TECHNICAL HELP

If you're reading this then you've probably encountered a technical problem which you're unable to solve. Don't Panic, this short but informative document is designed to help and provide you with some guidelines on how to fix the problem.

COMMON PROBLEMS

Firstly let's take a look at a few common and well-documented problems. These are most common causes of faults when running any sort of program.

Overloading
Try to avoid running too many programs at the same time. Although Windows is designed and able to do lots of things all at once, the more programs you run, the more work it has to do. This requires a lot of memory and storage space, which Windows must find and manage in order to coup with the demands of each program. If your machine starts to run slower than normal or freezes at random, check you're not overloading it.

CPU and Memory
Always make sure your computer has ample processing power and memory capacity. The table below shows the minimum specification expected for different versions of Windows.

	Minimum CPU	Minimum RAM
Windows '95	60Mhz	16Mb
Windows '98	133Mhz	32Mb
Windows Me	300Mhz	64Mb
Windows 2000	350Mhz	128Mb

If you plan to use complex graphics or multimedia programs always try and improve of these recommendations to enhance the performance.

Virtual Memory
Finally, ensure you've got plenty of free space on your hard disc, try to retain 100 Megabytes if possible. The reason for this is because if Windows runs out of memory, it resorts to using the hard disc as a temporary store for the information it's currently holding. This clears the memory so that additional tasks can be performed and starts a swapping process to and from the hard disc to transfer information, as it is needed. This is otherwise known as 'Virtual Memory'.
If your computer doesn't have sufficient storage space to do this, you'll notice your hard disc will be in constant use. As a result Windows may experience difficultly processing the information it needs and could stop working altogether.

DRIVER ERRORS (.DRV)

Errors reported in files with a .DRV file extension are related to special pieces of software called 'Drivers'. Drivers are used to allow devices such as printers, modems, video and sound cards to communicate with the computer. They're normally developed by the manufacturers of the device and supplied with it on a CD ROM or floppy disc. As you can imagine, writing this type of software is a very complicated process, and therefore could be prone to unpredictable problems.
If you're unfortunate enough to encounter one, be advised to obtain an updated driver from the manufacturers website or support department. If you can't find either of these, try visiting a general computer resources site such as WWW.DRIVERSHQ.COM, which should be able to help. If the problem still persists and you would like to contact us, please remember we can provide little assistance in fixing other peoples software.

It's important to remember that different programs have different ways controlling devices. Just because another program appears to work fine, doesn't mean to say they all will. There can be no guarantees that the drivers your computer is currently using are bug free. Therefore, if you encounter a problem like this, always make sure you've got the most up to date Drivers.

LINK LIBRARY ERRORS (.DLL)

If you receive an error message that specifically reports a file with a .DLL file extension, then it's related to a piece of software called a 'Dynamic Link Library'. In layman's terms a Dynamic Link Library is a file which controls a particular function or procedure, and allows other programs to request its help in performing a related task. DLL files are required to run all Windows programs, including Windows but you'll never actually see them at work.

If a program requires specific DLL files to function, it'll usually install them together with its other program files. Whilst this is happening it's important to ensure no other programs are running as these may block the installation of additional DLL files. If this happens an appropriate error message will appear. To resolve this problem simply restart your computer and reinstall the software. If the problem persists you may want to try disabling any utility programs you may have running in the System Tray before hand.
As a general rule, DLL files are usually installed into either the program folder or Windows System folder. When they are needed, a search is then made first in the program folder and then in the Windows and System folders. As soon as the appropriate file is found the program will continue working. However, if an incompatible, perhaps out of date, file is found and used its highly likely an error will occur.
To resolve this problem you must first carry out a search for the file reported by the error message. To do this select the *Find* option from the *Start* menu and type the filename in the text box provided. Windows will now list every copy of the specified file currently installed on your computer – this may take a while so be patient. Once the search is complete find the copies that reside in the Windows and System folders and rename them so that they have a .OLD file extension. As a simple example **MYFILE.DLL** would be renamed to **MYFILE.OLD**. Don't be concerned about copies that reside elsewhere on your computer, as these are unlikely to be the cause of the problem. Once you've renamed the files, reinstall the program and the problem should be resolved. In the unlikely event of this causing other problems be advised to examine the dates and version numbers of the files in question and try to use the most up to date copies available.

CHECKING VERSION NUMBERS

With all this talk about updates and version numbers you're probably thinking where can I find this information. The simplest way is to use Windows Explorer and right-click on the appropriate filename. This will present you with a small pop-up menu from which you should select the *Properties* option. In the dialog that will then appear select the *Version* tab and all the relevant information will be displayed.
This method of checking will only work with specific file types which include .EXE, .DLL, .DRV, .VBX files.

DIRECT X

First introduced in 1995, Direct X is a set of special tools and functions, which provide the building blocks for developing complex graphics applications. Developed by Microsoft, it's effectively a suite of libraries and drivers which mean's you could experience some of the usual outdated and incompatibility problems.
If you encounter one of these, the best thing to do is obtain an update either from a popular magazine cover disc or by visiting the Microsoft website – www.microsoft.com/directx. Here you'll find frequently asked questions with answers as well as information about diagnostics if you need it.

Need Some Support?

If you follow the guidelines and suggestions above, chances are you're troubles will soon be over. However, if the problem still persists don't worry more help is at hand.

Write to us at...	GSP Ltd. Meadow Lane St. Ives Huntingdon Cambridgeshire PE27 4LG
Email us at...	support@gsp.cc
Visit our website at...	www.gsp.cc
Fax us on...	(01480) 460 206

When requesting technical support please provide us with the following information. This will help our technicians deal with your problem more efficiently.

- Product Name: *What's the title of the program you're having trouble with?*
- Version: *What version is it? Simply tell us the catalogue number printed on the CD ROM.*
- Problem Encountered: *When explaining a problem, try to be as informative and specific as possible. If error messages and filenames are reported always make a note of them and when they occurred.*
- Devices: *If your problem is related to displaying graphics, playing sounds or printing something, tell us the make and model of the graphics/sound card or printer you're using. Problems like this are usually related to Drivers so make sure you've obtained updates and know the version numbers.*
- Windows Version: *Telling us its Windows 98 isn't quite enough. Microsoft, on occasion, provides updates for Windows in order to fix any critical problems that may have arisen since release. For this*

reason we need to identify whether or not the problem is with Windows and not the program. To find out the specific version number, please refer to the following section.

Useful Fact Finding and Procedures.

How to determine which version of Windows you're using.

1. Right click on the desktop icon labelled *My Computer*.
2. Select the *Properties* option from the popup menu that appears.
3. Observe the number shown beneath the *System* heading. (e.g. 4.10.2222 A)

How to determine what devices your computer is using.

1. Right click on the desktop icon labelled *My Computer*.
2. Select the *Properties* option from the popup menu that appears.
3. Select the *Device Manager* tab in the *System Properties* dialog.
4. Click on the '+' symbol to expand the device category you wish to examine.
5. Observe the individual devices listed.

How to update a device driver.

1. Right click on the desktop icon labelled *My Computer*.
2. Select the *Properties* option from the popup menu that appears.
3. Select the *Device Manager* tab in the *System Properties* dialog.
4. Click on the '+' symbol to expand the device category you wish to examine.
5. Select the specific device you wish to update drivers for.
6. Click on the *Properties* button.
7. Select the *Driver* tab.
8. Click on the *Update Driver* button.

A 'Wizard' will now take over the process of updating your selected device driver. Make sure you've either got a floppy disc prepared with the updated files on it or know their location on your hard disc(s). Some updates don't require this approach and instead have specially designed programs to do the job. Therefore always read any documentation supplied with the files before attempting an update.