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## **Put A Trail On Your Mouse In XP!**

Can't keep track of your mouse pointer? Add some pointer trails so that whenever you move it, lots of little pointers appear along its path.

Open the Control Panel, select the Appearance and Themes category, then select "Mouse Pointers" in the left pane (or from the classic view, double-click the Mouse item). Inside the Mouse Properties dialog box, click the Pointer Options tab and select "Display pointer trails."

Move your mouse around a bit to try it out the new setting. To make the trails longer or shorter, click the Settings button and move the lever closer to Short or Long. Click OK twice to keep the change.

## **Change Color Scheme In Windows XP!**

The default Windows XP color scheme is acceptable. But let's face it, a change of pace is fun once in a while. Change your color scheme and your computer can take on a whole new look.

Right-click the desktop, select Properties, and inside the Display Properties dialog box, click the Appearance tab. Click the down arrow under "Color schemes" to display a list of all available looks. Select any one and its preview appears. When you find one you like, click OK to apply it to the desktop.

## **Create Your Own Color Scheme In Windows XP!**

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I showed you how to change the color scheme for your Windows XP desktop: Right-click the desktop, select Properties, click the Appearance tab, select a scheme under "Color schemes" then click OK. Can't find anything you like? If one of the ready-made schemes comes close, customize it to suit your style.

Select the scheme you plan to modify and click the Advanced button. In the preview area of the Advanced Appearance dialog box, click the first item you want to change (or select it under Item), then make the desired changes using the Color, Size and Font fields. Repeat these steps for each element you want to change.

To save your customizations, click Save As, type a name for the new scheme and click OK. Click OK one more time to apply the scheme to the desktop. From now on, you can select that scheme by name from the "Color schemes" list.

### **Remove Unwanted Windows XP Components!**

When you install Windows XP, the computer won't prompt you to select which applications you want to install with the operating system. By default, setup installs almost all applications. But if you don't use them all, and you don't want all those extra components cluttering up your system, you can safely remove them.

Removing Windows components is an easy process. Here's how to do it: Go to Control Panel and double-click Add/Remove Programs. Select Add/Remove Windows Components for a list of options. However, you won't see all the components installed on your system listed in those options.

To remove many of the components, you have to look for them. Go to the hidden %systemroot%\Inf folder and open the Sysoc.inf file. This file lists all the components you can remove.

To view these components in the Add/Remove Windows Components dialog box, you must remove the word HIDE from each line. After you've made your changes, save the file and reopen the Add/Remove Programs dialog box. You should now see those additional components.

### **Add Item To Start Menu In Windows XP!**

Want your favorite application, file or folder within easy reach? Add it to the Start menu.

Click and drag any application, folder or file icon down to the Start button (a shortcut arrow appears on the pointer to let you know you're about to create a shortcut, then the Start menu pops up). Let go and that item appears in the left, top section of the Start menu.

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## **Troubleshoot Configuration Issues With The Useful Msconfig Utility!**

Windows XP ships with the System Configuration Utility that helps administrators troubleshoot configuration issues. To launch the utility, type msconfig in the Run prompt.

Here are the tabs and a few of their features that are displayed within the System Configuration Utility:

**General:** This lists three startup options--Normal, Diagnostic, and Selective. It also provides a button that launches System Restore.

**System.ini:** This displays the contents of the System.ini file and lets you control what it loads.

**Win.ini:** This displays the contents of the Win.ini file and lets you control what it loads.

**Boot.ini files:** This displays the Boot.ini file and allows you to change several boot options.

**Services:** This lists all of the services that are installed on the computer and their operational status, whether running or stopped. It also provides a feature that lists the services that are not from Microsoft, which allows you to easily identify installed services that are not a part of Windows XP.

**Startup:** This lists all of the applications that automatically start when you log on, including the applications that start from the various registry keys. It also allows you to disable these applications from automatically running.

## **Getting To the Properties Even Faster In Windows XP!**

Almost everything in Windows XP (and in many earlier versions) is considered an "object" that has properties that can be viewed or changed. These objects can be a files, folders, a computer, network, disk drive, modem, etc. In most cases, you can view the properties of an object by right-clicking the object and then clicking Properties from the menu that appears.

A shortcut to getting to the properties even faster is to press Alt-Enter on the keyboard instead. If the currently selected object has a properties page, usually Alt-Enter will bring it right up.

## **Get The Inside Details Of A Crash Report!**

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When a program crashes, Windows XP gathers information about the program, its code, and the actual crash. This data is then compiled into a special report. A dialog window appears, which prompts you to send the crash report to Microsoft. While its delivery is optional, remember that Microsoft collects this information and creates fixes based on the data.

Details of the report can be viewed by clicking on the link that specifies: "To see what data this error report contains, click here." However, if you're skeptical about privacy, it's possible to disable Error Reporting.

Here's how:

1. Right-click on My Computer and select Properties.
2. Go to the Advanced tab and click Error Reporting.
3. Click Disable Error Reporting.

If you want Error Reporting only on certain applications, click Enable Reporting and then select Choose Programs.

### **Here's How To Access XP's Defrag Utility**

1. Right-click My Computer and choose Manage.
2. Click Defragment.

XP's defrag tool differs from the one in Windows 95 and 98. The older operating systems lined up data on the disk during defrag. XP's utility is a little smarter and reorganizes data optimized for your system. When you analyze the hard drive, this is why you may see that data still isn't lining up.

### **Open The Firewall For Incoming Traffic!**

Windows XP ships with a simple firewall application that can help protect your computer and data from intruders. By default, the built-in firewall blocks all incoming traffic that isn't initiated from the inside.

If you're running any server software on your computer, such as a Web server, it will be inaccessible to other network users, because the firewall will reject their packets. However, you can open the firewall to allow certain traffic through. Here's how:

1. Open the Network Connections folder in Control Panel.
2. Right-click on the Internet connection that's protected with a firewall.
3. Select Properties.
4. Go to the Advanced tab.
5. Click Settings.

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If you want to open the firewall for incoming traffic, check the box in front of the protocol. For instance, if you want to allow other network users to use your Web server, open port 80 by checking the box in front of the Web Server (HTTP) option. After you select the HTTP option, a dialog appears that prompts you to specify the name or IP address of the computer that's running the HTTP service. Click OK to close all dialogs.

You have now opened port 80 and allowed all Internet users to access your Web server.

Note: Opening firewall ports is risky, so be sure to perform this task only when absolutely necessary.

### **Learn How To Disable Simple File Sharing!**

Windows XP's Simple File Sharing provides an easy user interface for sharing and securing folders--and the subsequent files--on NT File System (NTFS) partitions. This feature is turned on by default on XP Home Edition and XP Professional when you're working in a workgroup.

To take advantage of Simple File Sharing, right-click a folder and select Sharing And Security. You'll then see a Sharing window that provides the following options:

**Make This Folder Private:** This pertains just to folders located inside your user profile, such as My Documents, Desktop, and the Start menu. Checking this option protects the folder so that only you have access to it.

**Share This Folder On The Network:** To share a folder, check this option and type the name that you want to assign to the share.

**Allow Network Users To Change My Files:** This option allows other users to modify the files in the shared folder.

While the Simple File Sharing feature can help inexperienced users, some advance users may find it distracting. However, you can turn this feature off in XP Professional. Here's how:

1. Go to the Tools menu in Windows Explorer.
2. Select Folder Options.
3. On the View tab, deselect Use Simple File Sharing (Recommended).
4. Click OK.

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Note: It's also possible to share an entire disk with Simple File Sharing, but XP sends you a warning about the security risks that you must acknowledge before continuing with the Sharing options.

### **You Know How To Get The WinXP Task Manager Going?**

You can:

Hold down Ctrl+Alt+Del, or

Hold down Shift+Ctrl+Esc, or

Right-click an empty spot down on the Windows Taskbar and pick Task Manager

Once Task Manager is running, click on the Performance tab. You'll see a live meter of your CPU usage, plus a rolling log of usage history. Cool, but you probably already knew about that.

Here's a trick I bet you weren't aware of!

Double-click on the label "CPU Usage" or "CPU Usage History." (In fact, you can double-click just about anywhere in the upper part of the dialog box.) All of Task Manager's menus and tabs disappear, and you're left with a simple, resizable box that includes the CPU meter and the usage log.

From that point you can:

1. Click and drag the corners to re-size this unobtrusive dialog box.
2. Click on the box and drag it to a new location.
3. Double-click the box to bring back the original Task Manager.

If you've ever wondered why your system wasn't responding, a quick glance at this unobtrusive version of Taskman may well tell the tale.

### **Configure Performance Options To Fit The Computer!**

Windows XP includes several features to increase performance. However, some features actually cause your computer to run much slower, especially if your computer is older and doesn't have up to date components.

There are two places where you can disable various performance-related settings. Right-click the desktop and select Properties. On the Appearance tab, click Effect. If you have

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an older computer with a slower graphic card, you'll probably want to disable these options:

Use The Following Transition Effect For Menus And Tooltips

Show Shadows Under Menus

Show Window Contents While Dragging

Another set of performance-related settings is located in the System Properties dialog box. Right-click the My Computer icon and select Properties. On the Advanced tab, click Settings under the Performance option.

For Visual Effects, you can select from three predefined options--automatic, best appearance, and best performance--or manually enable/disable each individual setting. It's a good idea to leave the default settings on new computers, but you can alter the settings on older, slower computers.

## **Learn The Benefits of NTFS In Windows XP!**

Windows XP supports three disk file systems: NTFS, FAT16, and FAT32. Each of them has advantages, but NTFS is recommended. Here are some reasons why:

**Security:** FAT16 and FAT32 have absolutely no security for local folders and files. Anyone who logs on to your computer can gain access to the files. NTFS allows you to define permissions for every user on each individual file/folder.

**Separate Recycle Bins:** On FAT16 and FAT32 volumes, everything you delete gets put into the same Recycle Bin, regardless of the current logon account. On NTFS volumes, each user has a unique Recycle Bin.

**Encryption:** To truly secure your sensitive files, encrypt them. NTFS offers transparent, automatic encryption.

**Recoverability:** NTFS provides the ability to recover from file system errors. It also performs sector sparing to remap data to good clusters and mark bad clusters as unusable.  
**Compression:** NTFS offers support for file compression, which allows more space for storage.

**Disk quotas:** NTFS also supports disk quotas. This feature helps limit disk usage on workstations that are shared by multiple users.

If you didn't specify NTFS during setup, it's not too late. To convert from FAT to NTFS, type convert x: /fs:ntfs in the command prompt and replace x with the drive letter of the partition you want to convert.

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## **Make Explorer Open Where You Want It To!**

When you click Start | My Documents, Windows Explorer opens in the \My Documents folder. When you click Start | My Computer, Windows Explorer opens in My Computer.

But what if you commonly want to start Windows Explorer someplace else? What if you frequently want to open Windows Explorer in, say, the Program Files folder?

It's easy, if you know the trick.

1. Right-click any blank part of the Desktop
2. Click New | Shortcut
3. In the box that says Type the Location of the Item, type in a line like this:  
explorer /e,/root,"c:\program files"  
You have to be very careful and type that line precisely the way I showed it. In particular, there's a space before the first slash, but no spaces afterwards (except inside the quote marks).
4. Click Next
5. In the box that says Type a name for this shortcut, type a reasonable name, such as "Program Files".
6. Then click Finish.

WinXP will put a shortcut on your Desktop that launches Windows Explorer at the location you specified. Double-click on it, and you'll see how it works.

You can even put the shortcut on your Start menu (although you can't get it into the upper-right corner). Go out to the Desktop, click on the icon, and drag it to the Start button. The Start menu unfolds, and you can drag the shortcut to anyplace you like on the left-hand side of the Start menu.

## **Use Windows Messenger behind NAT/firewalls!**

Windows Messenger allows you to communicate in real time over the Internet. You can use Windows Messenger to make phone and video calls, share applications, transfer files, and more. But before you get too excited, you should know about problems that may occur when you have a firewall and Network Address Translation (NAT).

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Behind the scenes, NAT masks the private IP address of your machine to protect the internal network from the outside world. The packets that contain the IP address don't translate from private to public, so outside users aren't able to find you.

In addition, NAT must be configured to support Universal Plug and Play (UPnP), or you won't be able to use certain features, such as voice, video communication, and file transfer.

Firewalls must also support UPnP. Fortunately, you have two options. You can use a UPnP-enabled firewall device or manually open the following UDP ports on your firewall:

5004 - 65535: audio and video communication  
6891: file transfer  
6891 - 6900: 10 simultaneous file transfers  
1503: application and whiteboard sharing  
3389: remote assistance

If you're using Microsoft's solutions, such as Internet Connection Sharing (ICS) and Internet Connection Firewall (ICF), you're completely safe. ICS and ICF support UPnP and allow you to use all Windows Messenger features.

### **Using Virtual Memory In XP!**

Here's how to set the size of your page file:

1. Open the System control panel.
2. Click the Advanced tab and then the Setting button under Performance.
3. Under Performance Options, click the Advanced tab.
4. Under Virtual Memory, click Change.
5. In the Drive box, click C: drive.
6. For Initial Size and Maximum Size, enter 768.
7. Click on Set to set the page file.

### **Bridge Together Two Network Segments In Windows XP!**

Windows XP ships with a feature that allows you to join two or more network segments that use different physical mediums to act like a single network. For example, you can use a bridge to tie an Ethernet LAN segment to a wireless network.

Follow these steps to create a bridge:

1. Install and setup all the network interfaces on your bridge computer. This computer needs to have two or more installed network interface cards (NICs) that will act as a software bridge.

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2. Make sure all the NICs work and that there are no errors.
3. Open the Network Connections folder.
4. Hold the [Ctrl] key and select the interfaces that represent the network segments that you want to bridge or join together.
5. Right-click the chosen interfaces and select Bridge Connections.
6. After the configuration is complete, you'll see a Network Bridge icon in the Network Connections folder. This is where you can change the bridge's configuration settings.

Bridging is especially useful in small home and office networks. However, if you have a lot of computers and considerable traffic between them, you'll probably want to use a router. With a router, the networks will act like different segments and won't join with a bridge, but the computers will still be able to communicate.

### **Navigate the Network Setup Wizard In Windows XP!**

Setting up a network can be challenging. To help you configure computers on the network, check out Microsoft's Network Setup Wizard. This wizard guides admins through the setup of a network and can configure all the computers to use one Internet connection, enable a firewall, and/or enable a network bridge.

The Network Setup Wizard is installed by default on Windows XP Professional. To activate the wizard, select Set Up A Home Or Small Office Network, which is located in the Network Tasks section of the Network Connection folder. You can also use the wizard on other OSs, such as XP Home Edition, Windows 98/SE, and Windows Me by running the Netsetup.exe file from the i386 folder in the XP CD-ROM.

Before you run the wizard, make sure all of the network hardware is installed and working properly. Run it first on the computer that has the Internet connection that you want to share with others--the Internet Connection Sharing (ICS) host computer. Then run the wizard on all the computers that you want to network. It may not provide a solution for every possible scenario, but it's still useful for most networks.

### **Find And Seek Computers In My Network Places!**

One of the biggest problems that users have in home and small office networks running Microsoft OSs is network browsing. This service makes sure you see all the computers on your network in the My Network Places folder. However, what if you don't see other computers?

In these cases, here's what you can do:

1. Make sure your network connection is working. Ping yourself and another computer. If this succeeds, the network connection is okay.

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2. Enable NetBIOS over TCP/IP on your network connection. Open the Network Connections folder, right-click your connection, and select Properties. Choose Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) and click Properties. On the General tab, select Advanced. Go to the WINS tab, select Enable NetBIOS Over TCP/IP, and click OK.
3. Disable firewalls when troubleshooting.
4. Make sure all computers are in the same workgroup. Right-click My Computer and select Properties. On the Computer Name tab, note the Workgroup Text Box .
5. Depending on how you start your computer, you may have to wait about 15 minutes before My Network Places is populated.
6. If you still don't see any computers in the My Network Places folder, you can connect to them by other methods. One way is to type \\computername or \\IP\_address in the Run dialog box on the Start menu. This will directly connect to the remote computer. Another workaround is to use the Map Network Drive option in the Tools menu in Windows Explorer. This option allows you to directly map to a Shared Folder from a remote computer.

### **Utilize Internet Information Server 5.1 In Windows XP Pro!**

Windows XP Professional ships with simple Web server software, Internet Information Server (IIS) 5.1. This software is the little brother of the full-blown version of IIS in Windows 2000 Server, and it's designed for simple Web sites and Web application development.

IIS 5.1 is not installed by default. Here's how to manually install it:

1. Double-click the Add/Remove Programs icon in Control Panel.
2. Click Add/Remove Windows Components.
3. Select Internet Information Services (IIS) and click Details.
4. Specify which subcomponents you want to install. If you're not familiar with them, leave the defaults and click OK.
5. Click Next on the Windows Components dialog box and Finish to close the wizard.

After the installation is complete, you'll notice the IIS console in the Administrative Tools folder. This console is used to administer the Web server.

IIS 5.1 limitations and alternatives

The biggest limitation of IIS 5.1 is that you can't have multiple Web sites for different domain names. If you want more than one, you'll have to use Windows 2000 Server and its version of IIS or some other third-party application.

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However, most users will be well served with virtual directories. Here's how to create a new virtual directory:

1. Open the Internet Services Manager in the Administrative Tools folder.
2. Right-click Default Web Site.
3. Select New.
4. Click Virtual Directory.

A virtual directory is a directory beneath your Web site. If your site is [www.mywebsite.com](http://www.mywebsite.com), and you create a virtual directory called vd1, users will be able to see this directory by going to [www.mywebsite.com/vd1](http://www.mywebsite.com/vd1).

Another limitation of IIS 5.1 is that there's a maximum of 10 simultaneous client connections. This means that only 10 connections are allowed at a given time.

### **Alphabetize Your Favorites Menu (Win XP)**

If you're like many Windows power users, your Favorites list is full of frequently visited Web sites. While this is certainly a handy navigation tool, the Favorites list can defeat its purpose if it takes you too much time to locate the Web site you wish to visit from the several hundred you have stored there. The easiest way to keep your Favorites list organized is by alphabetizing the list.

All you need to do is open Microsoft Internet Explorer, and display your Favorites list. Right-click anywhere in the list, and then choose Sort By Name. The list is immediately alphabetized. Unfortunately, as you add new Web sites to the list, you'll notice that they appear on the bottom, instead of in alphabetical order, so remember to use this quick tip frequently.

### **Copying Files To CDs In Windows XP!**

Most third-party CD-burning programs let you select the files you want to burn, then they copy those files from the existing locations during the burning process. But when you drag and drop files to your CD-RW drive in Windows Explorer, Win XP actually copies the files to a temporary directory. This is handy, because you can burn the files to a CD later, even if something happens to the original. On the other hand, it means that you must have up to 700MB of free space on your hard drive to hold the copies of the files you want to burn.

But that's only half the story. If you watch the CD Writing Wizard while it's in action, you'll see that during the first several minutes, nothing is being written to the CD-RW drive, and the displayed message reads Adding data to the CD image. Before burning a CD, Win XP creates a complete image of the final CD on your hard drive. The good news is that this should help prevent the timing problems that can cause CD burn errors,

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because the disk heads won't have to bounce around to find your files. The bad news is that another 700MB of hard drive space will be used.

Putting those two parts of the process together, if you decide to drop a full CD's worth of files onto your CD-RW drive, you need to make sure you have 1.4GB of free hard drive space.

### **Here's How To Access A Program's Compatibility Mode In Windows XP!**

1. Find the executable or program shortcut icon you'd like to run.
2. Right-click the icon and select Properties.
3. Click the Compatibility tab and place a checkmark next to the text labeled "Run this program in compatibility mode."
4. Select the operating system that the program was originally intended to run on.
5. You may need to fine-tune the three fields under "Display Settings" if an older program requires 640x480 resolution or 256 colors.
6. Click Apply.

Try starting the program after making these changes. If it still gives you trouble, try a different operating system. If the program was written for Win95 and worked fine in Win98, there's nothing that says it still won't work fine with Win98.

### **Give Your Web Sites More Room On Your Screen (Win XP)**

If you surf the Web a lot, you might wish you could give the sites you visit more screen real estate on your monitor. All you need to do is press the [F11] key to maximize your browser window so that it fills your screen. IE's menu bar and XP's taskbar now disappear, and you instantly have more display room. Press [F11] again to return to Normal view.

### **Most Windows Programs Allow You To Print Specific Information!**

Most Windows programs, such as Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, Outlook, Microsoft Word, and so on, allow you to print specific information. In other words, if you have a Word document but only need to print a portion of it, you can do so and save on printer ink instead of printing out the entire document. Likewise, if you stumble across a Web site and want to print specific information, you can do so as well in Internet Explorer.

When you want to send information to be printed, you normally click File, Print, and then click the Print button. If you want to save on printer ink and only print the information you need, simply select (highlight) the information within the program, select the File menu, and click Print. In the printer dialog box, choose the Selection option usually listed under Page Range. Click the Print button. If you do not have the option to print a specific selection, your printer driver or program probably does not support this feature.

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## **Set Your TCP/IP Laptop Settings For Both Home And Office Networks!**

If you have a laptop that you use to connect to both home and office networks, you should investigate Windows XP's TCP/IP alternate configuration. This feature allows you to use your laptop on both networks without having to manually reconfigure your TCP/IP settings.

To use TCP/IP alternate configuration, one of the networks--most commonly the office network--must use DHCP-allocated TCP/IP addresses. The other network--most commonly your home network--must use a static TCP/IP addressing scheme.

Here's how to configure your laptop to use the alternate configuration feature:

1. Open Control Panel.
2. If you're using Category View, select Network And Internet Connections and double-click Network Connections. If you're using Classic View, simply double-click Network Connections.
3. Right-click the Local Area Connection icon and select Properties.
4. Double-click Internet Protocol (TCP/IP).
5. On the General tab of the Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) Properties dialog box, select both the Obtain An IP Address Automatically and the Obtain DNS Server Address Automatically radio buttons. These settings will allow your laptop to dynamically obtain a TCP/IP address from the DHCP server on the office network.
6. Select the Alternate Configuration tab of the Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) Properties dialog box and click the User Configured radio button.
7. Enter the static IP numbers that you use on your home network to connect to the Internet.
8. Click OK twice and close the Network Connections window.

You can now effortlessly move your laptop between both your office and home networks.

## **Add A Command Shortcut To Windows Explorer!**

If you spend a lot of time working from the command prompt window, you know how difficult it can be to move from one folder or directory to another by using the Change Directory (CD) command. It takes extra work to type long folder names on the command line, and if you make one typo, you have to start all over.

To make this task easier, Microsoft added the Open Command Window Here tool to the Windows XP PowerToys. Once you install the PowerToys, you can open a command prompt window from within Windows Explorer by right-clicking a folder and selecting Open Command Window Here from the shortcut menu.

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Not everyone wants to install the entire XP PowerToys package just to get the Open Command Window Here shortcut. Fortunately, you can add this shortcut to Windows Explorer via a small registry edit. Here's how:

1. Launch the Registry Editor (Regedit.exe).
2. Go to HKEY\_CLASSES\_ROOT\Directory\shell\.
3. From the Edit menu, select New | Key, and name the new key cmd.
4. Double-click the Default value inside the cmd key.
5. Type Open Command Window Here in the Value Data text box and click OK.
6. Select the cmd key.
7. From the Edit menu, select New | Key, and name the new key command.
8. Double-click the Default value inside the command key.
9. Type cmd.exe /k "cd %L" in the Value Data text box and click OK.
10. Close the registry.

Note: Editing the registry is risky, so be sure you have a verified backup before saving any changes.

### **Avoid Having To Re-log On To Window XP After The Screen Saver Starts Up!**

Here's what you do:

1. Right-click you're desktop.
2. Click on Properties.
3. Click on Screen Saver.
4. Uncheck the check box next to "On resume, password protect."

### **Schedule A System Shutdown Operation In Windows XP!**

Windows XP allows you to automate the shutdown of your system. This is especially handy if you want to schedule your system to shut down after it backs up files from a personal folder to a shared server folder after hours.

To help you with this type of operation, XP comes with a command-line utility called Shutdown.exe, which you can configure to run at a specified time within the Scheduled Tasks tool. Here's how:

1. Open Control Panel and double-click Scheduled Tasks.
2. Select Add Scheduled Task to launch the Scheduled Task Wizard.
3. Click Next.
4. Click the Browse button to access the Windows\System32 folder.
5. Select Shutdown.exe and click Open.
6. Follow the wizard through the next two screens to give the task a name and choose a schedule.
7. Enter the name and password of your user account and click Next.

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8. Select the Open Advanced Properties For This Task When I Click Finish check box, and then click Finish.
9. In the Task tab of Advanced Properties, add the following parameters to the end of the command line in the Run text box:  
-s -t 00
10. Be sure to include a space between the last character in the command name and the first character in the parameter list, such as C:\Windows\System32\Shutdown.exe -s -t 00. In this case, the -s parameter indicates shutting down the local computer and the -t parameter sets a timer that's measured in seconds for the shutdown operation, where zero specifies immediate shutdown.
11. Click OK.
12. Enter the name and password of your user account and click OK.

When the Shutdown utility runs, a small dialog box will display on the screen before the system powers down.

Note: On some older systems, the Shutdown.exe command shuts down Windows but doesn't power down the computer. Instead, it displays the message "It is now safe to turn off your computer."

### **Shut Down Your System With Tsshutdn.exe!**

Some Times Shutdown.exe command shuts down Windows but doesn't power down the system on some older computers. Instead, it displays the message, "It is now safe to turn off your computer."

If this happens to you, use the command-line utility Tsshutdn.exe, which was originally designed for shutting down Windows 2000 systems running Terminal Server. Tsshutdn.exe is included in Windows XP and can be run via the Scheduled Tasks tool to configure your system to shut itself down at a specified time.

Here's how:

1. Open Control Panel and double-click Scheduled Tasks.
2. Select Add Scheduled Task to launch the Scheduled Task Wizard.
3. Click Next.
4. Choose the Browse button to access the Windows\System32 folder.
5. Select Tsshutdn.exe and click Open.
6. Follow the wizard through the next two screens to give the task a name and choose a schedule.
7. Enter the name and password of your user account and click Next.
8. Select the Open Advanced Properties For This Task When I Click Finish check box, and then click Finish.
9. In the Task tab of Advanced Properties, add the following parameters to the end of the command line in the Run text box:

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0 /delay:0 /powerdown

10. Be sure to include a space between the last character in the command name and the first character in the parameter list, such as C:\Windows\System32\Tssshutdn.exe 0 /delay:0 /powerdown. In this case, the 0 parameter indicates a zero second wait time after user notification and before all user sessions are terminated. The /delay:0 parameter indicates a zero second delay before logging off all connected sessions, and the /powerdown parameter tells the system that it should prepare to power off.

11. Click OK.

12. Enter the name and password of your user account and click OK.

When the Tssshutdn utility runs, the command prompt window appears on the screen for a few seconds before the system powers down.

### **Access Hidden System Information In Windows XP!**

To investigate Windows XP system hardware or software settings, check out the System Information tool that's located on the Start | All Programs | Accessories | System Tools menu.

System Information displays information about the configuration of your system by using a tree view, similar to Windows Explorer. This makes it easy to drill down and find the information you're looking for, but sometimes it's difficult to sort through all the details that System Information crams into each screen.

For an easier way to read System Information, visit Windows XP Help And Support Center. You'll find a hidden version of System Information with a very nice display of a system's hardware and software settings.

Here's how to access the hidden version of System Information:

1. From the Start menu, select Help And Support.
2. Under Pick A Task, select Use Tools To View Your Computer Information And Diagnose Problems.
3. Click My Computer Information from the Tools column.
4. Select any of the links to view a graphical report of your system.

The Windows XP Help And Support Center is basically an HTML document, so you can use the Back button to return to the My Computer Information page after viewing each graphical report.

### **Add Fields To The Details View (Win XP)**

You can add other columns, such as Comments, Description, Category, and many others to the Details view of the files contained in Windows XP folders. Doing so provides you with customized information about each of the files on your hard

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drive.

To add new columns, open Windows Explorer, open the folder of your choice, and then right-click on the column header of the files list. Next, select one of the alternate fields listed (these will change depending on the folder you've selected), or select More. In the Choose Details dialog box, you can reorganize the order of column headers, specify column widths, and add columns to display details for the files in the folder you've chosen.

## **Quickly Access The Task Manager In Windows XP!**

Windows XP's Task Manager is a very useful troubleshooting tool because it provides you with a summary of several performance metrics and detailed information about all the applications and processes currently running on your computer. In addition, it allows you to terminate hung applications.

The most common method of accessing the Task Manager is by pressing [Ctrl][Alt][Delete], which brings up the Windows Security dialog box, and then clicking the Task Manager option. If you use XP in a stand-alone or workgroup configuration and log onto the system with the Welcome screen, this keyboard combination will immediately bring up the Task Manager.

Here are some other methods you can use in XP to quickly access the Task Manager:

Method one:

Press [Ctrl][Shift][Esc].

Method two:

1. Right-click the taskbar.
2. Select the Task Manager command.

Method three:

1. Right-click the desktop.
2. Select New | Shortcut.
3. Type Taskmgr.exe in the text box.
4. Choose Next, and then select Finish.
5. Double-click the new icon.

## **Put Your Laptop To Sleep In Windows XP!**

If you have Windows XP installed on a laptop, you can configure the settings to place the system in a power-saving mode when you close the lid.

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Here's how:

1. In Control Panel, click Power Options.
2. Select the Advanced tab.
3. Locate the Power Buttons panel.
4. From the When I Close The Lid On My Portable Computer section, choose a power-saving mode.

There are two power-saving modes in XP: Stand By and Hibernate. The Stand By option puts your system into a low power state, while Hibernate saves your existing system state to a file on the hard disk and then shuts down the system.

The power-saving mode you choose will depend on your main power source. Laptops that are usually plugged into an electrical socket should use Stand By. However, if you normally run your laptop on battery power, choose Hibernate.

## **Configure CD Audio Quality (Win XP)**

Windows Media Player for Windows XP gives you control over the reproduction quality of the CDs you record and burn. By reducing the quality, each track on your CD takes up less space, which allows you to record more tracks on the CD.

All you need to do is open Media Player, and choose Tools | Options. Select the Copy Music tab, and then in the Copy Music At This Quality panel, move the slider to where you'd like it, either to the left to create more space on each CD, or to the right for the best stereo quality. Then, click Apply and OK.

## **Lengthen Your File Extension Names In Windows XP!**

As you may know, when you create a filename for a document in Windows XP, you can use up to 255 characters. In addition, you can give your files longer extension names.

While three-character file extensions are a long-standing convention, you aren't bound to this restriction in XP. Longer extensions come in handy when you need to categorize your data files for organizational purposes.

If you decide to incorporate long file extension names, using four, five, or even six characters is ideal. A 20-character file extension, on the other hand, might be more trouble than it's worth.

When you rename a file extension, XP displays a warning message and prompts you to confirm the change. You'll also need to reassociate the file with the application that you used to create it. Here's how:

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1. Right-click the file and select Open With.
2. Choose an application from the Programs list or use the Browse button.
3. Select Always Use The Selected Program To Open This Kind Of File, and then click OK.

### **Revert Windows Back To Its Former Look (Win XP)**

If you've just upgraded to Windows XP, chances are you're a little overwhelmed by the virtually barren desktop, and the streamlined and colorful interface. As you're getting yourself used to the new operating system, you may begin to long for the comfortable and familiar interface of the "classic" Windows OS, and lucky for you, your security blanket is only a few clicks away.

All you need to do to revert Windows XP's interface back to the classic Windows interface is to right-click on the Windows XP desktop and choose Properties from the shortcut menu. In the Display Properties dialog box, select the Appearance tab, and then from the Windows And Buttons dropdown list, select Windows Classic Style. Next, click Apply, and then click OK. After a few seconds, the Windows XP interface will look like your old, familiar Windows interface.

You can even add some life to the barren Windows XP desktop by returning some of your familiar Windows icons to their original location as well. Simply right-click once again on the desktop to open the Display Properties dialog box, and this time select the Desktop tab. Then, click the Customize Desktop button, and on the General property sheet, select the check boxes corresponding to the icons you'd like to appear on your Windows XP desktop (these icons are absent by default to give Windows XP its new clutter-free and streamlined look). Once you've finished making your selection, click Apply and then click OK. When you return to the Windows XP desktop, you'll now see the shortcuts corresponding to the check boxes you just selected.

### **Make The Most Of My Network Places In Windows XP!**

When you're browsing through Windows XP's My Network Places on an extremely large network, tracking down the one server you're looking for can be quite a challenge. Of course, you can always maximize the window for My Network Places to get more room to scope out the network.

However, here's a little trick that will give you an even bigger picture of your network: The next time you open My Network Places, press the [F11] key.

This activates a full-screen feature similar to the one found in Internet Explorer. This feature is available in My Network Places because of the tight integration between the Windows XP operating system and Internet Explorer.

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To return the screen to normal size, simply press the [F11] key again. Keep in mind that this full-screen feature is also available in Windows Explorer and My Computer.

### **Quickly Find Your Desktop In Windows XP!**

Many people use their desktop as a storage area for their shortcuts, folders, files, and so on. If you are included in the 'desktop storage' group, you should probably know how to quickly clear all the open windows without minimizing and closing them to display your desktop.

In the far bottom corner of your desktop beside the Start button is the quick launch toolbar. As the name implies, you can use the icons to quickly launch your favorite programs. One of the icons on the quick launch toolbar is called 'Show Desktop.'

If you want to quickly display your desktop when you have windows open, all you have to do is click this icon on the quick launch toolbar. Even better yet, if you want to return the windows to the way they were, all you have to do is click the icon again.

### **Making Use Of The "Run As" Command!**

If you have more than one computer account in your house, you're probably the administrator. That means you get called on when some administrative task must be performed.

You don't have to log the current user off to run most programs. Usually, you can use the little-known Run As command.

Let's assume you're in a child's Limited account. Right-click the program you need to open and click Run As. In the Run As window, select "The following user." Fill in the user name and password. Click OK.

In my tests, I found this procedure inconsistent. Sometimes, the Run As option did not appear in the menu. In that case, depress the Shift key when you right-click. That often takes care of the problem.

### **Curing A Computer That Constantly Reboots In XP!**

Unfortunately, a lot of things can cause a computer to reboot. Usually, it is some sort of hardware failure. When the computer reboots, you get a quick look at a blue screen (known in computer doom as the Blue Screen of Death). Then the computer reboots.

The blue screen has information that you can use to diagnose the problem. So you need to stop the automatic reboot.

1. To do that, click Start>>Control Panel. Double-click System. Select the Advanced tab.

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2. Under Startup and Recovery, click Settings. Under "System failure," clear the box next to "Automatically restart."

On the next reboot, the computer will stop at the blue screen. Write down any number. You'll probably see some like 0x000000E7. Check them on the Microsoft site or send them to me at [info@internetfixes.com](mailto:info@internetfixes.com). You may see a more specific message, which you can check on the Internet.

Once you're finished there, reboot the computer. If necessary, turn the computer off, wait 30 seconds and power it up.

Tracking down these problems can be a real pain. If the numbers and/or messages on the Blue Screen of Death don't help, there are other things you can do.

### **Easily Lock Your Workstation Remotely With A Shortcut!**

If you are physically seated at a computer, you can easily lock your workstation by pressing CTRL + ALT + DEL and selecting the Lock Workstation option. Alternatively you can also press the Windows Logo and "L."

However, for those of you who use the remote administrator feature of Windows XP, you will soon discover that you cannot lock the workstation using either of these methods (for the obvious reasons of course). What you can do though is create a shortcut on the remote desktop. When you double click the shortcut, the remote computer will automatically be locked.

Here is what you have to do. Right click on the remote desktop, point to New and click Shortcut. In the Create Shortcut dialog box, type in the following:

```
c:\Windows\System32\rundll32.exe user32.dll,LockWorkStation.
```

Click Next. Type in a name for the shortcut, such as Lock Workstation and click Finish. Now when you double click the shortcut, the remote computer will then go into a locked state.

### **Automatically Add Internet Prefixes And Suffixes (Win XP)**

If you're sick of typing Internet prefixes and suffixes (www and com) at the beginning and end of your Web addresses, here's a shortcut you can employ to do the work for you. Simply enter the main component of the Web address in the Address bar (for example: cnn, usatoday, or nytimes), and then press [Ctrl][Enter]. Windows automatically adds both the "www" and the ".com" and then searches for the page on the Internet.

### **Selecting Multiple Files (Win XP)**

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When working in Windows Explorer or the My Computer window, you might need to perform the same action on more than one file in a folder. For example, you might need to copy a group of files to another location. You may think you have to copy each file individually, but you don't. Just select all the files at one time and then copy (or delete) them together.

To select a group of files listed together in the folder window (contiguously), select the first filename, hold the [Shift] key, and click on the last file you want to affect. This technique selects all the filenames between and including the first and last files. To select noncontiguous files, select the first file, hold the [Ctrl] key, and click on each of the other files you want to affect. (To deselect a file, hold the [Ctrl] key and click on the selected file.) Then, use the keyboard or right-click on one of the selected files to complete your action with the shortcut menu.

### **Secure Your Favorite Program's Place In The Start Menu (Win XP)**

Windows XP includes a customizable interface that adjusts according to your preferences and working style. With regard to your Start menu, this means that programs used less frequently are often bumped to submenus and aren't available for quick access. Luckily, though, you can permanently affix a favorite program to your Start menu regardless of how frequently you use it.

Click the Start button, and then right-click on the program you'd like to anchor to your Start menu. Then, select Pin To Start Menu from the shortcut menu. Choosing this option places the program shortcut at the top of your Start menu, just below your browser and email programs.

### **Delete Hiberfil.sys Before Defragmenting In Windows XP!**

If you use the Windows XP's Hibernation feature on your laptop, you may want to delete the Hiberfil.sys file from the hard disk before defragmenting. When you put your computer in hibernation, Windows XP writes all memory content to the Hiberfil.sys file before shutting down the system. Then, when you turn your computer back on, the OS uses the Hiberfil.sys file to put everything back into memory, and the computer resumes where it left off. However, Windows XP leaves the Hiberfil.sys file on the hard disk, even though it's no longer needed.

The Hiberfil.sys file, which can be very large, is a special system file that Disk Defragmenter cannot defragment. Therefore, the presence of the Hiberfil.sys file will prevent Disk Defragmenter from performing a thorough defragmenting operation.

Follow these steps to remove the Hiberfil.sys file from the hard disk:

1. Access the Control Panel and double-click Power Options.
2. Select the Hibernate tab in the Power Options Properties dialog box.

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3. Clear the Enable Hibernation check box and click OK.

As soon as you clear the check box, Windows XP automatically deletes the Hiberfil.sys file from the hard disk. Once you complete the defrag operation, you can re-enable the Hibernation feature.

### **Clean Up The System Tray (Win XP)**

Is the Windows XP system tray too cluttered for your taste? If so, you can get rid of unnecessary icons with just a few clicks of the mouse.

First, right-click on an empty area of the system tray and choose Properties from the shortcut menu. In the Taskbar And Start Menu Properties dialog box, on the Taskbar property sheet, verify that the Hide Inactive Icons check box is selected, and then click the customize button. In the Customize Notifications dialog box, you can choose one of three ways to display each of the components in your system tray by selecting each component and then choosing either Hide When Inactive, Always Hide, or Always Show from each component's dropdown list. Once you've made your selections, click OK to close the Customize Notifications dialog box, and then click Apply and OK. A small arrow will now appear in the system tray, allowing you to show or hide these components.

### **Quickly Access The System Properties Dialog Box (Win XP)**

Have you ever wanted quicker access to Windows XP's System Properties dialog box to access Device Manager or your hardware profiles? If you're like most, you simply right-click on My Computer and choose Properties, but you can accomplish this task without ever using the mouse.

Simply press the [Windows] key and the [Pause/Break] key, and the System Properties dialog box appears immediately.

### **Save Time With A Hidden Shortcut Feature In Windows XP!**

Do you have shortcuts to folders on your desktop to which you frequently copy files? If so, you probably double-click the shortcut to open the folder each time you want to copy files to that folder via the drag-and-drop method. While that is an appropriate approach, you don't really have to go to all that trouble.

Unbeknownst to most Windows XP users, you don't have to open the folder via the shortcut before you can copy files to that folder. Instead, you can simply drag-and-drop files right on the shortcut icon and it's the same as dragging and dropping the file into an open folder.

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