

UnderstandIT

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A publication designed to inform and enable businesses to understand the implications, costs and advantages of using Information and Communications Technology. Distributed through Chambers of Commerce.

WINDOWS XP – SERVICE PACK 2 (UPDATE 2)

Windows Service Pack 2 (SP2) is now in full circulation. It was released in a very controlled manner by Microsoft, commencing in mid August, and is now being propagated via the Microsoft Windows Update facility.

Windows XP Service Pack 2 is a major update to the popular operating system and significantly increases the security of the computer on which it is installed. A full description of SP2, what it provides and almost any other question you might have can be found here:

[http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;\[ln\];windowsexpsp2](http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;[ln];windowsexpsp2)

Unfortunately, the download of SP2 is a massive 75Mb+ in size (the actual size will depend on how up to date your copy of Windows XP is and how it is configured), and could be as much as 120Mb, so unless you have a fast broadband connection to the Internet, then the automatic download method of obtaining SP2 will be a lengthy process. Alternatively, you can obtain a copy on CD by going here:

http://www.microsoft.com/windowsexp/downloads/updates/sp2/cdorder/en_us/default.msp

However, be prepared for a 4-6 week delivery time-frame.

Some of our clients have reported facing a variety of problems when installing SP2, some minor and some more serious. On the positive side, Microsoft has assigned significant resources to addressing any problems. You can, of course, pay for support from Microsoft, but our experiences have shown that online support from Microsoft (by e-mail) is not only free, but very responsive. You should therefore consider this option if you are facing difficulties with installing SP2 (or indeed have any other problems with Microsoft products). To obtain on-line support for installation of SP2, go to this link:

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;EN-GB;contactms&product=windowsexpsp2&pname=Windows%20XP%20Service%20Pack%20%28SP2%29>

This upgrade to Windows XP is important – witness the amount of publicity that Microsoft have applied to its development and release. So, if you have any questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to call Alan Finch at 01224 697457 as soon as possible.

WINDOWS XP – USER ACCOUNTS

In both business and home environments, many computer systems are used by more than one person. In such environments, it is increasingly important to retain and maintain levels of privacy and security between the various individuals who require access to a specific computer.

Windows XP significantly improves the security features that are available to individual users. The following notes explain some of the basic facilities provided by XP.

Access to Windows XP is usually provided by requiring each user to log on to the computer (although this can be disabled if you do not wish to force each user to log on, in which case, each user will share the same folders and there will be no security between users). Normally however, each user will be provided with a user “account” which defines the users ID, password, and what features and facilities are available to that user.

New accounts and modification to existing accounts can only be carried out by the Administrator or someone who has been delegated with Administration authority (see below).

The Administrator

Unlike earlier versions of Windows ('95, '98 and ME), XP introduces the concept of an “Administrator” for the computer. The Administrator user of Windows XP is created during the installation of Windows XP and is automatically given full control over every aspect of the computer on which Windows is installed. It is VERY important that when this account is created during installation, the password associated with the Administrator account is kept secure and not lost. There are many facilities built in to XP that can only be implemented or modified by the Administrator.

Since the Administrator has so much power over the configuration, and security of the system, it is usually wise to limit when the Administrator logs on to the system. Conventionally, a second user account is usually created, and granted the same rights as the Administrator.

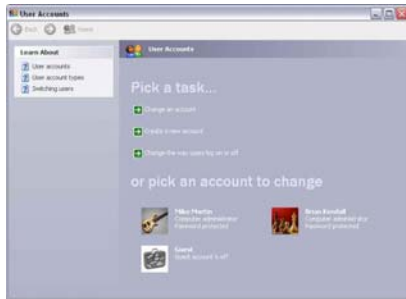
This “super user” can carry out the same functions, but should his account become damaged, or accidentally deleted for example, then it is still possible to gain access to the system to carry out the administrative functions by using the Administrator logon account (which cannot be deleted).

The Administrator (or any other user who has been given Administrator rights) is the only person who can add new user accounts to the system and implement any of the extensive security features of Windows XP.

Creating a new account

If you are the Administrator, or have administration rights, then you can create or modify existing user accounts. Here's how:

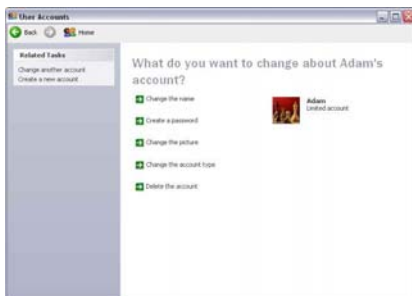
1. Go to CONTROL PANEL and click on the USER ACCOUNTS icon.



2. Select CREATE NEW ACCOUNT. You are then asked to type in the name of the new user. This should be the log on name that the user will enter to log on to the computer.
3. The following screen asks you to "Pick an account type" – this determines whether this new user is to have Administrator rights or be a "Limited user". A limited user will have full access to his or her own folders and any folders that have been declared as "shared", but cannot do any administrative functions.

NB: If you hover the mouse over each of the two alternatives, the screen will describe the rights available to each category.

4. Select which category is appropriate for this user and click on CREATE ACCOUNT. This will take you back to the main User Accounts screen.
5. The next step is to define other parameters that will apply to the account. Click on the name of the new account that was just created and you will be presented with the following screen:



6. From here, you can change this user's name, create a password (recommended!), change the icon associated with the user, change the user from a "limited" user to one with administrator privileges or delete the account. If you do not create a password for the user, then anyone can access his or her folders without any security.

Having set the new user up with a User ID and password, he or she will be able to log on to the computer and be assured that other users of the same computer will not be able to gain access to any private folders (those in the MY DOCUMENTS folder and any sub-folders), as these are secure and only accessible by that user.

Folder security within Windows XP is quite extensive, allowing the Administrator to grant or deny access to any folder or resource on the computer. "Access" can mean full control (create, modify, or delete folders and files), or the ability only to read files within specific folders. These facilities can become quite complex, and space does not allow us to cover the subject in any further detail. However, you can obtain extensive help if you go here:

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;308418&Product=winxp>

Alternatively, if you require further assistance in implementing tighter security on your computer system(s), then call Alan Finch on 01224 697457.

APPLE MAC OS X VERSION 10.4

Apple is now providing a sneak preview of its upcoming new release of the OS X operating system for the Apple Mac computer. Version 10.4 code-named "Tiger" is yet another significant upgrade to the OS X operating system, and follows version 10.3 (Panther).

Apple claim that Tiger will contain over 150 new features, including:

Spotlight – a new search tool for finding information on your computer

iChatAV – a video and voice conferencing facility – supports up to 4 users (video) or 10 users (audio only).

Safari RSS – Internet browsing and newsfeeds etc in an integrated environment

For more information on OS x 10.4, go here:

<http://www.apple.com/macosex/tiger/>

We wish to acknowledge with thanks that some of the material contained within this publication has been sourced from Computer Weekly.

May Day Consulting Limited and your Chamber of Commerce have endeavoured to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, but do not accept liability for any inaccuracy or omission contained within it.

Information on other Business and IT services can be found on our web site at: <http://www.maydayconsulting.co.uk> or by calling Alan Finch on 07968 262079.

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