

Tip for October 2005
Courtesy of Wyvern Technology
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Greetings and salutations!

A few of you, my readers, having stopped me to have a chat, have told me that they understand “some of my column”. This is just not good enough – I have obviously become too technical in my speak – which is not what I started out to do. So I have had a good hard look at what I have written recently and will try to attend to the needs of those of you for whom tech speak is just too hard.

I have often enough said to my clients – using a computer is like running a car – you don’t have to understand how it works to use it as a tool. The problem with computers is they are developing at such a speed that they leave their poor users behind.

One of the important features of your computer that you need to know is its specifications. This you need to know if you are going to change to Broadband, update the operating system, buy a new program etc.

To find out these, you need to go to the Control Panel – found in XP after you have clicked on Start and in Settings after you have clicked on Start if you have Windows 98. Double click on the system icon and on the first screen that comes up, you will see the operating system, the speed of the CPU and the amount of RAM.

For example, you may see:

System – Microsoft XP Professional Version 2002 Service Pack 2
Registered to with a serial number
Pentium 4 3.GHZ 512 MB DDR RAM

All this means:

- that you have a computer which works because it has Windows XP operating system running it and that you have the latest addition to it – Service Pack 2;
- that it runs at 3 GHZ which is pretty fast as a computer’s speed is measured in **Hertz**. The higher the number, the faster the speed. A regular computer for home use could range from **850Mhz** (850 million Hertz) to 3 or more **GHz** (2 Billion Hertz) A Hertz is a cycle per second, so a **1 MHz machine can do about 1 million steps per second.**
- that it has 512 Megabytes of random access memory - temporary storage used by the computer to store documents that it is working on. Its contents are lost when you turn off the power. The more RAM the better but 512 is more than adequate for most people.

I mentioned a couple of times that Zone Labs firewall was the way to go but lately it has been stopping access to the internet. I would advise anyone who is experiencing difficulties to uninstall it – Control Panel – Add/Remove Programs.

Till next month, Deirdree