



Cybergate Ltd
14A Leigh St
London
WC1H 9EW

0207 3873810

IT NEWS

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Welcome to the first Cybergate Newsletter.

We wanted to send out a regular newsletter to all our clients, just to give a very brief run down of some of the new technologies that are coming out, which might be of use to you.

We'll also have small sections on how some systems that you use every day actually work, and also how you can get more out of the computer in front of you. As this is new, it's likely to change quite a lot!

Google Tips

NOT – you can exclude terms from a Google search by using a minus sign “-”.

So if you wanted to search for **WWF**, but didn't want anything on wrestling you can search for **WWF –wrestling** and Google will exclude all webpages that include the word wrestling.

Windows Vista

More and more people are asking about the latest version of Windows, called Vista; whether it is worth installing, and when it may start appearing in the office. The truth is we're in no hurry to see it anywhere yet!

Vista is the successor to Windows XP, and Windows XP will eventually be phased out. Currently however Microsoft are still making Windows XP available to anyone who wants it, and the main reason for this is because of the number of problems that have been discovered with Vista.

Vista is very resource hungry, requiring at least 2GB of RAM to run smoothly. There have also been a lot of reported problems with simple operations, such as copying files, in some cases it is hundreds of times slower than Windows XP at simply copying files across a network.

There are two other good reasons for not rushing to upgrade at work. There is still a shortage of drivers to allow Vista to work with printers, scanners etc., although this is gradually improving. Secondly Vista does not work with some older programs, and it would need testing with any software specific to your company – mainly database systems.

These are of course things that we are working on at Cybergate. Service Pack 1 for Vista, which solves some of the problems reported with it has been released recently. And Microsoft Server 2008 is, as the name suggests, due for release soon. This latest version of the server software, the first for five years, should work better with Vista.

If you are looking at getting Vista, probably on a new computer, at home there are a few things you should bare in mind. Vista comes in seven different versions – the ones to go for are Vista Home Premium or Vista Ultimate. Avoid Vista Basic, although it is cheaper, it is missing some useful features. Vista Business is fine as well, although it is missing a few toys. Also make sure the computer you want to run it on has at least 2GB of RAM – or Vista is likely to run pretty slowly. Or crawl to a painful halt.

Contacting Cybergate

You are always able to contact someone from Cybergate if you have a problem with your computer.

Emailing support@c-gate.com will alert all the engineers, or you can email individuals, eg. ben@c-gate.com.

The office phone number is 0207 387 3810 – and you will probably have a few mobile numbers for us as well.

Google Tips

OR – Normally when you search in Google it will find webpages that include all the words that you enter. You can use | or type OR to include search for either terms. Do you can search for **Holiday France | Italy** and Google will come back with webpages about holidays in France or Italy.

Office File Types

Microsoft's Office suite of programs (Word, Excel etc.) are so widely used that they are a de facto standard. In general if you receive a document or spreadsheet, it will be in the a Microsoft Office file format – .doc, .xls etc.

However this is slowly changing, and I expect you will receive attachments with different file formats in your inbox. The main reason for this is Microsoft Office 2007, which by default uses a different file format.

Since Office 97, Microsoft has used the same file formats, and these are closed formats and you need a Microsoft program to utilise them fully. Obviously this gives Microsoft a lot of power, and it has been under pressure for some time to use an open standard format.

In Office 2007, Microsoft has moved to using Open XML formats. The files saved by Office 2007 end .docx, .xlsx etc. Because these files are an open standard, it is possible to use other programs, not written by Microsoft, to open, edit and save.

There is a competing standard, Open Document Format (ODF) which Microsoft will support in the future. ODF is already used by other Office programs.

The upshot of all this is that in the future propriety formats, such as .doc, should die out, and open formats will be used by all programs, giving users more choice over what program they would like to use.

One open standard you probably use every time you use a computer is Jpeg. You can open jpeg images with any number of programs, and in the future, the same should be true of office documents.

For a period of time however, there are going to be a lot of file types around, and the software you use may not open them all. There are lots of different convertors available to ease this however – so let me know if you receive an attachment you can not open.

Explainer - IP Addresses

Every computer will have at least one Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, if it is connected to a network. They are analogous to phone numbers, and although computers also have names, it is the IP address that they use to communicate between each other.