-Malware, Anti-Spyware, Anti-Pishing, Firewall, etc... | Bullguard Internet Security (bullguard.com) Block & remove viruses, malware, spyware, scams, rootkits, PUPs, phishing & ransomware. Privacy, browser & self protection, eMail & chat messenger scanning, parental controls with website content filtering, safe search, vulnerability checker, PC tune-up, gaming mode firewall, automatic updates & (hourly) updates, 24/7 online support & encrypted online backup to DropBox, OneDrive & Google Drive. Easy to use. 60 day FREE trial. Which? recommended, many times! 1 year, 1PC=£17.99, 3PC=£20.50 (if bought with hardware). | Norton Internet Security/Norton 360 (symantec.com) Regarded by many as the world's worst internet security - renowned for low detection & being slow & incompatible! Removal: liveupdate.symantecliveupdate.com/upgrade/RnR/NRnR.exe |
| Anti-Virus, Anti-Malware, Anti-Spyware, Anti-Pishing, Firewall, etc... NOTE: 2 or more active anti-virus or firewall will heavily slow down computer & cause conflicts! See page#4 for recommended settings. | Qihoo 360 Total Security (FREE) (360totalsecurity.com) Block & remove viruses, malware, spyware, ransomware, PUPs & phishing. Webcam & key logger blocking, self & browser protection, fast Windows updater, game booster, system cleanup & optimize, automatic updates & updates, VPN, remote assist, 5 engines & sandbox. (displays adverts) | Intel/McAfee Internet Security (mcafee.com) Low detection, high memory usage & extremely slow! John McAfee says it's "the worst software on the planet"! Removal: download.mcafee.com/products/licensed/cust_support_patches/MCPR.exe |
| | Kaspersky Antivirus (FREE) (kaspersky.co.uk) Block & remove viruses, spyware, ransomware, adware & phishing. Self-protection, eMail scanning, automatic updates & VPN. | AVG (avg.com) free or paid version! VERY low detection, very slow, no firewall (in free version), extremely high memory usage & collects & sells user data! Any professional recommending AVG (or any of these!) are either incompetent or are doing so maliciously - knowing you'll get infected, they're hoping they can charge you again & again! Removal: download.avg.com/filedir/util/AVG_Remover.exe |
| | ZoneAlarm Firewall/Security (FREE) (zonealarm.com) Use Firewall with Qihoo or Kaspersky to block internet attacks or, for low spec. computers, use Security instead of them. | Microsoft Security Essentials (microsoft.co.uk) Don't bother - they didn't! Like Windows Defender, it's a total waste of space (always comes last in reviews!) & has no firewall! NOTE: Use IObit Uninstaller (see page#2) to uninstall Norton, McAfee or AVG BEFORE running removal tool! If Windows is heavily infected, changing security & scanning is unlikely to fix issues - reinstalling is recommended (from as little as £29 (depending on computer specification)). |
| | WinPatrol (FREE) (winpatrol.com) - use with above Monitors Windows Registry (settings) to allow or undo changes... can prevent infections from auto-starting. | Also 'less good' (!): (*)=no firewall Ad-Aware(*), Avast(*), Avira(*), ESET, Malwarebytes(*), F-Secure, Panda, Sophos, Spybot(*), Trend Micro. |
| | Crystal Security (FREE) (crystalsecurity.eu) - use with above Blocks unknown programs from installing/running via multi-engine cloud based scanning & application white listing. | The built-in Windows 10 upgrade offer ended in July 2016, but you can still manually upgrade (see page#3). Be mindful Windows 10 is slow, not user-friendly & each new release is often incompatible with software/hardware that worked ok in previous version, sometimes requiring motherboard BIOS update to be able to install or even having to change software/hardware! See page#4 for better start menu. |
| Anti-Virus detection & effect | 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, if something isn't working correctly, or is corrupted or you can't even login, it's likely to be damaged caused by infection(s)! | |
| Restricted & emergency access | Most (98%!) malicious software requires administrative access rights to allow it to install/run... Make a password protected <i>administrator</i> account & then set all users to <i>standard/limited</i> to prevent these installing! And/Or create an 'emergency access' <i>administrator</i> 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. | AdwCleaner (toolslib.net) Quickly detects & removes adware, toolbars, hijacks & PUPs. | Spysware & malicious 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 programs that pretend to be antivirus & show you're infected, when you're not; programs that claim to speed up or optimize Windows, but actually 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. |
| FREE '2nd chance' anti-malware scanners. Use with active security (above) to remove existing infections. NOT protect against new infections. | Emsisoft Anti-Malware (emsisoft.com) High detection rate & classifies risk level. Supports direct disc access, heuristic scanning & PUP removal. Free mode after trial. | |
| Software updates to help prevent security vulnerabilities | herdProtect (herdprotect.com) Cloud based with 68 scanners for high detection rate. Tick anything reported & unticked but in a 'temp' folder. | |
| Internet web browsers (see page#4 for recommended settings) | AutoRuns (sysinternals.com) Allows removal of any program that loads at startup & can check with VirusTotal using 50+ anti-malware scanners. Use with extreme caution - can stop Windows loading! | |
| | Maxthon (MX5) (replaces Cloud Browser) (maxthon.com) Fast, safe & secure browser with built-in pop-up & advert blocker, dual web engines for greater 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-spm 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, quick launch site thumbnails/logos, download manager, customizable layout, many available plug-ins & available in 43 languages. | Internet Explorer (IE)/Edge (microsoft.co.uk) Very basic, slow, incompatible & renowned for poor security whilst browsing - Microsoft say they can't make it safe, after 20 years of trying(!) & Windows 10's Edge isn't much better! Using IE is often said to be the quickest way to get infected; Google, Adobe & even the Australian government were all hacked via IE! 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, Post Office, Sky, BT/EE, 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 'plug-ins' to provide functionality. |
| | Opera (opera.com) Compresses data for slow internet (e.g. TalkTalk, Post Office, Sky, BT/EE, 3G, etc), VPN to bypassing region blocking, built-in advert blocker & Facebook, WhatsApp & Telegram messengers. | Google Chrome (google.co.uk) Basic, VERY high memory usage & VERY unsafe! Just a 'spyware' front-end for Chromium browser & collects & sells user data! |

CornerStone Hints & Tips

| 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 desktop publisher database | LibreOffice (formerly OpenOffice) (libreoffice.org) Easy to use Microsoft compatible word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, desktop publisher & database. Available for Windows, Linux & Apple & even supports Works, PDF & EPUB3 documents. (setup: see page#4) | Microsoft Office (microsoft.co.uk) NOT part of Windows, but trial versions often included. Very expensive & not user friendly! For compatibility between other office suites (including Microsoft's!) use 2003 format. New versions often incorrectly display existing documents! |
| Program uninstaller | IOBIT Uninstaller (iobit.com) (untick extras) Remove 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 | AOMEI Backup Standard (backup-utility.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 reader & writer | Foxit PDF Reader (foxitsoftware.com) (untick extras) PDF reader & writer - small, fast, safe & easy to use. PDFCreator (pdfcreator.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. 7z, 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 (formerly XBMC) (kodi.tv) View video, music & pictures. Stream internet TV, movies & sport 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 | Krita (krita.org) Feature rich professional painting/photo editor. Available for Windows, Linux & Apple. Simpler: Paint.Net (getpaint.net) | Windows Paint (microsoft.co.uk) VERY basic, not many features or formats supported & now discontinued & replaced with Paint3D (Windows 10 only). |
| Video converter & editor | VSDC Free Video Converter (videosoftdev.com) Simple, easy to use interface & supports most formats. VSDC Free Video Editor (videosoftdev.com) Create videos 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, TV shows, etc | FrostWire (frostwire.com) (untick extras) Torrent client with built-in search. To access blocked sites, use psiphon.ca or gotounblocked.vc or websiteproxy.co.uk | 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 many USB flash drive format options, including Windows/Linux installs & 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 & changing password. We offer remote support at £5 per 15 minutes. | 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?. | Windows Sound Recorder (microsoft.co.uk) Ha ha ha - no! An absolute joke! Don't bother, they didn't! |
| 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!**

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| Issue | How to... (NOTE: shaded heading indicates recent change to document) |
|---|---|
| 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. <i>Emsisoft with BullGuard, Qihoo or Kaspersky</i> (websites listed on page#1). Use <i>AutoRuns</i> (analyse offline system) to check startup programs & untick/delete anything suspicious. If you have only one computer, download <i>Emsisoft Emergency Kit</i> (you may need to do this on another computer), open & extract files to a DOS bootable USB flash drive (see <i>Rufus</i> , page#2). Boot USB (check/setup BIOS for boot key/order/legacy), connect to internet, 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 <i>Emsisoft Anti-Malware</i> , install, update, full scan & delete all infections. After, download & run <i>AdwCleaner</i> & <i>herdProtect</i> . 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 security & how to update programs. Remote scans generally take 1-2 hours & local scans about 30-60 minutes. If preferred, we can do this for you: remote scan=£20 (3 scanners), local scans=from £25 (6 scanners), data backup-up to 50GB=50p/GB or over=25p/GB (minimum £10), Windows install=from £29 (product key/licence 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: <i>pagefile.sys</i> & <i>hibernat.sys</i> files in C:\ & all files in <i>System Volume Information</i> , <i>Recycle bin</i> , Windows Temp & user's <i>Temp</i> s, <i>Temporary Internet Files</i> folders (in <i>Users</i> or <i>Documents and Settings</i>) & the <i>JAVA</i> 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 Windows / macOS alternative | Linux looks like Windows/macOS, but is MUCH faster & safer, can run most Windows software (install Wine & PlayOnLinux) & is FREE! It includes: Microsoft compatible office suite, email, firewall, games, video/music player, video/picture editor & much more! Most versions of Linux support booting into a 'live' system, so you can try it without changing/losing anything on computer! You could also backup files or test hardware on a non-booting computer! Download ISO file & use <i>ImgBurn</i> / <i>Nero</i> / <i>etc</i> or <i>Rufus</i> to make bootable DVD/USB. Recommended: <i>Manjaro</i> (<i>manjaro.org</i>); cutting-edge & always up-to-date, or <i>Mint</i> (<i>linuxmint.com</i>); most popular version of Linux. Linux install with updates & extensive software suite=from £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, etc), 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 <i>Internet/ADSL setup</i> , 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: <i>VPI=38, VC=38, encapsulation=VCM, protocol=PPPoA or PPPoE</i> . To secure a wireless router, click <i>wireless/WLAN</i> select <i>WPA2 encryption</i> (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. |
| Router password | Routers are often shipped with a default login & WiFi password... to limit attacks, ALWAYS change router's name (SSID) & both passwords as there's software available to show default WiFi password from router's default name. 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 emit more electrical noise than usual, reducing your line speed by up to 75%! To identify which item is faulty, tune an AM radio to 67.7kHz then switch items off/on, listening for crackle. However, a faulty CRT TV up to 200m away can still cause problems! An interstitial plate (Plate) also 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 <i>Reactive Repair Tool</i> to see a detailed line speed history to identify potential issues. 4) Updating your router's firmware can fix problems & incompatible routers (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 telephone or router to another location. 7) Interference from another device (e.g. another router (if you have an Android mobile, install <i>WiFiManager</i> to check signal strength & channel numbers), microwave oven, 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 electric power & can make devices more stable/reliable. 11) To increase signal strength, take a sheet of 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! |
| ADSL broadband speed issues? | If Windows doesn't load/run properly then start computer in SAFE MODE (press F8 at STARTUP BEFORE booting) (for 8/10, during boot, turn off/on until says, "Please Wait"), press Windows key+R , type "MSCONFIG" , check Startup (in 8/10, Startup is in Task Manager (press Ctrl+Shift+Esc)) & Services tabs (Hide All Microsoft Services) & untick anything that looks suspicious! This just stops it loading when Windows starts, thus allowing you to identify & remove malicious/incompatible software. You can also try, "Last known good configuration" or, "System Restore", both of which will revert settings to an earlier state. |
| Windows loading problems? | The built-in upgrade offer ended July 2016 - to manually upgrade, go to: microsoft.com/en-gb/software-download/windows10 , download, run, select "Upgrade this PC now" & follow prompts (takes a LONG time) or "Create installation media", then select UK, English, 64bit, non-N & after files download, write DVD or USB (4-GB) flash drive, boot DVD/USB for clean (erase everything) install. Enter Windows 7/8 licence number when prompted or leave blank if computer came with Windows 8. The same website can also download installation media for Windows 7 or 8.1 by changing the "10" to "7" or "8" or we sell install DVDs for £5. |
| Upgrading Windows 7/8 to Windows 10 | If internet settings in Windows become corrupted, to fix: press Windows key+R & type CMD (for XP: <i>click Start, All Programs, Accessories, Command Prompt</i>), 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 internet & network fixes | 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. |
| Internet connection issues | 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 DNS proxy server (e.g. opends.com , comodo.com or quad9.net) & to access blocked websites, a Virtual Private Network (e.g. psiphon.ca), where (in both cases) your internet is routed through another computer that filters attacks & caches web pages for safer & faster browsing. |
| Secure internet connection | 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 BOOTRECFIX/MBR (for V7/7/8/10) or FIXMBR (for XP). |
| Master Boot Record virus? | Admiral Casino, Bognor Town, Brewers Fayre, Butlins, The Carlton Hotel, Costa, The Galleon, Hatters Inn, Howards Cafe, Lloyds Bank, London Road Coffee Shop, Macari's, The Martlets, Punch & Judy, The Railway, William Hardwicke |
| Bognor Regis WiFi hotspots | |

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