The most compact 'computer' in existence at the moment is the human brain. Science is still debating on why it needs to be so powerful. Its potential is known to be much more than is normally pressed into service, but we only get glimpses into its extraordinary capabilities.

I have a friend who is burdened with a memory that retains everything. Every book, newspaper he has read and every conversation. Some people can remember their own personal telephone directory; all without any special effort to do so.

Naturally the Human Brain Project is trying to build an artificial brain. The reward could be medical advances we can only dream about at present.

In computers, valves have been superseded by transistors helping to make them smaller and storage capacity has been increasing rapidly, but the number of connections in the human brain is such that a recent article notes that it would take 1000 aircraft hangers filled with today's supercomputers to match the computing capacity.

Not only would that be expensive and take time to build, the power to drive a machine with the capacity of the human brain is estimated to be the output of more than a dozen power stations. As that is rather more than the 20 Watts needed by the human brain, we have our work cut out to achieve anything like a match.

What is needed is a few break-though developments to give progress a boost. You can read more about all this on humanbrainproject.eu/introduction

One candidate development is that of Graphene. This is a new material that consists of pure carbon atoms arranged in a regular grid. That might not sound very exciting, but the sheet is only one atom thick and a room-sized sheet would weigh less than an aspirin tablet. Its potential is such that its development for practical use has attracted a grant of 1Billion Euros. Its use to produce even smaller and more efficient transistors is being pursued. Maybe this will assist the Human Brain Project.

Meanwhile, back in the world of everyday problems, some people want to show more icons on their desktop in Windows XP. This can be done by reducing the size of the icons and also reducing the spacing between them if preferred.

Right click on the Desktop background and select Properties to get the Display Properties dialog box. Select the appearance tab and click on the 'Advanced' button. Under the Item list select Icon. The option boxes allow you to select the icon size and the font style and size. Similarly the Icon spacing can be selected either horizontally or vertically to suit.

You can also edit an Icon's title by right clicking it on the desktop and selecting Rename and simply adjust or shorten the title to suit.