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Hello Consolidated Internet Customers

Welcome to our February eNewsletter issue. It contains information on a variety of timely topics that we hope will come in handy for you this month. First you'll learn about the risks of counterfeit software and ways to avoid buying it unknowingly. Keep reading to learn what hashtags are and how to use them on Twitter, as well as how to change the sound you hear when new e-mail arrives on your computer. For added fun in February, check out Great Sites for cruise planning tips, chili recipes, home design ideas, and more.

The goal of each of our monthly eNewsletters is to keep our subscribers informed regarding their Internet connection and to improve their Internet experience. We think you'll find this information interesting. If, however, you'd prefer not to receive these bulletins on a monthly basis, click [here](#).

To see what's inside this issue, simply scroll down the eNewsletter or click on the links within the index to the left. Thanks for reading!

- The Consolidated Internet Team

Caution! - Warning About Counterfeit And Pirated Software

According to a recent report from Microsoft®, the number of customers who unknowingly purchased counterfeit and pirated Microsoft software has risen dramatically over the last two years. This software poses a serious risk to security, since studies around the world have shown that a high percentage of illegally copied or downloaded software contains spyware, malware, or other malicious code. Consumers who are duped by fraudulent software can encounter viruses, lose personal information, risk having their identities stolen, and waste valuable time and money.



Worse yet, today's counterfeiters are often large criminal syndicates that don't stop at distributing hundreds of copies of unlicensed software. Software pirates are likely to create botnets, which are armies of compromised computers controlled by cybercriminals and used to perform a host of illegal Internet activities.

Here are some tips to help you avoid buying counterfeit software:

1. Take the time to fully research the products that you are buying and from whom you get them. Read reviews and talk to retailers so that you build a knowledgeable perspective.
2. If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is. Buy from a reputable source such as major retailers or other recognized resellers.
3. Look for spelling mistakes on the software package or a shoddy appearance.
4. Make sure software products are licensed. It is standard that every legal piece of software includes a developer's license agreement.
5. If you're unsure if a product is legitimate, call the manufacturer.

Microsoft has launched an education campaign to help you recognize counterfeit and pirated software, and know if you're purchasing genuine products. For more information, visit their "How to Tell" site at <http://microsoft.com:80/howtotell>.

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This Month's FAQ - What Are Hashtags And How Do I Use Them?

Question: As someone who's just getting started on Twitter, I'd like to know more about hashtags. What are they and how do I use them?

Answer: Hashtags are a community-driven way to label tweets (posts made to Twitter). They begin with the hash mark (#), followed by a word, phrase, or abbreviation—examples of hashtags include #americanidol and #lakers. When you insert a hashtag in your post, it makes it easy for Twitter users who don't already follow you (plus anyone



searching Twitter) to find your public contributions to the discussion on that particular topic.

Here are some tips for you:

- In order to get tracked via a hashtag, you need to opt-in and follow twitter.com/hashtags. Every time you make a post in Twitter that includes a hashtag, it will show up as a real-time post on hashtags.org.
- If you visit hashtags.org, you can click on any tag and it will show you all of the posts that have been tagged with that keyword.
- You can search for hashtags on Twitter by using the search box on the Twitter sidebar.
- You can also subscribe to any updates that contain a tag by visiting hashtags.org, entering in the tag you want to follow, and then clicking "subscribe."

By the way, thanks for the question. We're glad we could hash over this topic with our readers.

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Sites Of The Month - Great Sites To Check Out In February

Lend a Hand in Haiti

<http://redcross.org> - You can help the victims of the catastrophic earthquake and aftershocks in Haiti by making a contribution to the American Red Cross International Response Fund. It will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies and technical assistance. Visit their site to make a donation, get news updates from Haiti, and find out how to get information if you have loved ones there. You can also send a \$10 donation by texting 'Haiti' to 90999.

Celebrate Black History Month

<http://biography.com/blackhistory/index.jsp> - February is Black History Month, and a great time to visit this site. It features an interactive timeline to give you an overview of black history. You can also read articles, watch videos, play games, and check out featured bios on such notable figures as Barack Obama, Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King Jr., and Rosa Parks.

Cruisin' for Trip Tips

<http://cruisecritic.com> - Considering a cruise? Whether you're an experienced or novice cruiser, this detailed site can help you plan your trip. Find the best cruise for you by destination, lifestyle, cruise line, or price. Read features about weather, dietary restrictions, safety, trends, and more. Communicate with other cruisers on the message boards. And don't forget to read the expert cruise reviews for advice from the pros.

Hot Site for Chili Lovers

<http://chilicookoff.com> - This is the online home of the International Chili Society (ICS). Cookoffs take place throughout the world, and winners are qualified to compete at the World's Championship Chili Cookoff held each year in October. Check it out to read about cookoff winners dating back to 1967 and get some of their chili recipes to try at home. It's a sure recipe to heat up cold days.

Tour a Dream Home for Inspiration

<http://hgtv.com/dream-home/index.html> - It never hurts to dream big, and this site lets you experience the HGTV Dream Home 2010 in multiple ways. View the floor plan, watch videos, get a feel for life in New Mexico (where the home is located), or take a room-by-room tour. Check out the blog to learn even more about this contemporary Pueblo-style home. And if you like what you see, visit the Products section to find pieces to make your own home a little dreamier.

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Short Tutorial - Changing the Sound of E-mail Notification

You probably enjoy having the freedom to change the ring tone on your phone to suit your personality and preferences. Well, you have a similar opportunity to change the sound you hear when new e-mail arrives on your computer. Just follow the steps below for your e-mail program and operating system:

Changing the Sound of New E-mail Notification Using ...

E-Mail Program: Outlook Express 6 or Mozilla Thunderbird

Computer Operating System: Windows XP

1. Select "Control Panel" from the "Start" menu. (Make sure you are in "Classic View.")
2. Double click on the "Sounds and Audio Devices" icon.
3. The Sounds and Audio Devices Properties window will open. Click on the "Sounds" tab.
4. Highlight "New Mail Notification" in the "Program Events" list.
5. In the "Sounds:" field, select a sound from the drop-down list, or use the "Browse" button to find a sound not in the list. To assist you in selecting a sound, click on the arrow button next to the drop-down list to listen to a sound of interest.
6. When you have made your selection, click on the "Apply" and then the "OK" buttons to accept and save your changes.

Changing the Sound of New E-mail Notification Using ...

E-Mail Program: Windows Mail or Mozilla Thunderbird

Computer Operating System: Windows Vista

1. Select "Control Panel" from the "Start" menu. (Make sure you are in "Classic View.")
2. Double click on the "Sounds" icon.
3. The Sound window will open. Click on the "Sounds" tab.
4. Highlight "New Mail Notification" in the "Program" list.
5. In the "Sounds:" field, select a sound from the drop-down list, or use the "Browse" button to find a sound not in the list. To assist you in selecting a sound, click on the "Test" button to listen to a sound of interest.

6. When you have made your selection, click on the "Apply" and then the "OK" buttons to accept and save your changes.

Changing the Sound of New E-mail Notification Using ...

E-Mail Program: Mail.app

Computer Operating System: Mac OS X 10.5

1. With Mail.app open, click your cursor arrow on the "Mail" menu and select "Preferences" from the resulting drop-down menu.
2. When the Preferences window opens, select the "General" tab by clicking on its icon.
3. Click on the drop-down button next to "New mail sound." A drop-down menu listing all the sounds in your system will appear.
4. Select a sound and the sound will play. Keep making selections and listening to sounds until you find the one you like best.
5. Once you have made your final sound selection, close the Preferences window to save your changes.

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We hope you found this newsletter to be informative. It's our way of keeping you posted on the happenings here. If, however, you'd prefer not to receive these bulletins on a monthly basis, click [here](#).

Thanks for your business!

Best regards,

[Consolidated Internet Staff](#)

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