

Has your computer died?

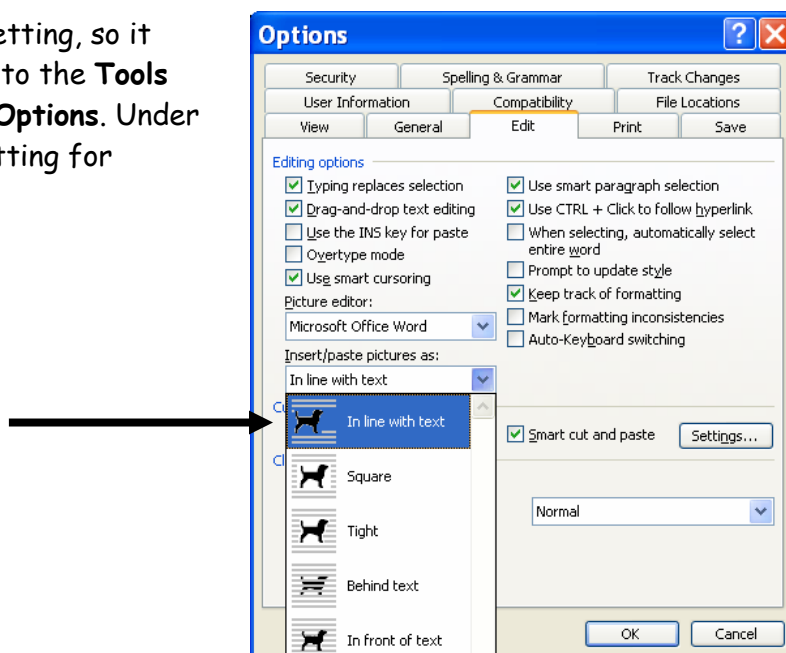
If you cannot turn your computer on but other electrical appliances plugged into the same power point work OK, disconnect the power cord from your computer and, after a couple of seconds, plug it in again. Now try turning the computer on. The fault may have been caused by a mains power irregularity which trips the protective circuitry in the computer's power supply. Pulling the power cord out allows the power supply to reset.

Positioning Images in Microsoft Word

Have you been frustrated with trying to position pictures and clipart where you want them in a Word document? Me too.

If you insert an image into a document, about the only thing you can do is to left, centre or right justify it as you do with text. To change one image, right click the image, select **Format picture...** and the **Layout** tab. In the **Wrapping style** section, if you select anything other than **In line with text**, you can click and drag the image anywhere in the document.

To change the default setting, so it happens with all images, go to the **Tools** dropdown menu and select **Options**. Under the **Edit** tab change the setting for **Insert/paste pictures as:**



Outlook Express Security

There is a risk of contaminating your computer with Internet nasties by opening an infected e-mail. Even if you only look at the e-mail in the Outlook Express preview pane, which is normally the bottom half of the Outlook Express Window, you have opened the e-mail and are therefore at risk.

To turn the preview pane off, go to the **View** dropdown menu and select **Layout...** Remove the tick from **Show preview pane**. Click **OK**.

The problem then is how do you know what's in the e-mail without fully opening it? That's why I am a fan for MailWasher which is a free download from www.mailwasher.net. MailWasher allows you to preview e-mail messages on your Internet provider's mail server before you download them to your computer. You can select and delete junk e-mails then download the ones you are really interested in.

Blank CD and DVD quality

I want to burn my own CD or DVD disc. What is the best brand to buy?

I wish I could answer that. I wish someone could answer that but the fact is that it seems no one can. There are many variables in the creation of a good disc. Here are some facts:

- There are hundreds of disc brands. Some are 'no name' brands.
- Within each brand there are frequently several types e.g gold, silver, premium etc. Don't be deceived. The fact that a disc is labelled Gold doesn't necessarily mean it contains any gold. It may be a marketing ploy.
- The company featured in the brand is usually not the company that manufactures the disc. For example, HP, Philips and Sony discs have been manufactured by Mitsui Chemicals. But the Philips and Sony discs may also be made by Taiyo Yuden. Imation discs are made by CMC Magnetics Corporation.
- A manufacturer usually makes discs for many different companies and a brand of disc may be made by different manufacturers.
- There are several factors that contribute to the reliability of a disc:
 - The quality of the disc
 - The compatibility between the disc and the cd writer or burner
 - The ability of the player to play the finished product
 - The speed with which a disc is burned

Non breaking hyphens and spaces in Microsoft Word

I am sure this must be covered in one of our courses but it's worth repeating here.

To keep two or more words together on the same line, instead of using the spacebar, use Ctrl + Shift + Spacebar simultaneously.

To keep two or more words separated by hyphens together, such as a telephone number, use Ctrl + Shift + Hyphen. Never use spaces to push a word onto the next line.

Most Recently Used Files

By default, Microsoft Word and some other Office applications show four of the most recently used files at the bottom of the **File** dropdown menu. Clicking on one of these files provides a quick way of opening them.

You can increase the number of files listed up to a maximum of nine under **Tools/Options** and the **General** tab. Adjust the number beside **Recently used file list**:

If you would rather not have any files listed, remove the tick from that entry.

Mouse keeping

These days computer mouses (?) tend to be optical rather than the roller ball type. This means there are now no moving parts to clog up with dirt and fluff. However, they still get caked with dirt on the pads that contact your desktop. Periodically, turn the mouse upside down and, with a finger nail, scrape off the dirt on the pads. You may be surprised how much more smoothly your mouse moves afterwards.

Power Protection

There are three types of power irregularities that can upset your computer.

- Surges or spikes which result in a momentary increase in power supply voltage. They can be caused by nearby lightning strikes around power lines.
- Brownouts are a momentary drop in power supply voltage perhaps caused by a component failure in the power supply reticulation.
- A complete power failure.

Problems that these can cause the computer are a possible loss or damage to files, or permanent damage to components within the computer.

Surge protectors, which are commonly used and quite cheap, are not an effective means of overall protection.

To achieve maximum protection you should consider an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). They are available from about \$200 up.

A UPS contains an internal battery. The battery supplies power to the computer and the mains power charges the battery so there is complete isolation between the mains and the computer.

Depending on the capacity of the UPS, they can keep a computer going for at least five minutes after a power failure.

Most of them will 'gracefully' close your computer down before the battery can no longer supply sufficient power.

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