

Many devices don't require a converter

April 22 2009, By Steve Alexander

Q. We will be sailing in the Greek Islands on a 32-foot boat in May, and I am wondering how to properly charge our various electronic gadgets -- an e-book reader, camera and phone -- so I don't wreck any of them. What should I ask the boat charter company about the power on board?

A. Ask if your boat provides either 110 volts or 220 volts, the electrical power levels most widely used around the world. You're right to be concerned, because if you plug a consumer electronics charger designed for 110 volts into a 220-volt outlet, you can probably kiss your camera, phone or e-book reader goodbye.

But SmarterTravel.com says you may not need to worry about the voltage differences. It says that "most electronic devices sold in the U.S. that use power chargers have a built-in dual-voltage compatible charger that accepts both 110 and 220 volts." See [www.smartertravel.com/travel-a ... d\(equal-sign\)2517809](http://www.smartertravel.com/travel-a...d(equal-sign)2517809) .

If you're not sure what voltage your chargers are designed for, you can buy an AC to DC converter that also has the appropriate electrical plug adapters for the area you're visiting. Some of those converters also have USB connections for charging consumer electronics devices. For example, see www.journalism.co.uk/66/articles/531513.php .

Q. I have problems viewing the JPEG image files (used by many digital cameras) that are stored in my computer or attached to e-mails. When I use the Windows picture-viewing software, I often get either a blank gray background with no picture or what looks like a faint color negative

on a gray background. In some cases I get an error message. Some other pictures show up fine. What's wrong?

A. The problem may be caused by a software update from Microsoft that was designed to protect the Outlook 2003 e-mail program from Internet attackers but that had the side effect of making some JPEG images unviewable with the Windows Picture and Fax Viewer.

Rather than tamper with a security update, I'd be inclined to find a different picture viewer by going to www.download.com and searching for "picture viewer."

But you can eliminate the update by going to the Windows Start button, clicking Control Panel and using "Add or Remove Programs." Uninstall "Security Update for Microsoft Office Outlook 2003" or the file number "KB945432." If you don't see either, then uninstall "Microsoft Office 2003 Service Pack" No. 2 or 3.

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