

Clear COMMunICaTions

From those friendly people at DOT-COMmunications



Clear COMMunICaTions is a regular column offering IT advice & support. If you have an IT-related problem that would also benefit others, please send an email to the address shown below, & we'll do our best to answer your questions.

Q. I recently received an email from Sony Ericsson that stated that I would be eligible for a free laptop if I passed the email on to at least 8 other people. I sent it to everyone I know but I still haven't received my laptop. What's gone wrong?

A. Unfortunately you've been the subject of an email hoax, one that has been doing the rounds since 2007.

The email you received read: free laptops

Dear All,

Ericsson are distributing free laptops for their brand promotion. They are hoping to increase their popularity and sales with this campaign. All you need to do is send an email about this promotion to 8 people and you will receive an Ericsson T18 laptop. However, if you send an email to 20 people or more you will receive an Ericsson R320 laptop.

Kindly ensure that you cc to Anna at Ericsson so that she will know you have sent the email. Make sure you copy Anna@Ericsson.co.uk to your emails.

However, Nokia has **never** distributed free laptop computers to email forwarders, Nor are they or Sony Ericsson (who do not make computers) ever likely to do so.

The offer sounds easy enough and tempting, too, but get this: both the [Ericsson T18](#) and the [Ericsson R320](#) are actually discontinued mobile phones, not computers.

The email is actually a revised version of an old scam promising free **phones** to frequent forwarders. Though the phrase "computer laptops" has been substituted in the newer variant to reel in more people, evidently the anonymous prankster who revised the original couldn't be bothered to change the model numbers of the supposed promotional items.

Sony Ericsson confirms that this email campaign is a hoax. In addition, Sony Ericsson confirms that the Ericsson contact name used does not exist. **Please do not reply to or forward the email if you receive it.**

For more information on this particular hoax, check out <http://tinyurl.com/lb95d3>

Q. I've had my computer for two years now, but recently it has begun to run slow. Should I buy a new computer?

A. Unless you plan to use the PC for something that will require more computing power, or upgrade to Vista then I'd suggest that your computer is probably still viable.

Over time, most computers start to slow down unless you carry out some basic tasks on a regular basis: is your antivirus up-to-date and run regularly? Are there too many programs or applications running at start up or in the background? Perhaps the amount of memory you have installed is now too small? If so, installing more memory may give your PC a new lease of life.

For information on how to check and clean up your system, go to <http://tinyurl.com/mh8s4f> and <http://tinyurl.com/mvol9j> for free and impartial advice on what to do next.

Free PDF Convertor

PDF has become one of the standard file formats for the exchange of documents and although there is a free adobe reader, if you can't afford Adobe Acrobat or a PDF Conversion program such as CutePDF, then writing your files in PDF can be a difficult process. However there is a free online convertor at <http://www.en.conv2pdf.com/> that will allow you to upload files up to 6mb in size and convert them to stable PDF for you.

Cheap Software for Charities

The CTX Programme offers donated technology products from Partners such as Microsoft, Symantec and Cisco to eligible UK Registered Charities and Charitable Housing Associations.

Before you are able to access CTX, you will need to register your organisation online and CTX will need to confirm your organisation meets the required Eligibility Criteria. (go to <http://tinyurl.com/md52z2> to check out eligibility)

For donated products, you will be asked to pay a small Administrative Fee both for the number of programs you request as well as the number of users that will be using them. Microsoft, for example allows Each eligible organisation to request up to six titles, and up to 50 user licences per title every per two-year period unless otherwise stated.

To find out more go to <http://www.ctxchange.org/>.

If you need assistance in choosing the right software package, please give us a call.

DOT-COMmunications is Calderdale's **ONLY** dedicated not-for-profit provider of computer support services & solutions to local community, voluntary & faith sector organisations & not-for-profit social enterprises.

For more information & a free consultation,
please contact: **01422-845003** or email: **talk2us@dot-communications.co.uk**