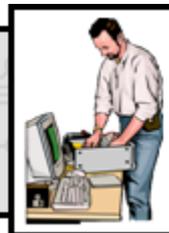


3rd Sector COMMunICaTions

From those friendly people at **DOT-COMmuniCaTions**
 please contact: **01422-845003** or email: **talk2us@dot-communications.co.uk**



3rd Sector COMMunICaTions is a regular column offering IT advice & support specifically for not-for-profit organisations. If you have an IT-related problem that might also benefit others, please send an email to the address shown below, & we'll do our best to answer.

Q. I've used Microsoft Outlook for my email messages for several years without any problems. I use it to keep track of my contacts, my calendars and of course all my emails. Then a couple of days ago Outlook refused to launch, and instead only displays an error message. What's happened?

A. It sounds as though your Outlook file has become corrupted – possibly due to being too large. This problem affects all versions of Outlook, even the newest Outlook 2010, so you're certainly not alone. Although Outlook 2010 has taken steps to help resolve this problem it is far from a complete solution.

The problem begins because Outlook stores its information in what is known as a Personal Folders File (.PST). This is a file that stores all your information relating to a specific account (Outlook 2010) or all your accounts (such as in all previous Outlook versions). It stores every email, every calendar item, every task and every note etc. As you can imagine the longer you use Outlook, the bigger this file gets and therein lays the problem.

Like every file that is used regularly on your system you should take a regular backup of your Outlook files and these can be located usually in one of two hidden folders:

Windows XP:

C:\Documents and Settings\username\Local Settings\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook

Windows Vista/7:

C:\Users\username\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Outlook

Older versions of Outlook had a maximum file size limit of 2 GB (newer versions have that limit set at 20 GB), although at these sort of sizes problems can arise simply from trying to open the file, this in turn can lead to data corruption, however there are ways to at least partially resolve this problem using free tools from Microsoft.

If you are using a version of Outlook prior to 2003 and you have exceeded the 2GB limit then you can use the PST2GB tool, this will truncate your Outlook PST file so that you can open it again, however you will lose some of your data.

You should always make and work on a copy (never use your original file). For those on a version of Outlook that is 2003 or greater you can use Microsoft's Inbox Repair Tool which comes with Office; to find this simply search for scanpst.exe on your machine.

You shouldn't try to download scanpst.exe from the Internet as it needs to match the specific version of Office you have installed on your computer and already comes with your Microsoft Office .

Unfortunately, this utility is also limited in the kinds of errors it is able to repair, and how much data it is able to recover.

If the Inbox Repair and PST2GB tool are unable to fix all of the damage or has resulted in a loss of your valuable data, then your next step will be to find a qualified technician to attempt a data recovery. There are unfortunately, no other free tools on the market that can undertake a full recovery.

The job of recovering data from corrupt files is extremely challenging and requires specialist tools and skills.

Remember, if you do decide to attempt a recovery yourself you should always work on a copy (never the original) so you still have the original data if things go wrong.

Monitor your laptop battery

If you're running your laptop on its battery you need to keep an eye on how much charge you have left. BattCursor is a free program that takes the battery notification out of the system tray and places it where you can clearly see it at all time: on the mouse cursor. It also turns the pointer yellow when the battery's running low and red when it becomes critical. (For Windows Vista and above only - it does not work with Windows XP or earlier).

More details and download at: <http://en.battcursor.net/>

Want to send more professional emails?

It can be difficult to design and properly monitor an email campaign that looks professional especially if you don't want to have to learn HTML. You also legally need to ensure that the people receiving your emails can unsubscribe if they no longer want to receive your emails.

Mailchimp.com provides a professional email service that enables groups to design and send emails using templates they supply and provides tools to automate email monitoring and subscription.

The service is free if you have less than 1,000 subscribers and send less than 6,000 emails a month and there are no expiring trials, hidden charges or contracts.

FREE Calderdale.COMmuniCaTions Newsletter

Sign up to DOT-COMm's irregular Newsletter filled with IT related advice, links and special offers on refurbished equipment. Only available to staff and volunteers of not-for-profit organisations in Calderdale.

To register go to: <http://tinyurl.com/yczm3m6>

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