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ROM is issued
six-times
a year to
members of the
Guildford PC
User Group
All Contributions
to the Editor
Tony Hawes
(details on page 2)

ROM

Newsletter of the Guildford PC User Group

Editor's Bit

Apologies

You should have received this copy of ROM over a month ago, but I was struck down, temporarily thank goodness, by the 'Dreaded Lurge' which meant there was no way I could have it finished in time, so sorry, but better late than never!

Late New Year Greetings!

Here we are again, and another year has gone by and we're all one year older. As I said at an earlier Christmas a couple of years ago: "I'm relatively familiar with Einstein's famous $E=MC^2$ theorem, but I have figured it out at last as to what it really means to us humans — it has taken me over 60 years to comprehend its meaning which is that the older you get, the faster time goes. So all of you who are under the sixty start worrying and those of you who are over, well it's way, way too late!"

Like previous years we've had help in the way of review copies and samples of software and hardware from some of the major software and hardware companies whose samples we have been fortunate enough to use as the basis for our monthly meeting demos. I'm also grateful for the expertise of Laurence Fenn when it comes to demonstrating graphics software, John Childs for his demos and talks about photography and MAC computers. They are to be congratulated for their efforts in talking to us about products that they

use often and therefore know so well.

Recent Meetings

Monday 11th October 2010 — Swann Security Cameras. Tony demonstrated two cameras from Swann Security. The first was the Digital Guardian Camera & Recorder ADW-400, a wireless security camera that transmits the picture and sound to a base unit that records to an SD card. The camera is mains powered, but does come with a power cable extender. It records at 16fps and can cope with low light levels, with a night vision setting. It can start to record when it senses movement, and the base unit can emit an alarm at the same time. It can cope with up to four different cameras, but the base unit only has phono out sockets for you to connect to a television. There is no connection to a PC, but as it records to an SD card it doesn't really need to. The package costs around £170.

The second camera was a RemoteCam DVR-410, shaped like a keyring fob. It has two controls, one for power and the other to take a photo or start recording. It uses a microSD card, and a 2GB one is supplied. It has a better resolution than the Guardian, and can record sound via the built in microphone. Tony showed some stealth footage of the Group recorded while we had a coffee and apart from the camera shake it was good quality footage. He then showed some footage taken when he went to his local shop and he kept the fob with his keys so he could hold it in a suitable position. The unit has a rechargeable battery

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ROM is now only available as a full-colour .pdf download from the Group web page at:
www.guildfordpcusergroup.co.uk

**NEXT MEETING — Monday
14th February 2011 at 7.45 p.m.**

Is a Mac Better?

Debate still rages as to whether a PC is better (or more efficient) than a Mac and each side of the argument has its own adherents.

To shed a little more light on the pros and cons of each system, John Childs who sits firmly at the head of the pro-Mac brigade will bring his latest all-singing and dancing Mac desktop computer to demonstrate its capabilities.

An interesting and fascinating display is promised.

Spread the word and please bring a friend — coffee, tea & chocolate biscuits are free.

**Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday
of each month at 7.45pm at the
Stoughton Youth Club and Community
Centre (opposite "The Royal" — Pub)
Worplesdon Road (A322), Guildford.**

Forthcoming Meetings

Monday 14th March 2011 at 7.45 p.m.

Hallmark Card Studio Deluxe — a practical lesson showing how easy it is to make your own greeting cards for birthdays and festive occasions etc.

Monday 11th April 2011 at 7.45 p.m.

Microsoft Xbox 360 with Kinect Sensor. Microsoft's latest version of the Xbox Game Console — a display by those who use it.

Monday 9th May 2011 at 7.45 p.m.

Annual General Meeting followed by a demo of Lexmark's new Genesis All-in-One Printer.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries or questions about the Guildford PC User Group and its activities please contact the following members of the committee:

Chairman (and Editor)

Tony Hawes

For Contact details see the entry under Editor (below).

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Laurence's Web Page:

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(this site contains many of the reviews that have appeared in ROM)

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that lasts an hour and the 2GB card can record around 25 minutes. It costs around £33.

The RemoteCam was the favourite of the two cameras shown, and will be on some members Christmas lists!

Monday 8th November 2010 - Scanners and PDF Creation. With the addition of a new u shaped sofa in the middle of the hall, which was comfy for members watching the demo, Laurence started the evening showing the Ion Pics 2 PC scanner. This can scan photos and 35mm slides/negatives, and is effectively a 5 megapixel web camera. Laurence compared the results from this scanner to scans of the same images done on his Epson 1660 Photo Perfection scanner, which were better. At £100 the Ion Pics 2 PC is one of the more expensive slide scanners available, but with the lack of decent results and flaws (it scans at 1800 PDI but saves a 96 dpi image) it was a bit of a disappointment.

Tony then showed his Epson Perfection V700 Photo scanner which has Digital ICE included which automatically removes spots and marks from your scans. It may be more expensive and take longer to scan slides, but the results were noticeably better. With the holder provided you can set it to scan twelve transparencies automatically, although it was advised to go and make a cup of tea whilst it was doing this as it takes quite while!

Finally, Tony showed Nuance's PDF Converter 7 software, an alternative to Adobe Acrobat for making your own PDF files. He demonstrated how to turn a printed page into a PDF, password protect it, and join PDFs together. At around £70, this is a cheaper alternative to Adobe Acrobat X, which costs around £500 for the full version, or around £220 for an upgrade version.

New Ricoh CX5 Digital Camera

New Ricoh CX5 digital camera with wide-angle, high magnification 10.7' optical zoom (28-300 mm) lens, with a higher autofocus speed using Ricoh's new hybrid AF system.

With the new CX5 model, AF focusing times are decreased to as low as 0.2 sec. for both wide-angle 28 mm and telephoto 300 mm, up to half as short compared to the CX4, using Ricoh's unique new hybrid AF system.



Using super-resolution technology, the CX5 also allows (1) recording of images with improved resolution using the "Super-resolution" setting and (2) telephoto shooting at up to 600 mm equivalent with minimal degradation in image quality using "Super-resolution Zoom."

Furthermore, in addition to the new Cooking,

Fireworks, and Continuous Golf Swing scene modes, the CX5 has improved features that make shooting photographs even more fun through the use of super-resolution zoom during Zoom Macro mode shooting and other functions.

The CX5 is an even more enhanced compact digital camera that was designed based on the concept of it being "a tool that you will find yourself wanting to use every day."

Available in three colours: Black, Silver, and Pink. SRP £259.99 from end February.

John Childs will be giving it a thorough going over shortly to see whether it lives up to the rather impressive hype.

Did you get a New Computer for Christmas and did you First, Unpack and then Disassemble?



Many new computers should come with a version of the usual consumer warning: Some disassembly required.

No, you won't have to buy a Torx screwdriver to remove any internal components. But you probably will have to spend time uninstalling software that a theoretically helpful manufacturer loaded on the machine.

That's some way in which the welcome arrival of Microsoft's Windows 7 in 2009 hasn't eased the routine of setting up a new computer while Apple's Mac OS X Snow Leopard, meanwhile, continues to need fewer tweaks of its own.

Start your new computer to download a load of system-software updates. Once Win 7 detects a network connection, it should automatically fetch updates for you; if not, click the Windows Control Panel's "Check for updates" link.

The first thing you're likely to see after a Windows Update prompt is a nag from an Internet-security program bundled by the PC's vendor. This software is usually a bad deal: Microsoft's free and nag-free Microsoft Security Essentials (microsoft.com/securityessentials) won't ask you to pay for a subscription after the first 30 or 90 days.

So I'd dump the included anti-virus program by clicking the Control Panel's "Uninstall a program" link-after downloading MSE's installer and disconnecting the computer from the Internet. (Keeping two anti-virus programs active at once won't keep you safer but will make computing much more of a nuisance.)

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Windows requires updates to some Internet plug-in software. The most important one is Adobe's Flash plug-in, which plays most Web videos and other interactive content. You can download the latest version at get.adobe.com/flashplayer.

You'll also need Adobe's new Reader X, a considerably more-secure version of its PDF (Portable Document Format) program. You can download it from: get.adobe.com/reader.

Some Web plug-ins are too much trouble to keep around. Oracle's Java has few uses on home PCs, and Microsoft's Silverlight has even fewer. I'd uninstall both in Windows.

Backup

Then it's time to set up a backup system. In Windows, type "backup" into the Control Panel's search box or click the little flag in the bottom of the screen (Win 7's reminder of pending system chores) to have Windows start backing up your data to a CD, DVD or an external flash or hard drive. An external hard drive provides the most capacity with the least effort. Don't own one? — make it a New Year's resolution to buy one ASAP.

With security and backup done, you can proceed to assume control of the computer. This is mostly a Windows chore, thanks to the often inept, tasteless software bundles planted by most manufacturers.

Start with easy things: Drag any unwanted desktop links or shortcuts to the Recycle Bin and hide space-wasting browser toolbars by clicking the "x" at the left end of each. Uninstall trial software and other bundled ware you're sure you don't want through the Control Panel.

The free PCDecrapifier (pcdecrapifier.com)

can automate this work, but decline any offers by it to remove updaters for the PC vendor's own software.

Now you should think about installing the programs a smarter vendor would include.

The free, open-source Mozilla Firefox browser (mozilla.com) is a great replacement for Internet Explorer, but Google's free, open-source based Chrome (google.com/chrome) is faster and updates its own Adobe Flash and PDF plug-ins automatically.

Many PCs now include Microsoft's Windows Live Essentials bundle of e-mail, photo and video software. If yours doesn't, hit get.live.com to download that, taking care to download only those three components to start. You may also want the free Skype Internet-calling program (skype.com).

Not tired yet? Customise the computer a little. "Pin" shortcuts to programs on the taskbar so you don't have to find them in the Start menu, change your user name from the default and peel off all those useless stickers. You know you're allowed to do that, right?

Transferring Data from Your Old to a New Computer

Make sure that you have the program disks for all your applications, because you'll may have to do fresh installs of them. Performing a clean install also means you'll lose your Windows preferences, so you'll need to recreate them later.

All this sounds like plenty of work, and it is. But a handy app called PCMover from Laplink Software Inc. can make the migration process much easier. PCMover (currently from Amazon.co.uk for £17.97 including a high-speed transfer cable and free delivery) backs up all your files, software and Windows settings in



one fell swoop. With it, you won't have to reinstall your applications one at a time or try to recreate your Windows preferences from memory; PCMover brings them right over.

PCMover is also the best option for transferring data, apps and settings from an old computer to a new one. Microsoft's Windows Easy Transfer tool helps you transfer your files and settings — though not your applications — to a new PC, but it's very time consuming. PC Mover is a far superior tool, but be aware that PCMover can only be used once. It's afterwards just for the scrap bin, although the boxed product (above) shows that it includes 3 licences which means I assume, it can be used on a desktop and two laptops before it refuses to work any more.

Hallmark Card Studio Deluxe v.11

Reviewed by Tony Hawes

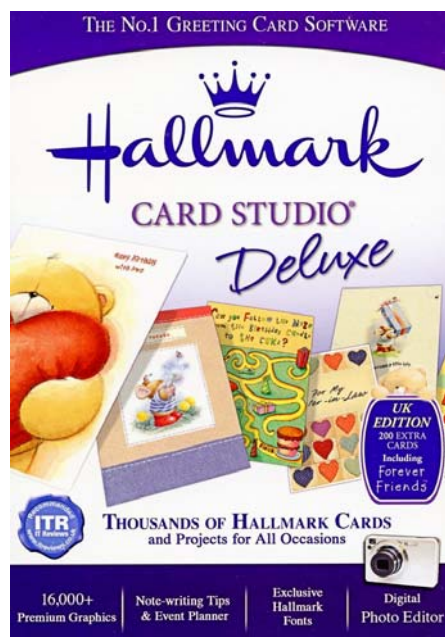
Some readers will know I'm an enthusiastic user of Nova Developments Greeting Card Factory and have been for a number of years. So when I received an e-mail from the UK Distributors / Press Office of Hallmark Studio Deluxe asking whether I'd like to review I jumped at the chance.

Product Features

Whatever the occasion say it with Hallmark Card Studio Deluxe

New greeting card software from Avanquest makes it easy to create Hallmark branded personalised cards and other creative designs for loved ones

Avanquest Software Publishing is set to release the latest edition of the number one greeting card software Hallmark Card Studio Deluxe in time for Christmas. With the official software of Hallmark, the UK's leading greeting card publisher, users can create unique and personalised cards for friends and family with thousands of designs and templates to choose from plus



200 extra cards featuring the Forever Friends brand.

Hallmark Card Studio Deluxe features Hallmark branded, quality templates that users can easily personalise for all occasions including Christmas, birthdays, weddings and anniversaries. By selecting from thousands of cards, invitations, stickers and over 16,000 premium Hallmark graphics, users can create and customise their cards to their own specific design and print them at home.

As well as greetings cards, the software has numerous other creative projects so users can celebrate events and keep in touch with friends and family by producing calendars, photo frames, mini albums, stationery, stickers and invitations. Hallmark Card Studio Deluxe is easy to use and projects can be created in just three easy steps:

1. Select - users can pick an occasion, event or theme and then choose from thousands of graphics to create cards, calendars invitations, stickers and other projects.
2. Personalise - add personal touches to designs with photos, fonts, captions and other graphics to enhance the final project.

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3. Share - upon completion users can print their design and post it to friends and family or save it as a PDF and send via email complete with music and pre-recorded sounds.

With the software's Digital Photo Editor, users can easily insert their own photos directly into designs plus adjust contrast and apply special effects with the editor tool to enhance creations. For those who find it hard to find the right words,

Hallmark Card Studio Deluxe offers help with a Note Writing Guide that provides inspiration and tips on how to write personalised greetings. Users will also never need to worry about forgetting important dates as the software includes a handy event planner that comes with address book features, mailing lists and date notification

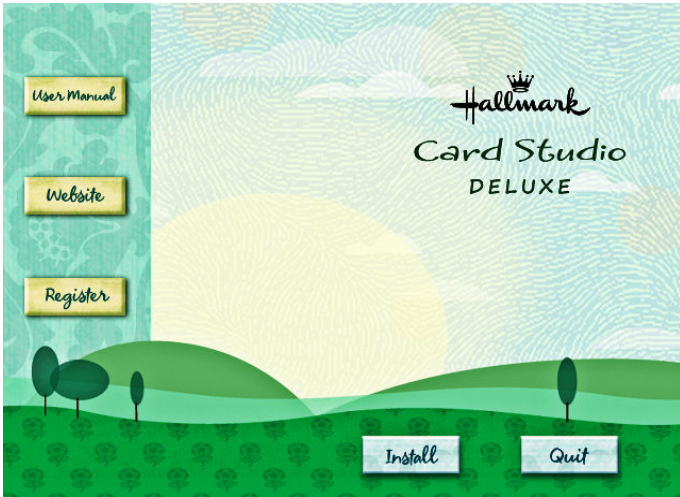
In Use

Installation was relatively painless, but took ages — over 1-hour, presumably

because of the number of templates, graphics, fonts etc that the program needs for its operation.

I don't want to write too much and prefer to show in graphic form screen grabs of the steps necessary to create a cheap and personalised greeting card that easily rivals anything one can buy in the shops.

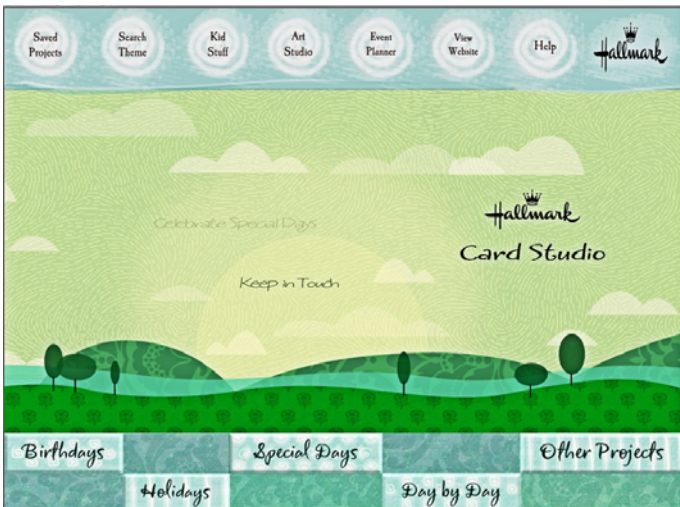
Screen Shots below



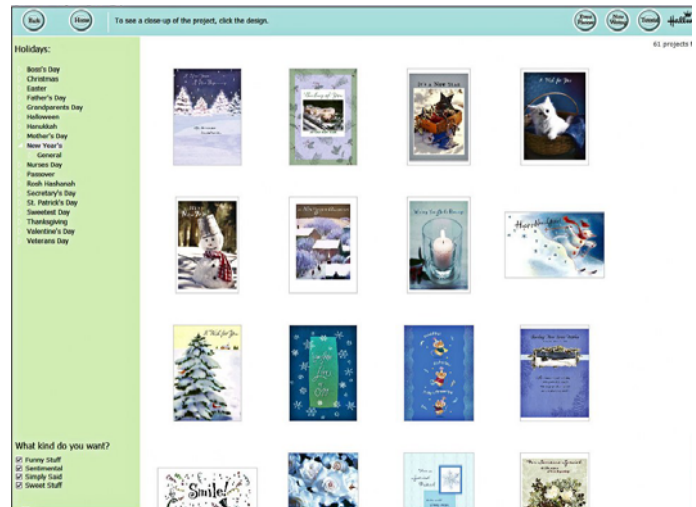
Initial Screen



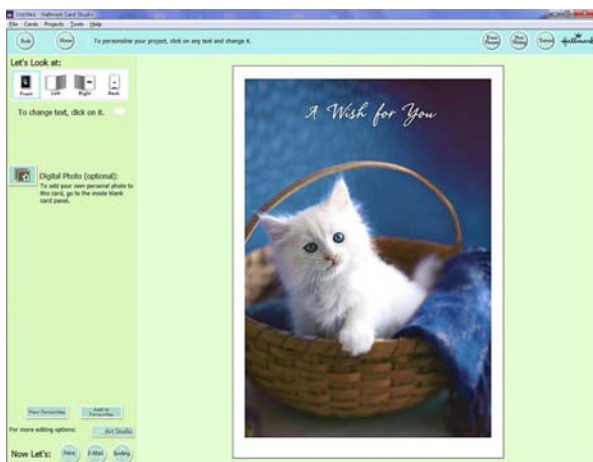
Installation in Progress Screen



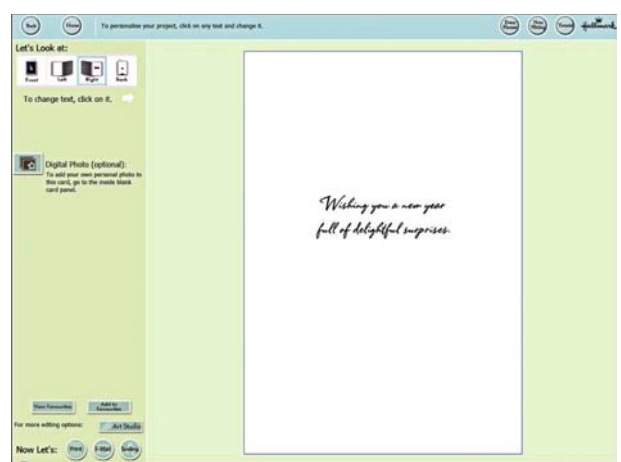
Choose your Project, Greeting, Theme etc.



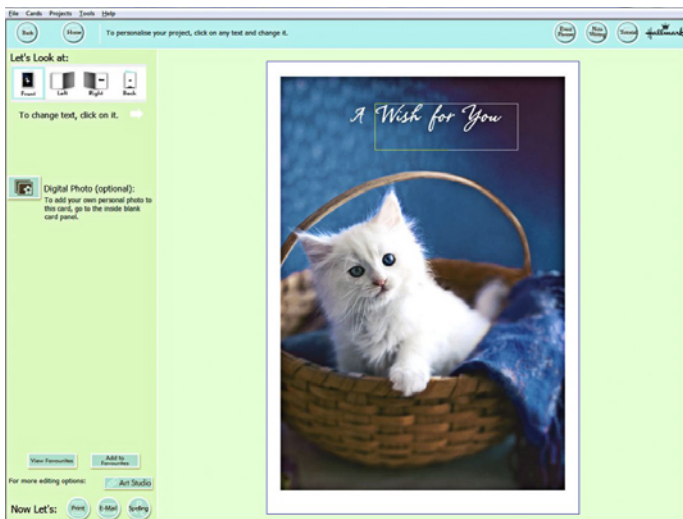
Having Chosen a Project — a Greeting Card, Sample Graphics are Shown



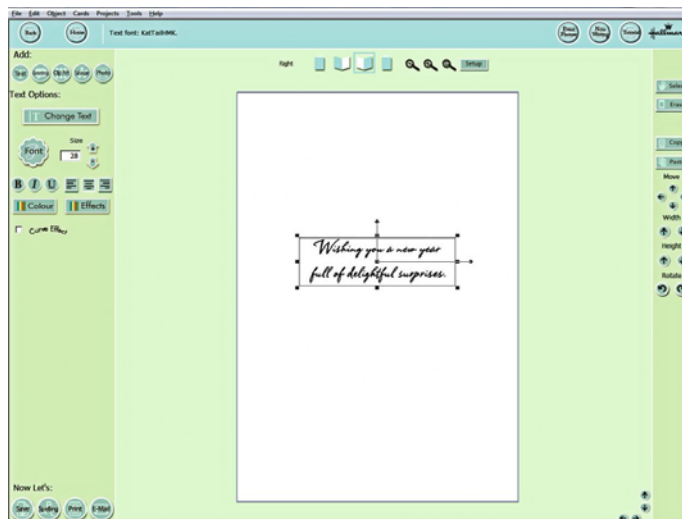
For the cover of my Card I've chosen a pretty fluffy white kitten



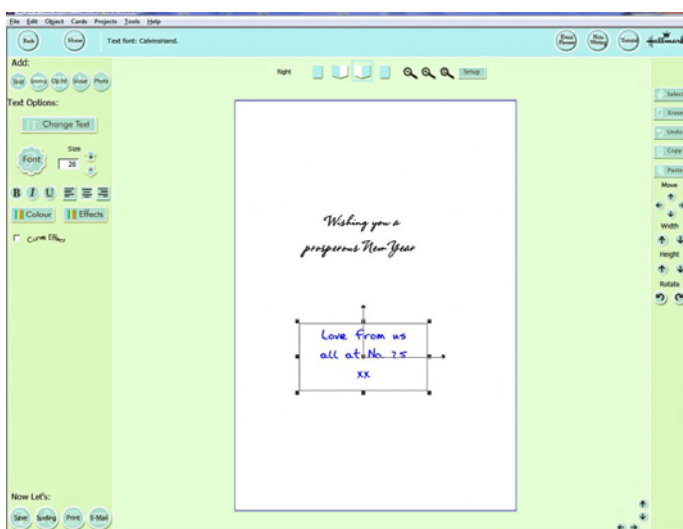
...and here is the inside (page 3) of my greetings card.



Highlighting the cover text-box to change the greeting



Changing the "Wishing you a New Year full of delightful surprises" greeting to "Wishing you a prosperous New Year" on the inside page.



Adding my own personalised salutation using a handwriting font coloured blue to give it an authentic as if written by hand look.



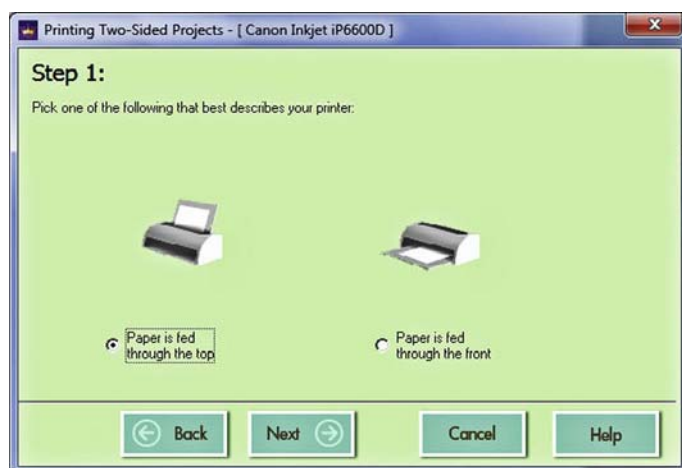
www.hallmark.co.uk

Created just for you, by Tony H.

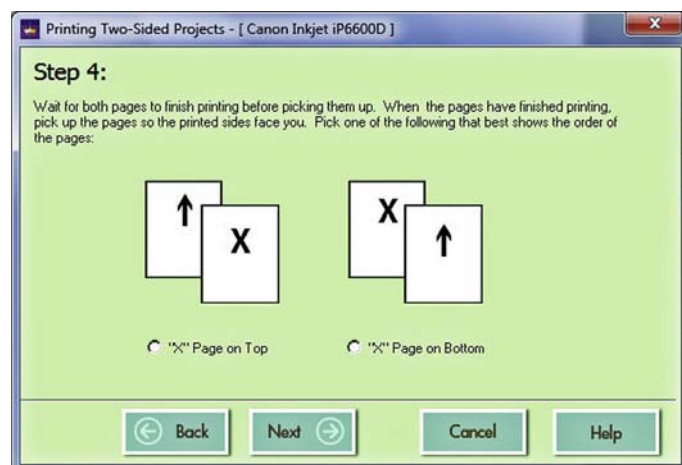
Card Studio

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Card Studio prints authentic Hallmark logos on the back page of your card project as above



Satisfied with your card project the print menu guides you through the necessary steps to print on both sides of you card media (above and below).



Conclusion

At only £29 Hallmark's Card Studio Deluxe v.11 offers a lot of bang for your bucks. The 16,000+ premium graphics are good quality, even if many are slated to the North American market with 'Americanisms' that jar a little for an English user.

My own particular favourite card making program is the cheaper "Greetings Card Factory 8" which comes with 25,000+ greeting cards and customisable projects and costs only £21, but the Hallmark product is easier to use for a novice who wants to design their own cards, so I give it a firm thumbs-up as a recommended product.

Pricing and Availability

£29 from Amazon.co.uk or Dixons: www.dixons.co.uk. Both include free delivery.

Demo Evening

We'll have Hallmark Card Studio Deluxe 11 as the basis of a greeting card creation evening at our March meeting. So come along then and see what you think.

Ion Pics 2 PC Scanner

Reviewed by Laurence Fenn

This all purpose scanner from Ion turns all of your photos, slides, and negatives into digital images. Ion are known for their audio conversion hardware, particularly their USB turntable which allows you to transfer vinyl records to your PC. I have one myself and it really does the job, but I digress. This device is the latest in their image range, which included Slides 2 PC and Film 2 PC. However, with this you can easily convert 35mm slides, negatives and 3x5, 6x4 or 7x5 photos.

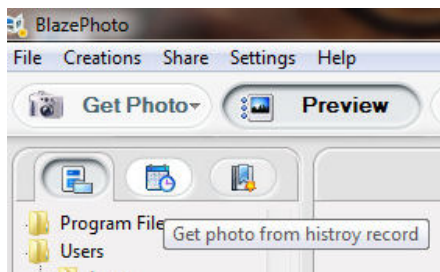
It is powered via the USB port and connects using a standard supplied cable with a mini USB socket on the device. Using the supplied CD you install the driver for the device and the photo software, and then you can plug in the scanner. It showed up on my Windows 7 system as a Web Cam, which gave me a clue as to what this device really is. It is quite light, with a slot near the back to take the plastic trays that hold your photos, and a slot on the side to take the slide trays. These trays lock into position and can only be fed from the right to the left. On top is a switch to select either slide or photo scanning, a scan button, two LEDs for Film Scan/Photo Scan and another switch to change between slide and film scanning. Why there are two switches I do not know, but the larger one moves something inside the box, presumably a light source so it either illuminates the photo or backlights the slides. Still, having to move two switches seems to be making the process a bit more complex.

Unlike a flatbed scanner (or at least the flat bed scanners I've used) you only have two choices for the resolution, 1800 or 3600. This maybe fine for slides but for photos this dpi setting is a bit high especially as the 3600 is interpolated. Using the software supplied is quite easy, but there are some bugs in the software. Blaze Photo 2.0 is installed from the CD without any problems but some features are built into the software rather than the hardware driver. Due to the way the photos are held in one of the trays (depending on the size of the photo), there is a border around the photo of about two millimetres or so. The photo slides into the tray and is held in by a series of small lugs, which cover part of the photo. The software automatically crops these out before saving the image, but that means you are losing part of the photo. If you have taken a decent photo then it is highly unlikely that anything important will be lost in the surround edges, but you should be aware of it. If you use the scanner with another graphics program and scan a photo in, you will have the black blocks around three sides of the resulting scanned image. In fact, using the device outside of the Blaze Photo software means you do not get a chance to choose the type of image,

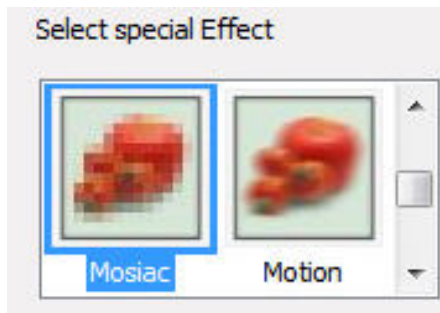


dpi, colour depth, etc. as these options do not appear to be included in the scanner driver.

There are a few spelling mistakes in the software:



History wrongly spelled as "Histroy"



Mosaic wrongly spelled as "Mosiacc"

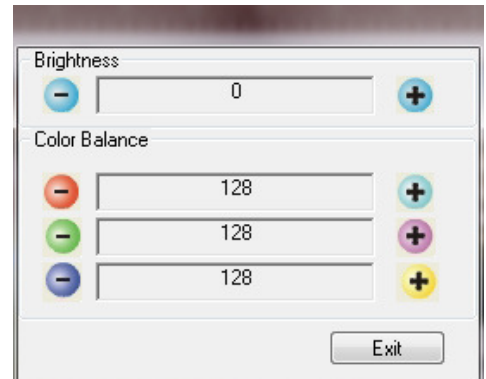


On the 'About' screen, the software is licensed to 'Vigorhood!' which is odd as I did not enter a name when installing the software!

When you click on the Get Photo button and choose to capture from the Film scanner (as opposed to the Photo scanner) you get the 'Select Scanner and Video Device' dialog. You can set where the files are saved, the colour depth (24 or 32 bit), the dpi (1800 or 3600), the file format, what the film type is (Slide, negative or B&W negative) and whether to open the Brightness manual Control box. When you click

OK you see the OVT Scanner dialog, which has a preview plus five buttons. The Capture button actual captures the image, and the Scan button on the device does the same thing as pressing this button. The Save button obviously saves the image, the Delete button removes the scan from the film strip at the top of the dialog, and there is an Exit button to quit the scanning process.

The Colour Brightness adjustment button brings up another untitled dialog (below).



Unlike other balance like control dialogs there is no bar to pull to either side, only plus and minus buttons to click on to change the value. The live preview changes according to the settings.

I tried to scan a transparency and immediately came across a problem. The slide holder has three holes and indentations for the square transparency, but the windows are rectangular. This means you can only scan transparencies that are 35mm rectangular. The older transparency I was trying to scan was square, and so part of the image was cut off.

Scanning a negative using the film holder is simple as it has six holes and lugs inside to place a film strip in the exact position. Like the slide holder this locks into the correct position once you push it into the scanner, but again I doubt you could scan any other negative size other than 35mm. The image size from a scan varies, despite the same dpi resolution. A colour negative came out at 2592x1680 pixels, whilst on the Epson Flatbed it was 2490x1614. A black and white negative on the Epson was saved with 256 grey scale colour depth. The Ion still saved the black and white scan as a 24 bit colour photo. All the images from the Ion were saved with a 96 PPI (Pixels per Inch) setting from the program whereas the Epson Flatbed with PSP X3 saved the same PPI setting as the dpi it was scanned with, i.e. 1800.

The scanner only has one real resolution, of 1800 dpi. The 3600 dpi setting is interpolated, which means the driver is guessing what should be in the picture to give the application a big image, rather than a true 3600 dpi scan. It may be fine to scan and print standard size

(Continued on page 7)

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photos but printing any larger sizes would show the lack of detail originally captured. Interpolation is not really suited for photo scanning as the resulting scan maybe bigger in size, but will be fuzzy and a bit blurred. It is more suited to line graphics when you want to print them out in a large size.

The software is very basic, and whilst it

offers some red eye removal, colour correction and sharpening tools it is no match for a dedicated graphics program. There is no way to clone a small area of the image, to remove a scratch or spot on the picture, and this is the one tool I use the most when scanning in old photos. Apart from the odd crash under Windows 7, the software works okay, but I couldn't really tweak the pic-

tures as I wanted. I ended up just saving the scans and then opening the images in a graphics editing program.

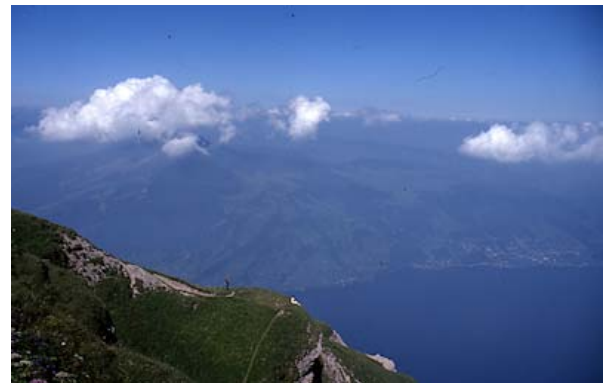
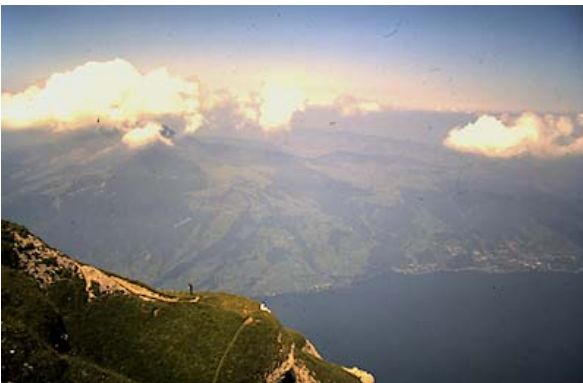
From the examples below, you can see the backlight can really affect the scanning of negatives and slides. Photos come out better, but did need a lot of post processing to correct

(Continued on page 8)

Comparison Pics 2 PC (left) vs Epson 1660 Flatbed scanner (right)



Scanned from a colour negative.



35mm transparency scanned at 1800 dpi



Photo-scanned then processed in Corel's Paint Shop Photo Pro X3



B & W negative scanned then processed in Corel's Paint Shop Photo Pro X3



(Continued from page 7)

the odd colour balance.

Product Specifications

- Image Sensor 5.1 megapixel CMOS sensor
- Lens Specification $f = f4.83$
- Automatic Colour Balance
- Automatic Exposure Control
- PC interface USB 2.0
- Scan High Resolution 3,600 dpi interpolation resolution
- Light Source Back Light 3 white LED
- Power From USB port
- Dimension s 220 x 208 x 147 mm

Final Comments

It may be easy to use, but the quality of the scan is poor to say the least. It could be

argued that if you have a bad picture then you are going to get a bad scan, but there is so much you can do to get a good picture by editing it. Out of focus photos cannot be saved, no matter how much sharpening you use post processing, but faded colour, over exposure (to a point) and other problems can be fixed with a graphics editing program. This all depends on having a good quality scan of a bad photo, if you see what I mean, and the Pics 2 PC just doesn't give you one. Whilst it takes up to 30 seconds to scan a negative/slide with a flatbed scanner, the quality is much better than what the Pics 2 PC 'WebCam' can provide. The light used to illuminate the negative/slide is a bit too bright and washes out the colour in the photo and can make pictures look dull. The device effectively takes a 5 megapixel photo of the slide/negative/photo at a fixed distance from the original with a light source.

The bugs in the software and the unnecessary double switches to change between photo and slide/transparency, plus a scan button that only really mimics clicking on a capture button in the software means I would probably recommend a flatbed scanner with the ability to scan negatives/slides, as you would have much more control over the process. It may be easier to use but I would rather have a better quality picture that took a bit longer to scan than one that was quick to get but didn't look very good.

Pricing and Availability

The review sample was loaned by I Want One Of Those (IWOOT) where it was on sale at £119, but they appear to be sold out.

However an online search shows that Amazon.co.uk sell it for £96, whilst the next cheapest is Pixmania for £111 (www.pixmania.co.uk).

BitDefender Security 2011

by Tony Hawes

BitDefender Security 2011

I've not used BitDefender Security before so was quite pleasantly surprised to receive an invite to meet the technical team from Romania responsible for developing the BitDefender security package in London recently.

The team explained the background to the company and details of the BitDefender range of products.

BitDefender is a straightforward internet security suite and come in two major varieties:

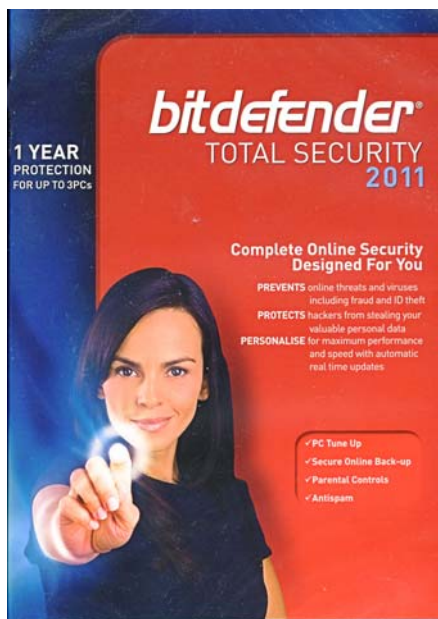
1. Internet Security Suite 2011 which comprises the core facilities of anti-virus, firewall, anti-spyware and anti-spam.
2. Total Security 2011 which in addition to the features above includes PC Tune Up, Secure Online Back-up and parental control.

Co-incidentally I'd already installed a 'Trial-ware' version of BitDefender Internet Security 2011 from a magazine cover disc and my review is based on this with notes about the 'extras' available with the Total Security package.

Installation

Inserting the CD I was asked whether I wanted to install the 32 or 64-bit version having selected the correct version (64-bit on my Laptop), it then checked and downloaded the latest version from BitDefender's web site.

Before install it ran a Quick Scan to detect any active malware shortly afterwards the following message was shown "Excellent News! No security threats were detected on this computer".



During installation it detected that I had Norton Internet Security on my computer and asked whether I should uninstall it — naturally I said yes, no point in having two security packages running on my computer!

In Use

When doing a full system scan BitDefender was excessively slow (see screen shots Fig 5 & 6). There was a worrying status report that 57 infected files had been detected, but I was unable to access what these were — very odd as Norton had not previously detected any anomaly.

Exploring the package I copied some screen shots (see page 9), I've annotated them where necessary. Worth noting is the reaction of BitDefender when I ran the EICAR false Virus. Readers will remember

I had a couple of real viruses and some malware on a CD which I always used when testing anti virus / security programs, but I've either thrown it away or lost it so am no longer able to use it to show how clever the relevant program is when detecting what was on the CD, hence my using the EICAR test program. As can be seen it worked well in detecting a (false), but potential nasty.

BitDefender Total Security

BitDefender Total Security offers tools that you'd normally find in a disk utility program, so it's rather a surprise to find that it comes with built-in PC performance and optimisation tools. These enable you to fine-tune your PC performance for optimum speed and most effective use of resources. The duplicate finder utility can locate duplicate copies of files scattered around your computer and if you have duplicate copies of applications allows you to remove them thus freeing up disk space. Encryption is included in the form of a tool that allows you to create a special encrypted 'safe' on your hard drive where you can store sensitive files or personal information securely.

Additional Features:

BitDefender Total Security may not have as many additional features as some of the alternative all-in-one major security suites, but the ones included work very well. So if you are a parent worried about what your little ones get up to whilst on the computer you'll find additional features like parental controls, laptop mode and gamer mode.

The parental monitoring is good, giving complete control over unsuitable content with suggestions as to whether a website is suitable or not, suggestions include pornography, gam-

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Fig. 1. Installation Complete.

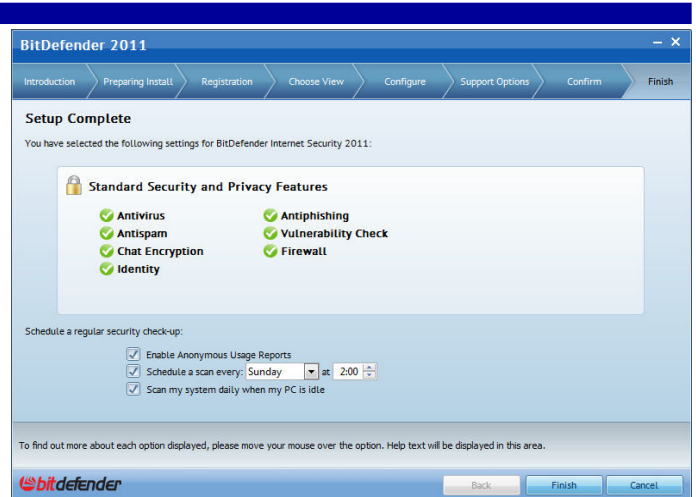


Fig. 2. I've selected Standard Security and Privacy Features



Fig. 3. Further options.



Fig. 4. Select Security Modules to protect your computer.

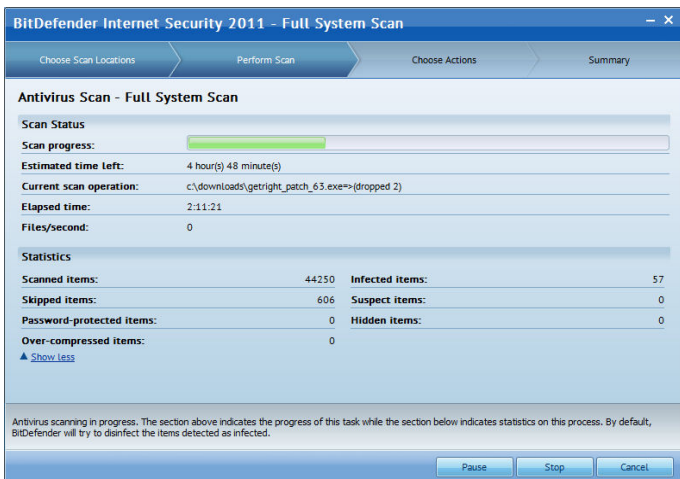


Fig. 5. Scan in progress. Time left 4 hours 48 minutes!

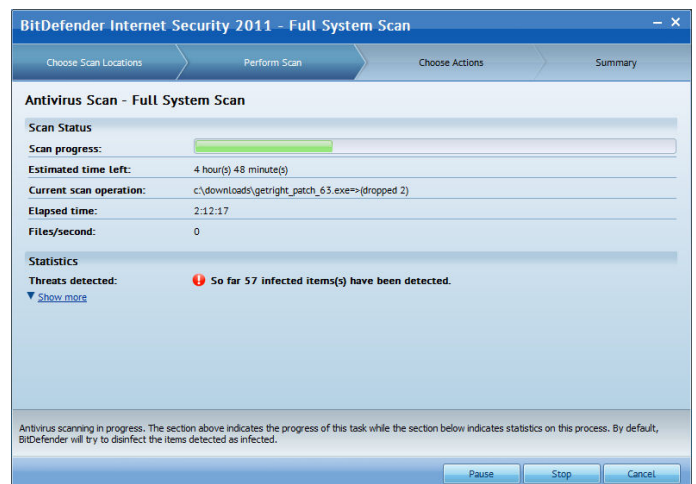


Fig. 6. Full system scan in progress. Note the false positives.



Fig. 7. Virus Detected! The EICAR false Test Virus.

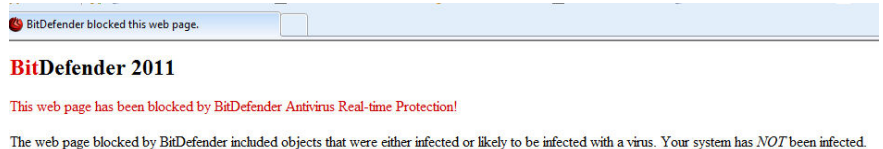


Fig. 8. Another example of BitDefender reporting my EICARE Test Virus

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bling, drugs, violence, etc. The filter is quite sensible in preventing access to unsuitable sites without restricting access to legitimate sites.

So all-in-all Total Security's additional range of tools are a very welcome bonus including among others: Registry Recover, Registry Cleaner, File Shredder, Duplicate Finder, Disk Defragmenter, and a tool called PC Clean-Up, that clears out the cached files in Internet Explorer, Recent Documents list and Temporary Files folder.

Conclusion

Apart from the excessively long time it took to scan my computer for the first time for potential threats; overall I was impressed by BitDefender. It offers first-rate



anti-virus and security services, good performance and is easy to use. I would equate it with Norton and Microsoft's free Security Essentials (MSE), but bear in mind that MSE provides only limited protection tools, whereas BitDefender includes many security 'extras'. On balance BitDefender equates favourably with the range of security packages available from the major

players in the computer security industry and is recommended.

PS As a subscriber to Which? Magazine I was pleased to see that BitDefender receives a Which? "Best Buy" as a recommended Security Suite.

Pricing and Availability

Currently BitDefender Total Security 2011, with a RRP of £59.22 is on offer from Amazon.co.uk for £29.99. It comes with a 3-user licence with a 1-year subscription for Windows 7 / Vista / XP.

The less well specified BitDefender Internet Security 2011 package is on sale, also from Amazon for £22.29 (3-user licence with a 1-year Subscription). Both versions with free shipping.

New from Avanquest

Fix It Utilities 11 Professional

Avanquest Software Publishing has announced the launch of Fix It Utilities 11 Professional, the latest version of its award winning software package, which offers a comprehensive solution for both home and business users to protect, clean, optimise and speed up a PC. Available with a three PC license, the software runs over 250 tests to eliminate the irritation of system crashes, freezes and slow system performance.

Major Features

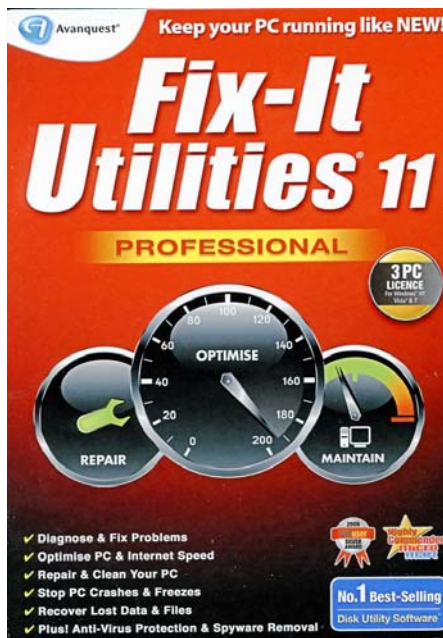
- Keep Your PC Running Like NEW!
- Diagnoses & Fixes Problems
- Auto-Optimises PC Performance
- Stops PC Crashes & Freezes
- Provides Virus & Spyware Protection
- Registry Repair & Maintenance
- Real-Time System Reports
- Used by Millions of PC Owners Worldwide
- Compatible with Windows XP, Vista & 7

Two Simple Usage Modes

Fix It Utilities 11 Professional comes with two simple usage modes for all users. One-click Fix all is ideal for those with no real technical knowledge as it automatically scans and fixes any problems. Expert mode offers users more flexibility as it enables them to scan their PC and instruct the program to repair any problems in the order and timeframe that they choose.

New features

New features to Fix It Utilities 11 Professional include a PC Analyser that identifies how much memory, CPU time and disk operations take place during start-up. A Disk Defrag tool quickly optimises the file system and consolidates free space. The software also monitors all of the systems



resources to fix problems with those resources not already in use.

Increased stability

Four easy-to-use maintenance wizards allow users to comprehensively fix, clean, optimise or protect their system in just one click for a complete tune-up. The software also finds and removes wasted disk space and checks system hardware such as memory, hard drives and network cards to ensure everything is working properly. A repair and maintenance feature defrags, cleans and fixes any problems that arise with Windows registry to speed up general performance.

Enhanced performance

In just one click users can optimise their systems for different tasks such as multimedia, gaming, security and office tasks. The software also accelerates browser, download and surfing speeds for Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox by 80% plus

addresses registry vulnerabilities and cleans the printer queue.

Data Protection

Fix It Utilities 11 Professional comes with a File Shredder tool that meets U.S. Department of Defence security cleaning standards ensuring all data that is erased from the hard drive is completely unrecoverable.

File Restore Capabilities

Built-in recovery features also enable users to instantly regain photos, music or other accidentally deleted data.

Integrated defence

The intelligent Malicious Link Identifier function checks each clicked web page in real time before it opens and automatically updates each time a new threat is discovered. It also detects and removes viruses, malware and spyware plus prevents Rootkits and keyloggers from obtaining personal data.

Key features of Fix It Utilities 11 Professional:

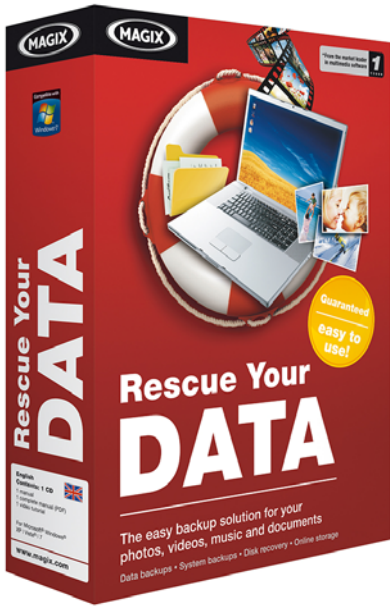
- Active Intelligence - silently monitors and repairs your computer automatically
- Real-time system reports - give an instant overview of the PC's health and security
- Internet Speed Optimiser - accelerates browser, download and web surfing speeds
- Real - time protection - against malicious activity
- Windows Rescue CD - Fixes and restores your PC when Windows won't start
- Free hourly updates against threats — 1 year of free updates against the latest threats

Pricing and Availability

Licensed for use on 3 PCs Fix It Utilities 11 Professional is available from Avanquest for £30.62 inc free shipping.

Review to follow.

New From Magix and Paragon



NEW MAGIX Rescue Your Data

The Easy Backup Solution for your Photos, Videos and Music!

MAGIX Rescue Your Data is the first, easy to use backup application for Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7 which is tailored specifically to the needs of notebook users.

Notebook computers are used to store personal information and important documents. However, computer viruses, hard drive failure and accidents pose a constant threat to irreplaceable documents such as emails, photos or music. With MAGIX Rescue Your Data you can automatically create a full backup of your system files and applications to an external hard drive or a DVD.

Rescue Your Data offers a simple and reliable solution for data backup. Simply connect the external hard drive, select what you want to back up to where, and the program will automatically take care of the rest. With 500MB of Magix online storage included and a search screen that allows you to search for individual files and instantly restore them, Rescue Your Data provides everything you need to be sure your important and personal information is protected.

Features:

- Specifically designed for notebook users
- Automatic backup - backs up all type of data
- Easy, fast data recovery
- Online storage of 500MB included
- Create custom backups with the Manual backup options

- MAGIX Data Shredder – completely wipes confidential data on request

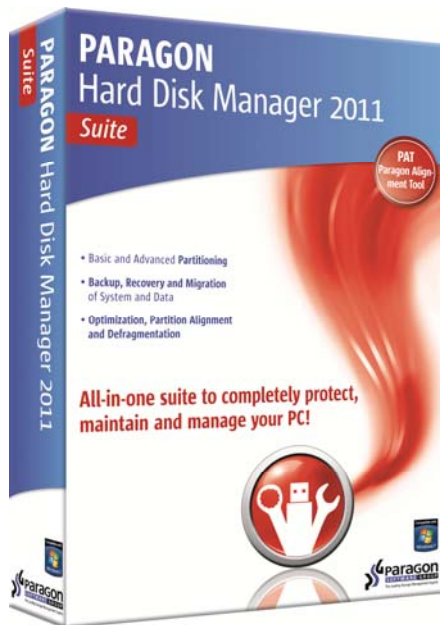
Price & Availability:

MAGIX Rescue Your Data is available now for SRP £39.99 inc VAT from Amazon and PC World.

Paragon Software Announces Hard Disk Manager 2011 Suite for Home Users

Latest version of Paragon Hard Disk Manager Suite is the most complete disk management solution available and includes every tool necessary for managing hard disks flexibly and safely.

IRVINE, CA, January 18th, 2011, – Paragon Software Group (PSG), the technology leader in innovative data security and data management solutions, launches Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2011 Suite, the latest version of its multiple award-winning disk maintenance and safety suite. This powerful software provides all the essential tools to manage today's hard drives, including partitioning, backup & restore, migration, optimization & defragmentation, hard drive disposal, boot management and system recovery. Keeping this tool to hand is a guarantee for every home user that any disk maintenance task will be easily and promptly resolved all from one single interface.



Packed with strong new features, Paragon Hard Disk Manager affords everything you may need for managing hard disks. Hard Disk Manager 2011 Suite allows you to move any Windows OS since XP from a regular hard disk to a fast SSD (Solid State Drive) even of a smaller capacity, thanks to its advanced data exclusion capabilities. The new Automatic Partition Alignment feature optimizes the performance of your

hard disk during partitioning/copy operations. Support for the latest HDD standards is also included giving support for AFD (Advanced Format Drive), 2TB+ and non-512B sector size drives.

Why Hard Disk Manager 2011 Suite?

- Easily partition your hard drives and keep them optimally sized.
- Manage multiple operating systems (up to 16) on a hard drive.
- Protect your entire PC, including the operating system, applications, your settings, and all data files with easy-to-use backup tools.
- Continue working on your computer while making backups.
- Restore the entire disk contents in minutes - no reinstallations required!
- Start the recovery process during start-up of your computer, even if your operating system has failed.
- NEW Enjoy support of a wider range of hardware configurations with the option to add drivers for specific hardware on-the-fly with WinPE 3.0 recovery media.
- Update Start up your system on a different hardware platform (P2P).
- Easily clone an entire drive or the required partition.
- NEW Move any Windows OS since XP from a regular hard disk to a fast SSD even of a smaller capacity.
- NEW Automatically align partitions during partitioning or copy to optimize performance of your drive.
- Tune your system for maximum performance with a powerful defragmentation utility.
- Maintain the confidentiality of your deleted data forever with a disk wiping utility.
- USB 3.0 ready.
- New support for exFat. Accomplish backup, restore operations with exFAT (Extended File Allocation Table), a file system developed by Microsoft Corporation particularly for modern high capacity flash storages. It can boast support for drives up to 16 exbibytes in size, files much larger than 4GB, larger cluster sizes, etc.
- NEW Check FS Integrity and Data Loss Policies. Specify the acceptable balance between the operation performance and the risk of data loss.
- All available Paragon Hard Disk Management technologies are available in one suite.
- Flexible and reliable overall system control at a low cost.

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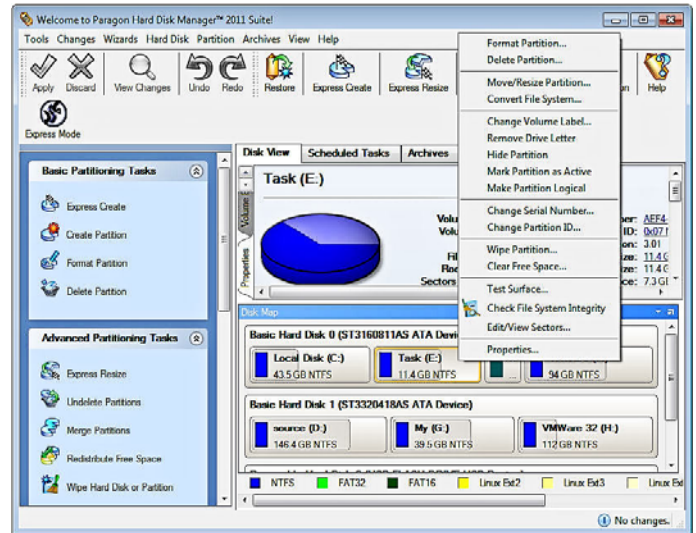
Price & Availability:

Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2011 is available from: www.paragon-software.com for (£25.95)

For more Information go to: Hard Disk Manager Suite website: <http://www.paragon-software.com/home/hdm-personal/>

It seems to have promise, so watch this space. Full review to follow.

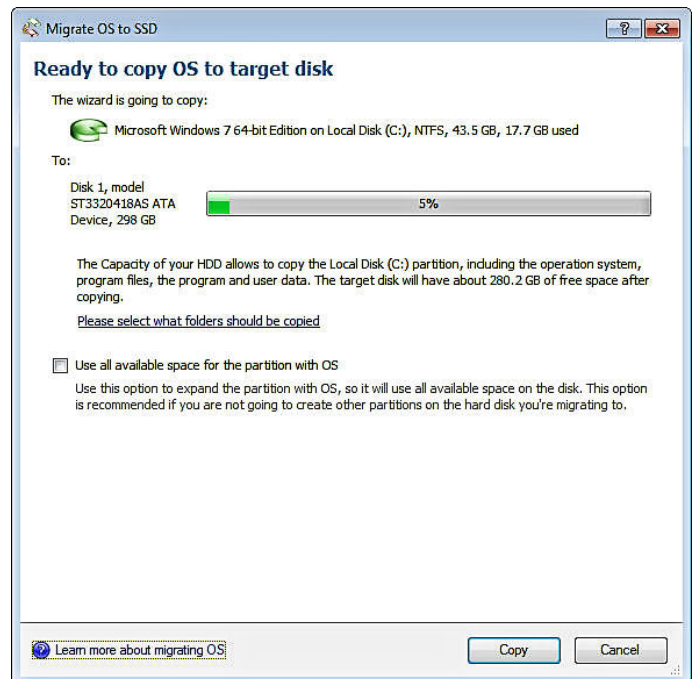
Meanwhile some screen shots here to show what Hard Disk Manager 2011 looks like operation.



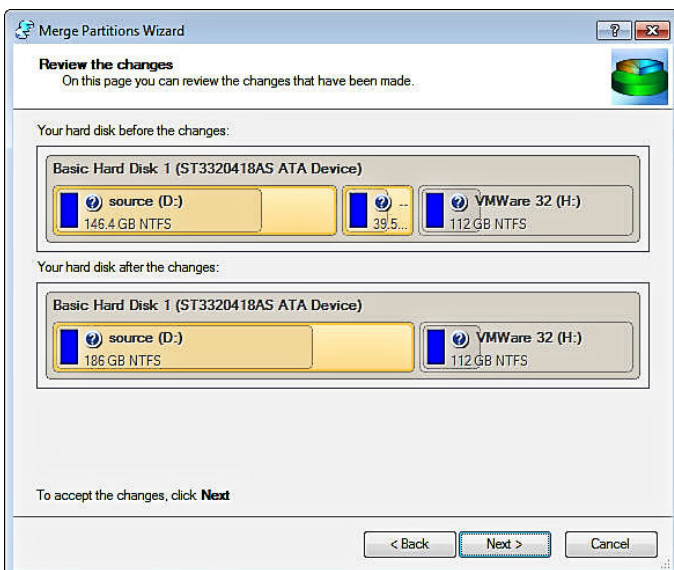
Full Scale Launcher



Express Launcher



How to Copy (Migrate) an OS to a New Disk



Merge Partitions Wizard — Dead Easy!



Using the Recovery CD