

# apc

February 2009

AUSTRALIAN PERSONAL COMPUTER

Reviewed!

## ASUS NJ10

The first notebook for gaming!

NEW OLED HDTV



# HOTTEST NEW TECH FOR 2009

**NEW HDTVS: THE OLED REVOLUTION**

**PLUS:** Windows 7, SSD drives, Android Phones, Snow Leopard & MORE!



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Vol 29 No 02 / FEBRUARY 2009 SOFTWARE / SECURITY / PLAYABLE DEMOS / LINUX

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Check out the long-awaited new **UBUNTU 8.10!** Our double-pack includes both Desktop and Server Editions.



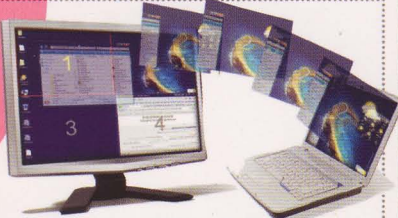
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Compared!

### EASY STORAGE

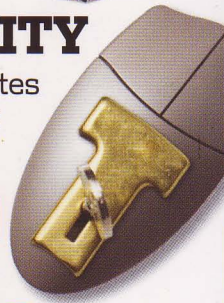
From 1TB drives to 64GB USB keys: Add room quickly!



Tested!

### 2009 SECURITY

New commercial suites vs free counterparts: Shock results!



48-page section

### HOW TO...

- Develop for Android Phones
- Build Windows 7 yourself
- Set up a web site in a day
- Turbocharge your Torrents!

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THE GEAR, THE GADGETS, THE TRIBE



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# HOTTEST NEW TECH FOR 2009

We take a look at this year's hottest kit and investigate what it tells us about the technology that's just over the horizon.

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# SUPERCHARGE YOUR NETBOOK





BUILDING A PC

# Speed up disks

Discover the secrets of how to speed up hard disks to improve overall system performance.

APC EXPERT

People tend to forget just how much a hard drive can slow your system. First thing to look at is defragmentation of your files: where the file is broken up into bits to fit into the gaps, as this leads to an associated loss in performance. The process of defragmenting is literally that of piecing files back together with some juggling.

Included with Windows under Accessories > System Tools is a 'no-frills' Disk Defragmenter, but this is basic software that doesn't perform any optimisation and is suitable only for sticking the files back together. I use JKDefrag ([kessels.nl/JkDefrag/index.html](http://kessels.nl/JkDefrag/index.html)) by Jeroen Kessels, which is a free alternative that attempts to optimise a little by putting the most used system and program files near the beginning of the disk and moving big, chunky, non-program files further towards the middle of the platter. This is because, on all modern platter-based hard drives, the beginning of the disk is faster than the end of the disk. With constant spindle speed and constant data density, more area, and hence data, passes the head on the outside tracks than on the inside tracks.

If you're feeling a bit fancy, there are other paid alternatives that are even more sophisticated, such as Diskeeper, Raxco PerfectDisk, Norton Speedisk and others which help to fine-tune the art of defragmentation. They also offer scheduled defragmentation and boot-time defragmentation for files locked while Windows is running.

Vista defragments your hard disk in the background; however, this isn't always

effective. Taking the time to do this manually is a good idea.

## DON'T FORGET: SWAP FILES AND SCRATCH DISKS

One often-forgotten optimisation of hard disks has to do with the Swap File. Most users have this set on "System Managed Size". This sometimes can lead to fragmentation of the swap file due to the growing of the swap file on demand. The Windows Defragmenter doesn't touch the swap file at all. The more expensive defragmenters try to optimise your swap file for you automatically.

Otherwise, for more adventurous users, you could set the system to have no page file, reboot, and then set it to a size larger than your maximum usage to allow the file to be allocated in as few chunks as possible on a permanent basis. Ensure you defragment first, or you could make things worse.

## A NOTE ON PARTITIONS

It is a little-known fact that partitions on a drive can actually decrease performance. The overhead of maintaining a few file-systems at the same time causes the drive to work more. Partitioning is like putting up a fence at a particular radius of the disk: by doing this, you are essentially forcing the head to move across the fence to read files on the other partition. This is undesirable if you're looking to get all the performance you can from the hard disk. The tip is to minimise the number of partitions you have. **ATC**

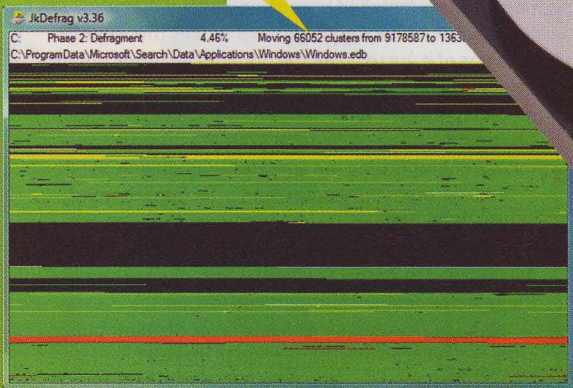


GOUGH LUI

Gough Lui is a university student currently studying electrical engineering.

He has worked with computers as a hobbyist since he was young, many times repairing, salvaging, building and servicing his own systems.

A number of free and commercial third party apps can help you keep your drive in top shape.



Minimising your partitions should lead to increased hard disk performance.