

## Computer Hardware

CoolMon helps you keep tabs on your PC's internal goings-on. This utility shows you up-to-the-moment information about how many processes are running, how much RAM is being used, and the exact time of day. In its standard configuration, it also tells you important information like your IP address and the name your PC uses on the local network. Best of all, a little extra work and a little in the way of geek smarts will let you configure the window to show exactly what you need it to show--even the local weather.

<http://tinyurl.com/yb9tv7>

Free Photocopier Scanner Software. Most scanners can also function like photocopiers. Just scan a document and redirect the results to your printer.

If your scanner can't do this, or it's kludgy to use, try ICarbon. The free utility has presets for black-and-white, grayscale, and color; it also loads quickly and sends a scanned document to the printer in seconds.

<http://www.idev.ch/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=76&Itemid=54>

PC Wizard. It's hard to keep up with all the hardware on your PC--just ask your PC. If you want it to have the right answers, install PC Wizard 2005. This utility detects all kinds of hardware, from the obvious Bluetooth devices to the boards in the guts of your PC. PC Wizard 2005 updates its lists monthly to make sure your PC recognizes the newest devices. Not only does PC Wizard tell you about your peripherals components, it can benchmark your system so you see how it's doing with all that hardware. <http://tinyurl.com/f4cm6>

Quick and Easy Ways to Master Windows Printing:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,103805,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,103805,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Printing Without Cable Clutter (Wireless):

[http://www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,3866,tk,nl\\_urxnws,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,3866,tk,nl_urxnws,00.asp)

Buying A Printer. This Printer Buying Guide includes shopping tips and solid background information to help you understand the various types of inkjet printers plus monochrome and color lasers:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/bguides/0,guid,16,page,1,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/bguides/0,guid,16,page,1,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Review of Printers: This provides a complete list of reviewed inkjet, laser, and multi-functional models, using the tools on the left to sort and filter the listings according to your needs:

[http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/sfchart/0,typid,12,tk,nl\\_urxrww,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/sfchart/0,typid,12,tk,nl_urxrww,00.asp)

Fix Printing Problems: A "How to" article:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,119658,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,119658,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Make Your Ink Jet Printer Output Sparkle and Shine:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,103802,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,103802,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Nine Quick Tips for Hassle-Free Printing:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,115068,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,115068,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Foolproof Photo Printing:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,104991,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,104991,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

More Photo Printing Tips:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,115656,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,115656,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Make Better Prints:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,125275,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,125275,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Pick the Perfect Photo Paper:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,121535,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,121535,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Make Your Photo Prints Last:

[http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,104151,tk,nl\\_urxhow,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,104151,tk,nl_urxhow,00.asp)

Many computers don't have temperature problems, but if you store your computer in a hot environment (such as a sunny room in the summer without air conditioning or close to a hot air duct), you should use monitoring software to make sure your CPU isn't frying. Programs such as Hmonitor (\$24 after one-month evaluation period; <http://www.hmonitor.com>) and Motherboard Monitor (free; <http://mbm.livewiredev.com>) oversee your CPU's temperature and cooling fan speeds at all times and alert you when conditions become hazardous. Even computers stored in cool rooms can be damaged if the CPU fan dies, so don't take the chance.

Motherboard Monitor: An overheated computer is doomed to eventually fail. This handy program reads temperature and fan RPM data collected by your system's BIOS, displays it in the Windows system tray, and alerts you when there's trouble. You can use this application to manage your resources and alarms by doing things like setting an alarm to go off, or having an email sent to another computer, when your motherboard starts to overheat. You could even have programs start and stop when your CPU reaches predetermined temperatures.  
[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=7309&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=7309&fileidx=1)

Hard Drive Health: Wondering how long your hard drive has to live? This utility will help you make the most of your time together, so you can prepare for life without it once it's gone. From its vantage point in your system tray, HDD Health uses Self Monitoring and Reporting Technology (S.M.A.R.T.), which is built into all new hard disks to assess your hard drive's condition and send you alerts when it's time to put your hard drive's affairs in order. Neither these alerts nor the records the program logs for you will tax your system resources.  
[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=22945&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=22945&fileidx=1)

This handy program reads temperature and fan RPM data collected by your system's BIOS, displays it in the Windows system tray, and alerts you when there's trouble. You can use this application to manage your resources and alarms by doing things like setting an alarm to go off, or having e-mail sent to another computer, when your motherboard starts to overheat. You could even have programs start and stop when your CPU reaches predetermined temperatures.  
[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,7309,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,7309,tk,hsx,00.asp)

PC Wizard. It's hard to keep up with all the hardware on your PC--just ask your PC. If you want it to have the right answers, install PC Wizard 2005. This utility detects all kinds of hardware, from the obvious Bluetooth devices to the boards in the guts of your PC. PC Wizard 2005 updates its lists monthly to make sure your PC recognizes the newest devices. Not only does PC Wizard tell you about your peripherals components, it can benchmark your system so you see how it's doing with all that hardware.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25444,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25444,00.asp)

There are a number of sites where you can download drivers for your hardware. Try: <http://www.driverguide.com/>  
<http://www.pcdrivers.com/>

If you have an LCD monitor or laptop, you may notice that things aren't as clear as they should or could be. This little application should fix it right up.

ClearTweak changes the contrast in the ClearType setting in Windows XP. You must have a video adapter and monitor that supports a color setting of 256 colors. Do not try this on a standard CRT monitor -- it may make it blurry.

<http://www.ioisland.com/cleartweak>

This little gem will tell you exactly what you've got on your computer. It takes seconds to run and produces a window of easy-to-read information. Belarc displays information on hardware and software. Cost: Free for personal use.

[http://www.belarc.com/free\\_download.html](http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html)

This program was designed to fix browsers whose home pages and settings have been altered or "hijacked," Hijack This! requires some knowledge to be used safely. After scanning your system, which takes just a few seconds, it shows in a single window a list of items that could be related to browser hijackings. Cost:

Free. [www.merijn.org](http://www.merijn.org)

Technical hardware information in plain English, plus a great guide to PC fundamentals. [www.pcguide.com](http://www.pcguide.com)

Free tools such as downloadable benchmarks and an upgrade advisor that analyzes your PC parts. [www.futuremark.com](http://www.futuremark.com)

A wealth of data on hard drives, CD-RWs, and DVD-ROM drives, including specs, tests, and comparison engine. [www.storagereview.com](http://www.storagereview.com)

SANDRA is an acronym for System Analyzer/Diagnostic and Reporting Assistant. It is a series of tests and analyzers that let you know what is going on inside your computer. It will test your system memory, temperature, processor speed and other hardware. There is a pay version with more tools available. Cost: free; \$29.99 for full version. <http://www.sissoftware.net>

HDD Health monitors your hard drives for possible failure. It uses Self Monitoring and Reporting Technology (S.M.A.R.T.). This technology is built into all new hard drives. It assesses the hard drive's condition and gives alerts. HDD Health can't fix your hard drive but it gives enough warning time to backup and transfer your information before your hard drive fails.

<http://www.panterasoft.com/>

Active@ KillDisk - Hard Drive Eraser is powerful and compact DOS software that allows you to destroy all data on hard and floppy drives completely, excluding any possibility of future recovery of deleted files and folders. It's a hard drive and partition eraser utility. If you use FDISK, FORMAT utilities, or DELETE standard operating system command for data removal, there is always a chance to recover deleted data (using undelete file or some data recovery software) and use against the owner's will. Check it out and run this FREE utility for the hard and floppy drives you want to dispose of, recycle, re-use, sell or donate to somebody. It can work with DOS, Windows 95 / 98, Windows NT / 2000 / XP, Linux, Unix for PC.

<http://downloads.csnnow.com/octobertopfive.html>

Whether you need a complete computer or just a video card, it pays to check Price Watch for the best available deal. For nearly 10 years, this service has provided real-time pricing information on computers and components from resellers across the country, with loads of categories that help you narrow your search. Keep in mind that because Price Watch serves only as a price search engine, you shouldn't necessarily trust any reseller returned in the results. Before you make a purchase based on a price you found on Price Watch, check Reseller-Ratings.com (<http://www.resellerratings.com> ), another useful service that features thousands of user reviews on more than 6,000 resellers.

<http://www.pricewatch.com>

Lavalys Everest Home Edition, a system diagnostic and benchmark tool, delivers details about your hardware, down to the component level. The program will benchmark any PC running on a 32-bit Windows platform. It displays information on the screen, prints it, or saves it to file in various formats like HTML, CSV or XML.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23043,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23043,tk,hsx,00.asp)