

Users having lots of problems with AOL 5.0 version



describing all sorts of problems with AOL's latest software.

The problems all stem from the way the upgrade takes over the network settings of Windows-based PCs.

What happens is that during the installation process, one of the on-screen instruction boxes asks if the user wants AOL to be the user's primary Internet connection. The default choice is "No." Clicking "Yes," however, invites AOL to move in and literally re-write your dial-in settings so that the computer connects to AOL whenever the user wants to browse the Web. Same thing when the user wants to send or receive e-mail or do any other online activities. But that's not all.

America Online's latest version of its software, Version 5.0, the "upgrade of death?"

That's what some people are complaining after installing the new 5.0 upgrade. I've been getting lots of e-mails and calls from listeners to my WXYT radio show and pcmike.com website over the past couple of months

Version 5.0 also disables the network settings you'll need to obtain access to the Internet through any other service providers.

A number of frustrated users have also told me it's all but impossible to get rid of AOL 5.0, even by uninstalling it. For some, the only solution was to reformat, or completely erase the hard drive.

A class action lawsuit has been filed over the AOL upgrade, something AOL has labeled as "without merit." Meanwhile, my advice is ... leave 5.0 alone. Stick with 4.0 until the whole mess is cleared up.

But AOL is not alone with these kinds of problems.

A lot of you have e-mailed me to complain of other net applications that have a way of holding your system hostage. Microsoft's Internet Explorer, the Outlook Express e-mail program, the Microsoft Network and RealPlayer are those most frequently cited by pcmike.com visitors as culprits that have a way of moving in and not making it easy for you to move them out or use alternate programs.

Several readers have also cited McAfee's anti-virus software as another application that likes to lock up your system when you try to install an anti-virus program from a rival manufacturer.

The manufacturers play dumb about all this, like it's not on purpose. But it's really all about greed and market share, and I'm not about to believe them when they say they don't intentionally try to make it as difficult as possible for you to switch out of their programs.

Guru not

I've spent most of the past week in St. Petersburg, Fla., with a group of online news directors at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. The other night we all huddled around a PC screen and shared some of our favorite websites. The one that caught our collective fancy the most is called Guru (www.gurunet.com). Try it out. It's a free download. If you're hooked up to the Internet and have this little program running all you have to do is put the cursor on any word - whether on a web page or even a document from your word processor - and then with just a right mouse click get instant information, word definitions, facts and much more. It's very cool.

Palm stock hot

Palm Computing has been spun off from parent 3Com and is the Net's new tech-stock darling. The stock was originally

expected to sell for about \$34 a share, but soared in opening day trading to as high as \$145 a share, more than four times the projected value. Here's a key reason why Palm is so hot: Forecaster research is predicting 1 billion wireless-enabled devices by 2003. Palm is way out front in the fast-growing WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) space as their hand-held computers and organizers merge with digital phones and pagers.

Online trading?

Or maybe I should say Fidelity (www.fidelity.com). But from e-mail, the problems I experienced Thursday trying to log in to their website and to execute an order for some of that hot PALM stock is something a lot of you regularly encounter from a lot of financial sites. The Fidelity website was very a-l-o-w in connecting, even with my T1 line access. But once logged on, it was so jammed my admittedly modest order could not be handled. When I tried to get through to the site's referred 800 telephone number, all I encountered was a busy signal ... and that after a frustratingly long three minutes of having to listen to stupid recorded messages.

This is no way to do business. For the

record, I tried to access some other sites Wednesday morning. E-trade's Web site (www.etrade.com) was also very slow. Ameritrade (www.ameritrade.com) and Datek (www.datek.com) offered instant connections.

Net taxes

The National Governors Association and the Clinton administration are sharply divided over the issues of Net taxes. It will be interesting to see how the issue plays out as the presidential election draws near. The governors don't want any federal laws that will diminish their ability to tax Internet sales, something they've been hollering about for the past year. The Clinton administration doesn't want Net taxes, believing it would put a major chill on the hot technology-driven economy. But with the national elections approaching, I'm predicting the Democrats and Clinton will cave in to the governors.

Till next week, "73" - PC Mike.
Mike Wendland reports about computers and the Internet for NBC television stations coast-to-coast. His radio show is heard every weekend on TalkRadio 1270, WXYT. You can reach Mike through his website at www.pcmike.com

BUSINESS CALENDAR

Items from the Observer/land area for the Business Calendar can be sent to: Observer Newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, MI 48150 attention: Business Calendar.

TUES, MARCH 7

WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS
The Greater Detroit Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners meets 8-9 a.m. at Border's bookstore in the Arborland mall in Ann Arbor. Discussion: "NAWBO is More Than Networking." No cost. Contact Jennifer Rice at (734) 425-8328.

BUSINESS NETWORK INTERNATIONAL
Laurel Park Chapter meets 7-8:30 a.m. at Archie's Restaurant, 30471 Plymouth Road, Livonia.

Call BNI regional office at (810) 323-3800.
Fri, March 10
BUSINESS NETWORK INTERNATIONAL
Livonia Chapter meets 7-8:30 a.m. at the Senate Koney Island on Plymouth Road near Stark. Call BNI regional office at (810) 323-3800.

THUR, MARCH 16

SERVICE CORPS OF RETIRED EXECUTIVES MEETING
Business Plan Workshop from 8:45 a.m. to noon at One Stop Capital Shop, 2061 Ross Parks Blvd., Detroit. Topics include planning process overview, financial statements and management and marketing questions. Cost: \$40. To register, contact SCORE at (313) 226-7947 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

weekdays.

SAT, MARCH 18

SERVICE CORPS OF RETIRED EXECUTIVES MEETING
Pro-Business Workshop from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Wayne State University-McGregor Conference Center, 495 W. Ferry, Detroit. Topics include analyzing opportunities, marketing and advertising, and business planning. Cost: \$40. To register, contact SCORE at (313) 226-7947 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays.

MARCH 21

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CAREER WOMEN
The West Suburban Chapter of the National Association of Career Women will meet at

11:45 a.m. at Ernesto's Restaurant, 41661 Plymouth Road, Plymouth. Etiquette consultant Patricia Warner will discuss "Minding Your P's and Q's in the Workplace." Cost: \$18 for members and \$22 for non-members. To make reservations, call Tracey Huff (248) 347-3355.

MARCH 30

SERVICE CORPS OF RETIRED EXECUTIVES MEETING
Marketing Plan Workshop from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Executive Office Building of Oakland County, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac. Topics include diagnosing marketing problems, market targeting, and advertising and publicity. Cost: \$40. To register, contact SCORE at (313) 226-7947 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. weekdays.

FRIDAY, APRIL 14

BUSINESS IN CHINA
Oakland University's Professional Development and Education Outreach, School of Education and Human Services (SEHS), will present "Opening Doors in the 21st Century: Creating Business Opportunities in China after WTO." The seminar will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, April 14, 2000 in Oakland University's Meadow Brook Ballroom. The Detroit Regional Chamber, Pontiac Export Assistance Center - U.S. Department of Commerce, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and Leonard Woodcock Legacy are co-sponsors of the event. The workshop is an introductory

course for individuals and organizations that are interested in developing or expanding markets in China. Jerome D. Hill, J.D., Ph.D., and Ledong Li will share their expertise on expanding interests and overcoming the challenges of doing business in China. Cost is \$295 and includes a Chinese luncheon and handout material. The registration deadline is Wednesday, April 5, 2000; enrollment is limited. Contact the Professional Development office at (248) 370-3033 for a brochure or to register for the seminar. Fax registration with VISA or MasterCard payment is accepted at (248) 370-3137.



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