

COMPUTERS MADE EASY

SIMPLE GUIDES TO GET THE BEST FROM YOUR COMPUTER

5 things you didn't know your computer could do

Your computer usually has far more capability than most people realise. We all know that it can “number crunch” and access the Internet etc, but what else can it do?

1

Do you have more than one computer? Are they all on Broadband ? (wirelessly or wired) If so, they can usually be made to “share” printers and files with no extra software or equipment at all. “Sharing” files mean that you can easily send files to another person's computer, and sharing printers means that if the printer is connected to one computer, the others can be made to access that printer and print to it even if they're not connected to it physically. This means that you may only need 1 printer per home! And no more exchanging files via floppy, CD or memory stick.

2

Do you have a digital camcorder? On your PC, you can “capture” your video (transfer it to the PC), edit it into one long movie, and then “render” (create an edited movie) and then write that to a DVD which can be played on any DVD player. Your computer comes with a basic package which can do this, and most PCs have DVD writers these days. So long as you have a large Hard Drive, (and these can usually be upgraded or added to for little cost), and the PC is not too old, you can create a movie with “transitions” (fades or effects as scenes in the movie change) and titles.

3

Are you interested in photography, and would like to be able to distribute and show off your photos to other people, perhaps with titles or captions? Your PC is capable of this, too, and once again, the software is free and probably already on your PC. You can create slideshows, write them to CD or DVD which can play on a normal DVD player. Photos shown this way look much better than when just written to CD and shown on a DVD player attached to a T.V.

4

Have you ever wanted your own Website? Perhaps you'd like to show off your photos, writing, or just have your “place on the Web”. Once again, your PC can help you create web pages and almost all Broadband providers give you some free “webspace” (a place for your website to go). And there is a huge amount of help and tutorials on the Internet, and the software required can be aquired for no cost at all!

5

Your PC is also a powerful audio processor. With a little help, you can attach a microphone and record your own music, or there are free and very good audio software which can do incredible things with sound, allowing you to “mix” your audio, add effects, reverb and finally output the final result to .mp3 or CD-Audio or other audio file format. The Internet is also a good source of music “samples” (clips of real instruments, for example, or nature sounds or whatever), which can be “looped” (repeated) and mixed together with other sounds. Many electric keyboards are capable of being attached to a computer: I even use my electric guitars through a computer!

All of these things are possible with no or very little outlay. There is a world of free and Open Source software out there which can help with this, and usually you do not need much in the way of extra equipment. All the tuition you need is out on the internet. Why not find a new use for your PC? You can rest assured that no matter what your hobby is, your computer can be used to help you. A good ICT technician can easily advise you what you need, and help you aquire software to achieve your aims.

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