TECHNICAL GUIDE

COMPUTER BASICS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
MANAGING SOFTWARE

Second Edition

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1. Why does software get updated?

Updates are intended to add features and improvements that enhance the capabilities of the package. They are also done to fix bugs and errors in earlier versions of the software.

2. How often should I update my operating system (OS)?

Updating an OS is a major undertaking. It should be avoided if your computers and software tools are old but do the job you need. If you invest in new hardware and software an OS upgrade is unavoidable.

3. How does Software as a Service (SaaS) benefit me?

With SaaS you can subscribe to a service rather than buying the software yourself. The main benefit is that someone else is responsible for managing updates and support.

4. Is it better to work on a laptop or a desktop computer?

It makes no difference except in terms of your own preferences. A laptop plus extra keyboard and full sized monitor gives you the choice of set-ups, but a desktop computer is far more compact and convenient. Your choice.

6. Does it matter if I use old versions of software?

If they run as you want and do the job you need doing, then it doesn't matter. However if you work with other people who use more recent versions you may find compatibility problems are frequent and spend too much time wrestling with software rather than getting work done.

5. Why does my software freeze?

The most common problem is a logjam of processing instructions. Instructions from the application are managed in your computer's Random Access Memory (RAM) which passes them to the Central Processing Unit (CPU) to execute. If there are too many at once the software cannot respond to further instructions from you and freezes. The other reason is bugs in the software that for whatever reason prevent instructions being carried out.

7. What makes cloud computing special?

It is the underlying model for the internet and a model for powerful computing services. Cloud service providers take responsibility for digital infrastructures to which you can subscribe, rather than having to invest in your own servers and software.

8. Do I need system software and application software?

Yes. The system software controls your computer's hardware and application software provides you with tools for specific tasks. The computer will run with just system software, but the range of things you can do with it will be very limited.

9. Is malware as bad as a virus?

A virus is a class of malware so it depends on how malicious the virus is compared to other types of malware such as Ransomware. None of it is good so you should use protection software to prevent access to your system.

10. How do I recognise a software bug?

Bugs are mistakes in how the software code was written. Think of them as spelling mistakes that disrupt your reading, only worse. Bugs can be trivial or very serious, such as an application suddenly quitting without saving the file.

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