



Tabard IT Ltd

Making Your PCs Work Harder

June 2006 Newsletter



Online Security



The BBC Technology website is a good place to look for well written (ie in English) articles on such scary topics as online security and preventing viruses and spam. For one such example, see their [article on safety when browsing the web](#).

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) Phone Calls



Free phone calls! VoIP is changing the way people communicate, even if you've never heard of it. VoIP is a way of making telephone calls over an internet connection. The calls are either free or charged at rates which are often cheaper than landline rates, and they can be made to other VoIP users or to normal telephones anywhere in the world.

It's usually free to call people who use the same software you're using, and most systems charge discounted rates to phone regular telephones. [Skype](#) is one of several companies providing this type of service, with another recent offering being [Tesco](#). Not every destination you call with VoIP is cheaper, but most have a clear table of [rates](#). Since the March newsletter, ADSL (non-cable) broadband prices have fallen. The Carphone Warehouse is offering "free broadband for life" through their Talk Talk service, if you sign up for 18 months to its £9.99 unlimited phone package, totaling £21.99 per month including the BT line rental (which is mandatory), plus a £30 setup fee. It's not necessarily the best deal for everyone, and it always pays to shop around before choosing or changing your broadband supplier, but overall prices look set to drop in the next six to nine months, which is good news for most users and businesses.

Hard Disc Failure



You'll see in the top right of this newsletter a note about backups. Just in the last couple of weeks, we've had three clients with hard disc failure - and no backups. Whilst it is sometimes possible to recover data from a failed or failing hard disc, it is not an easy (or cheap) task, and if you notice increasing frequency of crashes, corrupt files, slow startup times and strange startup errors, you might want to make that backup now...

For more information, see our [website section on backups](#).

Backups



You only appreciate the true value of your data once it's gone. It's fairly simple to set up an automated backup regime to a USB hard disk. External USB2 drives are available from £99 for a 250Gb drive, and if two are rotated, one can be stored off-site for safekeeping.

Holiday Pictures



About to go on holiday? Wouldn't it be good to show everyone your holiday snaps whilst you're on holiday, or soon after your return?

With the help of Flickr, you can, with a tool that allows you to display your pictures to the world, via PC or mobile phone. Their free basic version has size limitations, whilst the advanced version can be set up for a reasonable fee. Visit [Flickr](#) for more details.

Charity Begins At Home



Have you purchased a new PC/Mac recently? If you have an old PC and don't know what to do with it, why not give it to someone who could use it? [Computers for Africa](#) accept computers, but be sure they are in working order with all necessary CDs, and your old data is backed up and removed from the machine.

We have tried to make this newsletter informative and interesting, but if you would prefer not to receive this email from Tabard IT, please email help@tabardit.co.uk or call 0131 538 0766.