

## Tips, Tricks and Advice from your local “IT Guru”

This month I want to talk to you about a few of the things we have covered this year. Back in May I warned you of a particularly nasty scam, where you would get a phone call from someone advising you that your PC had a virus and that they could solve it for you over the phone for a small fee. It seems that this is still going on and has now caught the attention of the mainstream media, with a report even appearing on the BBC. I've had a few emails from people saying they have received this type of call and were pre-warned by my article, so it just shows it pays to read Look magazine as we are ahead of the game!

Right at the beginning of the year I told you all about Facebook and Twitter, and both these services have gone from strength to strength over the year. They've added new services and features, and also have had their fair share of problems along the way. Facebook even had a movie made about its creator, called The Social Network! Even with all the new features, I still have the same opinion: Facebook is great to keep up with a group of close friends and family, Twitter is for following celebrities.

A recurring theme throughout the year has been my fascination with all things Apple. Back in June I reported on the iPad, and suggested it might be just the thing for people that just want to do emails and browse the web. After a few months of use I still think that's the case; the iPad is a simple to use device that takes away all the worry about Malware and Viruses. It's battery lasts for days and it switches on in an instant, making it a brilliant device to have laying around for a quick check on things. Better yet, if you're not sure about taking the step into learning about a full size computer, it's ideal. You can't mention Apple without talking about the iPhone 4, and this has had a fair amount of press interest as well this year. I've had one since launch day and most of the stuff you will have read in the press is exaggerated. Suffice to say, having played with every type of smartphone on the market, it is still the best phone by far.

Another recurring theme in these articles is backups. I've lost count of the number of times I have had people say, "Please fix my computer, as otherwise I will lose all my data!" I can't repeat this enough: backup your valuable data! One day something is going to go wrong, and you will be glad of the few minutes you spent each week making sure you had copies of everything. As I have said, it doesn't have to be elegant, just copying important stuff to a memory stick or external drive once a week is enough. Just make sure you have more than one copy of the things you value.

I can't let the recap go without one more quick word on viruses. They are still out there, you still need to be careful, and you still don't need to pay for antivirus software. Microsoft Security Essentials is always my first choice. There is even talk of Microsoft including it in their update service, just as I predicted way back in February. At first it will just be offered to people who have no protection, but it's only a question of time before it becomes part of Windows itself.

If you have any questions or anything you would like me to cover in this column, email me at [look@4-11consultants.co.uk](mailto:look@4-11consultants.co.uk)

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