

the newsletter of Tarragon Solutions

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Laptop gone missing? Find it with Prey



One of the ongoing fears of anyone who possesses a laptop, net-book or similar device is that it could be lost or stolen. The effect on a company of losing data or, worse, having it fall into the hands of competitors can be immense. While it isn't the complete answer, Prey can make recovery of a lost computer a little more likely...

Prey is a free, Open-Source application that is designed to run on Windows, Linux and Mac machines (and some Android phones). Once installed and set up, it sits quietly until activated via the Internet—and then it goes to work.

If your Prey-enabled computer goes missing, you log into the Prey web control panel and notify the loss. The Prey client on your computer will then start building a report which will be sent back to the website and can be viewed by you—and forwarded to the relevant authorities. This report can include:

- a photo (via the webcam) of the person currently using the computer
- a map suggesting the location of the computer
- an image of the computer's screen
- a list of programs running on the computer, active connections, uptime and who's logged in

For even more peace of mind, talk with us about hard drive encryption for your laptop.

More next month!

Prey will use the current Internet connection if it's available; otherwise, it will search for an open wireless connection and make use of that. The report will be updated and sent every few minutes—you can control the frequency, what's included and even whether Prey should make a loud siren noise (useful if you have just mislaid your computer!).

Obviously, this is not the perfect answer; there are a lot of 'ifs' involved. However, Prey takes almost no resources while it's not active and it is far better than no protection at all. I have been trying Prey on my own laptop and its location mapping has been pretty accurate.

You can download and set up Prey yourself by visiting **www.preyproject.com** - or we'll be pleased to do the job for you!

Coming soon - the 4K revolution

A revolution is about to hit hard drive technology; a revolution that will improve the performance and capacity of drives significantly – but will impact users of older operating systems.

In the early 1980s, IBM decreed that, for their new “Personal Computer”, data on a floppy disk should be held in “blocks” or “sectors” of 512 bytes; as the then-available 5¼ inch floppy disks had a capacity of some 360KB this wasn’t an issue. Over the ensuing 30 years we have moved from those 5¼” floppies to terabyte hard drives but the 512 byte block has remained – until now.

By January 2011, almost all new hard drives will use 4K (4096 byte) blocks. This will allow greatly improved capacity, error recovery and data transfer - but there is a price to pay if you are using an older operating system.

Windows 7 and Vista, as well as later Linux and Apple OSs, are designed with the new disk architecture in mind. Windows XP is not.

This does not mean you will not be able to replace a hard drive on a PC running Windows XP; the drives are smart enough to be able to emulate 512 byte sectors and, when reading data, there should not be a noticeable difference. However, when writing data to disk there could be a significant performance hit of up to 10%. So, if you are using Windows XP (or earlier!!!) and your circumstances suggest you need to install a larger disk drive on your PC, it’s probably a good time to consider upgrading your OS as well.

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Solutions!

Tarragon introduces payment by credit/debit card and PayPal

We are pleased to announce that it is now possible to pay your Tarragon Solutions invoice using a credit/debit card or a PayPal account, via the Internet. There are times that this can be very handy.

To use the facility, visit our website at www.tarragon.co.uk, click on **Help > Pay an invoice** then provide the Invoice number(s), the total invoiced amount and your email address (for a receipt). You’ll then be transferred to PayPal where you can securely provide details of your card or PayPal account.

Businesses that use card payments a lot build the card-processing fees into their prices so you pay extra whether you use card or not. Tarragon’s prices **do not** include a card fee so we do have to add a surcharge at time of card payment to cover the costs to us of card processing. Sad, but necessary.



Tip of the Month - Outlook birthdays

When you import contacts into Outlook, the birthdays of those Contacts don’t automatically get added onto the Outlook Calendar (like they do if you add a Contact manually). To overcome this, you could:

- Open and then save each Contact
- Use a utility such as “Put Anniversary in Calendar” (<http://www.rsoutlook.com/us/prods/prod05.html>)

Please let us know what you think of [Solutions!](http://www.tarragon.co.uk) - email solutions@tarragon.co.uk