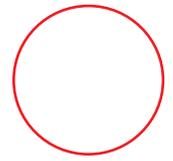


Letters



Write to *What PC?* Editorial, 32-34 Broadwick Street, London W1A 2HG. We offer a £20 book token for the best letter each month

CORRECTION

In our Up Front review of Turbocad 2D/3D for Windows 95 which appeared in June's issue of *What PC?*, the price should have been £99 and not £399 as quoted. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

Invisible Butterfly

Gremlins paid a visit to the May issue of *What PC?*, leaving behind as their calling card the rather attractive sludge colour which featured in the In Briefs section.

We apologise for this and for the fact that, although it was possible to read most of the text, the verdict for the Butterfly Keyboard disappeared in the gloom. We reprint it here for anyone weighing up the Butterfly's merits:

The Butterfly Keyboard is a well-made solution to the problem of keyboard-induced wrist strain but, as with all keyboards of this type, it pays to try before buying.

Double indemnity

Has anyone else had problems finding out about the guarantee for their brand-new PC?

I recently became the proud owner of a new desktop PC and was told by the retailer that it would be wise to buy one of their three-year warranties. I duly purchased guarantees for the PC and monitor for the princely sum of £395. As Stauf says in the Eleventh Hour, 'Bad Move'!

Had I not casually glanced at the Buyers Guide in *What PC?*, I might have wasted several hundred pounds. I discovered that the PC came supplied with a three-year warranty.



Because of the abacus...

About 2,000 or so years ago a Chinese person invented the abacus. It is my opinion that my forebears, the technophobes of their day, smashed the frame and used the little balls as marbles.

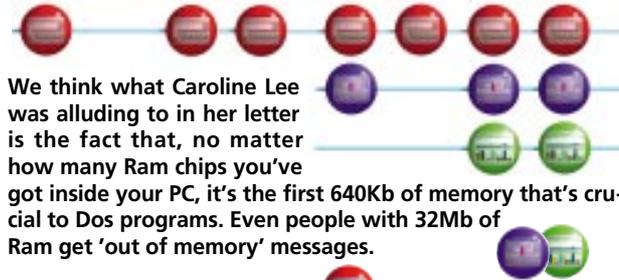
Through the ages my more recent relations have tried to make amends for this offence against the advancement of science. Firstly, they mined coal from the ground, only to see others set fire to it and reduce it to ash. Then we moved into the field of mechanical engineering – the precise art of turning perfectly usable pieces of metal into heaps of totally unusable swarf.

Now I am spearheading the family's efforts to enter the computer age. I'm on my second PC (that 'multimedia' buzzword eventually got to me) and I thought my progress was advancing at a rate approximately that of a forty-seven-year-old and a box of Lego.

But, while reading the most user-friendly computer mag in the country (the May '96 issue), I stumbled across the letters page where some lady made a statement about 8Mb of Ram really only being 640Kb! Pass the abacus and the hacksaw!!

Please can we have some articles in large, bold print along the lines of a *Janet and John* book that explains such matters in terms that even a layman might find over-simplified?

Nigel Mullins, Chesterfield, via The Royal Snail



We think what Caroline Lee was alluding to in her letter is the fact that, no matter how many Ram chips you've got inside your PC, it's the first 640Kb of memory that's crucial to Dos programs. Even people with 32Mb of Ram get 'out of memory' messages.

I rang the PC manufacturer in Birmingham using the number in the Buyers Guide (no number was listed anywhere in the supplied documentation) and was referred to a company called Mysis who helpfully explained what was covered, and registered my PC. The only difference between the two policies was that the retailer offered two extra years on site – but at almost £400 it would be cheaper to take a taxi to Birmingham if anything went wrong!

There's been a fuss recently

over salesmen persuading customers to take out warranties on domestic appliances, such as washing machines, which are already covered. It seems this applies to computers as well. I also wonder why PC manufacturers don't include guarantee details, 'phone numbers and bulletin boards with their machines.

My story had a happy ending: I managed to cancel the retailer's insurance within the legal seven days. A huge thank you for tipping me off – and for the telephone number.
Christine Chapman, Brentford

Delivery disservice

Is there a conspiracy between PC mail-order companies and courier delivery services?

I was about to place an

April competition winners

Many congratulations to Mr D W Redpath of Blackpool and C Wallace of Leeds, who are first-prize winners in April's competition and will both receive a Ricoh fax machine.

Congratulations also to our ten runners-up who will each receive a Corel software package. They are: B Shepherdson of Leicester; John Corr of Shoreham by Sea; Mr S P Webster of Matlock, Derbyshire; Alan Edwards of Edinburgh; Marcus Davey of Cambridge; John Paul Coe of Leek, Staffordshire; Mike Ward of Welwyn Garden City; M L Richards of Fife; Andy Darby of Banbury, Oxfordshire; and Mr P Dray of Reading, Berkshire.

order over the phone for an 8Mb Simm chip costing £75 plus VAT, when the salesman said that the courier delivery charge would be £25! Needless to say, I told him to forget it and looked elsewhere. I have since used the Royal Mail's package service for a quarter of the price.

Robert Smith, Co Offaly, Eire

Experiences required

We are a group of university students conducting a research project regarding IBM-compatibles vs Apple Macs, and we would be interested to hear the views of *What PC?* readers.

If you wish to take part in this project, please get in touch with us giving details of the system(s) you use/have used, the advantages and disadvantages and your preferences.

Your help will be greatly appreciated. You can e-mail us on: SteveT@waverider.co.uk Or write to us at: P Geddes-Smith, Matthew Boulton College 07 FE, Sherlock Street, Birmingham B5 7DB.



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Please note that any letters sent to us by e-mail will be printed along with the sender's e-mail address, unless we are specifically instructed otherwise.