

# MEMBERS NOTICE BOARD

Please use this Notice Board to benefit other members.



## NOTICE

If an members have reel to reel or 8 track tapes that they wish to transcribe to compact cassettes I can do so without charge, except for the cost of any cassettes.

Contact:  
John Atkin  
Tel. 740036

## Support local Isle of Wight Businesses

### WBS (Wight Business Services)

Big selection of:

- Computer Supplies
- Printing paper and labels
- Office essentials

• Computer chairs and workdesks  
Plus free delivery service

**390 page catalogue available**

Tel. 822229

## FOR SALE

### Aiptek Hyper Pen 6000

Boxed Set contains:

Drawing tablet

Cordless pen and Cordless mouse with Art Dabblers Software  
(creates animated cartoons) and 2nd software CD

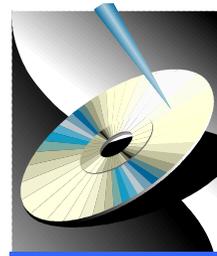
Windows 95/98 - Serial Port connection

**Special Price - Only £10**

Contact:- The Editor - Tel. 562569

Hot Key is published on the first Wednesday of every month. This edition was compiled using Microsoft Publisher 2000 and reproduced on an Epson Stylus 760 Colour ink jet printer and a Brother HL-1250 laser printer.

The views and opinions expressed here are those of the contributors alone. No responsibility can be accepted with respect to advice or suggestions made in this journal.



## HOT KEY

## ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

[www.iwpcug.org](http://www.iwpcug.org)

## MONTHLY JOURNAL

Issue 129 August 2002



Peter Greenhalgh and John Garner at the recent "Information Structure" talk

A very interesting and well presented talk was given by David Broughton recently at the Riverside Centre on "Making and Uploading Your Own Web Site". David commenced his talk with a slide show using Power Point to illustrate what is required to create a web site (See pages 10 and 11). David then went on to explain how to form a new web page using a suitable text editor, such as Qedit or Notepad. The various HTML tags were discussed and how to

introduce a photograph (as seen on page 11) and how to create a table of text and colour to the background of the web page. After the coffee break David went online and explained how to upload files using the very useful WSFTP software. The informative talk finished with a tour of the Club's website, especially the Members' Area, which contains David's Website of HTML colours and characters and Mike Bayliss' area, which explains the "control of font size". Thank you David for an enjoyable evening.

### In This Issue

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Future Meetings     | 2     |
| Editorial           | 4     |
| Ian Moth's Talk     | 6-7   |
| Microsoft Website   | 8-9   |
| Website Creation    | 10-11 |
| Wight Computer Club | 12-13 |
| Prize Puzzle        | 14    |
| Book Research       | 15    |
| Notice Board        | 16    |

## FUTURE MEETINGS

|                       |                                      |                                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>7th August</b>     | Taking the Lid off Microsoft Windows | John Harvey<br>Wight Computers |
| <b>21st August</b>    | Annual Barbecue (see map on page 11) | Bob Groom's Place              |
| <b>4th September</b>  | A Personal Computing History         | Jonathan Burt                  |
| <b>18th September</b> | Dreamweaver Netsite Builder          | Sylvia Farley                  |
| <b>2nd October</b>    | Council/Corporate Computing          | Dennis Linzmaier               |
| <b>16th October</b>   | Loading Operating Systems & Software | Dennis Parkes                  |
| <b>6th November</b>   | Motherboards                         | Andy Marsh<br>Island Computers |
| <b>20th November</b>  | Simple Database/Mail Merge           | Dennis Linzmaier               |
| <b>4th December</b>   | External Speaker                     | To be arranged                 |
| <b>18th December</b>  | Christmas Party                      | Riverside Centre               |

We also have two e-group discussion areas:-  
 Yahoo IWPCUsers: [iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com](mailto:iwpcusers@yahoogroups.com)  
 and for web designers:  
[IWPCUG-Web-group@yahoogroups.com](mailto:IWPCUG-Web-group@yahoogroups.com)



David Broughton during his recent talk at Riverside

### Book Research

I have been trying to find some general code for password protecting pages in a web site. I'm having to move this site away from the only ISP which processed the php code I was using. I was finally driven to looking in the local library (where I didn't find it) but I did find a lot of other books. Am I the last person to discover this resource? If not, then go and look at the following site: [www.iwight.com/thelibrary](http://www.iwight.com/thelibrary) where as an unregistered user you can get quite a long way and find quite a lot of books. If you visit the library in person then go straight up the stairs on arrival and the computer books are immediately on your left, **codes 004..005**.

We do have our own library at [www.iwpcug.org](http://www.iwpcug.org), which is accessed from the main menu. The books are looked after by our HotKey editor, Brian Sexton and any requests for books from the library should be directed to the editor. For the very rich, Ottakars, in Newport High Street, have a good selection of computer books.

Roger Skidmore

### TIP Clean Your Keyboard

A recent study carried out by the University of Arizona has revealed your keyboard is home to more than 10 million germs. Indeed, the average desk plays host to 400 times more bugs than you'll find on a toilet seat. For this reason it's recommended we regularly clean our keyboards with antibacterial wipes.

*Our thanks to Computer Buyer Magazine for this tip*



John Underwood, Geof Hughes and George Wilson enjoying the coffee break



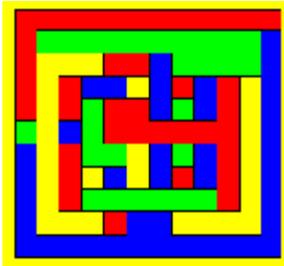
**PRIZE PUZZLE CORNER**  
**AUGUST 2002**  
 by David Broughton



The puzzle this month comes to you as a computer puzzle on the CD cover disk of Hot Key. (If for any reason you do not get the cover disk, the puzzle can be downloaded from the club's web site, [www.iwpcug.org](http://www.iwpcug.org), by selecting "Hot Key Puzzle" from the left hand menu). As usual, all the operating instructions are self-contained within the program which can be run in Windows or DOS. The name of the puzzle is 6LIGHTS and the computer file is 6LIGHTS.EXE. You don't need to 'install' it: just run it from wherever it is.

When you have succeeded in doing the puzzle you will be shown a secret code word. Send that code word to me, David Broughton (see page 3 for addresses) to arrive by 4 Sept 2002 to be entered into the prize draw.

**Solution to the June Puzzle**



This puzzle was to colour the diagram shown above in not more than four colours without adjacent areas having the same colour. It is a well known mathematical fact (though hard to prove) that any 2-dimensional map can be so coloured, but not all maps are easy to do. This diagram was chosen to be as difficult as possible within the size limitation, but three members succeeded and sent me their results. (One result is shown.) The successful entrants were John Amos, Colin Rowe and Ken Cameron. Colin Rowe won the draw and a £5 book token. Congratulations to Colin who is a new member and a new name to appear on the puzzle page. Well done the others. The uncoloured diagram is still on the web site if anyone would like a copy to play with using Paint or similar graphics program to do the colouring.

**The Farmer-Chicken-Wife Game**

Solvers who failed to catch the chicken may be interested to know that a modified version of the program is now available on the web site that allows you to cheat in an interesting way. The program's file name is FCW2.EXE -- you may also find it on the cover disk. No prizes, of course, for this but game buffs may find it fascinating to see the optimal solutions. And new members might find the game a challenge.

**ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP  
 COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Honorary President:**

Sir Norman Echlin, 36 Marina Avenue, Appley, Ryde, I.W. PO33 1NJ  
**E-Mail:- norm\_phil@hotmail.com**



564331

**Chairman:**

Roger Skidmore, 47 Quay Street, Newport, I.W. PO30 5BA  
**E-Mail:- rogerskid@lineone.net    Mobile:- 07732 480201**

822900

**Vice Chairman:**

David Broughton, Westwards, Hulverstone, Newport, I.W. PO30 4EH  
**E-Mail:- davidb67@clara.co.uk    Mobile:- 07762 486391**

740421

**Marketing Manager:**

Dennis Linzmaier, 20 Queens Road, Sandown, I.W. PO36 8DJ  
**E-Mail:- d.linzmaier@ntlworld.com**

403642

**Treasurer:**

Bob Groom, Bembridge Lodge, High Street, Bembridge, I.W. PO35 5SQ  
**E-Mail:- bob@blodge.demon.co.uk**

872707

**Secretary:**

Sylvia Farley, 166 Gunville Road, Newport, I.W. PO30 5LS  
**E-Mail:- amelie@btinternet.com**

521566

**Membership Secretary/Meetings Reception Assistant:**

John Atkin, 2 Westview, Hulverstone, Newport, I.W. PO30 4EH  
**E-Mail:- kermit1940@btinternet.com**

740036

**Hot Key Editor:**

Brian Sexton, 48 Ashy Road, Ryde, I.W. PO33 2UT  
**E-Mail:- alleyne@clara.net**

562569

**Committee Member:**

Cliff Maidment, 1 Palmers Road, Wootton, Ryde, I.W. PO33 4NA  
**E-Mail:- cliffm@clara.net**

883642

**New Members Co-ordinator:**

Zica Calderia Cabral, 2 Westview, Hulverstone, Newport, I.W. PO30 4EH  
**E-Mail:- zicacabral@hotmail.com**

740036

**Disability Resources Co-ordinator:**

Helen Edom, Flat 1, Glenfield Court, Whitcombe Road, Carisbrooke, I.W. PO30 1ED  
**E-Mail:- helenedom@tesco.net**

527208



In order to manipulate and enhance my 35mm colour slides and old filmstrips from the days before the digital camera, I decided to purchase a Film Scanner. On researching through the monthly magazine Digital Photo, I came across an interesting article in the May edition, entitled "Huge Film Scanner Test", which reviewed a dozen film scanners currently available. Seeing that I didn't want to spend £1300 on a Nikon Super Coolscan 4000 scanner, I opted for an entry level Microtek FilmScan 1800, which had the following review.

"Hard to complain about this scanner. It does the job well at a very attractive price and bundles the excellent Photoshop Elements into the bargain. The Microtek FilmScan 1800ppi scanner has a low resolution but decent results". It also comes with the appropriate software in the form of Cyberview 35, which contains the necessary TWAIN software for manipulation in Adobe Photoshop Elements. I have since tried scanning slides and filmstrips and found that in order to obtain a reasonable reproduction of the original snapshot, various tweaks have to be made in the Cyberview 35 software. Cropping the photo, enhancing and resizing the original image can then be arranged in Photoshop Elements. A clever way of improving those old film negatives and slides from years ago, which can be brought back to life with the aid of a suitable film scanner.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about using a video camera on a computer there is an excellent new magazine on the market called "Digital Video Made Easy", which is available at WH Smith at £3.99. It is packed with useful information and has a cover CD, which contains a 15 minute movie tutorial and free editing software. The magazine also has easy guides and a quick start tutorial for video novices. A recommended buy.

Whilst the cost of purchasing a DVD writer is still exorbitant at £300, the cost of CD writers continues to fall and you can now purchase a 48 read/40write/12rewrite CD EIDE drive for £80. If you wish to pay less you can obtain a Liteon 40read/24write/10rewrite for only £60. Obviously there are now cheaper models on the market depending on the specifications you require but if you desire an upmarket CD writer then buy a Plextor SCI or Mirai SCSI writer.



people with many commitments, E-groups are ideally placed for cheap, fast and effective communications. For the disabled, or the housebound, for people who live in rural areas, E-groups will become an ideal medium for communication, for sharing information, for exchanging ideas and problem-solving, even for arranging shopping.

### Promotion of Learning

We promote the use of the E-group amongst our members as a way of developing their skills in using the Internet. They do this through learning to register their details at Yahoo, linking their accounts to their subscriptions, uploading and downloading from the files area and depositing their membership details on the club database at Yahoo. Helpful advice is given as required. In this way, they are learning all the skills of using the Internet in a nice, easy and friendly way.

### Increased Representation

In the future, we hope to involve representatives from many more community groups on the island and make our E-group a powerful disseminator of knowledge and training in Information Technology and Communications and anything to do with the voluntary sector.

### Charitable Aims

We eventually hope to form a charitable club with a constitution, officers and an Internet based committee with members paying a small annual subscription. This will allow us to qualify for government or private initiative

funding for various kinds of projects to help the community and of course buy our first two pieces of important equipment a computer and a computer projection system.

### Website Project

A number of colleagues are keen to create a website and we will be starting this project after the summer recess. It will be a joint effort attempting to involve all of our members in the creation of the final product. We see project work as an important part of the development of our club and are particularly looking for people who are inclined to work in that way.

### Accessibility & Skills

Unfortunately, the WCC is only open to people who already have a computer with access to the Internet and a willingness to learn how to use a E-group. We do regret being unable to cater for people new to computing, but at the present time, we cannot provide the facilities. We are always looking for people who are willing to develop their skills and in particular, anyone with enough knowledge of Excel, to become our treasurer, would be most welcome.

### Thanks to IWPCUG

Lastly, let me say how grateful I, and our WCC colleagues are, for the training, knowledge and experience which we received from the IWPCUG and I am sure that they will join me in wishing the club every success in the future.

For any further information or to subscribe to our E-group, please contact me on:

[rankine@screaming.net](mailto:rankine@screaming.net)



The first Wednesday has usually a formal talk whilst the third Wednesday is more informal, geared to the new user and aims to help out members with specific problems.

**Membership is £12 per year.**

**Visitors are welcome.**

This journal, "HOTKEY", is printed every month. If you would like to know more about us, either come along to one of our meetings or contact one of our Committee Members listed on page 3.

**Club's Website - <http://www.iwpcug.org/>**

**The Isle of Wight PC User Group** welcomes all owners and users of IBM Compatible Personal Computers. It is a group which seeks to exchange ideas and seek new information. Our meetings are bi-monthly on **Wednesdays of each month at The Riverside Centre, Newport, 7.30 - 9.30 pm.**

## WIGHT COMPUTER CLUB

By Doug Rankine



### Club of a New Type

The WCC is an offshoot of the IWPCUG in much the same way as was the St. Bedes Investment Club. It was started in October 2001 when some of our colleagues suggested that we take advantage of forming a new type of club, based on the Internet and use an E-group as the main form of communication between the membership, rather than have meetings of a management committee and the extra time and commitment which this entailed.

### Steering Group

We started with around six members and set up a steering group made up from three or four of us and discussed how we would go about it, what our aims and objects were and what we should attempt to do. A mission statement was published on the e-group and we then advertised our existence. We currently have 44 subscribers to the E-group, a pro-tem secretary and myself acting as Facilitator and a number of others who occupy various roles helping the club.

### Meetings

Many of our subscribers are also members of the IWPCUG and we encourage our colleagues to keep up this commitment and publish details of its meetings on our E-group. We hold our own, occasional meetings at the Red Cross Hall on the first Friday of the month from 7.30 until 9.30pm, with the usual tea & bikkies. Meetings are not organised regularly, but on an ad hoc basis with discussions conducted on the E-group about

what subjects are important and who will do the presentation of them on the day. This was felt to be the best way to do it as most members didn't want a regular meeting, and the cost of the evening can go up quite considerably if poorly attended. We pay around £ 18 for the venue; a collection is taken; parking is easy, as is access for the disabled. The staff at the Red Cross is very friendly and helpful and the place is kept clean and tidy. They are very strict about the fire regulations, health and safety, and we are expected to return the hall to the condition in which we found it.

### Attendance

We have had three or four meetings so far and an average of around 12-14 attended. Subjects varied from using different software, to installing a new hard disk. Small meetings have their advantages in that everyone has a greater chance of participating in the meeting and getting their questions discussed and answered.

### Efficient Communications

Many of our members are involved in other areas, such as voluntary groups or running their own businesses. Consequently, another of our aims is to show how to use the Internet and the software available for the purposes of improving communications between each other and improving their businesses.

### Future of E-groups

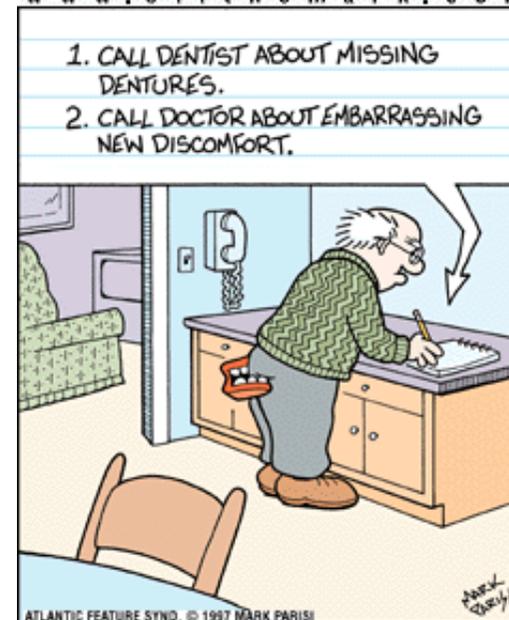
E-groups will be the way forward for voluntary organisations and community groups, in much the same way as they are being used by businesses for communications, training and for problem-solving today. For

# H U M O U R

off the mark by Mark Parisi  
www.offthemark.com



off the mark by Mark Parisi  
www.offthemark.com



## INFORMATION HANDLING



At the meeting of 3rd July, fan Moth got the audience thinking about information. And not just thinking about it -- audience participation was a key feature to get everyone involved.

Facts on their own are not very useful. Even many facts together may not be helpful if they are not organised. This was the key feature of Ian's talk.

He first handed round to everyone some cards, each with a simple fact concerning a family, their relationships and the presents that were given to nephews and nieces by aunts. Simple questions like "Who is Esmeralda's father?" could be answered by just the one person holding the card with that information. But "What did Aunt Edith give to her eldest nephew?" required some organising of several bits of information on separate cards to establish who the eldest nephew was. Furthermore, by producing a table of presents received by each nephew and niece, one could establish something of the character of each individual and even the historical period when these people lived. In other words, many facts can add up, with the appropriate tools of analysis, into more than the sum of their parts.

In the fields of espionage and criminology, gathering facts is one thing: processing the facts is called intelligence.

More audience participation was involved in acting through a simple database processing operation to find what item to make from a set of recipes.

The difference between a "flat" database and a relational database was well illustrated with the database of recipes. In the flat database, a large number of fields had to be set aside for the ingredients -- a sufficient number to accommodate the largest number of ingredients needed. This was inefficient as most recipes required only a few ingredients. The relational database was organised differently: the recipes alone were in an indexed table and the list of ingredients of all the recipes were in another indexed table. A third table contained the index numbers that related the recipes with their ingredients. In this form, the database was readily expandable to add extra recipes and extra ingredients as required without the overhead of adding extra fields to all records.

## Example of HTML created by David

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE></TITLE>
<BODY BGCOLOR="#b8bd8f">
<font face="Arial,Helvetica">
<center>
<table width=70% bgcolor="white" cellpadding=15>
<TR><TD>

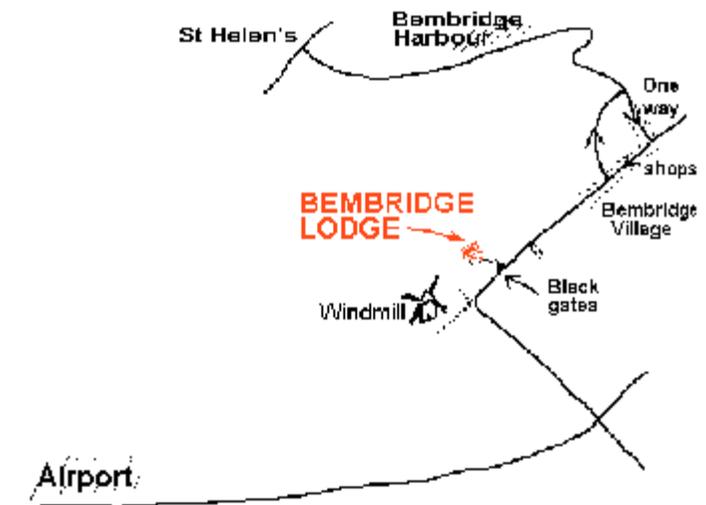
<CENTER>
<font color="red">
<H2>
THE NEEDLES LIGHT HOUSE
</H2>
</font>
</center>
<P>Position: 50&deg; 39'.70 N 01&deg; 35'.42 W
```



```
<P>Set in the western approaches to the Isle of Wight, the Needles form a narrow chalky peninsula which rises from jagged rocks to 120m cliffs. These rocks have always been a hazard to ships making their way up the Solent to Portsmouth and Southampton Water.
```

```
</table>
</center>
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

NB. The above is an edited version of the HTML file created by David and the above picture was produced by the web browser.



## Making and Uploading Your First Web Page

by David Broughton



### What you need

1. A Computer
2. Telephone Line
3. A Modem
4. Internet Service Provider (ISP)
5. A Domain Name and Password
6. Networking Software
7. Web Browser
8. FTP Software

### What you don't but think you might like

#### Web Creation Software

#### Useful extras

1. A versatile text editor
2. A versatile graphics package
3. A manual on HTML
4. The **TELLME** program

### Some golden rules

1. Don't make your user download a lot of information or pictures that he/she may not be interested in.
2. Make plain the purpose of the site and what it contains on the first page (without scrolling, if possible).
3. Avoid gaudy colours, fonts and background pictures.
4. Where there are pictures, keep the file sizes as small as possible, consistent with the expected resolution.
5. Keep the width of text down to not more than 60 characters.
6. Avoid animations and moving banners. They only irritate and distract from your message.
7. Remember that not all web browsers are the same and may render your page indifferently - especially if you use non-standard features of HTML or unusual fonts.



Ian then demonstrated the use of a real relational database used by a large company, In answering a question, Ian emphasised that in constructing a relational database one needs to first study and analyse what the data is going to be used for and what software tools are needed to handle the facts before embarking on the design.

Spreadsheets are another form of database in which arithmetic and logical operations can be performed on columns and rows. Spreadsheets are more flexible in layout and can help in the presentation of facts and statistics.

Ian brought to life what could have been a rather boring subject. He had clearly put a lot into the preparation of his talk, including a PowerPoint presentation. The club is indebted to his efforts.

Reported by David Broughton.

#### Bill Gate's Decision

"Well, Bill," said God, "I'm really confused on this one. I'm not sure whether to send you to Heaven or Hell. After all, you enormously helped society by putting a computer in almost every home in the world, and yet you created that ghastly Windows.

"I'm going to do something I've never done before. I'm going to let you decide where you want to go. Bill replied, "Well thanks, God. What's the difference between the two?" God said, "You take a peek at both places briefly if it will help you decide. Shall we look at Hell first?" "Sure" said Bill, "Let's go!" Bill was amazed! He saw a clean, white sandy beach with clear waters. There were thousands of beautiful men and women running around, playing in the water, laughing and frolicking about. The sun was shining and the temperature was perfect. "This is great!" said Bill. "If this is Hell, I can't wait to see heaven." God replied, "Let's go!" and so off they went to Heaven. Bill saw puffy white clouds in a beautiful blue sky with angels drifting about playing harps and singing. It was nice, but surely not as enticing as Hell.

Bill Gates thought for only a brief moment and rendered his decision. "God, I do believe I would like to go to Hell." "As you desire," said God. Two weeks later, God decided to check up on the late billionaire to see how things were going. He found Bill Gates shackled to a wall, screaming amongst the hot flames in a dark cave. He was being burned and tortured by demons.

"How ya doin, Bill?" asked God. Bill responded with anguish and despair, "This is awful! This is not what I expected at all! What happened to the beach and the beautiful women playing in the water?"

"Oh THAT!" said God. "That was the Screen Saver."



The Microsoft website, [www.microsoft.com.uk/default.asp](http://www.microsoft.com.uk/default.asp), is one of the biggest in the world. This is only to be expected, considering that the site should match the size and technology capability of the company behind it. However, although the website is bursting full with a multitude of goodies, these are not always easy to find. When you know where to look, you will find answers to technical problems and advice on almost any aspect of Microsoft software, from Windows 95 to Internet Explorer 6 and Outlook Express 6. You can search through a huge database of tips, known problems and fixes published by Microsoft's own experts or you can put your questions to a worldwide community of Microsoft users, which will almost invariably include someone who knows the answer to your particular problem.

You will also find new versions of certain products, plus patches and updates that can fix those nagging glitches that nothing else can resolve. Using the advice available and the free **downloads**, a remarkable number of apparently intractable problems can be made to go away without you ever needing to phone a customer support number or technical helpline.

#### Where do you want to go today

If you have a clear idea of what it is you are looking for, you should try the search engine. The basic search box is to the left, on the grey bar running below the blue menu and you simply type in a word or phrase and click on the Go button to see what happens. You can also opt for a Boolean search, which means you can define your terms using AND, OR and NOT (for example: Windows 98 AND Internet Explorer 5.5). There is also a "I want to select from the list" in a drop down box on the home page, which is a shortcut to where you want to go.

If the solution to your problem is for a patch or an update, you will need the Download Centre under the Windows Download Section but you will have to change from English (US) to English (Great Britain) and click go. This link takes you right to where you can pick from the most popular downloads of the moment, or use the search feature at the bottom of the page to call up a list of available downloads for a particular product.

#### Go ahead and ask

The trick to getting results out of the Microsoft site is to visit the FAQ pages and the Knowledge Base plus the useful Newsgroups Communities in the Technical Support section under Resources. Search the Knowledge Base by entering your query in the drop down box and click go. Also it can be helpful to use the search facility once you are actually in the newsgroup you want and then search for other people's posts on the topic you are interested in. You can then frame your question in a clear, friendly and unambiguous way and ask.

#### Window cleaning

Also under the Resources link is the Windows Update section, where you can choose which version of Windows you are using. If you are using Windows 98 or Me, Windows Update will download a small piece of software onto your computer, which examines your Windows setup and advises you which patches and updates you need. This is done on your machine itself and the information is not sent over the Internet, nor is Microsoft able to get its hands on any of the information about your PC - it is actually extremely useful. Windows 95 users will have to make do with a list, as there is no update tool for this version but there is another website,



namely <http://corporate.windowsupdate.microsoft.com/en/default.asp> where you can download the updates individually and save them to your hard drive or zip disk. Those members who are fortunate to have the Windows XP version don't have to bother with all this as XP is designed to update itself automatically when the PC is connected to the Internet.

#### Over to you....

As mentioned at the outset, the Microsoft website is huge and here concentration has been given to specific UK sections to help you find the most useful things quickly and easily. There is much more up there including the **Information For** section, where you will find further links to worthy stuff such as the Encarta Encyclopaedia, advice on hardware, much information on Windows XP, gaming devices and Microsoft's latest news.

It pays to keep exploring and following up the links to anything that looks interesting. It is easy to be cynical about Microsoft but there's no getting away from the fact that Microsoft has gone to considerable trouble to make its website useful. It isn't just puff and marketing; there's plenty of useful information and essential patches and updates. You are entitled to use all of it - you paid for it when you bought the original software - so it makes sense to exploit it to the full. Happy exploring!

Dominic Bucknall

---

## Updates and Windows XP

If you've started using Windows XP, you can benefit automatically from the steady stream of patches and updates coming from Microsoft as it responds to any minor problems with XP since its launch and any conflicts with other software applications. You can carry out manual, selective updates using the Windows Update feature on the Microsoft website but if you prefer, XP can handle all that sort of thing on its own, behind the scenes.

If you want, you can have Windows carry out a background check with Update and whenever you go online, it will download any new patches that Microsoft has released. Alternatively, you can keep a closer eye on things by having Windows notify you with pop-up messages whenever it wants to download an update.

To turn automatic update on and off, click the Start button, click Control Panel, Performance and Maintenance, and then System. Use the options on the Automatic Updates tab to control the way your Windows setup deals with background updates

Our thanks to Computer Active Magazine for these extracts