



Newsletter No.20

Windows 7:

This is the new Windows operating system which will become available on October 22nd and replaces the rather maligned Vista system.

I have been using Windows 7 for the past 6 weeks now and I have been very impressed. It is so much better than Vista and even slightly better than the old XP system. It is far less power hungry than Vista which means that if your computer can run Vista it will have no trouble at all with this latest program.

There are a number of changes to the way in which the program operates compared to both XP and Vista. The basics are there but you may find that it takes a little time to get used to finding all your favourites. One of the biggest changes offered by Windows 7 is the news task bar which allows you to swap from one programs to another with ease as well as offering reminders of which files you have used recently with various programs. To give you some idea of the change of “feel” to the program it is a bit like learning to ride a motor bike when you have been used to driving a car. They both have clutches, accelerators, gears and a steering device but they are indifferent places.

There are a number of different versions of Windows 7 but, instead of describing their different capabilities, I will just say that, for most average computer users, I would recommend the Home Premium version.

If you have been using the Vista system you will be able to install Windows 7 over the old program without much difficulty. This does not apply to XP users who will have to do a thing called a “clean” install which means making a backup of all your files on an external hard disk before installing the new program which will remove all your previously installed programs. You will have to re-install all of these from their original disks after you have restored your files from the backup disk. This is not something that I would recommend to a beginner and I would suggest that you get a professional to do it for you.

Don't forget that if you have any queries on the benefits of Windows 7 – or any other computer problem – you can always email me at bu33kin@tiscali.co.uk.

Watching TV re-runs

Many of my pupils seem surprised to learn that you can watch TV programs on the computer. BBC, ITV and Channel 4 programs are all available so that if you missed an episode of your favourite soap or a particular recent program you can catch up by using one of the following websites - www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer - www.itv.com/ITVPlayer - or www.channel4.com/programmes. You will need a moderately fast broadband connection to view these programs without irritating pauses during the transmission. If you do not hear any sound check that your speakers are not set to “mute”.



How fast is your broadband speed?

You can test the speed of your connection very easily by going to the PCWisdom website at www.pcwisdom.co.uk and click on the Broadband Speed Test link. If you live in an urban area you should get a download speed greater than 1500kps. Unfortunately I live in a rural area some way from the nearest telephone exchange and I can only get 400kps – but I can live with that.

If you are really stuck

If your computer stops working and nothing seems to work there is one little trick that may work. Hold down the power button on the computer for 7 seconds and it will immediately shut down. When you start the computer again you will be told off for not shutting it down properly. Ignore this and press the Enter key when the option to “Start Windows Normally” appears in black and white print.

Latest Interesting Websites

You do not have to remember some of these long web addresses – just click on the blue underlined link in this letter.

If you want to have a chuckle, try these two video offerings – www.youtube.com/watch?v=rH6ZJNzwTYc and www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PHnRIn74Ag

If you are a crossword fanatic you will find useful help at www.oneacross.com
You can track your stock market investments at www.moneyextra.com
If you are thinking of taking a holiday in Manchester, Morocco, Peterborough or Puerto Rico you can check out what previous visitors to the hotel thought about it at www.tripadvisor.com

Publishing News

My next book – The Internet for the Older and Wiser – will be published on October 23rd and available in the bookshop and on Amazon on the 30th. It aims to show you how much more you can do with your computer than send the odd email and search Google.

Don't forget – behind every successful man there is a surprised woman!