



Appliances that last

Jan 09, p40

Following your article about brands that last, may I add to the pantheon of old faithfuls? In 1979, I bought a Hoover vacuum cleaner and its suction power is as strong as ever. Part of the cleaning tube broke – I repaired it with a rubber band – but no parts have been replaced. It is ideal for my studio flat and I've never considered replacing it.

JOAN THOMAS, LONDON

Scam alert

Jan 09, p18

I was interested to read about scams, as I've received emails that are supposedly from one of the main banks asking me to update my details, claiming there's been a problem with my account.

As I only have an account with one bank, it would seem that the requests are fraudulent.

The emails are quite persistent, so people who do have an account with the bank in question might think it is a genuine request and then send their details.

PAT SALISBURY, MIDDLESEX

WHICH? SAYS These messages, known as phishing emails, are very common and you should never reply to them. See www.which.co.uk/onlineprotection for more on these scams.

Ask our experts

Recording from Sky

I would like to expand my Sky+ recording capacity. Is it possible to connect an external hard drive or an additional PVR?

TERRY HALL, PENISTONE

That's not possible, but you can transfer your Sky+ programmes on to a DVD recorder. You can burn them to DVD-R (a cheap write-once-only disc), or use a DVD recorder with a built-in hard drive, such as the Best Buy Panasonic DMR-EX87. You'll need a Scart-to-Scart lead to connect the DVD recorder and Sky+ box. You could replace the Sky+ box's hard drive with a larger one, but Sky does not recommend this, and it will invalidate your warranty.

Fuel savings

Do you have information about MPG caps (pills for car fuel

tanks) which, according to the manufacturers, will use between 7% and 15% less fuel and reduce exhaust emissions by 75%?

PETER MYERS, BECKENHAM

We haven't tested this product, and we don't advise that anyone buys it until we do. There are many negative reports from consumers online, and the manufacturer FFI International is being investigated in the US over possible 'unfair/deceptive business practices.' The best



Terry Hall wants to increase the amount his Sky+box can record

approach to saving fuel is to maintain your car properly and drive more smoothly. See www.which.co.uk/greenermotoring for more advice on saving fuel.

Broadband abroad

I spend five months each year in France and want to be able to email and browse the internet there, but I don't want the hassle of using a French internet service provider. Is there a UK broadband contract that I can use there?

PAULINE CADE, HERTFORDSHIRE

Unfortunately not. UK fixed-line broadband providers use your landline to connect to the internet.

If you don't want to pay for a fixed-line broadband contract in France, consider getting a French mobile broadband service. This will let you connect to the internet using a small USB

modem, known as a dongle, which you plug into your laptop or desktop computer.

There aren't any short-term contract options, but you could choose the pay-as-you-go service from Orange, which operates in France. We haven't tested mobile broadband services abroad, but see www.which.co.uk/mobileinternet for more on how it works in the UK.

Holiday refund

My son booked flights and accommodation separately for a family holiday in Tenerife. The company he booked the accommodation with went into administration, so it was no longer available. Is he entitled to compensation?

ROBERT BARR, CARLUKE

Your son is entitled to compensation if he booked

Supermarket offers

Dec 08, p23

In your report on supermarket special offers, you warn that multibuy offers can add to waste. We used to live in the US where, on buy-one-get-one-free products, we could pay half the price and buy one item only – meaning less waste. Why can't we do that here?

RICHARD WEBB, VIA EMAIL

Digital photo frames

Dec 08, p64

You left out an important point in your review of digital photo frames. Most work with a mains connection only, so they're inconvenient to pass around friends or family sitting together. Few have an internal battery. I bought a Varnam digital photo frame, which has a rechargeable

battery and was rated very highly in other reviews we read.

BARBARA PEMBERTON, SOMERSET

WHICH? SAYS Frames with rechargeable batteries are very rare – none of the 20 models we tested have them. We're testing more frames this year – hopefully some will have this feature.

Train station parking

Jan 09, p5

Your article on train fares was very informative and I would like to draw your attention to car parking charges at stations. Since 2002, the cost of an annual ticket for parking at my rural station has risen by 10% each year on average. If the train company continues to increase charges at this rate, fares will end up cheaper than parking.

LIAM O'KEEFE, SURREY



Keith Phillips is concerned about digital radio coverage

the accommodation with a credit card. Any credit card purchases between £100 and £30,000 are protected under section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974, so your son would be able to get a full refund from his card provider.

Unlike package holiday and flight providers, which are protected through the Atol scheme, accommodation providers aren't required to provide protection to consumers. Any compensation he may otherwise receive is up to the administrators.

Digital radio switch

When analogue radio is eventually switched off, will coverage for digital radio be as widespread as analogue is now? KEITH PHILLIPS, SURREY

It's difficult to say, as a switch-off date for analogue radio hasn't been announced – 2017 has been the earliest date suggested so far.

The Digital Radio Working Group, a body of industry and government experts, recently recommended that coverage and signal strength be dramatically increased before a switchover is considered.

Contact us

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Home insurance savings

Jan 09, p38

Using your Best Buy buildings and contents insurance tables has saved me £402 a year. The premiums on my old policies never increased excessively but, now I'm retired and living on a pension and with falling interest on my savings, the tables prompted me to go online and see what was available for less.

Using the tables as guidance, it was simple to get quotes online, and I signed up to a

combined buildings and contents policy for £222.

My premiums in 2008 cost me £624 and I was relieved to find that I could cancel my old policies by telephone at any time with a penalty of just one month's instalment – a small cost in light of the savings.

So if you haven't sought new housing insurance, do it now – another example of Which? membership paying off.

CLIVE CHAPMAN, LONDON

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

Calling abroad, Dec 08, p7

Prices for Virgin Media home phone calls were 7p cheaper than stated.

First look, Jan 09, p9

We used the wrong image with our review of the Kiddy Infinity Pro seat.

Home heating, Dec 08, p39

For a three-bed 1930s semi, estimated savings from solar water heating are around £90 a year compared with gas, not £220.

Home insurance, Jan 09, p39

The More Than contact number should be 0800 300 660.

Rail fares, Jan 09, p28

The lowest fare we found for an off-peak London to Birmingham return journey on Virgin Trains was the on-the-day fare of £39.50. However, it would have been possible to buy an

advance ticket to travel on a peak time train departing slightly later for £27 – a saving of 78% compared with the on-the-day fare for travel at peak times.

Digital photo frames, Dec 08, p64

Three more frames have been identified as Best Buys: Jessops 8 inch digital LCD frame, Kodak EasyShare M1020 and Sony DPF-V900. Some memory card compatibility details were also incorrect. See www.which.co.uk/digitalphotoframes for details.

Washer dryers, Oct 08, p53

We used the wrong image with the Best Buy CDA C1950. CDA has also changed its website to www.cda.eu.

Washing machines, Jan 09, p48

In the table, 'size (cm)' is presented as wxhxd, not hwxwd as the column heading suggests.