“Everyone wants to build but nobody wants to do any maintenance.” - Kurt Vonnegut

COMPUTER HOUSEKEEPING

This document is intended to support the ‘Silver Surfers’ course of the same name. It addresses some of the more common PC maintenance tasks such as personalizing your computer, file and folder management and backup, keeping secure online and managing your operating system and programs. The document assumes you are using Windows 7 as your operating system and Google Chrome as your web browser. If you are not using Windows 7/ Google Chrome, what is displayed on your screen will look slightly different to the ‘screenshots’ featured here.
## Computer Housekeeping

### Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer Housekeeping</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC Personalisation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop, taskbar and start menu options</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up your Start menu</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing unwanted desktop shortcuts</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting your desktop to a plain colour (avoiding distractions!)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installing and uninstalling software</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a new user account</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File and folder management</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding your way around the hard disk</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing your ‘view’</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing the sort order of your files and folders</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deleting, renaming, copying and moving files and folders</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting multiple files/folders</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deleting files and folders</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaming files and folders</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaming multiple files/folders</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying files and folders</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving files and folders</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backing up your important files and folders</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online backup</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping secure online</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring your home PC has good security</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with suspicious emails</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising secure websites</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping your PC healthy – Defrag, Windows Update and System restore</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Defragging’ your hard disk</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows update</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System restore</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We all like to do pleasurable (and productive!) things on our computers but in order to keep them in a state where they continue to be a pleasure to use, it is important to take some control of what happens to them and ensure that things run relatively smoothly.

Having a well organised computer is no guarantee that you won’t encounter problems – you will! – But it should at least minimise those problems.

This course will show you how to take charge of your computer and the important information you might be storing on it. It is not a 100% comprehensive guide – Windows 7 has so many different options it would need several hundred or even several thousand pages to document all the different options that are available. Instead, I will concentrate on some of the main options.

This task is broken down into five sections:

1. PC Personalisation – Setting up the way your computer looks and feels.
2. File and folder management – Keeping your files and folders in a tidy state.
3. Backup – Ensuring you will never lose those precious photographs, videos and other documents.
4. Online security – Ensuring you don’t get scammed, invaded by viruses and malware or have your identity stolen.
5. Managing your hard disk, operating system and programs.

**PC Personalisation**

- Desktop, task bar and start menu options
- Installing/uninstalling software
- User account settings

A big part of what makes you feel that your computer really is yours, is the way it looks and feels. This is what this first section is all about.

The first thing we are going to look at is your start menu and desktop, the first screen you are presented with when you login.
Being able to control what software is on your computer also helps you feel in control. We will look at how you install and uninstall software by taking a step by step tour of these processes.

Finally in this section, we will look at controlling user accounts so that several people can use the same computer without getting in each others’ way!

**Desktop, taskbar and start menu options**

To change the look of your desktop, click the ‘Start orb’ in the bottom left hand corner of the screen ( tắt ) then click ‘Control Panel’. The Control panel will be displayed. If it says ‘View by Large Icons’ or ‘View by Small Icons’ in the top right hand corner of the window, click the words ‘Large icons’ or ‘Small icons’ and then click ‘Category’ so that the window looks like the one below:

![Control Panel Window](image)
Click ‘Appearance and Personalization’ to display the next window:

I could write a whole book just on the options available in this screen! However, there are more important topics we need to cover later in this document so I would suggest that you just experiment! You can’t do any damage and if you don’t like the results of your experiments, just undo whatever you have done! (Make a note of any changes you make as you go along to aid this process).

We are going to look at just two customisations in detail:

- Setting up your start menu with the programs you use most frequently and
- Setting the desktop screen to a plain colour (to avoid distractions!)

**Setting up your Start menu**

To setup your start menu, first make a list of the programs you want to have quick and easy access to. I want these programs on my start menu:

- Google Chrome (My chosen Web Browser)
- Picasa 3 (My photo editor and viewer)
- Serif PagePlus (My Desktop Publishing program)
- Serif PhotoPlus (Another more sophisticated photo editor)
- Microsoft Word (My Word Processing program)
- Solitaire (The card game)!
At the moment, I have a completely different set of programs on my start menu, programs I rarely, if ever, use. The first task is to remove these items. When you do this, you are not removing these programs from your computer – you are simply removing the ‘pointers’ to those programs that are on the start menu.

These ‘pointers’ – menu items – have to be removed one at a time as follows:

Right click the item you want to remove. On the pop-up menu that is displayed, click ‘Remove from this list’. Repeat for all the items that you want to remove from your start menu.

Now we will add the items we do want on our start menu. The first program we are going to add is Google Chrome. Click the Start Orb and the (by now) empty start menu will open:
In the search box at the bottom of the window, start typing the name of the program you want to add – Google Chrome. The program will appear on the list:

Right click on Google Chrome and click ‘Pin to Start Menu’ on the pop-up menu that is displayed. Repeat this process for the other programs you want on your start menu until it has all the programs you want listed:
The Start menu has an annoying habit of adding programs to the start menu just because you have opened them. To stop this happening, right click a blank area on the left hand side of the menu and then click properties. A new window will be displayed:

Remove the two ticks (by clicking them) under the ‘Privacy’ area then click OK. Windows will no longer add items to your start menu upon its own initiative!
Removing unwanted desktop shortcuts

Your desktop may also have shortcuts that you don’t want. To remove them, right click the icon you want to remove and from the popup menu that is displayed, click ‘delete’:

In the example above, I am removing the shortcut to the program called ‘Serif PagePlus’.

Adding desktop shortcuts is also possible, but beyond the scope of this document. Search Google for ‘Adding desktop shortcut Windows 7’ if you want to learn how to do this.

-*

Setting your desktop to a plain colour (avoiding distractions!)

Now we are going to set our desktop to have a plain colour. Click the Start Orb then click ‘Control Panel’. Under ‘Appearance and Personalization’ click ‘Change desktop background’:
Click the down-pointing arrow opposite ‘Picture location’ and choose ‘Solid Colours’:

Click the colour you want as your desktop background then click ‘Save changes’. Your desktop will now be the colour you have chosen.

**Installing and uninstalling software**

Your computer comes with quite a lot of programs pre-installed. For example, you will have Internet Explorer installed as your web browser.
but you may want to use a different web browser. If so, you will need to download and install it.

There is a very useful website where you can download and install many useful programs from different companies all at one go rather than having to visit lots of different websites and download and install programs individually. Point your browser at ninite.com:

Put ticks in the boxes of the programs you want to install on your computer. In the example below, I have chosen to install ‘Google Earth’, and ‘Java’.

Next, click ‘Get installer’:
A new page will be displayed:

If you are using Google Chrome as your browser, the download window will be displayed in the bottom left hand corner of your screen:

Click ‘Save’. After a few seconds, there will be a button in the bottom left hand corner of the screen

Click this button. A new window will be displayed:

Click ‘Run’. A new window will be displayed:
Another screen will ask if you wish ninite to make changes to your computer; click ‘Yes’. A new small window will be displayed:

When the programs are installed, the window tells you it has finished:

Click the ‘Close’ button. Your programs are installed.

You may want to uninstall programs from your computer if you no longer use them. To uninstall a program:

1. Click ‘Start’ then Control Panel. In category view, click ‘Uninstall a program’ under the ‘Programs’ heading. In icon view, click ‘Programs and features’. A list of all your installed programs will be displayed:
2. Click the program you wish to uninstall, then click the ‘uninstall’ button. In the example above, I am about to uninstall a program called 7-zip.

3. You will be asked to confirm your wish to uninstall the program:

   ![Confirmation dialog box]
   
   Click ‘Yes’. A new window will be displayed:

   ![Windows Installer dialog box]
   
   You may get a window asking if you want to allow changes to be made to your computer – click ‘Yes’. The program will be uninstalled.
Creating a new user account

It can be useful to setup user accounts for different users of the computer. This will allow each user to setup their own start menu and desktop and have their own libraries of documents, pictures, music and videos.

Another reason to set up additional user accounts is to ensure less experienced users can’t make big changes to the computer – for example install/uninstall software. You may not want to give your children or grandchildren full rights over your computer!

To create a limited user account:

1. Click start then Control Panel:
2. In category view, under ‘User Accounts and Family Safety’ click ‘Add or remove user accounts’ then click ‘create new account’. In icon view, click ‘User accounts’, ‘Manage another account’, ‘Create a new account’. A new screen will be displayed;

3. Give the account a name (i.e. the name of the person who will be using the account) and choose ‘standard user’. Click ‘Create account’. I have created an account for Michael:
To add a password to Michael’s account, click his name. A new screen will be displayed:

Click ‘Create a password’. Follow the prompts.

4. Next time the computer starts up, the new account will appear on the list of user accounts.

File and folder management
Managing your files and folders is a key skill when you are trying to master your computer. It’s quite a dry subject but very useful knowledge!

A file may be defined as a collection of data with a name. Files are of many different types including photographs, movies, letters, pieces of software, pieces of music etc.

A folder is an electronic container for files and other folders. All your files and folders are stored on your hard disk which is the electronic equivalent of a filing cabinet. As we all know, filing cabinets can get very disorganised and files lost! This is why this is such an important subject.
After you have been on the holiday of a lifetime, your pictures of that holiday will be very precious to you and this is why it is important to know how to manage them. This section will guide you through some of the basic techniques of managing files and folders. It is closely related to the next section – backing up your important files.

**Finding your way around the hard disk**
To begin exploring the hard disk, click the Start Orb then click Computer – a new window will be displayed:

![Image of Computer window]

Your hard disk is represented by an icon and has the name ‘C’. To look at the contents of ‘C’, we need to double click it. Whenever you want an icon to do something, you have to double click it. This icon represents a drive, so when you double click it, the drive will ‘open’ and display its contents.

Let’s double click the ‘C’ drive:
We are now in the same window but we are looking at a different location – the yellow folders represent the folders on the hard disk. Also notice that the address has changed from ‘Computer’ to ‘OS (C)’. The address bar displays what is known as the ‘path’. The path should be read from right to left so in the current situation the path is saying that we are looking at the contents of ‘C’ which itself is inside ‘Computer’. In a moment, we are going to double click the folder labelled ‘Users’. But first, what is the ‘Users’ folder all about?

When you login to your computer, you will be logging in as a particular user. To see who you are logged in as, click the Start Orb – The name of the currently logged in user will be seen at the top of the right hand column of the Start menu:

Let’s now double click the ‘Users’ folder:
The address is showing the path – We are in the Users folder which is inside the ‘C’ folder which is inside ‘Computer’. Notice that one of the Users is ‘Silversurfer4’ – That’s who we are logged in as!

Let’s double click ‘Silversurfer4’:

![Image of the Windows Explorer window showing the Users folder]

The folders we can now see all belong to Silversurfer4. Let’s click ‘My Documents:

![Image of the Windows Explorer window showing My Documents]

We are now looking at Silversurfer4’s documents.

To open one of the documents we need to double click it (because it’s an icon). Let’s double click the document entitled ‘Solitaire rules’ – The document will open in the program that was used to create it – in this case, Microsoft Word:
To close this document, click the cross in the top right hand corner of the window:

So far we have been ‘burrowing down’ into the hard disk’s folder structure – It’s a bit like a ‘Babushka’ doll – we have been going into a folder then into a folder inside that folder and so on:

How do we follow the path the other way – i.e. retrace our steps?
We just click the location in the address bar for the location we want. So for example, if we wanted to go back and look at the contents of ‘C’, we click ‘C’ in the address bar:

By clicking (as above) we will go back to see the contents of ‘C’:

‘Views’ button

‘Links’ to useful folders on the hard disk
Another way of moving around the hard disk is by clicking the links on the left hand side of the window. These only need a single click because they are links not icons.

One last way of moving around the hard disk is by using the back and forward buttons in the top left hand corner of the window. The left pointing arrow points back to previous locations, the right pointing arrow points to locations you have been to prior to clicking ‘back’!

**Changing your ‘view’**

So far we have looked at different ways of moving around the hard disk. When you are doing this, you can change the way your icons are represented using the ‘views’ button.

In the pictures above, the icons are displayed as a list but there are other ways to display them using the ‘views’ button. If you click the arrow to the right of the views button, a menu is displayed showing your options:

*Extra large folder icons look like this*

*The same folders look like this when displayed in detail view*

Try looking at a folder of files in all the different views to become familiar with all the view options.
Changing the sort order of your files and folders

Another useful technique is to change the sort order of files and folders. By default (i.e. unless you change it) your files are sorted alphabetically, top to bottom, left to right. But sometimes you may want to sort them in a different way. For example, you might download a new program from the Internet into your Documents folder. When you go to find it, you can’t remember what it’s called and there may be hundreds of files in the folder. No problem – just sort your files by date and the newest file (the one you downloaded) will be at the bottom of the sorted files. To do this, right click on the background within a folder and choose ‘sort by date modified’ on the popup menu that’s displayed:

In this picture the files are currently sorted alphabetically – by name. To change the order to ‘Date modified’ click the words ‘date modified’. The files will then be sorted by date with the oldest one first and the newest one last:
Deleting, renaming, copying and moving files and folders

It was stated earlier that if you want an icon to do something you have to double click it.

Double clicking a folder icon will open the folder to reveal its contents.

Double clicking a picture icon will cause your picture viewing program to open and display the picture.

Double clicking an icon for a Word document will cause Word to start and display your document.

So you double click a file if you want an icon to do something. But what happens if you want to do something to an icon? In other words, what if you want to move, copy, delete or rename a file or group of files?

Double clicking icons will open files and folders but that's not what we want to do here. What we need to do is select a file or folder or several files and folders.
Selecting multiple files/folders

To select a single file or folder, click on it. It is selected:

Sometimes you might want to select several files at the same time. For example, you want to delete three files so you first need to select all three files. To do this, click the first file. Now hold down the ‘control key’ (labelled Ctrl and found in the bottom left hand corner of your keyboard). While you are holding down control, click the second and third files. You now have three files selected:

Now you have selected your files right click on one of the selected files. A menu will be displayed:
Deleting files and folders
In the picture above we have selected three files and then right clicked on one of them to bring up the menu (the grey area saying open, Edit, New etc). We can now choose an action from the menu. We are going to delete (throw away) these three files so we click ‘Delete’ on the menu. Windows asks us to confirm our choice:

![Delete Multiple Items dialog]

Click ‘Yes’ to delete the files. The files will be sent to the ‘Recycle bin’. To delete these files permanently, right click on the desktop icon for the recycle bin and click ‘Empty the Recycle bin’, on the popup menu that is displayed:
Sometimes, you might make a mistake and delete files and/or folders accidentally. This is not a problem, however (assuming you haven’t yet emptied the recycle bin)! You can open the Recycle bin and then simply restore the files/folders to the same location they were deleted from.

To do this, double click the Recycle bin icon on the desktop: The Recycle bin window will be displayed:

Select the files you want to restore – click the first file then hold down the control key. Now click on the other files you want to restore. Right click on one of the selected files. On the popup menu that is displayed click restore:

Your files/folders will be put back from where you deleted them from.
Renaming files and folders
Sometimes you may want to rename a file or folder. For example, when you download pictures from your camera to your hard disk, they usually have names created by the camera:

To rename a single file, right click the file and from the popup menu that is displayed, click rename:

Type a new name over the top of the old name and press the Enter key:

Your file has been renamed:

Renaming multiple files/folders
You can rename multiple files or folders, all at once. Select the files or folders you want to rename. Right click on one of the selected items and choose rename from the popup menu. Type in a name for your files/folders and press Enter – I have typed ‘Cyprus’. Your files will be renamed:
Copying files and folders
Sometimes you may want to copy files and/or folders. For example, you may want to copy your treasured photographs to a memory stick so that you can take them with you and show your friends on another computer.

To do this, follow these steps:

1. Select the files/folders:

   ![Pictures library]

   In this example I have selected three folders of pictures.

2. Right click on one of the selected items and from the popup menu choose ‘copy’:

   ![Pictures library popup menu]

   Put your memory stick into a USB port on your computer. A new window will be displayed:
3. Click ‘Open folder to view files’. A new window will be displayed;

4. Right click on the window and from the popup menu, choose ‘paste’. Your folders of pictures will copy to your memory stick:

5. Release your stick. Click the icon representing USB devices in the notification area (bottom right hand corner of the screen). From the popup menu, click the device you want to release (In this case it is ‘USB disk 2’):
6. Remove the memory stick after you receive confirmation that it is safe to remove the device:

![Safe To Remove Hardware](image)

**Moving files and folders**
To move files and folders rather than copying them, follow exactly the same procedure as above, but on the popup menu choose ‘cut’ where you previously chose ‘copy’.

**Backing up your important files and folders**
In the previous section, we looked at how you can copy files to your memory stick. In essence, backing up your files and folders is doing exactly the same! The only difference is that when you are doing a backup, you need to think about the logic underlying the process.

Essentially, assuming that you always save your documents, pictures, movies etc to the appropriate folders, you only need to backup those folders on your computer. In other words, the only files that you need to backup are the files you have created yourself.

The first step is to see how much space your files are occupying on your hard disk. We need to do this to ensure that the backup medium (memory stick, CD, DVD, external hard disk etc) has enough room on it to accommodate all your files. To do this, follow these steps;

1. Click the Start Orb then click your user name (The user you are logged in as):
2. A new window will be displayed:

3. Click the first item you want to backup. Hold down the ‘Control’ key on the keyboard and click the other items you want to backup. Your window should now look similar to this:

4. Right click on one of the selected items and from the popup menu click ‘Properties’. The properties of the selected folders will be
displayed, showing the total size of the files within the selected folders:

![Image of file size](image)

**The total size of all the selected files**

5. Now you need to ensure there is enough space on your backup medium to accommodate this amount of data. I am using an empty 4 GB (gigabyte) memory stick so there is ample room.

6. The final stage is to copy and paste your selected items in the same way as explained, beginning on page 19.

7. Once your files have copied onto your memory stick, release your stick as outlined on page 21.

You should backup your files on a regular basis. Exactly how regular is up to you. If you backup your files once a month, in the worst case scenario, you could lose your most recent month’s created files. If you only backup once a year, you could lose your most recent year’s files!

When you come to do your next and all subsequent backups, you should follow exactly the same procedure as above except when you paste your files onto your stick you will get the following message displayed on screen:
Put a tick in the box labelled ‘Do this for all current items’ and then click ‘Yes’. Another window will be displayed:

Place a tick in the box labelled ‘Do this for the next n conflicts’ and then click ‘Copy and Replace’. The computer will overwrite files that are already on the memory stick from your previous backup and add any
newly created files. The copy window will show you the progress of your backup:

![Copy window](image)

When this window disappears, your backup is complete. Release your stick.

Backing up onto other types of media involves similar processes. Using an external USB hard disk as a backup medium involves exactly the same procedure as above – your computer 'sees' a memory stick and a USB hard disk as the same type of media.

Backing up to a CD or DVD is slightly different but very easy. Follow the first three steps of the instructions beginning on page 22 and then click the 'Burn' button:

![Burn window](image)

A new window will be displayed and your disk drive tray will open:
Place a CD (Capacity 650 mb) or DVD (Capacity 4.6 GB) into the tray and close the tray. A new window will be displayed:

If you are using a CD-RW or DVD-RW (i.e. rewritable disks) choose ‘Like a USB flash drive’. If you are using a CD or DVD that you can only write to once, choose ‘With a CD/DVD player’. Generally speaking, use the first option and with almost all disks, it will work! Give the disk a meaningful title. Click ‘Next’. A new window will be displayed:
When the disk has been formatted, the following window will be displayed:

![Window Displaying a Backup Disk]

Click ‘Open folder to view files’ – this may not be necessary – the window may open automatically:

![Folder to Add Files]

This window is self explanatory: ‘Drag’ the files and folders you want on the backup disk into this window to create your backup!

Of the two methods (backing up to memory stick/external hard disk or backing up to CD/DVD) the first is easier and quicker so I would advise this method if possible. CDs and DVDs are rapidly becoming last year’s technology rather like what happened to floppy disks – remember them?

**Online backup**
There are a number of free online backup services but the easiest one to use, by far is called ‘My Dropbox’. This works seamlessly with your computer to provide automatic backup of your important files.

In essence one folder on your hard disk is synchronised automatically with your online backup folder. You don’t need to think about it once it is set up. Best of all it’s free!
First you will need to sign up for a dropbox account. Go to www.dropbox.com and click the download link:

![Download Dropbox](image)

In Google Chrome, click the save button on the ‘downloads’ bar in the bottom left hand corner of the screen:

![Save button](image)

After a few seconds, a new button will appear in the same place:

![Dropbox 0.7.110.exe](image)

Click the button to begin the installation. In the window that is displayed click ‘Run’:

![Open File - Security Warning](image)

Another window will be displayed asking if you want to allow Dropbox to make changes to your computer. Click ‘Yes’. The Dropbox installation wizard will be displayed:
Click ‘Install’. After a few seconds a new screen will be displayed;

If you are setting dropbox up for the first time, choose ‘I don’t have a dropbox account’, then click next. A new screen will be displayed. Fill out the form as below then click next:

In the next screen, make sure the free, 2GB (2 gigabyte) account is selected then click next:
In the next screen click, ‘skip tour and finish’;

In the final screen, read the instructions and click ‘finish’: 
You will now find a new folder inside your documents folder called ‘my dropbox’. Anything you save in that folder is automatically backed up online.

You can also set up dropbox on a second/third/fourth computer but when you are installing, choose ‘I already have a dropbox account’ instead of ‘I don’t have a dropbox account’ as previously on page 36.

**Keeping secure online**

We have all heard horrific stories about getting scammed online. Armed with some knowledge however, this becomes a lot less likely.

To stay safe online:

1. Ensure that you have good security on your PC at home. This means effective protection against viruses, spyware, malware etc.
2. Don’t ever open an email that you think may be suspicious – Delete it without opening it.
3. If you are using your credit card online, use common sense and caution. It is always better to use a credit card rather than a debit card – It gives you greater legal protection should a problem occur.
4. Only use reputable online shops – names you have heard of like Sainsbury’s, Amazon. Ebay etc. If you are unsure of an online shop’s veracity, put its name into Google and research it. See what others say about a particular online retailer.
5. Only type your credit card number into a secure website whose address begins https:// - The ‘S’ stands for ‘secure’.
6. Be wary of using your credit card on ‘public’ computers – You have no way of knowing whether it is compromised and insecure.
7. If you login to your email on a public computer, make sure you log out at the end of your session.

We will now look at the most important of these points in some more detail.

**Ensuring your home PC has good security**

Ideally, you should have one program installed that can effectively prevent infections from viruses, spyware, malware etc. Commercial programs such as Norton or MacAfee will do the job but they are not
cheap and you have to pay every year in order to be able to download the updates, which is essential.

How can you find out what security software you have got installed on your home PC?

Click the Start Orb then click ‘Control Panel’:

The Control Panel can be viewed by category:

Or as icons:
If you are viewing the Control Panel by category, click ‘Programs’ and then ‘Programs and Features’, if as icons, click ‘Programs and Features’:

Scroll through the list of programs installed on your computer and look for something with the word virus in its name.

My computer is protected by Sophos anti-virus so I can relax, at least about this aspect of my security! You need to do a similar check.

If you find that you don’t have any anti virus software installed, it is important to install some. It is also important not to have more than one anti virus program installed as they can tend to conflict with one another.

The best of the free anti virus programs is ‘Microsoft Security Essentials’. Although it is free, this does not imply that it is inferior to the commercial products – it does as good a job as any of them so there is little reason not to use it.

To download it, search Google for Microsoft Security Essentials. When you find it go to the download site and click the ‘Download Now’ button:
A new screen will be displayed:

Change the language to English and then click the link corresponding to your Operating system. If you are unsure which operating system you are using, click the Start Orb then right click on ‘Computer’ and then choose ‘Properties’. The window that is displayed will tell you which operating system you are using:

After you have clicked to specify your operating system, the setup file will begin to download. In Google Chrome, click ‘Save’:

Once downloaded, the file will be in the bottom left hand corner of the screen (assuming you are using Google Chrome):
Click this button to begin the installation. A new window will be displayed:

Click ‘Run’. The installation wizard will be displayed:

Follow the prompts to install the program – begin this process by clicking next.

Once installed, MSE will scan your computer to check that it is virus free.

Dealing with suspicious emails
Easy – Delete them!
Email attachments are another common source of viruses. It is extremely ill advised to open attachments from complete strangers, especially certain kinds of attachments. Nearly all files have what is called an ‘extension’ – The extension tells the PC what ‘family’ of files a particular file belongs to. When you get an email attachment, you can see its extension:

This file has an .xls extension – that means it is an Excel spreadsheet file. Some extensions are very good at transporting and hiding viruses and other ‘nasties’. For this reason, you should be very wary of opening email attachments with any of the following extensions:

- .exe
- .com
- .inf
- .scr
- .pif
- .vbs

If you still want to go ahead, scan the file with your anti virus program before opening it.

Also be very wary of files with ‘double extensions’. A file with a double extension might be called something like ‘file.jpg.exe’. These are very suspicious indeed and should not be opened under any circumstances!

**Recognising secure websites**

If you are using your credit card online, always make sure the page where you enter your card information is secure.

How can you tell? Well, very easily, in fact. Look at the address at the top of the web page. In the picture below, I am looking at the address of the BBC website:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/
Virtually all website addresses (also known as URLs) begin ‘http’, standing for ‘Hyper Text Transfer Protocol’ – i.e. the set of rules that govern the way the World Wide Web operates.

Secure websites – the ones where you might enter a credit card number have a slightly different format. Look at the login page for the Halifax Building Society:

https://www.halifax-online.co.uk

The ‘s’ at the end of the ‘http’ stands for ‘secure’. So always ensure the address of the page where you type in your credit card details begins ‘https’.

Keeping your PC healthy – Defrag, Windows Update and System restore

Over time, your hard disk can become ‘fragmented’. This simply means that it is less than optimally organised. This is nothing to do with your filing habits!

‘Defragging’ your hard disk

To defragment your hard disk, follow these steps:

Click the ‘Start orb’ – The Start menu will be displayed. In the search box, type ‘defragmenter’. When it appears in the window click it once – The disk defragmenter will open:

Click ‘Analyse Disk’. The program will check your hard disk to determine whether or not it needs defragmenting. When complete, the program will report how fragmented your disk is. If it is more than 10% fragmented, you
should defragment it by clicking the ‘Defragment Disk’ button.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disk</th>
<th>Last Run</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OS (C:)</td>
<td>20/05/2010 16:01 (0% fragmented)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP_RECOVERY (D:)</td>
<td>20/05/2010 15:13 (0% fragmented)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SYSTEM</td>
<td>20/05/2010 15:08 (0% fragmented)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My report (above) indicated that no defragmentation is required.

You may wish to set a ‘Defragmentation schedule’ by clicking the ‘Configure schedule’ button. This will bring up the window where you can set a schedule:

Set the frequency (monthly is often enough), the day and the time. Click ‘OK’. The Defragmenter will now defragment your disk monthly automatically if necessary.

**Windows update**

It is advisable to set Windows to update automatically. This way, your operating system will always be updated to the latest version, minimising the likelihood of problems with your operating system.

To set your computer to update automatically, follow these steps:

1. Click the Start orb then click ‘Control Panel’. The Control Panel may display in one of three different ways; Category, large icons or small icons. The Control Panel window shows which of these three display options is active:
If the Control Panel is displaying as large icons or small icons, click 'windows update':

![Windows Update](image)

If the Control Panel is displaying as Category, click 'System and Security':

![System and Security](image)

Now click 'Windows Update':

![Windows Update](image)

The windows Update screen will be displayed:

![Windows Update Screen](image)

Click 'Change settings'. Set your computer to update automatically:
System restore
Sometimes, especially after installing some new software, your computer may start behaving erratically. Uninstalling the program may cure the problem but if not, you may want to put your PC back into the state it was in before the trouble started!

This is what System restore does. To use system restore:

1. Click the Start orb and in the search box type ‘system restore’. It will appear on the list:
Click ‘System restore’. The System restore window will be displayed:

You can choose the recommended restore point or choose a different restore point. Follow the prompts by clicking next. If you chose to use a different restore point another screen will be displayed:
Placing a tick in the ‘show more restore points’ box will display even more restore points. Click the one you want then click ‘next’. Finally click ‘Finish’.

Your PC will reboot and will be restored to the date you chose. This should fix any problems that you had recently noticed.