Computers and Stuff.

Sam Houliston.

Windows 10??

Windows 10 has arrived, it's better than all previous versions and it's a freeby but – is it for you???

What Microsoft, or anyone else, hasn't told you is it just mightn't be – unless your computer is a real young pup, it might not have the relevant drivers to run Windows 10 and if you do take advantage of the free offer, your computer might slow down considerably and occasionally lock up.

Before you download Windows 10 and end up screaming at your computer when it starts to play up, you should log onto the manufacturer's web site and check to see if your particular model is compatible with Win 10 (ie: if the drivers are available). If you have a Toshiba machine, one of the most popular on the market, log onto this site (http://www.mytoshiba.com.au/support) fill in the form below and it will tell you if a driver is available.

If there isn't – DON'T INSTALL WINDOWS 10 unless you do some googling that indicates it should work. For most activities Windows 10 is more efficient than Windows 7, and on a par with Windows 8.1, and it will be supported for longer into the future than either of those, so there are benefits in upgrading if you can do it safely.

Other manufacturers also run compatibility notifications, see below.

For:	Go here:
ACER Computers	http://www.acer.com.au/ac/en/AU/content/windows10-eligible-models#_ga=1.172110563.137751394.1446080455
ASUS Computers	http://www.asus.com/event/2015/osupgrade/upgrade.html
Dell Computers	https://www.dell.com/support/article/us/en/19/SLN297954/en
HP Computers	http://www8.hp.com/us/en/drivers.html
Lenovo Computers	https://support.lenovo.com/us/en/documents/ht103535

If you have a computer not listed above, Google "*Is my XXXX laptop compatible with windows 10*" inserting your brand instead of the XXXX.

If it is not compatible – don't install Windows 10 yet. Perhaps one day your computer manufacturer *might* release a driver/s for your machine, but if it is an elderly machine, don't bank on it!!!

If you have installed the upgrade and your computer is as slow as a wet week, (after allowing time for it to settle in and catch up on updates) and it is less than 30 days since you did so, click on **Settings**, then **Update and Security** then **Recovery** and roll back to the version you had previously. If it's more than 30 days I'm afraid the only option available to you is to do a clean restore of your original system – big job!!!

Good luck!!

The Trouble with Texting

THE TEXT

Hi Bob, This is John next door. I'm sorry buddy, but I have a confession to make to you. I've been riddled with guilt these past few months and have been trying to pluck up the courage to tell you to your face, but I am at least now telling in text as I cannot live with myself a moment longer without you knowing. The truth is, I have been sharing your wife, day and night when you're not around. In fact, probably more than you, particularly in the mornings after you've left for work. I haven't been getting it at home recently, but that's no excuse I know. The temptation was just too much. I can no longer live with the guilt and I hope you will accept my sincerest apologies and forgive me. I promise that it won't happen again.   Regards, John .

THE CONSEQUENCES

Bob, feeling anguished and betrayed, immediately went into his bedroom, grabbed his gun, and without a word, shot his wife twice, killing her instantly. He returned to the lounge where he poured himself a stiff drink and sat down on the sofa. He took out his phone to respond to the neighbour's text and saw he had another message.

JOHN'S SECOND TEXT

Hi Bob, This is John next door again. Sorry about the slight "typo" on my last text, I expect you worked it out anyway, but as I'm sure you noticed, my predictive text changed 'WIFI' to wife. Technology hey?!?   Hope you saw the funny side of that.

Regards John.

Windows 10 Recovery Drive.

If you have Windows 10 and everything is working just fine, you should be very happy as it is an excellent system. However, sometime in the future, odds are it will play up and it will need some TLC to get it up to speed again. Microsoft knows this and they have built in an excellent self-booting rescue feature into their system. It's called the **Recovery Drive** and you should follow this advice.

If you're lucky, you'll never need your Win10 recovery drive but when/if things go seriously wrong, you'll be extremely relieved to have it. Here's how to create and use a recovery drive.

Preparing the Recovery Drive.

The changes to the self-booting, Windows-recovery system start with the name. It's no longer a rescue disc, it's now a rescue drive. In fact, creating a bootable CD or DVD is no longer an option; you must use a spare USB flash drive with a capacity of at least 8GB in order to produce a recovery drive with a complete set of tools.

It's important that you create your new recovery drive now while your Win10 setup is healthy but remember, a recovery drive created on one PC might not work on

another machine. You should create and label a Recovery Drive for each computer you have that is running Win 10.

Insert a suitable (at least 8 GB) flash drive into your system, then in the Win10 search box, enter "recovery" and select the option under Settings (arrowed right).

Click "Create a recovery drive" and follow the prompts. This can take a while as you will be backing up system files.

When the process is done, label the flash drive with something like "Recovery" plus the make and model of the PC. Store it securely, so it doesn't get used for some other purpose and you'll be able to find it in an emergency. It is a good idea to test the drive before you file it away, to do that, do this!!
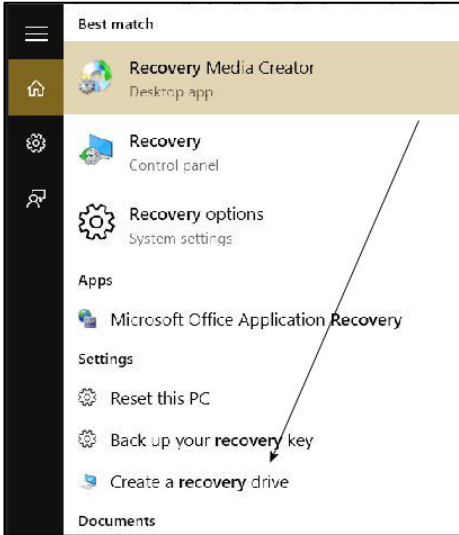
Booting Windows from the recovery drive.

Plug the flash drive into your USB drive and switch on the computer. When the recovery drive boots, you'll first be asked to choose a keyboard layout — which is really a choice of languages and nationalities. (Choose US.). The next screen, Choose an option (below), offers three choices. Click (or tap) Troubleshoot.


Next, you get three more choices:
1) Reset this PC,
2) Recover from a drive, and
3) Advanced options (below).

The Advanced option offers a variety of tools for fixing Win10 issues.

(After selecting one of these tools, you might be asked to select an operating system — even though the only option is Windows 10. Don't worry about it; simply select Windows 10.)

Advanced options: When you don't need to reinstall.

Despite the heading, most of the offerings under "Advanced options" (below) aren't more advanced than anything else on the Troubleshoot menu. They are simply tools that might fix
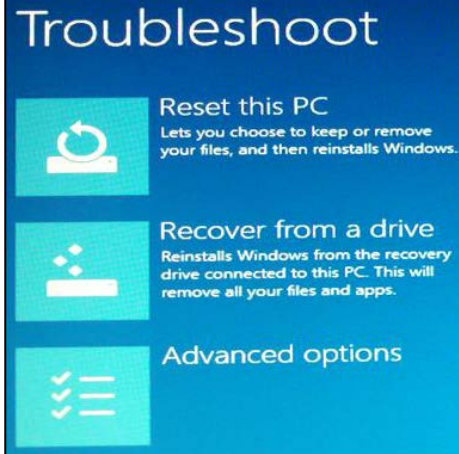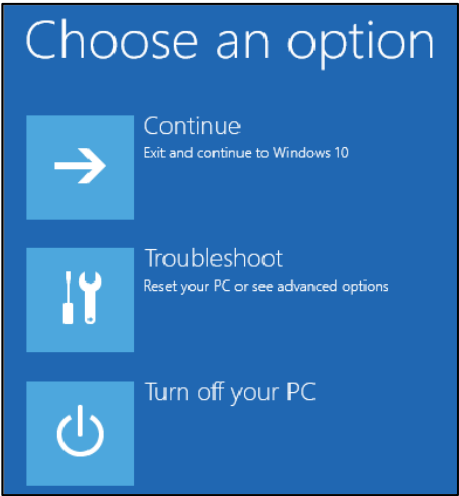
Windows without reinstalling the operating system. In other words, these are the tools you should look at first.

The recovery disk's Advanced options includes various levels of repair. (Note that all these tools are available within the default Win10 setup. Click **Settings**, then **Update and Security**, then **Recovery**, then **Advanced Startup**. Next click **Restart** then **Troubleshoot/Advanced** options. But, of course, you can't access those tools if you can't boot your PC.)
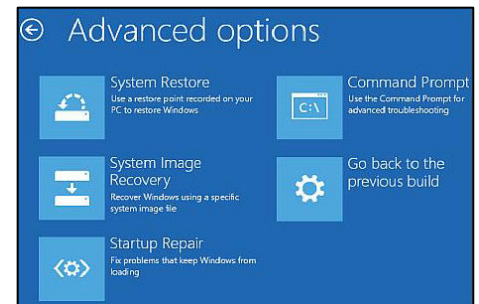
Startup Repair: This simple tool examines all system files and settings that play a role in the Windows boot process. It then tries to determine what's at fault and attempts to fix it. Because it's relatively quick, this tool is a good place to start your troubleshooting. If it doesn't work, you can then move on to more extensive solutions.

Go back to the previous build: If you've upgraded from Win7 or Win8.1 within the last 30 days, and you haven't removed your Windows.old folder, this option will take you back to the previous OS.

System Restore: Most likely, you're already familiar with Windows restore points — records of previous operating-system settings and configurations that you can access and restore via Control Panel/Recovery. The option in the recovery drive works that same way.
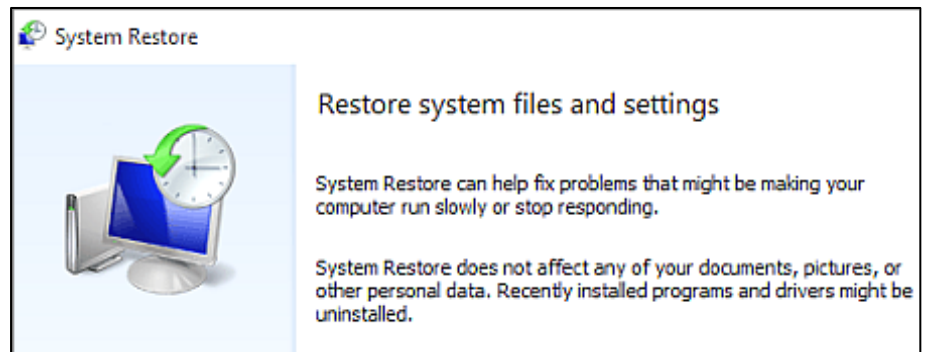
System Image Recovery: You can also access backup images of your system hard drive (SSD), stored on another drive. (If you don't have a recent image backup, click **Control Panel** then **File History** tool. The link, **System Image Backup**, is in the lower-left corner of the File History window.) To restore an image from an external drive, plug in both the recovery drive and the backup drive into separate USB ports.

Command Prompt: There are times when the command-prompt environment is useful, for example, when booting to Safe Mode from the recovery drive. Unfortunately, recovery drive doesn't include a simple safe mode–restart option. The command prompt has other recovery uses. For example, use XCOPY (more info) to move your personal files to an external drive, or use DISKPART (more info) to delete or create drive partitions (if you're careful and patient). Of

course, you'll also want to remember the "exit" command, which gets you out of Command Prompt.

Reset and Recover: Reset this PC and Recover from a drive. Both reinstall Windows and offer essentially the same options. Where the two options differ is that Reset uses the installation files on the internal drive and Recover uses files on the recovery drive. That's why you'll see the Recover option only if you used an 8GB or larger flash drive and chose the Back-up system files to the recovery drive option when you created the recovery drive. When would you use Recover instead of the Reset option? Typically when the special recovery partition on the main system drive has been destroyed or corrupted. You might also use Recover when replacing or upgrading the main drive and you're creating a clean installation.

Neither of these options will require a product key — assuming you're running the recovery drive on the original PC.

When selecting Reset this PC, you'll be asked whether you want to Keep my files or Remove everything. The first option reinstalls Windows but leaves your personal documents, photos, and other data files where you left them, at least if you left them in folders (Documents, Music, and so on) recognized by Windows as part of your libraries. Personal files in other locations might get deleted. (Obviously, you should have all your data files backed up before you do anything involving significant changes to Windows. In fact, your data files should be regularly backed up, period.) Reset the PC also remembers who you are; you won't have to set up your account all over again.
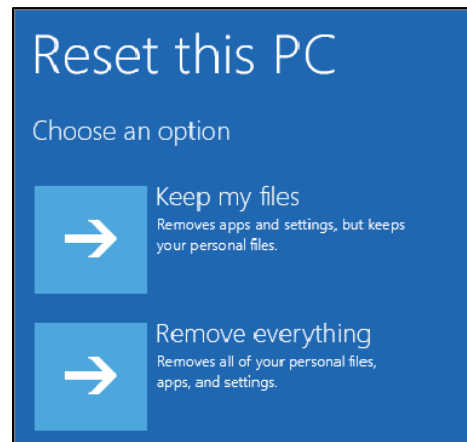
If you select Recover from a drive or if you go with Reset this PC and Remove everything, the installation process will delete all files. Once it's finished, you (or perhaps a new owner) will have to start from scratch, including setting up user accounts.

Remove everything has two more options: Just remove my files and Fully clean the drive. That last one, which can take hours, securely wipes everything off of the drive. A secure wipe will make it impossible to recover any data from your hard drive.

Final thoughts: Create a recovery drive and store it someplace where you won't forget where it is. One of these days, it may save, if not your life, than at least your sanity.

Windows safe mode: Many advanced users and system admins still use Safe Mode. Safe mode boots Windows with a limited set of essential drivers and startup files. It loads just enough to get Windows running and is useful for troubleshooting problems with programs and drivers that might not start correctly or that might prevent Windows from starting correctly. If a

problem doesn't reappear when you start in safe mode, you can eliminate the default settings and basic device drivers as possible causes. If a recently installed program, device, or driver prevents Windows from running correctly, you can start your computer in safe mode and then remove the program that's causing the problem. Microsoft doesn't make it easy to access safe mode either in Windows 8 or 10 but here are two ways you can do it:

1.

Win10 has a set of troubleshooting tools for fixing operating-system problems. The easiest way to access them is to open the start menu and click the Power icon. Next, hold down the Shift key and click Restart. That will pop up the "Choose an option" window; select Troubleshoot and then Advanced. In the Advanced options window, select Startup Settings; you'll end up with the window shown at right. It merely describes what options you'll have. Click Restart (bottom right in the window).
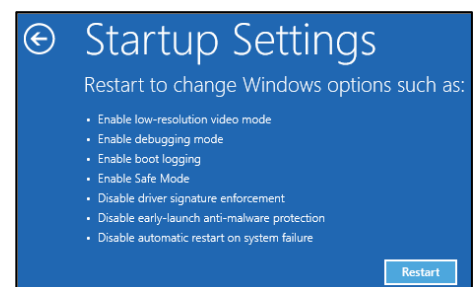
Your system will then do a full restart. A second Startup Settings window then appears with your actual choices (below right). Pressing the F4 key restarts Windows again and opens with the classic safe mode look. Rebooting out of safe mode returns your system to its standard startup format.

2.

Launching the classic startup options. On some systems, through a trick of the command prompt, you can have the OS boot to the DOS-like "Advanced Boot Options" window. Here's how. Launch Windows 10 using a standard installation/recovery/rescue disc or flash drive. Select your language. If "Repair my computer" appears on the next screen, click it, otherwise, click *Troubleshoot* then *Advanced* options then *Command Prompt*. Enter the following commands, as shown, on separate lines.
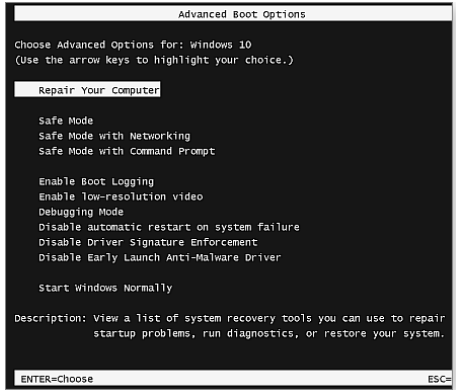
        C:/
        BCDEDIT /SET {DEFAULT} BOOTMENUPOLICY
        LEGACY
        Exit
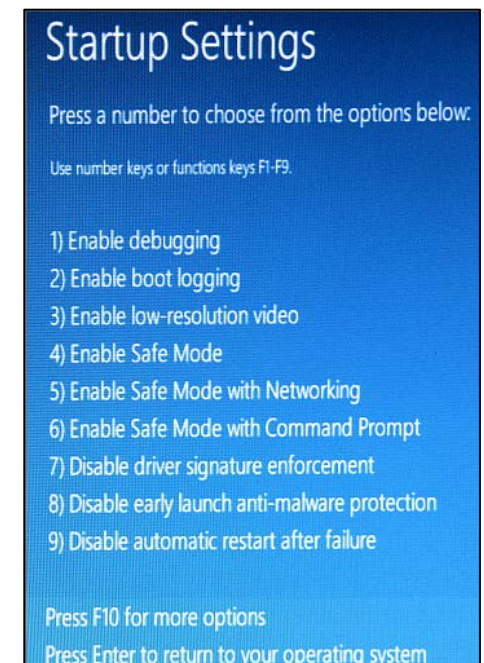
Back in the Troubleshoot menu, click Turn off your computer.
Power up the system again, and as the boot process starts repeatedly press the F8 key until the Advanced Boot Options menu appears, shown below.

Again, after you're finished with safe mode, rebooting will return your Windows installation to its normal startup process.

This procedure might not work on some computers, if it doesn't you might have to change a BIOS setting. If you don't know how to do this, I would suggest you'd be better off not trying this method at all – stick with method 1. If you do know how to get into your BIOS setting, turn off the FAST BOOT option. That should fix it.

```
                    Advanced Boot Options

Choose Advanced Options for: Windows 10
(Use the arrow keys to highlight your choice.)

 Repair Your Computer

    Safe Mode
    Safe Mode with Networking
    Safe Mode with Command Prompt

    Enable Boot Logging
    Enable low-resolution video
    Debugging Mode
    Disable automatic restart on system failure
    Disable Driver Signature Enforcement
    Disable Early Launch Anti-Malware Driver

    Start Windows Normally

Description: View a list of system recovery tools you can use to repair
            startup problems, run diagnostics, or restore your system.


 ENTER=Choose                                              ESC=
```

Renovating??

With house prices at an all-time low and renovation shows like 'The Block' and 'House Rules' having an overwhelming success, it has never been a better time to look at your own home and assess the rooms that need improvement. The bathroom and laundry used to be very practical areas, that didn't get much attention to the way they looked.

What trends are now showing is that with a combination of clever interior design and affordable bathroom products, a bathroom can be transformed into a sanctuary. Along with the kitchen, the bathroom is now one of the most pivotal rooms when trying to sell a home. Without having to spend a fortune, a bathroom upgrade can even increase the sale price of your home by about 10%.

Gone are the days of showering over a bath tub while frameless glass showers continue to be one of the most popular items in a modern bathroom. Some people prefer an enclosed

frameless shower while others just prefer a singular panel, either way this popular choice looks very clean, sophisticated and opens the bathroom up.

A lot of people ask, do you think I should keep the bath or just have a larger wet area? This is up to personal preference; however we would always recommend keeping at least one bath in the home if space permits. Consider the next 10 years – do you expect to move or sell your home? Will you have children or elderly people present? Try to think through all options before you make the decision that is best for you. Freestanding baths are still a very popular purchase and are often used as a feature within the room.

An important thing to consider is how much storage space you need. The vanity is one of the biggest decisions as you want it to be highly functional as well as good looking. Wall hung

vanities have been the popular choice over recent years although a floor mount vanity will generally have more storage. If you need excess storage then have a think about integrating a mirrored cabinet or having a side cabinet in the room too.

The mood of a bathroom is set with the choice of tile. The modern bathroom opts for floor to ceiling tiles so it is more crucial than ever, to choose wisely. The monochrome palette has been a popular choice of those who take a particular interest in the recent renovation shows. Some prefer a warmer style and opt for natural looking, stone coloured tiles. Feature walls are also very popular and the possibilities are endless but we are seeing a lot of exposed brick, textured tiles to add depth.

A lot of people find it overwhelming thinking about renovating their bathroom. The process starts to flow with your initial research. There are a huge amount of resources online to get a feel for the style you would like to achieve or alternatively there is still a wide range of magazines on the market.

Once you have an idea of the style, you have to think practically. Measure the area and take note of where the pluming is currently. Think about the current area – does the layout work for you? What would you like to change and what do you think should stay the same?

Now is the time to start looking at product, bearing in mind the style and space constraints. At this stage, we would suggest to visit your local Highgrove Bathrooms store to start making your ideas, a reality. Our friendly sales people will be able to consider your personal taste and room measurements to help you pick out some products from our wide range in store.

It is important in this day and age to realise that cheaper doesn't necessarily mean inferior quality. Highgrove Bathrooms pride ourselves in offering great looking, high quality products at an affordable rate. We can do this as we import the product ourselves, cutting out the middle man and selling directly to the public via our 25 stores Australia-wide. This, along with our friendly customer service and product on hand, is why Highgrove Bathrooms is the fastest growing bathroom company to date.

Providing quality bathroom products since 2004, Highgrove Bathrooms have just celebrated our 10th Birthday in the industry. We have strived to be at the forefront of bathroom design by closely watching the current and future bathroom trends over the duration.

15% discount.

Being an Australian owned company, the business owners would like to pass on a price discount to all ADF personnel who hold a DVA Health-care Card (either Orange, White or Gold) as a token of their appreciation for the dedication and service to Australia provided by these ADF personnel. As such, the owners hereby offer the gift of a 15% discount off retail prices to all DVA Health Card holders (and their families) on any product, in any Highgrove Bathrooms' store. This offer is value until 31 December 2015.

To receive 15% discount, please present your DVA health card when you purchase/order any item. Click HERE for the store closest to you

Moving to the "Cloud".

If you're in business, moving to the cloud, whether it be OneDrive, Dropbox, SkyDrive, Sharepoint etc, has a lot going for it, your employees can access files from anywhere (provided there is an internet access), your files are safe, if your lose your computer or your hard drive dies, your files are intact, and 99% of the time, the cloud's security is far better than yours, your files can't be hacked – BUT!!!!!

The problem is the speed of the connection, particularly, the upload speed. If you've got a cable connection a download speed of 30mbps is relatively normal these days, but with that you get an upload of only 1mbps. If you have your documents located in the cloud, then getting hold of them is easy, you click to download and within a few minutes your file is accessible locally but when you've finished work, you have to put that amended file back into the cloud and with a much slower upload speed, this can take ages.

Achieving the best upload speed possible is becoming the holy grail of moving to the cloud.

The answer is what is called a "BOND" - joining multiple broadband connections together. There are numerous ways of doing this and there are numerous companies out there that offer it, but at the end of the day if you want to use the cloud, you need a solution that just works, is fast and is reliable. But - It's not cheap and of course it only works "at the office" – it won't work

from your employee's home or a shared WiFi. However, a BOND will mean, while "at the office" all your employees will have access to a bullet fast internet.

Unless you've got big pockets and a way of laying the expense off against profits, it's not for you, costs of (about) $300 per month are the norm. One day, not too far off, you can bet upload speeds will be made a lot quicker than they are today.

You can read a bit more about it HERE.

Old age is coming at a really bad time!

Microsoft's Solutions for Common Problems.

Microsoft provides many automated, online solutions for common problems you might encounter with Windows software and hardware, on top of the dozens of always-available troubleshooting tools built into Windows 7 and Windows 8. These extremely useful tools can provide 24/7 self-help fixes for problems with printing, audio, security, and networking along with many other hardware and software issues. But (there's always a "but") not all fix-its and trouble-shooters are easily found. In fact, following Microsoft's system for searching for help can sometimes lead to dead ends, wrong answers, or missed solutions!

The information that follows will help you find the automated repair/diagnostic tools you need. Use it as a quick reference for what's available, how Microsoft organizes its tools, and the best way to search for the solution to a particular problem.

Fix-its and trouble-shooters are user-friendly implementations of two advanced Microsoft technologies: the Support Diagnostics Platform (SDP) and the Microsoft Automated Troubleshooting Service (MATS). SDP is a mechanism to collect diagnostic information such as Registry data, configuration files, and application event logs. MATS can analyze SDP data to see whether the conditions fit a known pattern and if so, suggest or implement automated repairs that are likely to resolve the detected problem

(See the MS Support article 2598970, "Information about Microsoft Automated Troubleshooting Services and Support Diagnostic Platform" and MS Support article 2672837, "Microsoft Diagnostics Services — Self-help diagnostic portal.")

For most individual PC users, those pro-level MATS/SDP offerings are overkill. So instead, let's look at Microsoft's far-easier-to-use, but still highly effective, automated fix-it and trouble-shooter tools.

Start with Microsoft's fix-it library.

Microsoft has collected most of its fix-it solutions in the Fix it Solution Centre site which you can access HERE. The site's deceptively simple homepage (see right) is in fact the portal to some 500 solutions, accessed by simply pointing and clicking.

The page is divided into three sections, which Microsoft clearly wants you to step though in a 1-2-3 order.

Step 1: Select a problem area.
Choose from the twelve major application categories the one that's closest to what's causing trouble.
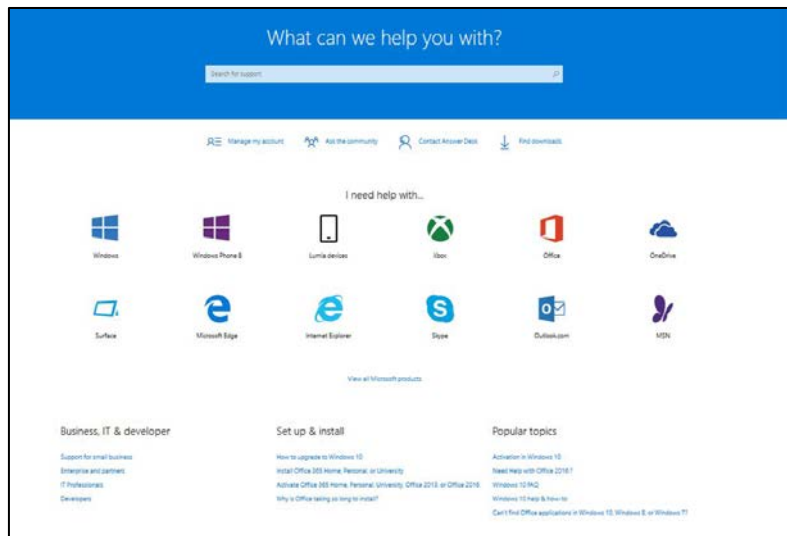
Step 2: What are you trying to do?
This section attempts to narrow your search by listing specific kinds of trouble. Depending on what you chose in Step 1, you'll get a a number of sub-choices

Step 3: View or run solutions.
Suggested solutions, such as a click-to-run fix-it or related information, will appear in the Step 3 text box. If you don't find an answer to your problem you have the choice of putting your problem to the MS Community or putting it to the Microsoft Answer Desk.

Microsoft's three-step method seems straightforward and should work for inexperienced users, anyone who enters the site with little or no clue as to why their system is malfunctioning or what might need to be fixed. If you already have at least a general idea of what the trouble is, or what the needed repair is, you can often do much better with a more direct approach.

There is another way!!

Running Windows' built-in troubleshooters.

Some problems are common enough that Microsoft built the relevant fix-it right into Windows itself, there's no need to go online. Microsoft calls the built-in fix-its "Troubleshooters." Built-in

troubleshooters aren't just handy, they could be vital if a problem prevents the PC from going online. (Obviously, a Web-based fix-it is of no use at all if you can't access it.)

Windows10, 8 and 7 each have many trouble-shooters built in; Vista, alas, has but one. You can see the available trouble-shooters by opening the Control Panel and if you're in the Category View, type the word "troubleshoot" into the search box (If you're in Icon View [my suggestion] just click on Troubleshooting. Depending on your version of Windows, a window similar to the one at right will appear (This is from Windows 10)

You can then open each subcategory to drill down to the individual trouble-shooters. When you find an appropriate trouble-shooter, just click to run it.

When local and online solutions don't work.

Combined, the local trouble-shooters and the online Solution Centre offer hundreds of solutions, but, oddly, not all of the automated solutions are offered by Microsoft. Sometimes, you have to search elsewhere.
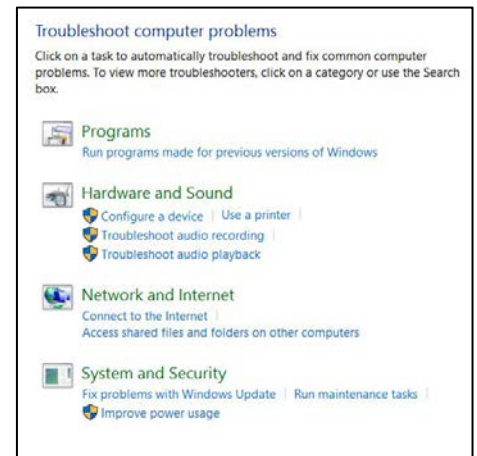
For example, let's say you've made some networking changes to a Win7 system. Suddenly, all the network connections, including the Home (local) network, are now stuck in the limited "Public" mode, which is preventing you from properly sharing files and devices. Surprisingly, it's not a rare problem at all though none of the built-in networking trouble shooters addresses this problem but there is an excellent, fully automated solution: Microsoft fix-it 50725, described in and accessed by MS Support article 2578723, "Windows 7 Network connections are stuck in Public mode."

Although the Solution Centre can't find that particular fix-it, a general Web search can. For example, entering the same keywords, e.g., "stuck public network" into Google or Bing yields a listing for KB 2578723/fix-it 50725 within the first few search results. In fact, Google usually lists the correct Support article and fix-it as the very first result.

So don't give up if your initial searches of Trouble-shooters and the Solution Centre come up dry. Your favourite search engine might help you find additional automated repair tools that Microsoft didn't include in those two resources.

Windows 10 Update.

As was expected, Microsoft has released their "Fix" for Windows 10. It's called Version 1511 and it's a huge download, about 3 gig – which could stretch the friendship for a lot with a small monthly data allowance.

Depending on your configuration, you mightn't see the new update, the reasons being:

- If you've only recently upgraded to Windows 10, you won't see the update until your "fall-back" option (this is the 30 day period when you can revert back to Win 7 or 8.1) has expired. When this 30 day period has expired, the update will show up in Windows Update.
- If you selected Defer Upgrades in the Windows Update advanced options there will be a delay in you receiving Ver 1511.
- You don't have room on your hard drive to take the update.

The changes are few, which makes us think more are to come. You can see what has changed by clicking HERE.   One setting they have changed is the ability to switch time zones automatically. Windows has long handled seasonal time changes automatically, but bizarrely it hasn't offered to ever switch time zones automatically like your mobile phone does - until now. To turn this feature on, go to *Settings > Time & Language* then select *Set Time Zone Automatically*.

Get your USB devices out of low gear.

USB 3.0 data transfers should be up to 10 times faster than USB 2.0 and 2.0 should be almost 10 times faster than USB 1.0. But many factors can cause your USB connections to limp along at a fraction of their expected speeds. Here's how to check your USB system's performance to verify that it's running at its full speed and what to do if it's not.

Here is how to check:

Like a lot things, a USB connection is only as fast as its slowest link. USB is a complex system of controllers, software drivers, hubs, ports, cables, and external devices. For a USB 3.0 connection to achieve its full Super Speed throughput, up to 625 megabytes per second (MBps), all those system components must be fully 3.0 compliant. If any component isn't 3.0 compatible, the USB setup will drop back to a slower speed: e.g., High Speed (up to 60MBps), Full Speed (1.5MBps), or even Low Speed (0.19MBps).

Unfortunately, getting USB components to fully match can be the proverbial can o' worms. At last count, there are some 110 different variants in common use. Checking your USB system starts with a simple visual inspection that should take only seconds. All USB hardware is supposed to have clear, external labeling that indicates whether it supports versions 2.0 or 3.0. For example, fully compliant USB 3.0 devices, cables, and sockets (ports) should have the Super Speed logo, a USB trident prefixed by the letters SS (see below). And 3.0 ports typically have an easily seen blue interior.

On the left, the simple trident logo of USB 2.0 devices, cables, plugs, and sockets; on the right, the dual-S Super Speed logo of fully USB 3.0-compliant hardware.
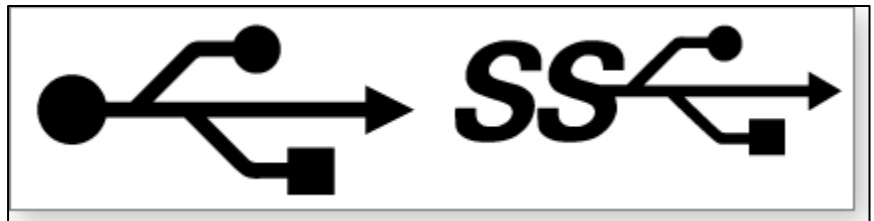
The best and most reliable way to fully explore USB setups, in all Windows versions, is to run Microsoft's free and easy to use USBView tool. It isn't part of Windows; it's a separate download and is part of the Windows debugging (WinDbg) toolkits for Win10, Win8, and Win7. (Vista can use Win7's USBView.) The WinDbg toolkit, in turn, is included in the Windows Software Development Kit (SDK). There are separate SDKs for each Windows version, and all are free. Fortunately, you don't have to install the full, huge SDK just to obtain USBView; you can selectively download just the WinDbg toolkit portion of the SDK. Here's how:

Download the appropriate SDK using one of the links below. (Note: There are slightly different versions of the SDK for different versions of Windows. Download the one that relates to the version of Windows you currently have on your PC). Vista people use Win 7

Win10 SDK   (HERE) Click "Download the standalone SDK"
Win8.1 SDK   (HERE) Click "Install and download"
Win7 SDK   (HERE) Click "Download"

When the installer process opens either the "Installation Options" or "Select the features you want to install" window, leave only the Debugging Tools for Windows option checked (uncheck all other offered components). Again, the Windows debugging toolkit will include USBView.exe.

When the install completes, navigate to USBView.exe — it's usually in one of the following locations. (If not, use Windows' local search function to find USBView.exe on your system.)

Win10 64 bit	C:\Program files (X86)\Windows Kits\10\Debuggers\X64
Win 10 32 bit	C:\Program Files (x86)\Windows Kits\10\Debuggers\x86
Win 8 64 bit	C:\Program Files (x86)\Windows Kits\8.1\Debuggers\x64
Win 8 32 bit	C:\Program Files (x86)\Windows Kits\8.1\Debuggers\x86

| Win 7 64 bit | C:\Program Files\Debugging Tools for Windows(x64) |
| Win 7 32 bit | C:\Program Files\Debugging Tools for Windows(x86) |

Scroll down to USBView.exe (it's down the bottom of the directory) right click it then click **Send To** then click **Desktop (create shortcut)**. This puts an icon for this file onto your desktop which gives you access to it at anytime.

Go to the desktop and click the icon, USBView opens and you will see two windows. The left window displays a connection-oriented tree view. You can select any USB controller, hub, or device that you wish to learn more about.

The right window provides a vast amount of information about the selected item, depending on the PC's setup and the selected device's capabilities. It will also show the component's current speed plus what other speeds it might be capable of. (See below) The selected device is operating at USB 2.0's High Speed, but it's not capable of operating at 3.0's Super Speed.
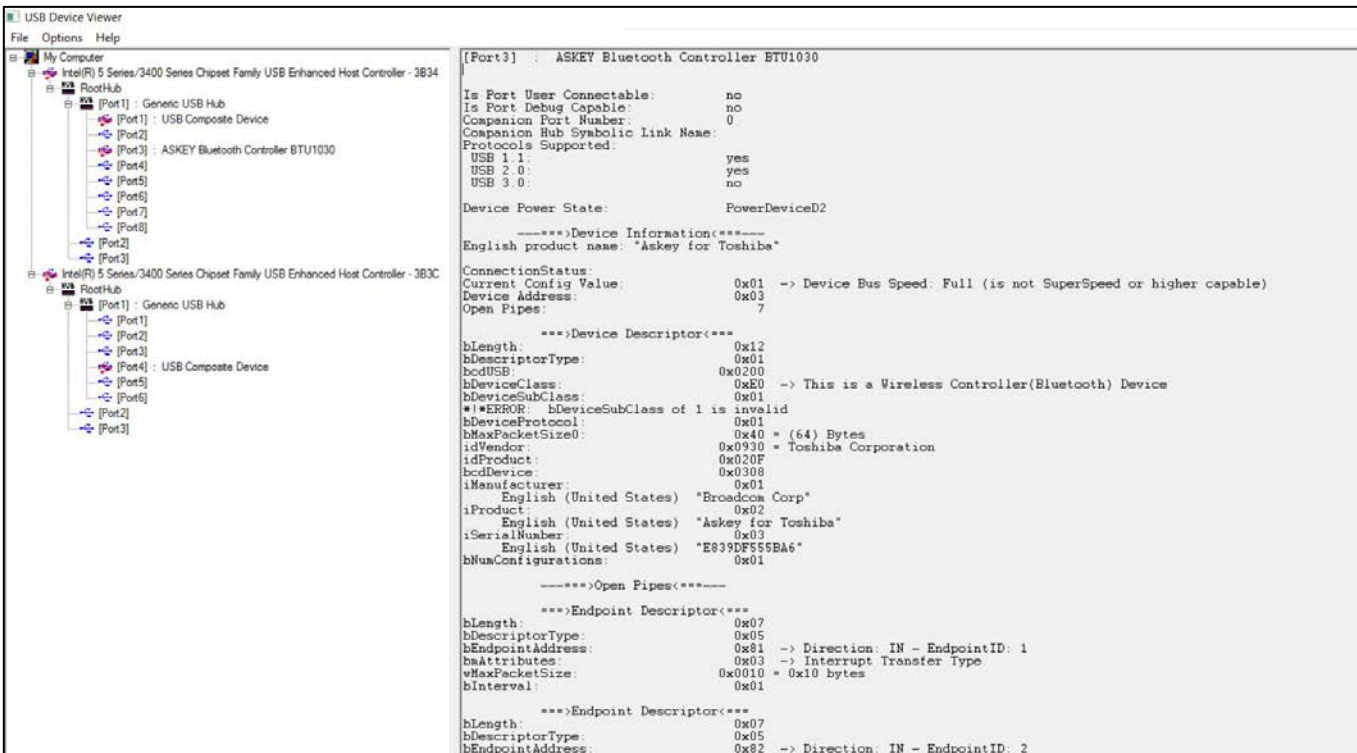
In fact, USBView provides so much information, it can be confusing. One way around that is to disconnect all USB peripherals, wait a moment for the system (and USBView) to reset (or click File/Refresh), and then reconnect your USB devices, one at a time. This will let you more easily connect a particular device with its somewhat more cryptic description in USBView.

After running USBView, you'll know everything that Windows knows about your USB setup. The proof, as they say, is in the pudding, or in the case of USB systems, in the actual, real-life, delivered throughput speeds. To verify that your device is operating as it should, test its throughput and then compare the actual USB speeds to the theoretical maximum speeds listed earlier. Although no real-life system will ever achieve its theoretical maximum speed, a properly functioning system will at least be in the ballpark.

If your USB setup seems stuck at speeds significantly lower than expected, here are some troubleshooting steps.

Start by checking the obvious. Try plugging the device into different ports on your PC; some systems have a mix of 2.0 and 3.0 ports. And if you're trying for USB 3.0 speeds, make sure that all physical components are 3.0 rated. Look for the double-S trident logo and the blue color-coding in all ports and plugs. Important: Note that some USB hubs operate at the speed of the slowest attached device. In other words, a USB 3.0-rated hub might throttle down to 2.0 speeds if even one 2.0 device is attached to any of its ports. If you suspect this is the case, and you're using an external hub, disconnect the hub and plug each device directly into an appropriate port (USB 3.0 or 2.0) on the PC.   Re-test the devices. That'll let you see what each device can do, without   the hub's influences.

If you detect trouble with no obvious   cause, try uninstalling and then reinstalling your USB drivers. Use the latest available, USB 3.0-rated mainboard or chipset drivers from your system maker and from your external USB device manufacturers. If the drivers and all the accessible hardware check out okay but the slow speeds persist, then the problem is likely to be internal, within the PC itself. In that case, contact the manufacturer for an explanation, upgrade, or repair.

Another option: If your PC has open and available expansion slots, you might consider adding a third-party, plug-in USB 3.0 board. With luck, it'll never get that far. With a physical inspection, OS reporting, USBView data, and real-life throughput testing, you'll know everything there is to know about your USB system and devices — including any bottlenecks.

New attack steals passwords and ransoms your files.

If you click on a link in a scam email or visit a compromised website, you may receive a message saying your files are locked and cannot be accessed without you paying a ransom to unlock them. If this is the case, you've been hit with a ransomware attack.

The scam email may look official and even incorporate the logos of prominent organisations to encourage you to click on the links in the email body. The compromised website may be legitimate but be infected by malicious software.

Stay Smart Online has previously provided alerts about several ransomware attacks, including Cryptolocker and CryptoWall. But now there is a dangerous new ransomware attack targeting Windows users. This attack reportedly steals victim's passwords before using CryptoWall to lock down their files.

A victim of this type of ransomware who restores access to their files (preferably from a backup system not connected to the computer under attack from the ransomware) may still be subjected to further attacks. The attacker may use the password to gain access to sensitive personal and financial information on the victim's computer. As a result, victims should also change all their passwords immediately.

The new ransomware starts by infecting various websites in order to attack people who visit them.

Staying safe.

If your computer has been infected by ransomware, you should restore your files from backup and update your systems. To do this, you need to maintain regular backups of important files. Stay Smart Online has information about how to do this, and we recommend you seek technical advice if you are unsure about next steps.

We recommend against paying any ransom demanded to decrypt your files. There is also no guarantee the attackers will provide a working decryption tool, and you are not protected against future attacks.

You should also change all of the passwords and usernames on your computer. Stay Smart Online has advice on choosing strong passwords and we recommend the use of a password manager to help you choose and use very strong passwords.

The best cure is prevention, and we recommend that you keep your antivirus programs and computer systems updated at all times, and to be cautious of viewing attachments in emails from unknown sources and visiting websites of dubious origin.