



Newsletter Number 19

Opening .doc documents:

A number of my pupils have complained to me that they have been unable to read the newsletters that I have attached to the email messages. The reason for this is that they have not got the Microsoft Word word-processing program on their computers. This is a program that comes bundled with the Microsoft Office suite and although it is the leading word-processing program it is rather expensive. There is an alternative program called Open Office that can read these documents with the great advantage that it is completely free to download and use. You will find all the download instructions at www.openoffice.org . Like Microsoft Office it is a suite, or bundle, of programs which includes word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, graphics and database programs which integrate perfectly with the commercial Office programs like Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Access.

It is a very large program to download and I would hesitate to try if you only have a dialup connection – even with broadband it will take several minutes. The great advantage is that it is completely free and you only have to download it once and then install it on your computer.

If you don't want the hassle of downloading such a large program you could download a much smaller program called Word Viewer which will enable you to read Word .doc documents. You can find the download site by searching Google for the term 'word viewer' and follow the links.

Moving files between folders:

If you want to move a file from one folder to another the easiest way is to open two folder windows from My Documents – one containing the file in question and the other being the destination folder. Then simply drag the file in question from one window to the other.

Saving money on utility bills:

At this time when household budgets are being squeezed by the recession you will almost certainly be able to save a lot of money by changing your utility suppliers. Use a price comparison site such as www.uswitch.com to reduce your outgoings on electricity, gas, telephone and mortgage payments. I have recently done this and made an annual saving of more than £500. Just one word of warning! Think carefully before you switch your ISP (Internet Service Provider) because this may mean that your email address will change and you will have to notify all your friends and relatives of the change. You can overcome this problem by registering an immovable email address with Google – <http://mail.google.com> – or Hotmail with Windows Live at www.hotmail.com . Registration is free with both alternatives and you can configure your email program – Outlook, Outlook Express or Windows Mail – to receive messages sent to these addresses.



YouTube:

You may have heard of YouTube and even used it on a few occasions. The site at www.youtube.com is not restricted to the gurning of Gordon Brown or the voice of Susan Boyle. It is a very useful site for those of you who want to learn a new skill or craft. If you feel the urge to do some woodworking you can learn how to cut a perfect mitre joint by entering the keywords into the search box or getting video instructions on how to improve your Latin American dancing. Like search engine results there is a lot of dross but there are diamonds to be found.

New search engine:

Microsoft released their new search engine, Bing, last week and it has already overtaken Yahoo in the popularity stakes. The home page is clean and uncluttered in the same way as Google but its main advantage seems to be the listing of likely keyword associated websites in the left hand column beside the search results. It is well worth giving it a try at www.bing.com