

Thousands of computer owners are now using a wireless connection for the Internet, especially for their laptop. To do this you need a wireless router, which enables you to work from any room in the house and stay connected to the Internet. A wireless router is the backbone of your home network, allowing all your wireless computing devices to “see” each other no matter what room you are in. A large number of routers have an ADSL modem built into them so they can act as a wireless connection to the Internet. This means that your laptop can connect to the Internet without the need for cables etc. One important thing to remember is that unless you secure your router by means of a user name and password you are open for any device outside your home (say a neighbour) to access your network and could find someone “hacking” into your private data and possibly engage in illegal activities. If you should purchase a router check that you have the option of choosing a new user name, and a new password instead of the one set at the factory. Changing both of these will make it harder for anyone to use your connection without your knowledge.

## INTERNET SEARCHING

For those wanting an alternative Web Browser to Internet Explorer 7 try Firefox 3. I personally have been using this for over 12 months and find it extremely good.

It is faster, more stable, more security conscious having protection against malware, warns you about entering sites that are known to copy malware, automatically links you to your most visited sites, and with an improved download manager and help system.

Why not try it by typing Firefox 3 in your Web Browser which takes you to their website to download and install.

You do not have to uninstall Internet Explorer 7, but ensure you make Firefox your default browser.

If you place double quotes around a key phrase such as “John Smith” this restricts the results to those where the words appear together. Without the quotes your search would show results such as ‘ St. John’s Smith Square’

If you are not sure if a word has a hyphen in it or not (email or e-mail) keep the hyphen in as your Search Engine searches all variations.

To search for specific types of documents/files type the appropriate file type:

filetype:pdf...searches for PDF files

filetype:doc..searches for Word documents

filetype:ppt..searches for Powerpoint files.

Include the keyword in your search e.g.

filetype:pdf BBC Annual Report

There are documents on the Internet that appear to be hidden, and do not usually appear in the main search engines. These include library catalogues, websites that require a login or a subscription, all kinds of databases, newspaper archives and suchlike. These have to be searched using specific search engines. For an explanation of how to search for these hidden pages, type in your usual search engine..... invisible web.

## FREE SOFTWARE

The majority of computer users will probably be using Microsoft Office whatever version it may be. Perhaps you have purchased it, downloaded it, or obtained it elsewhere, but no doubt paid for it. Open Source software is non-profit software and is available free to anyone who wishes to download it. One of the most popular is Open Office.org, which is available for Windows, Mac OS X and Linux operating systems. It comprises a fully-fledged word processor, spreadsheet program, presentation program (PowerPoint) , graphics editor, and a database program.

These all have features that are comparable to those found in Microsoft Office. Go to [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org) to download the program, but it is a large download of 148MB.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

**Screen Snapshot (XP)...**Need a “snapshot” of your current screen for any reason (error messages, tips, snippets, web pages) or anything you may have a need to keep or send to someone. Press Print Screen (at the side of F12). Open Paint (Start/All programmes/Accessories/Paint), click on Edit/Paste and the screen will appear in the programme.

Should you require a particular part of the “snapshot” go to the Select Tool (top left and looks like a square) hold down the left mouse button and draw around the part you require. Right click inside the dotted lines, click on Cut, go to File/New (in Paint) ....say No to" save changes". Go to Edit/Paste (in Paint) and the specified part will now appear.

**Switching ISP's (XP and V)...**If you wish to switch to another Provider you will not be able to take your existing e-mail address with you as this has been assigned to you by that Provider.

**Multiple Webmail Accounts (XP and V)...**There is no limit to the number of Webmail accounts you can set up. Why not set one up for Shopping , one for registering for Newsletters, one for other reasons when asked for an e-mail, and one for Family and Friends. This will cut down the amount of spam you may receive. should you use only one address.

Windows 7 is now released and already installed on new computers that are in the shops. It has had excellent reviews and is expected to be a much improved Operating System. If you are a Vista owner then W7 looks and acts like Vista in many ways (and to some extent like XP), but underneath the surface much has changed.

If you have had problems with Vista, Microsoft has listened to it's customers and many lessons have been learnt. It has changed a lot of features, but not the driver module (this is the way your hardware interacts with Windows) so if your hardware (printers,scanners,webcam etc.) that work with Vista it will certainly work with W7. It runs faster than Vista, takes less memory and less “space” on your hard drive, and above all is more reliable. I hope to elaborate more on this new OS in the future, and no doubt there will be tips and tricks becoming available very soon. If anyone has taken the plunge I should be interested in hearing from them.