

Spring 2006 newsletter

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Service developments

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. We kept our nose to the grindstone over the winter, and we now have some new technology to announce:

- ◆ Our new **page-monitoring service** will email you when a page you specify on a remote website is changed. If you find yourself constantly checking a website to see whether it has been updated, this service is for you. It does the same thing, but it does it automatically. You only need to visit the page when it actually changes – and you'll know it has, because you'll receive an email from us when it does. You can specify whether to trigger an alert when a specific series of words changes, or if any changes are made to the page at all.
- ◆ We have rolled out **new webmail** software. UebiMiau is a full-featured and easy-to-use replacement for your current webmail system. It includes support for folders and groups, has a Sent Items folder, and many other useful features. If you'd like to upgrade, contact us.
- ◆ Our mailout service can now send **HTML mailouts**. This permits you to send webpages as emails to a list of email addresses (as many addresses as you want). In addition, we now have our own SMTP server, which accelerates delivery times, and minimises the chances of your mailout being flagged as spam. If you have bulk mail, we can deliver it.
- ◆ We now have the skills inhouse to make and repair **Ethernet cables**. This means it's much more cost-effective for you to run a cable of any length from A to B. Previously, lengthy cables needed to be custom-made by a supplier. Now we can do this ourselves, which has already saved our customers time and money.

Current promotions

Here's the latest from our Sales Department. Please, contact us for more information.

- ◆ **Early-bird payment credits:** if your full payment becomes cleared funds in our bank account within 5 working days from date of invoice, you will qualify for a credit, to the value of 5% of the value of the invoice. This will be credited against your next invoice. Paying large invoices early earns the best discount here. To maximise your opportunities, we suggest using the BACS payment mechanism. Note: credits are not transferable to another party, and are not redeemable for cash.
- ◆ **Mailouts:** 4 mailouts a month for £50 - HTML supported – personalisation available – free bounce analysis - <http://www.blazingfibre.net/mailouts.htm>
- ◆ **Website hosting:** 10% discount on 2-year plans – quality hosting from less than £5/month - <http://www.blazingfibre.net/hosting.htm>
- ◆ **Website development:** still just £10/half-hour - <http://www.blazingfibre.net/websites.htm>

Regulatory developments

- ◆ More infrastructural than regulatory, BT Wholesale recently announced the availability of their "Max" ADSL products, which provide up to 8Mbit downstream speed and up to 448Kbit upstream (residential). This is probably 8x to 16x faster than your current ADSL connection. The new products will work with existing ADSL routers (since they are simply taking the ADSL 1 specification to its maximum rated speed), however existing USB ADSL modems do not work with 8Mbit speeds. These new wholesale products will be repackaged by retail ISPs such as Pipex and Zen; Zen already have their 8Mbit pricing online. Thus, 8Mbit ADSL is coming to an ISP near you. You may be able to get a free upgrade, however be careful as all the 8Mbit retail plans we've seen so far are capped. That means you can only download a certain amount of data per month before you must pay extra, and/or your connection speeds are slowed.

<http://www.adslguide.org.uk/newsarchive.asp?item=2570>

Security developments

- ◆ Free anti-spyware software such as Ad-Aware Personal and Spybot Search and Destroy is good, but usually lacks several vital features. In particular, neither of these programs do automatic updating, scanning and cleaning. For ease of use and peace of mind, check out Ad-Aware Plus. It's just like Ad-Aware Personal, but it works automatically. We've tested it and it works great, and for \$USD26.95/copy it's good value for money as well. Available from us, or from Lavasoft direct.

<http://www.lavasoft.de/>

- ◆ See this newsletter's Tip of the Month section for more about spyware.
- ◆ Here's another way you can lose some privacy. This is an email we received:

From: someone we know
Subject: Invitation

Hi! This promotion made me think of you. Sign up and we can both get the new iPod nano!

<http://www.dodgydomain.com/?r=...>

Talk to you soon!

Here, the promoter has used the chance to win a prize to induce someone we know to put our email address into the promoter's database. This will undoubtedly cause an increase of spam in our inbox.

Again, the message is simple – please, think twice before you give away your friend's privacy!

Tip-of-the-newsletter

by Dr C. P. Yu

If you have a query you'd like to see as tip-of-the-newsletter, send it in! Contact details are at the end.

Tip #2: avoiding malware

[This is an abridged version of "Avoiding and Removing Malware" available at <http://www.blazingfibre.net/tech/malware.htm>]

Windows-based computers need three extra components to secure them effectively. These components are anti-virus software, anti-spyware software, and a firewall. They are all different functions. However they do sometimes come in the same package. As with hifi gear, separate components give a better result. Malware is a generic term given to any kind of malicious software, whether it be a virus, spyware, a trojan horse, a worm, or something else. The security components above, when used together, provide a decent defence against most malware on the net today.

Antivirus software is useful for avoiding many types of malware, and should be installed as a simple preventative measure. AVG is free and seems to work. Similarly, a firewall is a must-have item, whether it be software-based such as ZoneAlarm, or hardware-based (such as inside your broadband router). Firewalls prevent many network-based attacks.

Internet Explorer, Microsoft's web browser, is the primary route of spyware infection for most PCs at present. If you use a different browser, for example Opera or Firefox, then your browser will successfully resist many attacks, simply because many attacks are crafted to exploit vulnerabilities in software you're not using. Anti-virus and anti-spyware software only cleans up the mess afterwards and does not stop your browser being hijacked. The best way to avoid spyware is to avoid using Internet Explorer to browse the web.

Outlook, Outlook Express and MSN Messenger also have their issues, and should be replaced with more secure and more feature-laden free programs such as Pegasus Mail and Trillian.

Email filtering may also be of benefit, in that it can be used to strip all emails with executable attachments, for example, from your inbox.

You can scan your computer for spyware by using Ad-Aware or Spybot Search and Destroy. Links to these programs, plus instructions and additional information, are available at <http://www.blazingfibre.net/tech/malware.htm>

Contacting us

We'd love to hear your suggestions and comments. Our contact details are as follows:

- web: <http://www.blazingfibre.net/>
- email: support@blazingfibre.net
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- GPG key: <http://www.blazingfibre.net/fibre.key>