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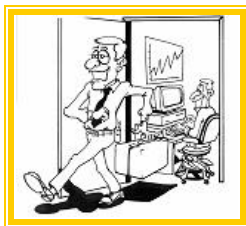
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*“Thousands of businesses  
around the world depend on  
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Pat Chesters  
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## Avoiding the holiday blues!

When I was a lad back in the 50's and 60's there was nothing worse than opening a gift on Christmas morning only to find that inside was the latest electronic robot or toy train that would not work because batteries were not included and I had to wait a day or two for the shops to open and someone to go and buy batteries.

Today the equivalent (but much worse) is the gift of a computer or software that for one reason or another does not work.

There are massive sales of computer related items during the December period all over the world. Many of these purchases are made in good faith by people that know absolutely nothing about computers – granny buys the latest game for Johnny's old PC, or you get the latest PC for your wife to run that programme she has used for years. There will certainly be a lot of disappointment when many of these gifts are opened. The latest software (including games) generally relies on the latest computer equipment. Running the software on older equipment, may be impossible or possible with some technical tweaking. It could run so slow you'll wish you hadn't bothered..



Equally putting your old DOS or Win 95 programs or games on to the latest and fastest WinXP computer system can see them fail altogether and hang the system or just not run. Often with a bit of know how this old software can be made to work. So what should be done to avoid the disappointment?

### Hardware:

If you purchase a new computer system as a present, buy it a few weeks early. Set the system up, for XP you will need to register it with Microsoft (normally using the modem). You may need to load software and or drivers to get items like printers, scanners, network and the internet connection running. You may need to sign up with an ISP to get on the net. Don't forget to check out the sound and be sure to remember what hole the speaker connection goes in (often the colour coding doesn't match for speakers).

### Software:

Putting old software on a new PC may require some special set up and short cuts that run the programs in the correct mode. To avoid disappointment these need to be tested.

Putting new software on older PCs can be a bit of a minefield, firstly check the packaging for system requirements and attempt to match these against the intended PC. Take the spec of the PC to the shop and ask the assistant for advice. The software (particularly games) may need a level of video hardware to enable it to run. Even if the system is compatible the games often need configuration to get them to run or run in the optimum sound and video modes.

Remember to buy early, plan the testing and take advice from your local IT specialist to avoid the pitfalls.

**Happy Holidays!**



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