



The name game

Tim Nott comes up with a VB script for **renaming files** to run under DOS 6.22.

Readers Bob Jonas has come up with a request which cannot adequately be covered in our Q & A section: 'I want to transfer a large number of files to a laptop running DOS 6.22. Prior to this I would like to copy the files to another directory, rename them with 8 + 3 file names incorporating sequential numbering whilst preserving the original extensions, and print out a list with the old name and the new name.'

Taking the last bit first, we covered something similar in last month's piece on scripting, so I'm going to concentrate on the issue of the actual renaming. The easy way is to get a utility like QuickKeys. Besides its many other talents, the principal being a souped-up, editable version of the old Windows 3.x Recorder, it offers a bulk sequential renaming facility. But are *Hands On* readers devotees of the easy way? I think not. A surprisingly short bit of VBScripting (see Fig 1) will take care of this task, and with rather more versatility.

First, you need to assemble all the files in one folder then run the script. The script prompts for the source folder path. If it can't find this folder it grinds to a halt (I've built in no error-handling, here). Next it prompts for a prefix. If, say, you were to type 'file' here, you'd end up with file0001.doc, file0002.txt, file0003.bmp and so on. This might be especially useful to someone assembling a load of

graphics for a web page. If you were to leave this blank, each copied file would bear the first four letters of the source file, plus the number. For example: docu0001.doc, read0002.txt, pict0003.bmp.

It next prompts for a destination folder, which must be new. If the destination already exists, the script will bail out without copying any files. This is simply a precaution to keep the new files tidily segregated. Note that VBScript doesn't use the \$ character in string handling so the traditional Basic "Left\$()" is just "Left()". One rather awkward problem is that the existing file extensions may contain more or fewer than three characters: for example, .MPEG or .RA. So, in these cases, a simple Right (filename, 4) won't return a dot plus the extension.

We also have to deal with cases where the first part of the filename contains less than four characters. The InStr function gets the position of the dot and if necessary truncates the extension to three characters, while less than three are left as they are. If there are less than four characters to the left of the dot, then the destination filename is adjusted to suit.

It's still not foolproof. It will, for instance, choke on files with no extension at all and it doesn't check the validity of the user-supplied prefix. A little extra code could cure this but we don't have room so this is left as an exercise for the reader.

Another new thing here is the first statement (lines starting with a single-quote are just for information to humans and are ignored by the



▲ FIG 2 INTERNET EXPLORER'S SECRETS REVEALED

scripting host): Option Explicit means that any variables which are used in the script but not declared in the DIM statements will generate an error. Not only is this good programming etiquette but it can also save hours of anguish if you mis-spell a variable somewhere and wonder why the script isn't working.

For those who cannot be bothered to type all this you'll find the file in the Hands On section of this month's cover CD as Bulk Rename.vbs. As always, this CD is supplied without guarantee and neither the author nor the publishers are liable for anything you may get up to by using it. So, back up, check your insurance and say a prayer before use.

One particular warning: never attempt to copy large numbers of files to the root of a drive (e.g. C:\), as this can cause file system problems.

■ Diversions ahead

Two readers have come up with obscure time-wasters this month.

➔ **First**, Neil Shepherd: 'In the unlikely event that your machine running Win98 does not crash, you can recreate illegal operations at your leisure by making a shortcut to: C:\windows\rundll32.exe user.exe,BozosLiveHere.' Well, thanks Neil. Just what we've always wanted!

➔ **Second**, Alex Pounds sent in the key to the Internet Explorer 4 'Easter egg' or gang screen [Fig 2]. 'Open up IE4 and go to Help, About Internet Explorer. Ctrl + drag the e in the top right corner and waggle it around the left edge of the



▲ FIG 3 CLIPTRAY STORES YOUR FAVOURITE PLATTITUDES AND OTHER USEFUL TEXTS

[FIG 1]

RENAMING AND TRANSFERRING FILES

This VB script prompts for a source folder and a destination folder it then copies each file in the source to the target, renaming each in a numeric sequence. Script cobbled together by Tim Nott, 1999.

'Declaring variables

```
Option Explicit
Dim sourcefolder, targetfolder, count, allfiles, tail
Dim indir, outdir, prefix, newname, eachfile, abort
Dim dotpos, extension, filecopy, myobject, myobject2
```

'Prompt for source and destination folders

```
indir=InputBox("Enter the path to the source folder")
prefix = InputBox ("Enter the prefix for the new files - maximum four characters. Leave blank to use the first four characters of the source files")
outdir = InputBox ("Enter the path to the new destination folder")
```

```
If outdir <> "" Then
    Set myobject2 = CreateObject( "Scripting.FileSystemObject" )
    If Not myobject2.FolderExists( outdir ) Then
        myobject2.CreateFolder outdir
        abort = False
    Else
        MsgBox "Folder already exists - script will end", 0, "Cannot create folder"
        abort = True
    End If
    Set myobject2 = Nothing
End If
```

'Call the function unless the destination folder already existed

```
If abort = False then filecopy=DoCopy(indir, outdir, prefix)
```

'Function to copy files

```
Function DoCopy(sourcespec, destspec, head)
    count = 0
    Set myobject = CreateObject("Scripting.FileSystemObject")
    Set sourcefolder = myobject.GetFolder(sourcespec)
    Set targetfolder = myobject.GetFolder(destspec)
    Set allfiles = sourcefolder.Files
    For Each eachfile in allfiles
        count = count + 1
        tail = right("000" & count, 4)
        dotpos = InStr(eachfile.name, ".")
        extension = Mid(eachfile.name, dotpos, 4)
        If head <> "" Then
            newname = head & tail & extension
        ElseIf dotpos > 4 Then
            newname = Left(eachfile.name, 4) & tail & extension
        Else
            newname = Left(eachfile.name, dotpos-1) & tail & extension
        End If
        myobject.CopyFile sourcefolder & "\" & eachfile.name, targetfolder & "\" & newname,
    True
    Next
End Function
```

“Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0” text, which should then move aside to reveal an “Unlock” button. Drop the e and click it. The globe on the left will start to shake. Ctrl + drag the e onto it. A new window will appear showing the names of the IE4 team.’

■ The Cliptray utility

Buried in the Windows 98 Resource Kit is a useful utility called Cliptray [Fig 3] that I happened on all by myself. When run, it sits in the System Tray at the right of the Taskbar, displaying a clipboard icon. Right-click on this and select Add. You'll

then get a box with a space for a name and some text. Type in some text you often use, like your name and address. Repeat and you'll find that subsequent right-clicks show a menu of the names you gave to the texts. Select one and it's copied to the clipboard, ready to paste



Questions & answers

Q For some reason the titles of some of my Windows 98 Desktop icons are truncated. How can I cure this?
GREG KINGSLEY

a You should find that selecting each icon reveals the full text. For an overall solution try going to Control Panel, Display, Appearance and increasing the horizontal and/or vertical icon spacing from the 'Item' list. Click on 'Apply' then right-click on the Desktop and Arrange Icons to update the results.

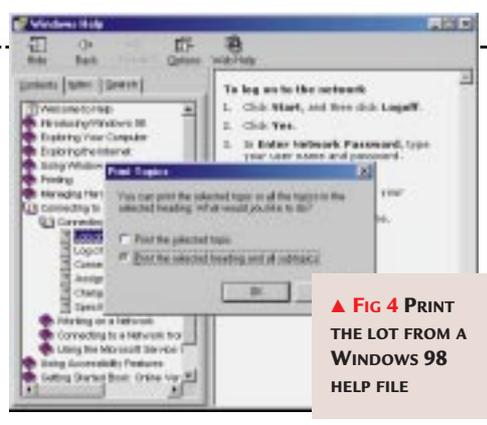
Q Recently, when I right-click on the Start button, the Open and Explore options are greyed out. Any idea why, or how to restore them?
DILLY KEEGAN

a This seems to be a common problem and one which has had me baffled for some time. There are two things you can try, according to usually reliable sources. Both need TweakUI installed. First, check that you are not hiding any drives in the My Computer tab. Second, check that the path to the Start Menu folder is shown correctly in the Special Folders list in the General tab.

Q I cannot seem to get individual Control Panel property pages (e.g. Multimedia) to appear on the Taskbar when opened. It's annoying when experimenting with settings to have to minimise all the windows 'on top' to get at it.
GREGORY HOLDEN

a This is one of my pet annoyances, too. You can get it back into focus by re-summoning it from Control Panel but a smarter solution is to hold down Alt + Tab. A small window will appear showing icons for each open folder or program. Hold the Alt key and tap the Tab key until the relevant icon is highlighted, then release both keys.

Q With regard to your item in the March column concerning the 'phantom phone menace', I seem to be suffering some of the symptoms you describe, having installed RealPlayer G2. Specifically, the prompt to disconnect the connection when I close my browser no longer appears. Can you tell me how to re-enable it?
STEVE DODMAN



word processor document. The Windows 98 .CHM (compiled HTML) help files do have the facility to print either the selected topic or the selected heading and all subtopics [Fig 4]. You'll find this by choosing 'Print...' in the Options menu.

Q I have a new PC running Win98, and an older laptop running Windows 3.11. How can I connect them so that I can upgrade the laptop to Windows 98 as well?
MIKE EDMONTON

a Technically, you can do this with commercial software like Laplink. Or, if you want to do it the hard but free way, there is MS-DOS Interlink and InterServer which come with MS-DOS 6 and Win95. I won't go into detail as the relevant DOS help files provide instructions but I've used this in the past to transfer files between a Win3.1 laptop and a Win98 desktop. However, I should point out that your Win98 licence only permits you to install it on one computer at any one time, so upgrading your laptop in the way you describe is in breach of your licence and is illegal. You should find a file named LICENCE.TXT in the Windows folder of the Win98 machine which spells out the gory details.

a Some permutations of Windows/Internet Explorer have a check box for this buried somewhere in the DUN settings. Some don't, which is the sort of thing that makes supporting Windows such a rich and challenging experience. If you don't have the checkbox, back up the Registry then run Regedit. Go to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Internet Settings and find the EnableAutodisconnect key. Change the data value to 01 00 00 00. Quit Regedit and restart your computer.

Q Is there a method of printing a whole help file without having to visit every topic and print them one by one?
GAVIN BENSON

a For standard .HLP files, the answer is 'no'. Your best bet would be to copy and paste each topic into a single

into any text-input situation. Now I can write things like 'First, make sure to back up the Registry', and other well-worn phrases, with a few mouse-clicks even when writing my column in Notepad. Although you may be able to wrinkle out the files necessary to install this on its own, the standard installation routine copies most of the Windows Resource Kit to your hard disk. But it is only 10Mb and there is some useful stuff there, including the indispensable TweakUI. Open up the tools\reskit folder on the Windows 98

CD-ROM and you will find a Readme.doc and a Setup.exe.

■ **Updates tip**
Following the long-running saga in recent Hands On Windows columns, of getting hold of Windows updates as downloadable files rather than on-line updates, reader Peter Ball recently contacted me to point out that Microsoft does now provide a site for just this, at www.microsoft.com/windows98/downloads/corporate.asp.

Meanwhile, users of other versions of Windows will be able to find updates at its web site at microsoft.com/windows/downloads/default.asp.

PCW CONTACTS

Tim Nott welcomes your feedback on the Windows column. He can be contacted via the PCW editorial office (address, p14) or email win@pcw.co.uk
QuickKeys www.quickkeys.com



The Update update

Tim Nott reveals other aspects of the Windows 98 Update tool and turns his attention to automation.

Recently, I wrote in glowing terms about the Windows 98 Update tool (*February issue*). Since then, there have been a couple of developments. First, despite what I said about having to use a third-party utility to save the update files to disk rather than just apply them to the PC in use, reader Graham Mayor has a simpler way:

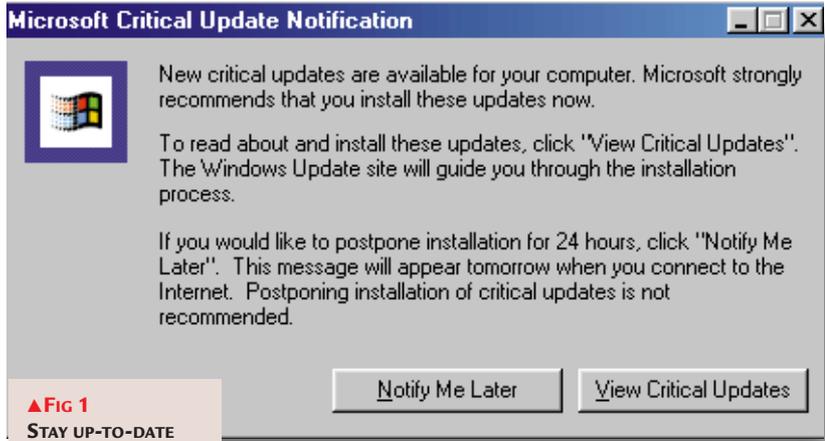
'It is possible to recover the files from Windows/Temporary Internet Files with Explorer. Select the folder, sort on date/time and pick out the relevant *.exe, *.cab and/or *.zip files, then copy them to another folder.'

Peter Geddes, however, states that the files are saved in the folder MSDOWNLOAD.TMP. Mileages seem to vary, as having just downloaded the Critical Update Notification utility I could find no trace of it in the latter but did eventually track it down to a sub-folder of Temporary Internet Files.

Second, you can now be informed automatically when relevant updates become available. To enable this, go to windowsupdate.microsoft.com and download the Windows Critical Update Notification. To quote from the instructions: 'When you install Critical Update Notification, you give Windows Update permission to scan your computer. The scan which occurs in the background while you are using the internet determines if the available update is appropriate for your system.'

Task Scheduler controls the scanning schedule so you'll see a task for Critical Update Notification among your other scheduled tasks. The scanning schedule is preset and Microsoft recommends that you do not modify the settings. You won't be notified of every scan, the scans won't interfere with your internet computing and none of the information gathered is sent over the internet.' This feature is fairly overbearing, though. The default interval in Task Scheduler is five

Windows has never addressed automation very well



▲ Fig 1
STAY UP-TO-DATE ON UPDATES

minutes and the message [Fig 1] is somewhat insistent. Still, it's only a 24Kb download and you can uninstall it from Control Panel Add/Remove should it get too irritating.

■ Keeping to the script

One thing that Windows has never addressed well is automation. DOS has the fairly primitive processing of a list of commands in batch (.BAT) files, and Windows 3.x has the Recorder which creates non-editable scripts of keystrokes and mouse actions. Office users have the full panoply of VBA, or WordBasic in earlier versions of Word, but Windows 95 has nothing.

Enter Windows 98 and the Windows Scripting Host. Windows 98 users may have noticed a folder under Windows named Samples\Wsh which contain a number of files carrying the .VBS and .JS extensions. If you do not have these

you will need to install the Windows Scripting Host from Control Panel, Add/Remove, Windows Setup, Accessories.

You might have noticed that this column has been strangely silent on this topic. This is because I have been searching for an 'idiot's guide to Windows scripting'. As this search has been largely unsuccessful I'm having to write my own, which at least has the advantage of being written for idiots by one of their own. Visual Basic and Java Scripts are not, in themselves, new;

they've been available to HTML programmers for some time. What is new with Windows 98 is the standard provision of the Windows Scripting Host, though this is also available for NT and as a download for Windows 95.

The Scripting Host provides an interpreter for Java or VB scripts running directly from the PC, rather than being embedded in an HTML page. These scripts are plain text files and the best

HACK WATCH

One update which wasn't on the windowsupdate site (*see main text*) at the time of writing rectifies a security loophole in Forms 2.0 which gets installed by Office 97, Outlook 98, Project 98 and Visual Basic 5. The loophole was discovered by the magnificently-named Spaniard, Juan Carlos Garcia Cuartango.

The risk is that a hacker could 'use the Forms 2.0 Control to read text on a user's Clipboard when that user visits a web site or opens an HTML email created by the hacker.' You can get further details, and download a patch to rectify this, from officeupdate.microsoft.com/downloaddetails/fm2paste.htm.

➔ While we're in a security-conscious mood, there's a further patch that addresses a vulnerability in Word 97. See this month's *Hands On Word Processing* (p256) for the full story.

way to get the feel of what they can do is to double-click on one of the sample VBS files and see what happens. Then right-click Edit the file to see what's making this happen. The sample scripts include adding and removing Registry keys, doing things with Excel (if you have it), creating shortcuts and connecting to a network. This is obviously a rather powerful, if under-documented, feature.

For reasons of pure ignorance I'm going to pass rapidly over Java script but if you've done any VBA programming, you shouldn't find the VB script language too unfamiliar. What you don't get, however, is an all-singing, all-dancing editor like that in Office 97. You're stuck with the distinctly unentertaining Notepad.

So, we're going to build a VB script which provides another way of getting at that old Windows puzzle of a printable file listing [Fig 2]. Bear in mind that this is the blind leading the blind so if you know more than I do about the subject, please don't laugh. The code is in the *Hands On Windows* section of this month's PCW CD-ROM as FLIST.VBS.

How does it work? The first three lines [Fig 2] declare the variables we will be using, which is good programming manners. The next line creates an 'object' which we'll use later to find the path to the desktop.

The Function on the following line, creates more objects to hold a folder and its files, and creates a list of the latter with a carriage return between each. The script then prompts for the target folder – sorry, no browsing – then assigns the result of the previously-defined function applied to the target folder to the variable 'filelisting'. The variable 'desktoppath' is then assigned to the actual location of the desktop (which may not be C:\Windows\Desktop) using the WSHshell object created earlier.

Finally, the 'Creatfile' subroutine is called which creates a text file on the

[FIG 2] Another way to get a printable file listing

This script prompts for a folder path and creates a list of its files on the Desktop:

```
Dim myobject, targetfolder, allfiles, eachfile
Dim filelisting, desktoppath, WSHshell
Dim mylist, crlf, myobject1, mytextfile
Set WSHshell = WScript.CreateObject("WScript.Shell")

Function ShowFileList(folderspec)
    crlf = chr(13) & chr(10)
    Set myobject= CreateObject("Scripting.FileSystemObject")
    Set targetfolder = myobject.GetFolder(folderspec)
    Set allfiles = targetfolder.Files
    For Each eachfile in allfiles
        mylist = mylist & eachfile.name
        mylist = mylist & crlf
    Next
    ShowFileList = mylist
End Function

whatdir=InputBox("Enter the path to the folder you want
listed")
filelisting=ShowFileList(whatdir)
desktoppath = WSHShell.SpecialFolders("Desktop")
Call Createfile

Sub Createfile
    Set myobject1 = CreateObject("Scripting.FileSystemObject")
    Set mytextfile = myobject1.CreateTextFile(desktoppath &
"\flist.txt", True)
    mytextfile.WriteLine("List of files in " & whatdir)
    mytextfile.Write(filelisting)
    mytextfile.Close
End Sub
```

(Key: ✓ Code string continues)

desktop, writes a one-line heading showing the folder name followed by the list held by the 'filelisting' variable. No frills, error handling or file details but it gives an idea of what can be done [Fig 3].

Department of obscure tips

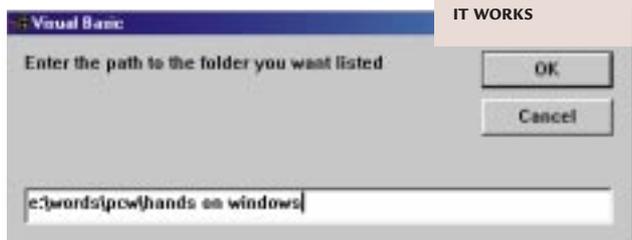
Henry Bevan and other readers came up with a useful pointer concerning the tip about letting IE4 expand web addresses (*February column*). It involves a Registry

edit so the usual disclaimers apply, but if you go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main\UrlTemplate, you can edit the prefixes and suffixes and the order in which they are tried. The

'%s' stands for what you've typed, so editing an entry to 'www.%s.co.uk' will add UK web sites to the list.

Here's one that is even more useful, concerning the ghost that makes unwanted dial-up calls to the internet. I've already mentioned two suspects: RealPlayer G2 Beta (*March column*), and Lotus SmartCentre (*see p256 in this issue*).

Reader Alex Nichol claims that Windows can manage this all by itself without third-party help. He writes: 'It involves a registry setting. Look under HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\OLE. In the right pane will be two lines: EnableDCOM = Y and EnableRemoteConnect = N. The trouble arises when the latter gets set to Y. I think it is part of Microsoft's assumption that everyone is on a fast LAN and wants instant connection to it at boot...' or, indeed, that everyone has free local calls to their ISP.



▼ Fig 3 NO BELLS AND WHISTLES, NO BROWSING, BUT IT WORKS



Questions & answers

Q What is a RAM drive? On the net, I've seen things to do with them but I don't have an icon for one in the My Computer folder.

TOBY McDONNELL

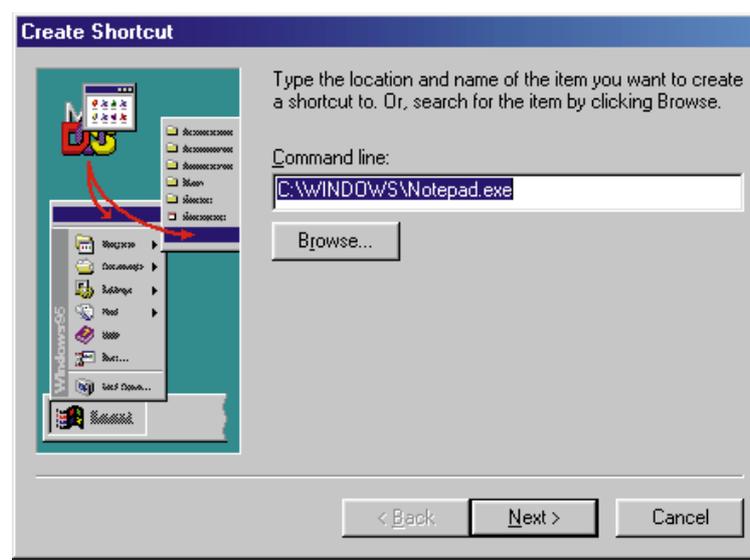
a A RAM drive is an area of memory (Random Access Memory) that is used as if it were a disk drive. Access is much faster than a normal disk but it's a much more expensive form of storage and is lost when you switch off the PC.

Windows has a much better way of speeding up your PC, by using memory as disk. It is called cacheing. If, say, you load a large application, then close it, then load it again, you'll find it's much faster the second time as it is still 'cached' in memory. The RAM drive is, however, used by the Windows 98 emergency recovery disk. This contains a whole load of utilities which are zipped — that is, compressed — in order to fit onto a floppy, and which are unzipped onto a RAM drive for use. That way they will work even on a PC whose hard disk has not been formatted.

Q I have lost my shortcut wizard — by this I mean that when I right click on the desktop and go to New, Shortcut, I just receive a new file called 'New shortcut'. When the properties are examined it is shown to be a 0Kb file. Then, if I add '.lnk' to the file name it becomes a shortcut and can be set up as such, but where on earth is the wizard?

ROD LANE

a This is a long-running mystery but I have at last found an answer [Fig 4] on the Microsoft web site. It appears



◀ Fig 4
THE AMAZING, DISAPPEARING SHORTCUT WIZARD

waiting years for Microsoft to incorporate this into Explorer. My delight was diminished, though, when I noticed that a folder I had opted to view as thumbnails

had acquired a 'thumbnails.db' file. On a folder with 11 JPEG files which Explorer reports as totalling 121Kb, the thumbnails.db file is 322kb! Has Microsoft signed a pact with hard disk makers?

CHRIS VENESS

a I do not think that the conspiracy theory applies here. What is happening is that Windows creates 120-pixel square 24-bit colour thumbnails, seemingly using a similar compression method to the original.

My trials show that ten thumbnails of JPEGs totalling 390Kb produce a 132Kb thumbnail file, or around a third of the originals. If the original files are smaller than 120 pixels square, then the thumbnail file could well exceed the total size of the originals. Converting the same files to the TIF format, however, where they total 9Mb, produces a 432Kb thumbnail file — a twentieth of the originals.

PCW CONTACTS

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that installing Internet Explorer 4 can damage a key in the registry. So, to repair this, you should first backup the registry and then launch Regedit. Go to HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT \.lnk \ ShellNew \ Command. If you have the Windows Desktop Update component installed, then this should have a value of

your CD-ROM drive letter):
EXTRACT /A D:\WIN95_02.CAB MARLETT.TTF /L C:\WINDOWS\FONTS.
If this gives you a 'Bad command or file name' message then you need to copy EXTRACT.EXE from the Windows 95 folder on the CD to C:\WINDOWS\COMMAND. Note that

If I add '.lnk' it becomes a shortcut and can be set up as such, but where's the wizard?

RunDLL32 AppWiz.Cpl, NewLinkHere %2. If not, then the value should be RunDLL32 AppWiz.Cpl,NewLinkHere %1.

Q My Windows 95 caption buttons show a diagonal pencil for minimise, a pen nib for maximise and a square instead of a cross for close. The scroll bar arrows are also wrong and the check boxes are indecipherable. Please help!

CHAS GRUNDY

a This sounds as if your Marlett font has gone AWOL. First, you'll need to reinstall it from the Windows 95 CD. From a command prompt, type (assuming D: is

Windows 98 users can just double-click on Win98\WIN98_47.CAB then double-click on MARLETT.TTF to extract it. After you've extracted the file to the Windows\Fonts folder, set its attributes by typing this line at a command prompt:
ATTRIB +S +H C:\WINDOWS\FONTS\MARLETT.TTF.

If the problem persists after replacing the Marlett.ttf file try deleting the Ttfcache file in the Windows folder. It will be rebuilt at the next boot.

Q I was pleased to read your tip about thumbnails in Windows 98/IE4 as I have been



Sonic boon

Tim Nott hears of a new file player to put good sounds on your PC. Plus, audio standards.

One of the bits of unofficial showing-off by the Windows 95 interface team was the clock which came with Powertoy. Nothing really remarkable about it except that it was round — a porthole, if you like, rather than a rectangular window. There's no reason why windows should be rectangular, either in operating systems or architecture, so when I was digging through the Litestep site for last month's *Hands On* I was rather impressed by a strangely-shaped thing in some of the screenshots. What, I asked one of the creators, is that? It turned out to be a music player called Sonique.

Sonique has a variety of interesting shapes ranging from a tiny little roller that unfolds to display controls when the mouse pointer passes over it, to a fully-fledged console with a drop-down graphic equaliser.

My personal favourite is the rather organic shape shown in Fig 1. If Kai Krause, the doyen of digital imaging, and designer Philippe Starck teamed up to conceive a personal



◀ Fig 1 SONIQUE — THE FREE-FORM MUSIC PLAYER

stereo, then it would probably look something like this. Although it will play individual tracks from audio CDs it's essentially a file player and will work with a variety of formats including MPG123, MP2, MP3, MOD, XM, IT, PLS and S3M as well as the more mundane WAV. As well as playing music you have loads of knobs to twiddle and besides the graphic equaliser mentioned earlier you can change the pitch, juggle playlists and engage in all sorts of arcane activities, with options. There's also a variety of visual effects you can have pulsating away to the music. At the time of writing there is no help file so it's very much a case of playing around to see what happens. Also, Sonique was still in beta and the expiry date meant I couldn't include it on our cover-mounted CD-ROM. You can, however, download a free trial version from www.sonique.com.

Having got the player, it made sense to get something to play on it — it's surprising how quickly one can get bored with TADA.WAV and the Microsoft Sound.WAV. If these file extensions don't mean much to you, well, they don't to me either, except for MP3.

MP3 audio compression standard provides good quality music in around a tenth of the storage space of conventional CD-Audio. As such, running at around a megabyte a minute, transferring music across a modem link becomes a viable possibility. Although it takes a lot longer to download than a 'streamed' format like Real Audio, the difference in quality is astounding: it's like comparing Bang and Olufsen with a wind-up Victrola gramophone.

There is a huge number of MP3 tracks available free, as well as a number of pay sites and although the Sonique site has plenty of links, www.mp3.com is probably as good a place to start as any. Here you will find well-known artistes as well as lesser-known bands. Among the latter I found God Ate My Homework, not so much a garage as a bicycle shed

READERS' TIPS

An unusual twist on the long-running 'Shutdown blues' saga. M. Davison reports the case of a colleague whose 'Please wait...' screen was never replaced by the 'It is now safe...' version. The reason? Some bright spark had copied the first screen file (LOGOW.SYS) over the second (LOGOS.SYS).

Autorun is another old favourite. Henry Brown's CD-ROMs wouldn't but Audio CDs would. When he mailed me he'd already tried the usual remedies. I won't repeat them here as they can be found in the back issues on our PCW CD-ROM. I wasn't able to help so he tried the Gateway user forum, where a very nice sysop suggested he run Regedit and go to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer\NoDriveTypeAutoRun. This key should have a value of 0000 95 00 00 00. Somehow — and the culprit has yet to be found — this had got changed on Henry's machine to 0000 75 00 00 00. Changing it back cured the problem.

band, whose seminal work 'Secret Asian Man' contains the immortal lines: 'He is playing Mahjong As he downloads from Hong Kong, Where today it's already tomorrow'.

But surely, you ask, what is to stop unscrupulous types from pirating copyright material? Well, just as there is pirated software, pornography, racist propaganda and terrorist manuals available on the web, so there is also bootleg music and unless you live an extraordinarily sheltered life you'll realise that you can get all these things on traditional magnetic, optical or paper media anyway. However, it is not compulsory to download stolen music but I dare say it makes good copy for the more webophobic among the press.

Sites such as www.mp3.com are, in fact, extremely conscientious about

You can engage in all sorts of arcane activities, with options

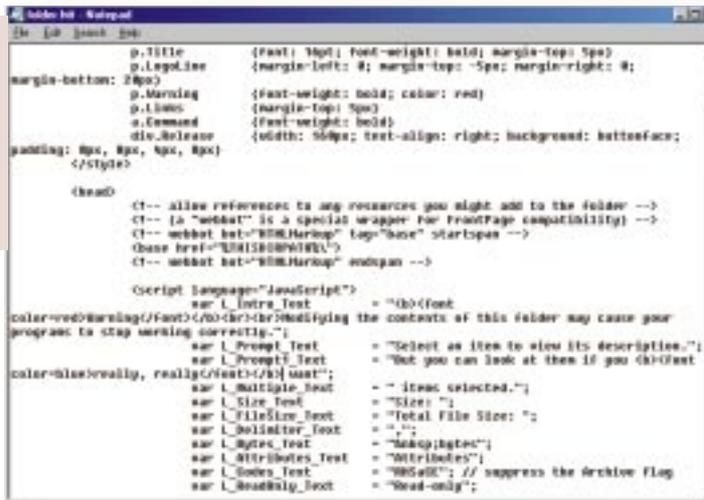
copyright and all the music you find there will have the copyright holder's consent. I think it's a brilliant way for bands and individual musicians to bring their work to the attention of a larger audience. (See also, *News Analysis* p38).

➔ **A good view**

Call me old-fashioned but I really don't feel the need to view my folders as web pages. But just as I was congratulating myself on answering Jeremy Castle's query (p228) about disabling the warning before Windows 98 will let you see the contents of the Windows folder, along came Ian Briscoe with another method.

This lets you retain 'View as web page' whilst seeing the files without the irritating preamble. The answer resides in a file called FOLDER.HTT. This, as Ian points out, is 'basically a JavaScript program with HTML wrapper' [Fig 2]. I will be honest — mainly because I realise I

▶ **FIG 2 DON'T PANIC! IT'S ONLY A LITTLE JAVASCRIPT IN AN HTML WRAPPER**



haven't a hope of bluffing my way through this — and admit that my knowledge of HTML is on a par with Posh Spice's grasp of Mesopotamian Cuneiform. My JavaScript expertise is even less. Nevertheless, I've tried Ian's instructions and they work (see the panel *Revealing files in web view*, below).

• **Next month**, we'll be rolling our own Java applets with an empty washing-up liquid bottle and the cardboard centre from a kitchen roll. Meanwhile, I think Ian has earned himself a book token for such a fine piece of meddling.

REVEALING FILES IN WEB VIEW

First, make a backup of the FOLDER.HTT in the Windows folder, preferably with a different extension. Then open FOLDER.HTT in Notepad. Fight back the rising tide of panic, and look for the line:

```
var showFiles = false;
Change this to read:
var showFiles = true;
• Next, look for the Init function, which goes:
function Init() {
document.all.FileList.style.display = "none";
document.all.Brand.style.display = "";
// call our FixSize() function whenever the window gets resized
window.onresize = FixSize;
FixSize();
Info.innerHTML = L_Intro_Text + "<br><br>" + L_Prompt1_Text;
}
```

- **Change** the second and third lines to read:


```
document.all.FileList.style.display = "";
document.all.Brand.style.display = "none";
```
- **Change** the last line to read:


```
Info.innerHTML = L_Intro_Text + "<br><br>" + ✓
L_Prompt1_Text;
```

(Key: ✓ code line continues)
- **As an alternative** to this last step you could modify

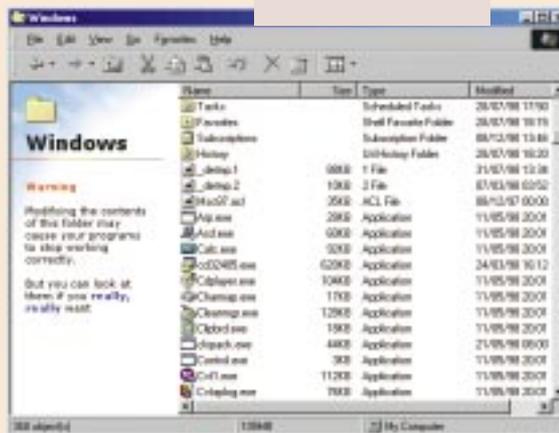

```
var L_Prompt1_Text =
```

which you'll find back up near the start of the file, to anything you feel might be more suitable.
- **Save** FOLDER.HTT over the original and the job is done.

The Windows folder will then show all its files when opened in web view. You'll get the warning but not the 'Click here...' and the former will disappear as soon as you select a file, when you'll get the usual details and preview. There, that wasn't too bad, was it?



▼ **LOOK, BUT DON'T TOUCH — A MODIFIED WEB PAGE VIEW OF THE WINDOWS FOLDER**





Questions

& answers

Q I've just added a second hard disk and relocated the 'My Documents' folder on it. I then redirected the 'Send to...' command but instead of moving the highlighted files to the new 'My Documents' it copies them, leaving the originals behind. Although the 'Send to any folder...' Power Toy tool works it always prompts for a destination. Any ideas?

MALCOLM CHERRIE

a Yes. If you hold down the Shift key when you use 'Send To...' the files will be moved (shifted, geddit?) rather than copied.

Q Some time ago you gave details of a program that would reveal the 'real' password you see as a row of asterisks in, for example, the DialUp Networking login. I have looked through back issues of your magazine on CD-ROM (honest!) with a variety of keywords including 'password' and 'asterisk' but have failed to find it.

NEVILLE FAIRBAIRN

a That's probably because it was in the December '97 column which cycled off the CD in the January '98 issue. Anyway, the program you want is Revelation 1.1 which is available free from www.snadboy.com.

Q How can I stop the annoying warning that 'Modifying the contents of this folder may cause your programs to stop working correctly' when I open, say, the Windows folder? Is there a way of by-passing the clicking on 'Show files'?

JEREMY CASTLE

a The easy way, having once shown the files, is to uncheck 'View as Web page' from the View menu. Then make sure that 'Remember each folder's view settings' is ticked in Explorer's View, Folder Options, View. You'll lose the little preview as well as the details area to the left of the file list but you can usually get those from right-clicking

off... entries at the same time. They are all in the IE4 tab [Fig 3].

Q I have recently upgraded to Windows 98 and I like the new Quicklaunch toolbar but it has a tendency to swap its icons around so, for example, the button with the Notepad icon actually launches Paint. It can get very confusing. Is there a way of taming this?

COLIN DECKER

a This is a common complaint. I do not know why it happens but you can restore the icons by right-clicking on an empty part of the toolbar and then choosing 'Refresh'.

Q I seem to remember that you printed a tip a while ago on how to get another instance of Explorer running just after it crashes — i.e. all the system tray icons disappear. Could you refresh my memory?

PETER GEDDES

a I certainly can — you just press Control +

Select Explorer — not Exploring — from the list and click 'End Task'. The Windows Shut Down confirmation will then appear. Cancel it. Wait. In due course, a 'Not Responding' dialogue will appear. Click the 'End Task' button. The Taskbar and Desktop icons will momentarily disappear then reload. You will not get the tray icons back, however, without restarting Windows normally.

Q How can I persuade Internet Explorer just to download Zip files rather than attempt to open them?

ALAN BUNTING

a From Windows (rather than Internet) Explorer, go to Options (a.k.a. Folder Options) on the View menu and select the File Types tab. Select the WinZip file type, hit the Edit button, then tick the 'Confirm open after download' checkbox.

Q I made a custom launch bar, similar to the Windows 98 Quicklaunch bar, in the Taskbar. It has now sunk without trace. Is it possible to get it back or do I have to start from scratch?

DELPHINE MOREAU

a A custom toolbar is just another way of looking at a folder. When you create a new toolbar you are asked to browse to an existing folder. As long as you haven't deleted the folder you can get the toolbar back by right-clicking on a bare bit of Taskbar, selecting Toolbars, New Toolbar and browsing to the folder. The bad news is that when you close a toolbar either from its own controls (where you get asked to confirm) or from the Toolbar list (where you don't) this removes it from the list permanently — unlike the Quicklaunch, Address, and other built-in bars — so you have to go through the ritual above to re-open it. Worse, any custom settings you made such as ordering the icons or hiding the text will be lost.

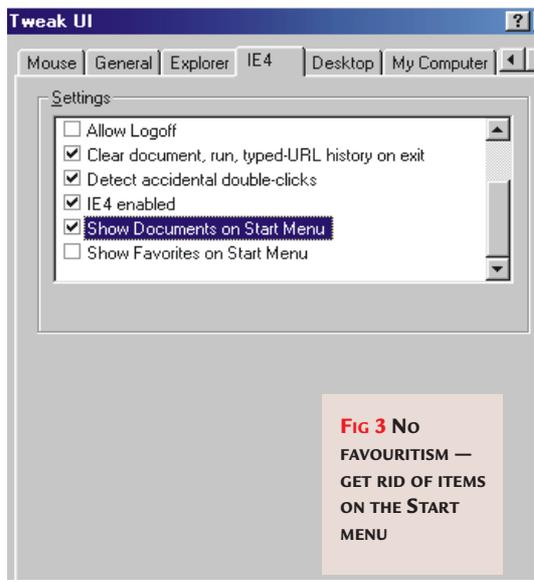


FIG 3 NO FAVOURITISM — GET RID OF ITEMS ON THE START MENU

QuickView or Properties. For a far more complicated way of doing it, see Ian Briscoe's contribution on page 227.

Q Can I get rid of the 'Favorites' entry on the Start Button in Windows 98?

MIKE DURIE

a Yes. The Windows 98 version of TweakUI will let you do this. You can also get rid of the 'Documents' and 'Log

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Phantom phone menace

Tim Nott relates a **creepy connection tale** of the unexpected.

Remember the urban legend of the couple who returned from holiday to find that their flat had been broken into? Curiously, nothing appeared to have been taken. More curiously, the intruder left a quarter-full bottle of his or her own Scotch on their desk. The mystery was only solved when the phone bill arrived and the cost of their burglar's whisky-fuelled chat session was revealed.

These days you don't need a burglar — you can get software to bump up your phone bill without your knowing, as Stephen Blake and many others have found out. Stephen wrote: 'A couple of weeks ago, and for no apparent reason, my computer started to connect automatically to my service provider shortly after booting up. This was just the connection: neither my browser nor email software started. This was irritating but not a major problem, and I've now set my parameters to "always ask before connecting" so I can just hit Cancel.

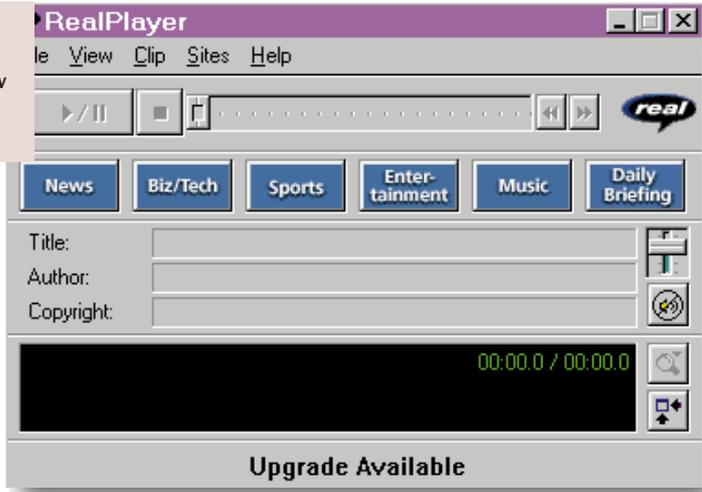
'A friend of mine recently started having the same problem, but as he has an internal modem, he didn't notice. You can guess what his phone bill looked like. In both cases, I cannot find any way of preventing this automatic connection taking place. So I turned to the Microsoft newsgroups on the internet. Here, I found dozens of desperate souls with the same problem. Obviously we all go on the net, but we all seem to use a

▶ **REALPLAYER**
REGULARLY
CHECKS FOR NEW
VERSIONS OF
ITSELF

variety of ISPs. So why have our PCs started to do this? Conspiracy theorists could have a field day about which site we may have all visited.'

Similar reports abound — some adding that the 'automatically disconnect if idle...' timeout is disabled, as is the prompt to disconnect when you close the browser. The common factor in all these cases seems to be the G2 RealPlayer. If you download this, or its beta, it likes to 'touch base' at frequent intervals to see if a new version is available. Apparently, nobody at RealNetworks realises that courtesies such as asking before using someone else's phone and hanging up when finished are important, especially in the majority of countries where one pays for local calls.

If you're a victim of this, there are three things you can do. First, you can remove the icon from the System Tray, from RealPlayer's Options, General, 'Allow SmartStart to run in the System Tray'. Second, you can disable the upgrade checking for a period of 30 days at a time, from the Options,



◀ **IT IS DIFFICULT, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO RESTORE WINDOWS 95 BACKUPS IN WINDOWS 98**

Upgrade menu. The third drastic solution is, of course, to uninstall the RealPlayer software.

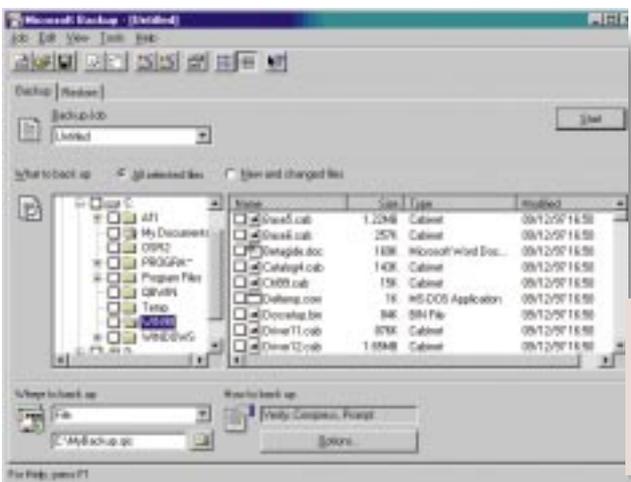
▶ **Here's some better news.**

In January's column I aired Robert Trzebiatowski's problem in that the scroll arrows you get in Windows 98 (or Windows 95+IE4) when a Start Menu level is too tall to fit the screen, won't go away when the number of items are reduced, and end up obscuring the entries. Robert now writes to say that updating his version of Internet Explorer has solved the problem.

Egg, meet face

In December 1998's PCWI I stated that it's impossible to restore Windows 95 backups in Windows 98. Not so, says Michael Kenward: 'You just have to go about it in the right way — difficult, I know, given the awful interface of the new version. Start 98 Backup. Go to the Restore tab. Find the .QIC file from 95 Backup, open it and away you go.'

More egg (I'm going to need a bigger face, soon) from Nicholas Ward, who states that I'm mistaken in saying you can only open one picture per instance of Internet Explorer. 'If you use the option to open all windows in one browser, it will open all the images selected in the one browser and you simply click on the Back button to scroll through them.'



CRYSTAL CLEAR

Several readers have asked me how they, too, can achieve the 'transparent windows' effect seen in Chris Bidmead's column in December 1998's *PCW* (p273). I had no answer, apart from relinquishing Windows in favour of Unix. But reader Paul Bunyan pointed me at Litestep, the strangest thing I've seen for Windows in some time.

It's a PC version of Afterstep, which itself is a window manager for Unix. It's the brainchild of Francis Gastellu and has attracted a large cult following. If you feel the opportunities for customising Windows are too limited, this could be for you, as it's a complete replacement for the Windows shell. Yes, that screenshot [Fig 1] really is my Windows 98 desktop. The toolbar thingy at the right is the Wharf, which can be used to launch programs, open files or folders, and host applets such as a clock, a system monitor and a virtual screen manager that gives you multiple desktops. More esoteric Wharf applets include a variety of CD controllers and (no kidding) a CPU thermometer.

The Start menu is replaced by a cascading right-click menu (seen here above the Word window), and shortcuts on the desktop can use any bitmaps. The examples shown on the left of the screen are bitmaps of text that 'light up' when the mouse pointer crosses them. Note that although the wharf tiles and shortcut bitmaps can have transparent portions,

windows themselves can't, and the seemingly transparent backgrounds to the text shortcuts are actually part of the wallpaper.

However, Litestep isn't for softies. Ideally, you need to be of that rare breed — a programming geek with artistic talents. Even using the ready-made 'themes' (my desktop is a slightly modified version of Psoriac's SpaceStep) you'll find you have to do a lot of configuration editing and file shuffling [Fig 2]. It's also prone to falling over, leaving you in the interesting position of being in Windows with no shell, and there are various other little surprises, such as an apparent loss of the Find File command.

Litestep is free, and is released under the GNU General Public Licence. You are not only free to use the



▲ Fig 1 It's WINDOWS, JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

program, but free — indeed, expected — to download and modify the source code and generally do whatever you like. Which will probably come as something of a shock to devout Windows users, conditioned as we are to monopolistic marketing practices. Despite the complexity, one very good point is that Litestep does not burrow deep into the Registry or the Windows and System folders. The sole point of contact is via the SHELL=entry in SYSTEM.INI. If this is edited to point back at

EXPLORER.EXE, then normal service will be resumed. Determined meddlers would do well to have a boot disk with a copy of EDIT.COM about their person before diving into the wonderful world of Litestep. The shell itself, and many sample themes, can be downloaded from www.litestep.net.

➔ **Paul also answered** a FAQ about graduated title bars, mentioned in November's column. If you're running Windows 95 and yearn for the shaded title bars and animated

menus that 98 users have, you might like to try Win98fx. It's on this month's CD-ROM. Do read the Readme.txt file first as this free utility replaces several crucial Windows files which will need to be backed up beforehand.

```

step.rc - Notepad
File Edit Search Help

; Sound to play when clicking a shortcut
ShortcutClickSound
c:\litestep\starstep\sounds\mousedown.wav

;-----
; DESKTOP SHORTCUTS DEFINITIONS
;-----

; Top Pane Shortcuts
*Shortcut "Adobe Illustrator" 91 32
sc_s1_illus.bmp sc_s2_illus.bmp .none
"F:\Adobe\illustrator.exe"
*Shortcut "Paint Shop Pro" 91 56
sc_s1_ PSP.bmp sc_s2_ PSP.bmp .none "F:\Paint
Shop\Psp.exe"
*Shortcut "Corel CAD" 91 81 sc_s1_cad.bmp
sc_s2_cad.bmp .none
"G:\corel cad\programs\corel cad.exe"
    
```

◀ Fig 2 FORGET ABOUT DRAG-AND-DROP: THESE SHORTCUTS IN LITESTEP ARE NOT FOR SOFTIES



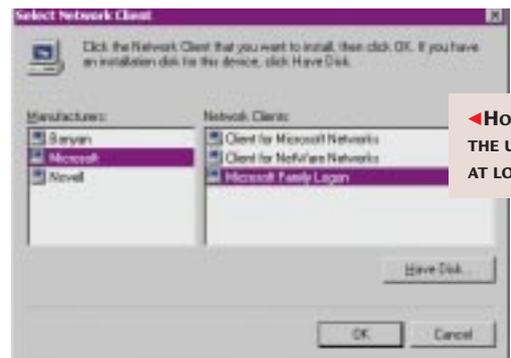
Questions

& answers

Q A friend and I both have Windows 98. I tried to set up multiple user logons for each person to have their own settings. When he logs on, he has a list of all the users to log on as, but when I tried that on my version it wouldn't work — it just gave me the old Windows 95 logon, i.e. Type Username and Password. The weird thing is that my version should be newer than his because my computer is only a week old. Can you help me?

BARA MUSTAFA

a If you go to Control Panel, Network, you'll see a list of 'Installed Components'. If Microsoft Family Logon is not included



here, then hit the Add button, choose Client and select it. The next step is to make sure this is selected as the 'Primary Network Logon' in the box below.

Q I recently bought a new Epson 640 colour printer to replace my old HP 560c. Now when printing I get an error message saying an illegal operation has taken place in ATMSYS.DRV. I cannot find any application that uses this file or ATM32.DLL, which accompanies it. I know they are Adobe Type

Manager files and they're both dated 1992, yet when I try to delete them I cannot do it from Windows as they're "being used". Deleting them from DOS and rebooting brings up an error message while Windows is loading and it simply comes back to the 'Safe to turn off' screen. The only application I can think of that may have used it was an old version of Adobe Photoshop 2.5 from my old machine running Windows 3.1. This didn't work under Windows 95 and so I deleted it.

GEORGE DEETH

a This is a legacy from your Windows 3.1 days. If you open the file SYSTEM.INI, which you'll find in the Windows folder, with Notepad, you'll find, somewhere near the

beginning, the line: system.driv=atmsys.driv Change this to: system.driv=system.driv This will stop the Adobe Type Manager loading and you'll be able to delete the files.

Q I've bought an ex-demo PC with Windows 98 pre-installed (I was also given the original CD). I find my Windows folder is 426Mb, with 166Mb in a sub-folder called Options. 165Mb of this is in another sub-folder called Cabs, which in turn has other nested folders.

Could you tell me if it's safe to delete these folders?
DERRICK LEWIS

a It sounds very much as if the Cabs sub-folder contains the Windows installation (.CAB) files: you can verify this by comparing the contents with that of the Windows 98 folder on the CD-ROM. As you have the Windows 98 CD-ROM, you don't need these copies on your hard disk and can safely delete them.

Q Whenever I install new programs on my PC, the name of the store manager and company where I bought my PC come up as defaults in the installation dialogue box that asks for my Username and Company. Could you tell me how I can change these defaults?
DERRICK LEWIS

a You need to change some registry settings, so back this up first. Then run Regedit and go to Regedit and go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion. The keys you want are in the right-hand pane. Look for RegisteredOwner and RegisteredOrganisation: you can double-click on either to change it.

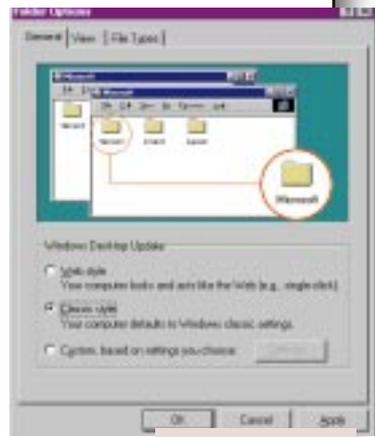
Q I still can't get Windows to remember my dial-up networking password, despite following your suggestions in June 1998's PCW and downloading and installing the appropriate upgrades.
CLIVE BRITTEN

a This can be due to a problem with the encrypted password file that Windows maintains. First, make sure you have a written

record of all the passwords you use. Then delete the file username.pwl. You'll find this in your Windows folder, with username being what Windows knows you by. Next time you enter a password, it should then be remembered.

Q I installed some BT Internet software and it has changed both my desktop and the appearance of Windows Explorer — in my opinion, for the worse. How can I get back to the standard Windows 'look and feel' without uninstalling the software?
JANE TELFORD

a Under the Start menu, Settings item you'll see some new choices. If you click on the Folder Options, you'll



see three options in the General tab. Choosing Classic style will restore the Windows 95 look we know and love. You may also need to untick View as Web Page from Start, Settings, Active Desktop, and right-click, then Refresh on the Desktop itself.

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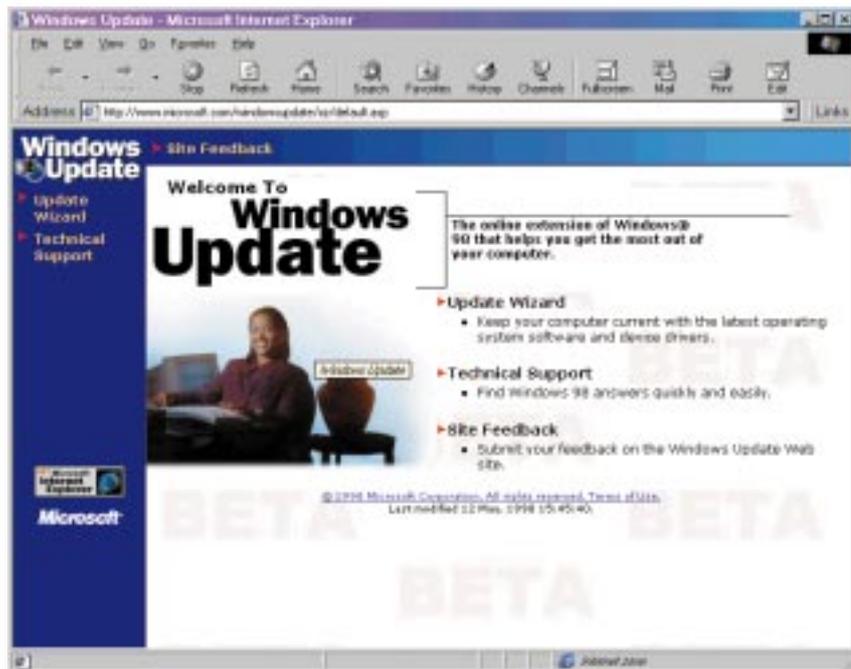
All right now

Tim Nott has a cure for those Windows update blues.

One of the things that makes life a lot easier in Windows 98 is the Windows Update tool. This connects you to the Microsoft web site and checks your system to see if there are any updates or patches you should have.

All very user-friendly, but it does have its oddities. One is that on several occasions when I've visited, it has been slow to the point of stasis. Another is that the automated approach, which downloads and installs updates without further user intervention, has the shortcoming that it doesn't seem possible to keep the downloaded setup files. So, if you want to re-install Windows 98 for instance, you have to start all over again to obtain the updates. Worse still, if you have a number of PCs to update, it seems you have to go through the same process for each.

Internet tools are not really in the province of this column but I'll make an exception for GetRight, which is a tool for managing downloads. What makes it relevant to this column is, as Mike Insley



points out, that it gets around this problem. GetRight, which at the time of writing was available from www.download.com/PC/Result/TitleDetail/0,4,0-21523-g,501000.html (phew!), will intercept the download and save it to your chosen location, although the MS Update site itself will report an unsuccessful download. Mike adds that he can't get it to work with the Netscape

Smart Update site, so if anyone out there can help him, please let me know.

It can be done!

This is starting to become a habit, but here's another "can't be done" solved. We've had the one-stop-close-down-Windows tip several times. The last sighting was in the July '98 column,

YOU CAN STAY AT THE PCMCIA

Simon Abraham mailed me from the Gambia with a power management problem in Windows 98: whenever he tried to use a PCMCIA modem from his notebook, it would take several seconds to "wake up" the power to the card, during which time the mouse pointer was also frozen. These devices are now more commonly known as PC Cards, because People Can't Memorise Computer Industry Acronyms.

In Windows 95 there is an option in Control Panel to have PC Cards permanently on, but this has disappeared in Windows 98. Although the visible control has gone, the

underlying Registry setting remains. Back up your Registry, run Regedit and go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\VxD\VCMM. You can then set the value of EnablePower-Management to 00 00 00 00.

This did the trick for Simon, who was so pleased that he wrote a utility to do this automatically and won himself a book token. I've included his file on our cover-mounted CD as PCMCIA Power



▲ SIMON ABRAHAM'S UTILITY RETURNS PC CARD POWER TO WINDOWS 98 USERS

Manager.zip. Although the file has been scanned with the latest Dr Solomon's virus scanner, it has not been extensively tested. Use it at your own risk, and if you have any queries, contact Simon, not me.



Questions & answers

Q Is there a way to determine the make of display card I have, without opening up the case?

GERALD ROSSI

A There are two ways. Firstly, when you switch on the PC, the first message you see on the screen should contain information about the display card. But sometimes this disappears too quickly to see, or may have gone by the time the monitor has warmed up. A second, better, method is to open a DOS session within windows and type debug
c:\>000:0 100
This will produce a "dump" of memory on the screen in hexadecimal, with the corresponding characters in a column to the right [Fig 3]. Most of the latter will be gibberish, but somewhere

be done, type "?" to list all the possible commands. You are on your own, now. This column takes no responsibility for self-inflicted injuries.

Q Would it be possible for you to include the latest version of TweakUI for Windows on your next cover disc? I do not have internet access at home, so I can't download it from Microsoft.

JOEL STANFORD

A TweakUI is included in Windows 98, though you do need to dig it out manually. Go to Tools\Reskit\PowerToy on the Windows 98 CD-ROM, right-click on Tweakui.inf and select Install. For Windows 95 users, and in answer to your question, that's a good idea, Joel, and you'll find PowerToy.exe in the Hands On section of this month's PCW CD-ROM. Copy this to a temporary folder on your hard disk, then double-click on it to expand the contents. This includes not just TweakUI, but various other goodies which are all documented in the Readme.txt file. Note that

Philips CD-RW (internal SCSI) drive. This attempts to load while Windows is starting, and more often than not causes the computer to crash irretrievably.

NICHOLAS DELIYANAKI

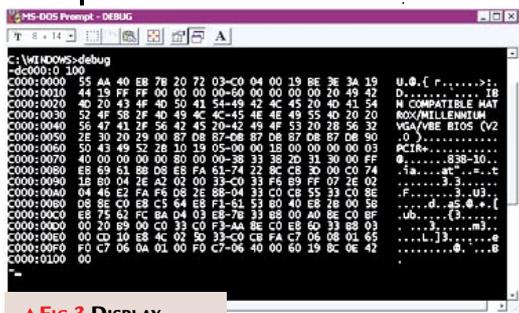
A I don't know about the Adaptec software nor why it should cause the system to crash, but I can tell you where to look for it apart from the Startup group. First, look in the file WIN.INI in the Windows folder. It's a plain text file you can edit with Notepad. In the first section there may be two entries: LOAD= and RUN=. The first starts any program(s) listed to the right of the equals sign minimised, the second starts them normally. Next, look in the Registry. Start Regedit.exe and go to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion and look for keys starting Run, Run Once, RunServices and similar. Repeat for the corresponding branch and key under HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE. Windows 98 users, as mentioned in a recent edition of the Hands On Windows column, have a much more elegant way of controlling all this from the System Configuration Utility, which you can find in the Tools menu of the System Information accessory, or by running MSCONFIG.EXE.

A I always have a twinge of conscience about answering this sort of question, which could be used for nefarious ends. But on balance, if there is a hole in security, people are going to find it anyway and those who rely on such security measures should be aware of their shortcomings so that more appropriate measures can be taken. So, if you start Regedit and go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Ratings, you'll find a binary value named "Key". Delete this and you'll have a blank password. You will then be able to get in to the Content Advisor settings again.
• Special thanks to Jason Ozin for helping out with this one.

Q In November's column you mentioned installing Windows 98 from scratch, rather than upgrading a 95 installation. I'd like to do this on a freshly formatted hard disk, but my Windows 98 CD-ROM states that it's an upgrade.

DECLAN GILBERT

A No problem, provided you have a "qualifying product" from which to upgrade. At some stage the Windows 98 installation will ask for this. You'll need to put a Win95 CD-ROM in the drive or show the floppy drive a few Win3.1 disks. Make sure you have a bootable floppy disk with CD-ROM drivers on before you burn your Win95 boats, though.



▲ Fig 3 DISPLAY-CARD SECRETS REVEALED WITH DOS DEBUG

there will be a text string describing the card. Typing "d" (dump) a few more times may well produce further information, and "q" (quit) will exit debug. Do be careful using debug; it's a programmer's tool that can be used to write to, as well as read from, memory, and hence can crash your PC in a variety of fascinating ways. Stick to the dump and quit commands, but if you want to see what can

you can install the lot by right-clicking on Install.inf, or piecemeal from the individual .inf files.

Q How can you prevent an application from loading automatically when Windows 95 is started? I don't mean the ones in the Startup group, all of which I have removed. The particular application is Adaptec's Direct CD which allows direct access to a

Q I put a password in Control Panel, Internet, Content, Enable Content Advisor, thinking this was a good idea with young children around. But I have now forgotten the password. Is there any way of changing it without first knowing it?

TIM ROGERS

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➔ **Following last month's** venture into the impossible, here's another long-standing "can't be done" which has now been solved. This one comes from Deepu Chandy Thomas, a 19-year-old engineering student in India. It is for either Windows 95 or 98 with IE4. You can give any folder a custom icon and tooltip text. Use Notepad to create a file containing the following, in the desired folder:

```
[.ShellClassInfo]
IconFile=Path to the icon file
InfoTip=Any text you want
```

Save this as DESKTOP.INI, then set the folder's system attribute from a DOS box by navigating to the folder and using the attrib command. For example:

```
CD C:\WINDOWS\DESKTOP
ATTRIB +S MYFOLDER
```

Note that if the path to your folder

[FIG 5]

```
[.ShellClassInfo]
IconFile=c:\windows\system\shell32.dll
IconIndex=41
InfoTip = Your text here
```

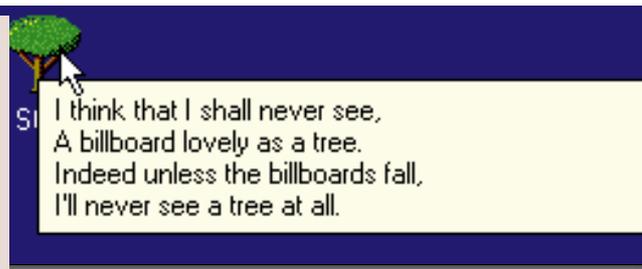
contains a long folder name, or names with spaces, you need to enclose it in double quotes, for example:

```
CD "C:\WINDOWS\DESKTOP\
MY NEW FOLDER"
```

Switch focus to the folder containing the desired folder (or in this case, the desktop) by clicking on it, then hit F5 to refresh it. You should see the icon change, and hovering the pointer over it will produce a tooltip containing the chosen text [Fig 3]. But things get more complicated if you want to pick an icon from a file containing several, as I found out after a glorious time-wasting afternoon.

First you have to catch the icon number. You can do this by creating a shortcut (to anything) and then right-clicking it, Properties, Change Icon. Hit the browse button and select the file from which you want to extract the icon: in the example [Fig 4] it's SHELL32.DLL which contains 80 icons. They are numbered, starting at 0 and working down, then across, so that the tree icon is number 41. Then change the desktop.ini file to read as shown in Fig 5. You might find that the icon does not change, even having refreshed the desktop several

► **FIG 3**
CUSTOMISE
FOLDER ICONS
AND TOOLTIPS
WITH A
DESKTOP.INI
FILE...



times. If this is the case, use the Tweakui "Repair Icons" tool, or go to Display Properties, Appearance and change the icon size by a few pixels. Hit the Apply button, then change the size back and OK out.

➔ **Here's a quick addition**

to the long-running "Shutdown blues" saga, where the PC never gets beyond the "Please wait..." screen. Mark Lomas suffered this problem and

cured it by using the Windows 98 System Configuration utility mentioned in the October *Hands On Windows* column. You can get at this from Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Information and then go to the

... the pre-set schemes include fountains, fireworks and a huge range of random patterns

Tools menu, although it is probably quicker to Start, Run... MSCONFIG. On the General tab, click the Advanced button and you will find a checkbox to Disable Fast Shutdown. Mark did so, and his problem disappeared.



▲ **FIG 4 ...BUT**
FIRST CATCH
YOUR ICON

➔ **Here's a funny thing.**

Robert Trzebiatowski found that some of his Start Menu were too long to fit the screen and showed little scroll arrows at the top and bottom. Well, that's a "feature" of Windows 98; on 95, the menu used to break into multiple panels. I get around it by organising my menus so that no single level is too long for the screen. However, when Robert tried this, the menus shrank but the arrows stayed put, and with only one item on a menu, the arrows obscure it. I can't reproduce this, because the arrows go away politely on my PC. So, has anyone else experienced this, or better still, found a cure?

QUICKIES

➔ **To select all** but a few files in a folder or Find results, first select the ones you don't want, then Edit, Invert selection.

➔ **When modifying** an item (such as the Active Title bar) in Display Properties, Appearance, clicking on it in the picture is quicker than scrolling down the list.



Questions & answers

Q I would like to archive large quantities of data from a server onto CD-R and wish to do this on a time basis (e.g. all files prior to 31st December 1995). Find file on Windows 95 and NT allows the files to be selected but loses the directory structure, which I need to make sense of the data copied to CD. Is there a method or utility available which will allow me to carry out this process?

TONY DAWSON

a You can manage this with DOS XCOPY, Windows Find, some spare disk space and a little ingenuity. Let's take an example. Say I want to copy all the files in my Hands On 95 folder and subfolders modified between 25/09/96 and 24/09/97. First, I create a temporary store for the files at F:\TEMP. Then I open a DOS box and type: `xcopy "e:\words\pcw\Hands On 95" f:\temp /D:25/09/1996 /s` The quotes are needed because of the long folder name. The date form must match that shown on the screen when you type DATE from DOS, and the /s switch copies subdirectories and their contents. The snag is that the date filter only works one way (i.e. it selects files modified on or since the date given) so my next step is to run a Windows Find on F:\TEMP to get all the files modified between 25/09/1997 and the present, with "Search subfolders" ticked. Now I have to be a little careful, as the copied subfolders, unlike the files therein, will bear the current date and if I delete those I'll

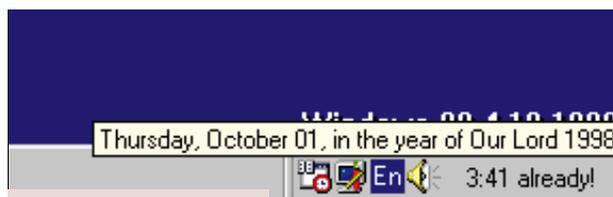
delete all their contents regardless of date. So, I click on the "Type" heading to group all the folders together and then delete everything but those folders (see "Quickies", p255), leaving just the new folders and any files they contain dated before 25/09/97, ready to be transferred.

You can find out more about the XCOPY command by typing HELP XCOPY from the DOS prompt. If you haven't got the DOS help files installed, you'll find them in the OLDMSDOS folder on the CD-ROM (HELP.COM and HELP.HLP). With Windows 98 you may also need to copy the XCOPY files (XCOPY.EXE, XCOPY32.EXE and XCOPY.MOD) to the WINDOWS\COMMAND folder.

Q On my computer and on my dad's laptop, the time is displayed in 24-hour format. On my mate's PC, his clock is 12-hour and has PM after it. I cannot find anything about it in Windows Help, the time settings in Control Panel or even the registry.

GRAHAM (SURNAME NOT SUPPLIED)

a It is in Control Panel, but under Regional Settings rather than Date/Time, where one might expect. You need to go to the Time tab and look in the Time Style box where you'll see something like hh:mm:ss tt. You can choose a different format from the drop list, or have more fun typing in your own [Fig 6], doing excitingly futile things such as putting the minutes before the hour. The salient points are as follows. Upper or lower-case H switches between 24- and



▲ FIG 6 HOURS OF FUN CUSTOMISING THE TIME AND DATE

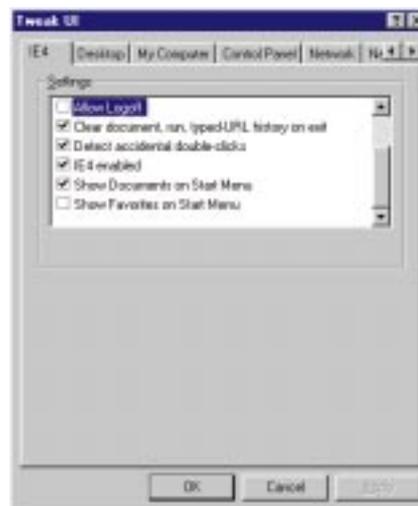
12-hour formats, and a double letter forces a leading zero. The tt suffix appends AM/PM, but you can change these as well in the boxes below. Unfortunately, you only get eight letters, which rather stymied my intention to have "Far too early to get up" and "Time for a siesta" on the system tray clock. Similar tricks apply to the Date tab: d and dd give the day number, with or without a leading zero, while ddd and dddd give the short or full weekday name. One to four Ms work similarly for the month, and two or four Ys give the long or short year. Keeping the best for last, you can add text anywhere in the date or time by enclosing it in single quotes, but beware that more than a few characters kills the system tray clock. These settings affect not just the clock, but the way dates appear in Explorer and in applications.

Q I have recently upgraded to Windows 98 and have succeeded in removing most of the desktop enhancements because I do not like the new look. But two items remain:

on my Start menu, there is a rather nasty "Log Off USER", and also the "Favorites" folder. Can I get rid of these? Especially the Log Off one because I do not have multiple users installed.

TOM GREK

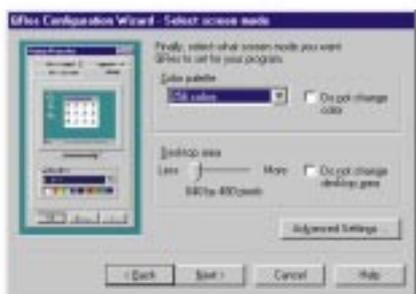
a Yes, you can kill both of these from the IE4 tab of TweakUI [Fig 7] which now comes with Windows 98. If you have not yet installed it, you will find it in the Tools\Reskit\PowerToys folder on the Windows 98 CD. Open the readme.txt file in Notepad for details of how to install TweakUI.



▲ FIG 7 GETTING RID OF THOSE UNWANTED START MENU ITEMS

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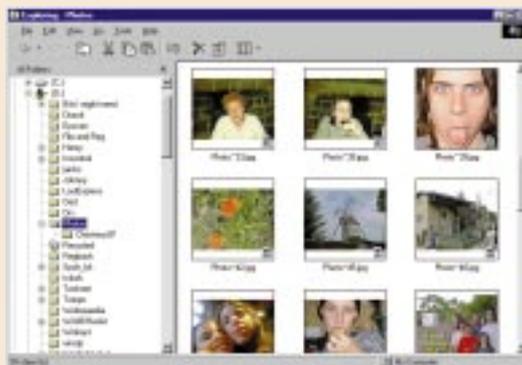
▲ **FIG 3** AUTOMATIC RESOLUTION CHANGE WITH QRES

Not to be outdone, Benjamin Kitt brings news of TClock by Kazuto Sato. It's freeware, and the modest 118Kb download includes the source code for those that like that sort of thing.

This time you get two impossibles in one. You can change the start menu graphic, the start button text and icon, and even hide the start button. As far as I can tell it does all this without modifying the User.exe and Explorer.exe files. The other impossible thing it does is display the date and day alongside the time in the Taskbar tray. There's all sorts of other diversions, including alarms and customisation, but you might have to figure out some of the more esoteric options by trial and error as the help file is still under construction. It does, however, contain the succinct advice that "If you get any problems with TClock, quit using it."

The third thing you can't do, as regular readers will know, is start Windows with different screen resolutions and colour depths loading automatically. Oh no, no way, as I pointed out in September's

QUICK TIPS



◀ **FIG 4** PREVIEW THOSE PICS IN EXPLORER

Here's a neat trick.

You probably know that you can jump around folder contents (and many other Windows lists such as the File Types) by typing the first letter. If you then type another letter without pausing, this will select the first item starting with those two letters. So, if I open my Windows folder and type N it takes me straight to the NetHood folder. If I

then type O it skips to Offline Pages. But if I type the two letters in quick succession, it highlights Notepad.exe.

◀ **Windows 98** users who don't have a removable floppy drive (i.e. most desktop machines) can speed up booting by going to Control Panel, System, Performance, File System, Floppy Disk and unticking the "Search for new..." box.

column, as this information is stored in the common part of the registry rather than on a per-user basis. Well, as Paul Brown points out, this isn't true in Windows 98. Display settings are saved with user profiles, so if you want to start up with a different resolution (say for

different family members or for games players) just create a new user from the Users icon in Control Panel [Fig 3].

Another solution is to use Berend Engelbrecht's QRES. This is an add-on for QuickRes, the resolution-changing utility that comes with the Microsoft Powertoy and is included with Windows 98 and later versions of 95. This adds another page to shortcuts, giving the new screen settings. It makes it rather more versatile, as you can effectively change the resolution for a single application, such as a game or children's title, and there's an option to restore the original settings when the program is closed. Astute readers will realise that on a multi-user machine, if QRES is applied to a shortcut in the user's StartUp folder, this will have the same effect as the Windows 98 method described above. Many thanks to Chris Elliott and Mapson for bringing this to my attention.

TECHNOLOGY IN ACTION

It's not strictly Windows, but I thought this story from reader Martin deLoughery was worth sharing. "About five months ago I was on the phone to my accountant. Towards the end of the chat I said 'By the way,

are you on email yet?' To which he said 'Sorry, it's a bit adventurous for us, and I'm not sure the partners would go for it'. About three months later I got a bill from them, and at the bottom of the page I see their new email address. "Super!"

I think. "That'll speed things up a bit." A day or so later I banged off an email reply and sent a cheque in the mail. SEVEN WEEKS LATER I got another letter in the post, saying only 'Thank you for your email message: it arrived safely.'



Questions & answers

Q I like the extra toolbars you can have on the Taskbar with Windows 98, especially the Quick Launch bar, but it's annoying when icons get "squeezed off" and you have to click on the almost-invisible arrow to get at the rest of the icons.

TANYA RAYMOND

a If you grab the faint grey bar at the left of each Taskbar section, you'll find you can move them around or even drag the Quick Launch bar out of the Taskbar area. Another tip is to drag the top edge of the Taskbar itself (assuming you have got it at the bottom) to give yourself extra rows of buttons.

Q I've recently started getting crashes when logging on to AOL – something to do with WAOL causing an invalid page fault.

BRENDAN ABBOT

a This seems to be a problem with the version of the AOL software supplied on the Windows 98 CD-ROM finding the wrong version of Msvcrt.dll. If you download the later version of AOL 4.0 from <http://aol.com> the problem should go away.

Q I have downloaded some pictures and saved them to disk. If I try to open all of them I get a separate Internet Explorer window for each picture. How can I open all the pictures in one Internet Explorer?

AHMAD NORDIN

a No, mate. You can't (shakes head sadly and

slowly). Not unless the pictures are attached to a web page. Your best bet is to use a program such as Paint Shop Pro (in our CD-ROM software library) that will display more than one graphics file at a time. Alternatively, see this month's quick tips [p259].

Q Recently my friend got Windows 98 and I wanted to copy some files to his PC. Because the files were too big to copy to floppy I used MS Backup. When I tried to restore the Backup files on to his PC they did not appear to be on the disk. I tried to restore the files on my Windows 95 PC and they worked. Is there any way I can get it to work with Windows 98?

IAN RONALD

a No, mate. Not no how (sucks air in through teeth). You can't restore backups made with Windows 95 on to a Windows 98 machine. Of course, if you use WinZip to compress all the files to a single Zip file, you'll find it has an option to span multiple floppy disks.

Q I would like to know how to disable and hide Run, Find and Settings in the Start menu without any new software. Is this possible?

RUPERT

a Yes it is, but it's not for the faint of heart. You need to use the System Policy Editor which is on the Windows 95 CD. Go to the Admin\Apptools\Poledit folder and read the installation instructions in Poledit.txt. You'll find instructions in the



▲ FIG 5 RESTRICTING USERS WITH THE SYSTEM POLICY EDITOR

Resource kit helpfile, which is also on the CD in Admin\Reskit\Helpfiles. With Windows 98, go to the Tools\Reskit folder on the CD and open Readme.doc which gives full instructions for installing both the Resource Kit and the Policy Editor. System Policies is a complex subject and to cover it in depth would take several months of Hands On, so I'm not going to go into depth – it's all in the Resource Kit help file (Windows 95) or the online book (Windows 98). But to answer the question, it's quite straightforward to disable these entries on a standalone PC set up for a single user – i.e. the "All users have the same settings" option is checked in Control Panel, Passwords, User Profiles. Back up the registry and run Poledit. Go to the File menu and choose Open Registry. You'll see two icons appear, labelled Local Computer and Local User. Double-click the latter, and click on the book icons to expand the tree. Under System, Shell, Restrictions, you'll find the options you are looking for: note that you can't remove the entire Settings entry, but you can remove the folders (e.g. Control Panel and Printers)

and the Taskbar settings. Tick the restrictions you want enforced, OK out of the box, close Poledit and confirm the changes to the registry. When you restart the PC, you'll find the relevant commands hidden and disabled – the Control Panel and Printers folders will also be hidden in Explorer [Fig 5].

Q I have created a custom-made boot disk which will format my hard disk, copy CD-ROM drivers to it and then run Windows 98 setup using the msbatch.inf file created by Microsoft Batch 98. I would like to know if there is any way that I can format my hard disk without FORMAT.COM asking for me to press Y to start.

PETER GEDDES

a Do I have this right? You want a boot disk that automatically formats a hard disk without confirmation? Just suppose the disk got left in a floppy drive by accident and the machine was switched off. Switch on again and it's goodbye data, goodbye applications, goodbye operating system.

PCW CONTACTS

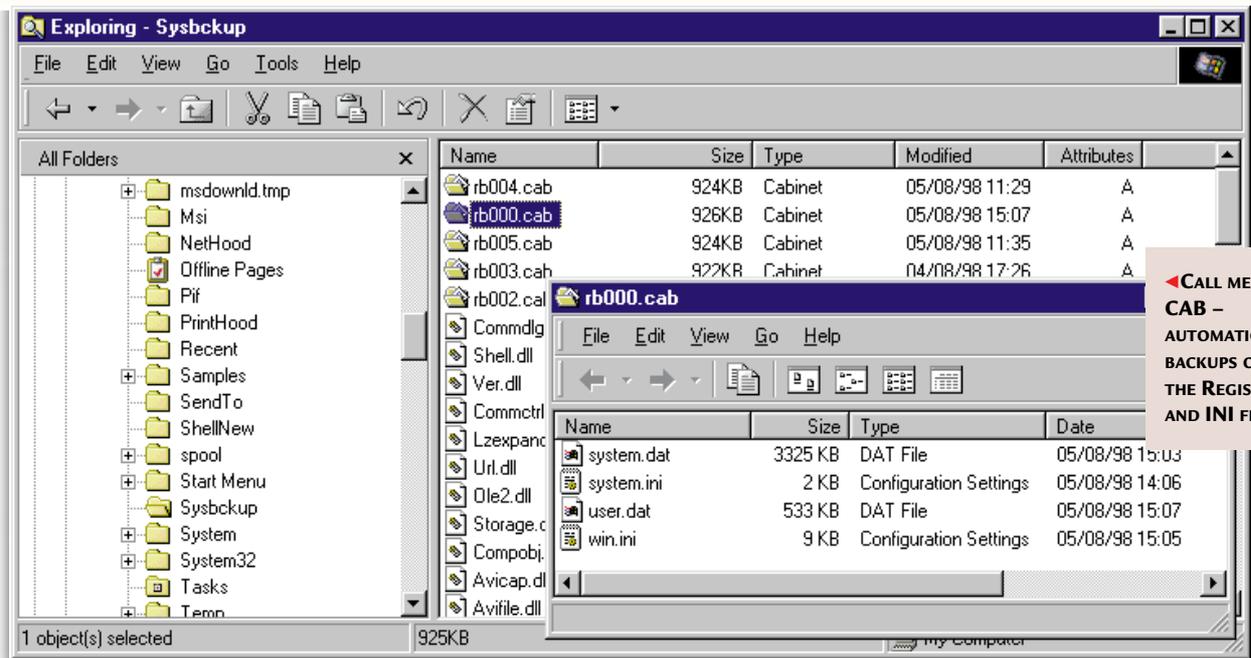
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Powertoys
www.microsoft.com/windows95/info/powertoys.htm

QRES
<http://home.wxs.nl/~einhard/qres.html>

Start Menu Changer
www.halyava.ru/aaalexey/StartMenu.html

TClock
<http://member.nifty.ne.jp/kazubon/download/tclocke.htm>



Beta blues

Tim Nott had cleaned up his PC act, installed Windows 98 from scratch and loaded Office 2000 beta. Great, but where had the configuration backup and emergency recovery utility gone?

Three exciting things happened this month. First, I decided to do something about my monstrous Windows 98 over Windows 98 beta, over Windows 95, plus various patches installation. So I bit the bullet, double-checked my emergency boot disks, backed up the bits and pieces I might need, and vapoured the rest. I then reinstalled a squeaky-clean Windows 98 from scratch. The second exciting thing (which rather undid the hygienic effects of the first) was to install the beta version of Office 2000. The third was to back up the Registry. Well, actually, it was the second, chronologically, for obvious reasons, but it makes a better story this way around.

Now you see them...

So I set off to look for those old stalwarts, the Configuration Backup and Emergency Recovery Utility. And there they weren't. A thorough search of the CD revealed no trace of Cfgback or Eru and, as far as the Windows 98 help files and Resource Kit were concerned, these un-programs had

been written out of history. Happily, however, I did find a replacement and although it's early days yet it does look rather good. It's to be found under the Tools menu of the System Information utility, which gets installed on the Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools menu. If you can't face the seven mouse actions involved, create a shortcut to (or simply Run) Scanregw. Under Windows 95, each successful boot created a backup copy of the Registry files, System.dat and User.dat, with the extension .da0, the idea being that if your Registry became corrupted you could replace it with these last known good versions. What usually happened, though, was that your Registry would get corrupted in non-fatal stages, so that these backups were often equally useless. So, all prudent users would use one of the aforementioned utilities, or other manual methods, to create registry backups. But both utilities were flawed. Cfgback would let you make nine different backup versions, but you needed to be running Windows to restore them. Your life-jacket

is back at the airport, so to speak. Eru, on the other hand, though it backed up other vital files and could be restored from DOS, tried hard to persuade you to back up to a floppy disk which, as anyone with a fully-fledged Registry will realise, is somewhat inadequate, size-wise. And, no, it wouldn't span disks. It just left what it couldn't fit, not backed up.

Don't boot, back up!

Windows 98 seems to have addressed this mess quite well, as far as I can tell. Every day, rather than every boot, it backs up the Registry to the Windows\Systembackup folder which, as with 95, contains spare copies of vital DLLs and so on in case the originals get copied over by third-party software. Both Registry .DAT files, Win.ini and System.ini get backed up to a CAB file. This has the same compressed format as the Windows installation CAB files, and you can View the contents and extract

I bit the bullet, backed up the bits and pieces I might need, and vapoured the rest

individual files from Explorer. By default, Windows maintains five copies, though you can alter this by editing the Scanreg.ini file. You can also opt to include extra files for backup, too. The other half of the package is the DOS-mode utility, Scanreg (without-a-w).

Questions & answers

Q When I create a new shortcut and type in a folder's name that contains a space, such as C:\My Documents, I am helpfully informed there is no such folder as C:\My. I've got SP1 installed. Is this a bug?
 NICK LEE

a Bug, Nick? Surely not. It's a feature — one that continues on into Windows 98. To stop this happening, enclose the target in double quotes, thus: "C:\My Documents". Alternatively, use drag-and-drop to create shortcuts.

Q Every time I restart MS Exchange and Compose New Fax, the "Do you want a cover page" option is greyed, leaving me to trawl through Options, Select a Cover Page, Browse. I choose one, then it tells me that it is already in the list of available cover pages: do I want to overwrite it? I click yes, and all the cover pages suddenly appear as options. We are then OK until the next time I shut down, when I have to start all over again.
 SARA BOURKE

a It sounds crazy, but this happens when the Archive attribute has been removed from the .CPE files — for example by backup software. You can cure it by right-clicking on each one, choosing Properties and ticking the Archive attribute box. A more radical cure is available from a patch: navigate to the Knowledgebase on the Microsoft web site and search for COVERPG.EXE.

Q With Active Desktop installed, the content of any Explorer window with detailed view selected becomes invisible except for file attributes. The number of items in the window is given correctly but I just can't see them. Any ideas, other than uninstalling the active desktop?
 GORDON FEENEY



▲ SO THAT'S WHERE THE COLUMNS WENT!

a It's not drastic enough for uninstalling the active desktop. What has happened is that someone or something has messed with the columns. Move the cursor to the column headings (or in

your case, heading) and move it to the left until it becomes two parallel vertical lines with an arrow sticking out each side. If you get just a double-headed arrow, you've gone too far. Drag this cursor to the right and you should see the first of the missing columns (Modified) revealed. Repeat to uncover the rest of the missing details.

Q A while ago I noticed that my screensaver would not come on; after a while, the screen would just go blank. I checked the Properties-

Screensaver dialog and found it set to None. After changing it back, I now find that whenever I reboot, the setting is reset to None. How can I return to having a screensaver as a default when I boot up?
 MIKE CLAYTON

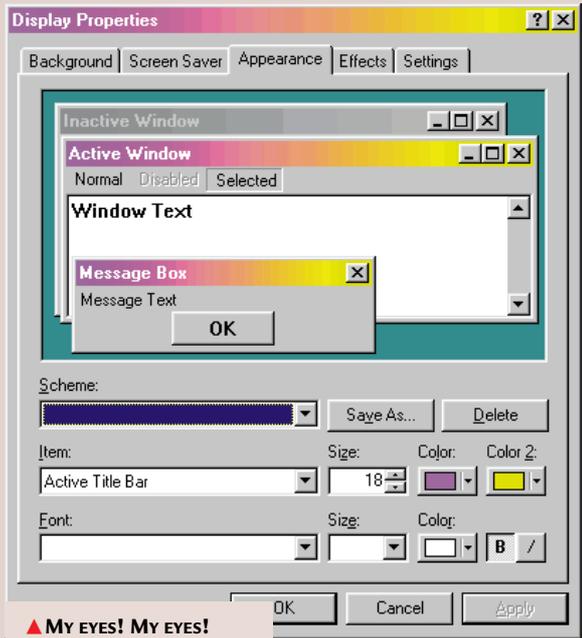
a Log in as the default user by restarting the PC and hitting the Cancel button when prompted for a name and password. You are now logged in as a "default" user. Set the screensaver, shut down Windows and you should find that this screensaver will now not only have "stuck" for all users, but that each user should be able to select their own, which will also be remembered.

Q Where has Fax support disappeared to under Windows 98? I can't find it anywhere on my machine or install CD.
 DAVE OLDORN

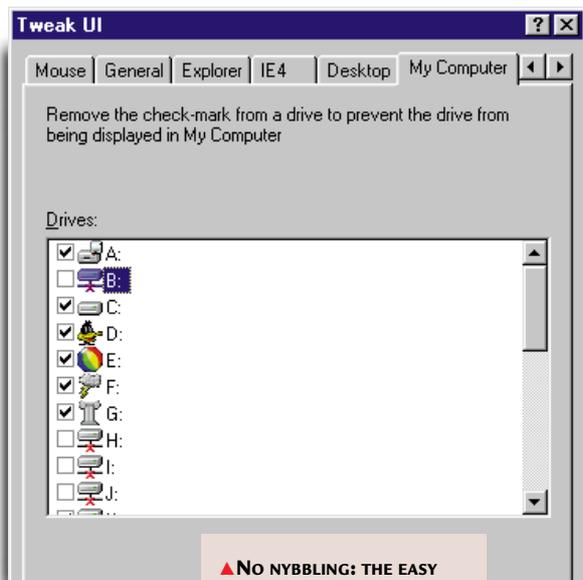
a Diligent research reveals that this is buried on the CD under tools\oldwin95\message\intl. You'll see a file called wms-fax.txt, which contains instructions on installing the fax software.

Q All the windows on a friend's PC have rather elegant title bars that "shade" from dark to light blue. Mine are boring old solid blue. How can I change them?
 MARK HUTCHINSON

a This, again, is a Windows 98 or IE4 enhancement. Right-click on the desktop and choose Properties (or go to Control Panel, Display), then click on the Appearance tab. Choose "Active title bar" from the Item list, or simply click on the title bar in the sample picture and if you have this facility you'll see two "Color" buttons that control the start and end colours of the shading.



▲ MY EYES! MY EYES! ARTISTIC SHADING IN THE TITLE BAR



[FIG 1] Behind the mask

```
#####ZY XWVUTSRQ PONMLKJI HGFEDCBA
00000011 11111111 01111111 10001110
03 ff 7f 8e
```

“Graphics” sub-menu, alongside the regular residents such as Paint Shop and about ten temporary guests which were taking part in a group test on which I was working. I ended up with a fulsome system of stacked menus encompassing shortcuts to all the Visio templates one could ever possibly

[FIG 2] The nybble table

HEX	BIN	HEX	BIN
0	0000	8	1000
1	0001	9	1001
2	0010	A	1010
3	0011	B	1011
4	0100	C	1100
5	0101	D	1101
6	0110	E	1110
7	0111	F	1111

If the Registry is found to be corrupt on starting, this will automatically replace it with the last known good version (pretty much as before). However, you also get the opportunity to run this manually and select which backup set you'd like to restore. As mentioned before, you can have more than the default five (up to 99, in fact) backups, and a command line switch with the Scanregw.exe can be used to add comments which become visible in DOS Scanreg. You can find out more from the General Troubleshooting chapter of the W98 Resource Kit.

But despite the improvements, there does seem to be something left on my wish list. The back-ups are replaced on a first-in, first-out basis and I'd really like to see a way of keeping key backups, such as “this is my original working Registry with just X, Y and Z installed” or “how it was before I installed Bloatware 6.0”. The only way to do this seems to be to copy the CAB files elsewhere, then extract them (but not to the Windows folder), then restart in DOS mode, then copy them back over the existing .DAT files remembering to clear and set the Hidden, Read-only and System attributes.

I decided to install Visio 5 this month. Having got through the various options of what I wanted installed where, it then asked where I wanted the Start Menu shortcuts put. Declining the default choice, I told it to stick them in my

need. And not a trace of any of the original shortcuts, which had disappeared beyond the reach of the Recycle Bin or even DOS mode undelete. So, if you install this fine product, be warned — don't specify an existing Start Menu folder.

Thanks to Sam Edge, Dave Johnson and Graham Mayor, who pointed out, *vis-à-vis* September's column, that there is another way of loading CONFIG.SYS devices for MS-DOS mode. To recap briefly, if you want to use, say, a CD-ROM drive in real-mode MS-DOS rather than a windowed DOS session, you have to specify new CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT commands in the relevant PIF. However, there is a utility that lets you load CONFIG.SYS entries from a batch file. Hence, you can load both components of the CD-ROM drivers from DOSSTART.BAT, saving considerable restart time. It's called DLOAD.COM and comes with SoundBlaster cards. <ftp://ftp.creaf.com/pub/creative/patches/ctload.exe>.

Remember I wrote in last month's Q&A section about using TweakUI to hide drives and how this was related to a Registry setting? I wrote that “no doubt some bright spark will write in to tell us how the other drives are calculated.” Well, just to recap, the setting is at `HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer`

It's a binary value labelled Nodrives, which defaults to 00 00 00 00 hex — in other words, all drives are visible. And the bright spark who actually got in before the column was published, as we were discussing related matters, was Peter McGarvey, upon whose anorak may the sun never set. To see how the mask works:

1 WRITE DOWN the drive letters in reverse order, separated into four groups, with the first group containing six leading “padding” characters.

2 ASSIGN a 1 to each drive to be hidden, and a zero to each one to be visible. You should get four binary bytes.

3 WRITE the hex code of each byte below. You should end up with something like [Fig 1]. If, like me, you can't do this in your head and find it equally painful using the Windows calculator, use the nybble table in Fig 2 to translate each half-byte. Then reverse the order of the bytes and this will be the value that appears in the Registry. So, 8e 7fff03 will hide all but drives A,E,F,G. And P. 04 00 00 00, as reported last month, just hides the C: drive.

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Defrag's a drag...

...but it has to be done.

Tim Nott relates the triumphs and the tears. And what about the final cut of Windows 98? The System Information tool is just one of the features that will cheer you up.

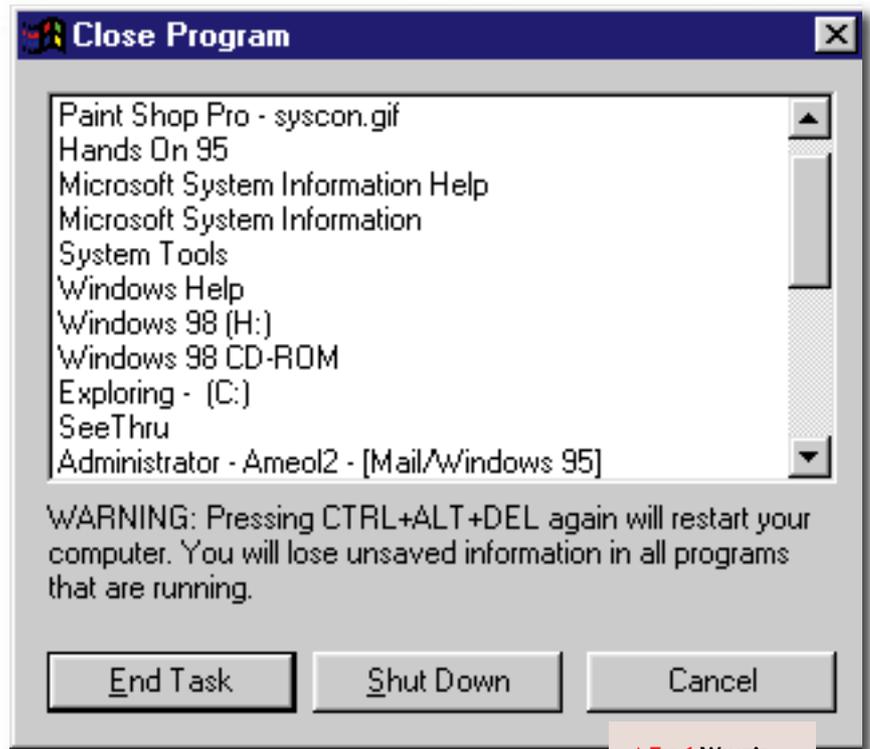
These Hands On columns are filed early in the PCW production cycle and at the time of writing I'd only been using the final cut of Windows 98 for a few weeks, although I've been running the beta for several months. One rather good feature is the System Tune-up Wizard. It provides one-stop shopping and scheduling for disk utilities such as Scandisk and Defrag.

I had a joyous email from regular Hands On correspondent Peter McGarvey who stated that following a defrag, the time to load Word 97 had dropped from nine seconds to two. And this on a modest P133 with 32Mb of RAM. You're kidding, I quipped merrily. I bet you're timing from a session where Word has recently been loaded and much of it is still cached in memory. And lo, McGarvey restarted his machine from scratch, clicked on the Word icon and two seconds later had it up and running.

Unlucky for some

On this machine I have an even more modest P100 but with 64Mb of RAM, so my 13 seconds seemed comparable with Peter's original nine. So, other things being equal, I should see the load time decrease to three or four seconds after a good defragging. Given the marvellous dual opportunity to speed up my system and go out for lunch at the same time, I set it optimising away. An hour later we had both finished. I clicked on the Word icon. But other things were evidently not equal, as it still takes 13 seconds.

While we're on the fragging subject, David O'Callaghan has requested that I "stop betting food items to people that Microsoft FindFast is the cause of all their hard-disk-gnashing" (*Q&A, June*). He cites screensavers, monitor power-downs, background printing and



▲ FIG 1 WHAT'S GOING ON? CTRL + ALT + DEL REVEALS ALL

scanned or defragged will cause the process to restart. And I'm rather surprised at the lack of warnings telling you this when you start. It's best not to have anything else running. Applications which Autosave are another possible culprit, as is anything that logs data to a file.

Windows re-adjusting the swap file as other possible defrag or scandisk stoppers. Well, I wouldn't have thought a screensaver would have caused problems, but Roger Metcalf wrote from Arlington, Texas, saying that he too had experienced problems with night-scheduled defrags. He wrote: "I was finally able to trace the culprit back to a screensaver program that occasionally writes to the hard drive. Since I switched back to a Microsoft screensaver I have not experienced the problem."

Snooping around

Tony Bolton still had the problem after disabling FindFast. Doing a Ctrl+Alt+Del (always a good idea to be able to know what's really running, see Fig 1) revealed several possible culprits, including: "Tk_schen, a virus-check scheduler; Loadwc, a web checker but I don't know what it does; lowatch, something to do with my Zip drive; and Ptsnoop (I have no idea what this does). As far as I know, the only other thing running is Dr. Solomon's WinGuard."

The short answer to all this is that anything which writes to the disk being

Tooled up

One thing I don't like about Windows 98 is the hideously slow Welcome to Windows tour, which is a triumph of design over content. But it did lead me to (eventually) discover something I do like: the System Information tool. This is squirreled away in Start menu, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, which is why it took a little time to find it. And it's not a brand-new invention, as Office users have had a similar feature available from the Help, About box.

There's loads of wonderfully techie information here about IRQs and DMAs. This alone is enough to keep a seasoned anorak happy for hours but the really joyful, and mostly new, stuff is all in the Tools menu.

Questions & answers

Q Is there a way of creating a shortcut to change the resolution and colour depth? I have several games that will not run in my normal 1024 x 768 x 16.7 million colour mode, and it's a pain to have to change back and forth to play them.

MICHAEL ESKIN

a Not that I know of. Some games are better-behaved in that they do this for you automatically (or sometimes after asking). The nearest thing I can recommend is *QuickRes*. This is part of the free MS Powertoys and gives quick access to all the resolution/depth combinations your display adapter can support from an icon in the System Tray.

Q I'm network manager at our school and have over 100 PCs. I currently use POLEDIT to restrict access to the Start button functions like Control Panel and Printers. What I'd really like to do is restrict access to drive C: for everyone but particular users.

NICK FURNELL

a Although there are more secure third-party solutions, you can hide drives in Explorer with the later versions of TweakUI (see screenshot, above). You should (at least according to the Windows Resource Kit) be able to do this with POLEDIT, too. But for a straight Registry hack try the following, having taken the usual precautions: `HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\ExplorerNoDrives=hex:04 00 00 00.`

You may have to create the NoDrives entry as a Binary Value. The "04" will hide C: and all zeroes shows everything. And no doubt some bright spark will tell us how the other drives are calculated.

Q I have a large file called SYSTEM.1ST in my C:\ folder. What is it, and can I get rid of it?

BARNEY RISSINGTON

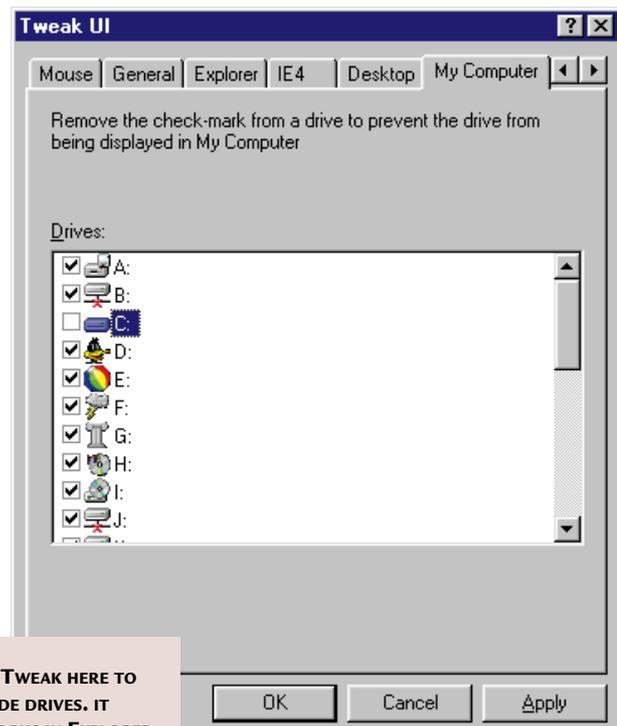
a This is a copy of the original Registry created when Windows was installed. It isn't essential to the working of Windows but provides a last-line backup should the Registry become corrupt. If you're desperate for disk space you could zip it up (unset the hidden and read-only attributes first) and stick it on a floppy.

Q I am about to purchase a new PC with a 6Gb disk. Although I am sure you covered the subject some years ago, I am unable to find the particular issue of PCW that dealt with using Windows 95 and Windows 3.11/DOS as alternatives. Can this still be done? And if so, how?

HAROLD ALEXANDER

a Yes. First you will have to FDISK the hard disk into smaller partitions, less than 2Gb each. Next, install Windows 3.11. Then install Windows 95 or 98. Ignore all the blandishments to replace your existing operating system and insist it installs the new version to a different directory. You'll then be able to dual-boot by pressing F4 or F8 at boot-up.

Q I have just bought a PC to help my wife who has started using them at work. The system at her



office uses Windows 3.1. Is there any risk in installing 3.1 on the same machine as Windows 95, as long as the installation directory is called something other than WIN or WINDOWS? The idea is that I would close down 95 and go into DOS from where I would start 3.1 from the other directory.

EDDIE MCCABE

a You cannot run Windows 3.1 that way but see the answer to Harold Alexander's query (previous column). But, as Mr Blair would say, there is a Third Way. Practically all Windows 3.1 programs will work fine in 95 (or 98) and you can still use the Program and File Managers that Windows 3.1 users have come to know and, possibly, love.

Q Following a spate of crashes and Safe Mode starts, I now get the

StartUp option screen every time I switch on the PC. Eventually, if I don't press anything, it counts down and launches into Windows, but it's rather a nuisance. How can I stop this?

NIGEL COMLEY

a Open Explorer and make sure that "View all files" is selected in "View, (Folder) Options, View". Then in the root of C:\ you will find a file called MSDOS.SYS. Make a backup, then right-click, Properties, and turn off the Read-only and Hidden attributes. Open the file in Notepad — despite the name it's a simple text file, but if you use the "Open with" command make sure the "Always use..." option is not ticked. You'll see a section headed [Options] and in here will be an entry named BootMenu=. If this is set to 1, then you will always get the Start Up menu. If it is set to 0, you only get it when you press F8.



● There's a System Configuration utility [Fig 2] that lets you disable entries in Autoexec.bat, Config.sys, Win.ini and System.ini. More importantly, it lets you disable all those things that start up automatically when you load Windows, but are triggered from deep in the bowels of the registry rather than the StartUp menu.

Star turns

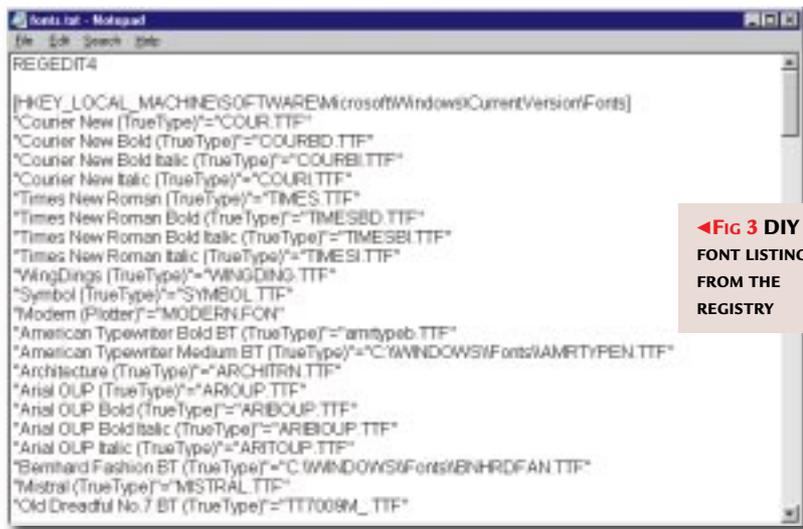
Then there's a System Report tool, to let you inform Microsoft in the unlikely event of your having any problems, and various other bits and pieces. The stars of the show, for those of a diagnostic bent, are the Version Conflict Manager and the System File Checker.

The first of these shows a list of all files that have been replaced with newer versions by software installation (including the Windows 98 upgrade). If you get problems with a particular application you can try restoring the original file.

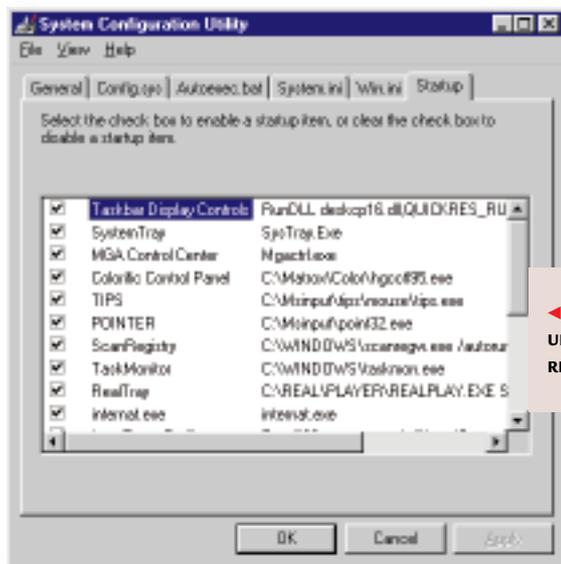
The second, as its name suggests, checks all your system files (with lots of options) and should it find any corrupted, will wrinkle out a fresh replacement from the CD-ROM without the user having to trawl about in the CAB files.

Font list tips ride again

- More tips on the font list front. You may remember the problem of getting a printable or saveable list of font names, together with their file names (*July issue column*)? Brian Handscombe has written a purpose-built DOS program that does just this. You can get it free from www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~cdman/.
- One thing I'd add to the Readme file is that to save the list, use the redirection symbol (for example, TTFNAMES C:\windows\fonts > fontlist.txt).
- And here is a beautiful piece of lateral thinking from David Mooney. Run Regedit. Go to MyComputer\HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\



◀ Fig 3 DIY FONT LISTING FROM THE REGISTRY



◀ Fig 2 START-UP MYSTERIES REVEALED

Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\FONTS. You will see a list of names and files in the right hand pane. Export the branch as, say, FONTS.TXT and then load it into Notepad [Fig 3].

If all else fails...

Here is a little lesson for us all. Following an enquiry from Duncan Stewart on why his CD Autorun didn't, I rounded up the usual suspects — Auto Insert Notification in Device Manager, AutoPlay as default action, and so on.

It still would not work, so Duncan took the eminently sensible step of contacting the supplier, because the machine was still under warranty. And they advised him to pop down to

Woolworth's and spend £9.95 on a CD-ROM cleaner disc. So he did. And now it all works perfectly.

Crazy as a fox

Regular readers may remember that this all started with the obscure tip of changing the "Quick brown fox..." text in Windows font viewer (PCW, March). There is nothing like a bit of trivia to get the correspondence

flying, and the response has been so great that I don't have room to name names. The search for the perfect 26-letter pangram produced, among others: ● Veldt jynx grimps Waqf zho buck. Yes, all in the dictionary. But I can't really make any sense out of it.

● Cwm fjord-bank glyphs vext quiz. Very popular, but I'm a bit uneasy about this Nordic sea inlet in a Welsh valley.

● XV quick nymphs beg fjord waltz. I'll let the XV stand, but surely not a good place to dance?

None of the French ones I received consisted of just 26 letters but they comfortably beat the 73-letter default screed: *Servez a ce monsieur le petit juge blond assis au fond, une biere hollandaise et des kiwis.*

No more! You'll get me into trouble.

PCW CONTACTS

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Crazy little thing called DOS

When your CD-ROM drive won't restart in MS-DOS mode, how can you overcome the problem? Tim Nott comes up with a custom configuration to save you aggravation.

What started as a simple question from Peter Sewell ("Why doesn't my CD-ROM drive work when I restart in MS-DOS mode?") opened such a catering-sized can of worms that my first thought was to forget the whole thing and go fishing. But duty prevailed, and I have got the situation more or less under control.

Drive ways

Under Windows 3.1, CD-ROM drives needed drivers loaded in the start-up files. For IDE drives (the most common) these usually consist of a device driver (.SYS) loaded in CONFIG.SYS, followed in AUTOEXEC.BAT by the MSCDEX.EXE program which "finds" the loaded driver and enables the operating system to access the CD-ROM drive.

Under Windows 95, for all but very old or proprietary-based drives, these Real Mode drivers aren't necessary as Windows detects the drives and automatically loads the required Protected Mode drivers.

The drive will also be accessible from an MS-DOS session running in Windows, even if that session is running full-screen. If you start a DOS window, hit Alt + Enter to make it full screen and type D:\ (substituting the appropriate letter) and you should be able to see what's on a CD-ROM with the DIR command. Typing EXIT will close the DOS session and return to Windows.

Please, no unloading

So far, so good. But if you shut down and choose the "Restart in MS-DOS mode" option, you'll probably find that attempting to access the drive letter produces an "Invalid drive specification" message. This is because Windows has unloaded itself from memory, taking the CD-ROM access with it.



First catch your PIF (Fig 1, left)...
...then dig in to those Advanced settings (Fig 2, below)

within will be processed when restarting in MS-DOS mode. This is fine for loading, say, a mouse or a sound-card driver, but as there is no corresponding file to process CONFIG.SYS stuff, it doesn't solve the CD-ROM problem. So this is what you do. Somewhere on your hard disk

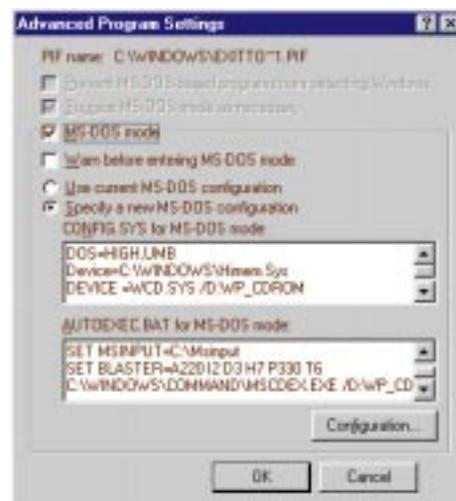
What you need now are those good-old real-mode drivers back.

Now, you may not even have an AUTOEXEC.BAT or CONFIG.SYS on your machine. Windows 95 doesn't need them, but usually on a default installation there are a handful of entries to set keyboard and screen country settings. It's possible to add the relevant entries here, but although this leaves you well-equipped for MS-DOS mode, under Windows this will at best just waste low memory. At worst (as Peter found out) it could stop Windows being able to access the drives.

Start me up

You may or may not know that if you have a batch file called DOSSTART.BAT in your Windows folder, the commands contained

(mine's in C:\Windows) is a file named Exit to DOS.PIF. Although (and I've given up trying to get my head around this) the .PIF Extension doesn't appear irrespective of Options/View settings, a Find File for *.PIF will unearth it (Fig 1). If you haven't got one, then Shut



Down, Restart in MS-DOS mode, wait for the command prompt and type EXIT. Windows will restart and you'll find the file has been created.

First make a backup copy somewhere safe, then right-click on it and choose Properties. On the Program tab click on the Advanced button — exciting stuff, eh? You should see that the "MS-DOS mode" checkbox is ticked (Fig 2). The "Warn before..." box doesn't need to be ticked

Questions & Answers

Q I've been using QuickRes along with the other Powertools since it appeared. What I'd like to do, though, is change the screen resolution to a particular setting whenever someone logs in. This is because I prefer a higher resolution than the rest of the family (who each have their own logins) and it would save any moans if the screen resolution were set to each person's preference when they log in.

Ian Wall

A Sorry, Ian, you're out of luck. The display settings are stored in a part of the Registry that is common to all users.

Q How do I find out what is executed when I run a program? For instance, DLLs and other bits and pieces. My CompuServe buttons seem fuzzy but if I run an AVI file this cures it.

Nigel Deeley

A I have no idea what could be causing these symptoms (or their cure) but I can point you to some software that will do as you ask. See the item on Filemon in the panel below.

Q When you click on the Start Button a menu appears. On the left of the menu is a graphic stating "Windows 95". Do you know how to change this graphic?

Richard Lee

A I don't, Richard. As far as I know, it is built in to the innards of Windows. But you can get rid of it by right-clicking on the Task Bar, selecting "Properties" and ticking the "Show small icons..." box. This also gives a neater and easier-to-negotiate top level to the Start menu.

Q I use WinZip to create and unzip files. How can I label a Zip file with a description without changing the original name?

Stan Gaffney

A Good question. To the best of my knowledge the only product that lets you do this is Zip Magic <www.zipmagic.com>. But if you want to stay with WinZip, how about this workaround? Create a new folder, right-drag all the Zips to it and choose "Create shortcuts here". You can then rename each shortcut with a long, descriptive filename. Double-clicking on it will launch WinZip with the contents of the target Zip displayed.

Q I usually have my icons arranged in a way that is convenient to find and access. The other day they seemed to have rearranged themselves and now I can't move them to where I want them. When I try, they just fly back to the left of the screen as if they were connected by elastic.

John Silver

What's going on? How Filemon can help

Wouldn't it be nice (see Nigel Deeley's query, above) to know exactly what files were being accessed and when. It might make diagnosing all those mysterious "Invalid Dynalink" calls easier. Help is at hand with the Filemon utility <www.sysinternals.com>. This monitors all reads and writes to and from every file on your system, with a scrolling list that shows various details.

It is quite astonishing how much activity is going on. Just clicking on the Start button produced 26 events and loading Word resulted in over 5,000 accesses. One good point is that you can filter what is and is not reported so you could, for example, ignore calls made to files in the TEMP folder or the MS Word spelling dictionary, and you can also search the results if you have a suspect in the frame. Filemon is free, as far as I know, and you can get it in both Windows 95 and NT flavours from www.sysinternals.com.

#	Time	Process	Request	Path	Result	Other
9094	15:02:28	Winword	Read	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\HFR87...	SUCCESS	Offset: 0600 Length: 4
9095	15:02:28	Winword	Seek	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\HFR87...	SUCCESS	Beginning Offset: 0664
9096	15:02:28	Winword	Read	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\HFR87...	SUCCESS	Offset: 0664 Length: 16
9097	15:02:28	Winword	Close	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\HFR87...	SUCCESS	
9098	15:02:28	Winword	Open	E:\WORD95\CA\HANDSO~2\...	NOTFOUND	OPENEXISTING ORDINAL#
9099	15:02:28	Winword	Open	C:\WINDOWS\HFR87803\IPC	NOTFOUND	OPENEXISTING ORDINAL#
9100	15:02:28	Winword	Open	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\HFR87...	SUCCESS	OPENEXISTING ORDINAL#
9101	15:02:28	Winword	Attributes	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\HFR87...	SUCCESS	Get Modify
9102	15:02:28	Winword	Seek	C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM\HFR87...	SUCCESS	Beginning Offset: 0600

Keep a finger on those file accesses

Questions & Answers (cont'd)

A Right-click on the desktop, Arrange Icons. At the bottom of the next menu you'll see Auto Arrange. Click on this to remove the tick beside it and your icons will stay where you put them.

Q I can't seem to remove anything via Win95 Add/Remove. I once got rid of lots of old uninst.exe files. TweakUI lists them but Control Panel won't remove them. Any solution?

Antony Stansfield

A This is almost certainly the result of deleting the uninst files. The TweakUI Add/Remove feature will remove the leftover entries in Control Panel's Add/Remove list. But that's all it does. It doesn't remove the program components themselves. Unless you are certain you've removed the program, any unshared DLLs and any Registry entries, the only practical

way to clean up completely is to reinstall the application to the same destination, then remove it again, either from Control Panel (as above) or from the program's Uninstall routine, if it has one.

Q In April last year you told us how to have just the drives displayed as icons when starting Explorer, by changing the shortcut target to read `c:\windows\explore.exe /n,/e,/select, C:\`. It has worked fine until recently but I now find that it is linked to `c:\windows\explorer.scf`. I have tried adding the suffixes but this doesn't work. I am running OSR2 with IE4.01.

Rob Marshall

A I think this is an active-bloodiedesktop thing. An .SCF file is an "Explorer command" and it runs Explorer the "old" way with C: expanded. The cure

seems to be to change the shortcut to point back to the original target.

Q I installed a copy of Eudora Lite and it opened a folder named Scripts. Some had interesting names so I tried to open one. I was thrown into the Open With command box and foolishly clicked OK while it was on the top entry "Acrobat Reader". Now, whenever I try to open one of these files I'm thrown into Acrobat Reader which will, of course, not read it. How I can break the link? The files in question have a .MOD extension.

Graham Keeley

A Open Explorer, or any folder. From the View menu, choose Options (or Folder Options), then File Types. Scroll down to the MOD file type, highlight it and hit the Remove button.



Fig 3 Turning off AutoPlay

and below these are two option buttons. Select "Specify a new MS-DOS configuration" and you'll see two greyed-out panels spring into full, editable glory: one for CONFIG.SYS and another for AUTOEXEC.BAT. Here, you can edit away to your heart's content, adding the relevant commands to load the real-mode drivers and any other stuff you might want.

The actual command syntax will vary with the hardware (that shown in Fig 2 is for a Wearnes 12X CD-ROM drive) so you'll have to dig out the relevant commands from the manual or driver disk that came with the drive. The .SYS file itself must also be present on the hard disk at the target

location given in the new CONFIG.SYS. OK out through both levels, Shut Down, and Restart in MS-DOS mode again. Your PC will then restart to a command prompt and you'll be able to access the CD-ROM drive just as in a Windows-hosted DOS box.

One important thing to remember is that you shouldn't switch off the computer when using a custom configuration in this way, despite my reply to Alex Pounds last month, otherwise it will reboot back into MS-DOS mode. Type EXIT instead to return to Windows, then shut down normally. We'll look at this next month.

Land of the truly paranoid

Many people use a password-protected screensaver as the first line of defence from casual passers-by while they are out to lunch. But out to lunch is the operative phrase here, if they think this is going to stop anyone getting at their PC.

The simplest way for someone else to get around such "protection" is to switch off the PC or press the reset button. This has the additional unwanted "bonus" of losing any unsaved work, leaving temporary files around and possibly doing worse damage. Once the machine has been restarted, the intruder has the run of it.

If you'd like to get *really* paranoid, it gets better. Although a password-protected screensaver disables user input, there are other things it doesn't disable. One such is

the AutoPlay feature of CD-ROMs, so imagine the following scenario: you've run off to get the boss to come and look at your fabulous spreadsheet which will revolutionise working practices and result in your promotion. Wisely, you run your password-protected screensaver from a shortcut to the relevant SCR file. As you leave, a jealous colleague slips "Mandy's Incredibly Naughty AutoPlaying Slide Show" into your CD drive! *You have been warned.*

Destructive practices

On a more serious level, bear in mind that an AUTORUN.INF file on a CD-ROM could be made to run any program, including those destructive to the contents of your hard disk. Fortunately you can disable AutoPlay (Fig 3), as regular readers will know, from the property sheet of the CD drive in Device Manager, by deselecting the Autoinsert notification box.

This, of course, has the down side that you need to run CDs manually. It's hardly a gargantuan labour, but you can make it easier by making a Desktop shortcut to your CD-ROM drive — double-clicking will carry out the default (AutoPlay) action.

PCW Contact

Email Tim Nott at win95@pcw.co.uk or write to him c/o the PCW editorial office (address, p10).



Not-so-hot **date**

'Quantum leap' takes on a new meaning for Tim Nott as his PC jumps a century and refuses to run Windows. It urges him to find a fix which will alert users to potential date disasters.

Reader Ted Wlodarczyk had a rather entertaining problem with his system date, which suddenly developed a Dr Who-like propensity for leaping uncertainly into the future.

The usual cause for date loss is a problem with the CMOS battery that keeps things such as the date and drive details in a kind of slumbering memory while your PC is switched off. But in Ted's case this didn't seem to be the case, as the date wasn't just lost, but seemingly leapt about at random. It ceased to be amusing when his accounts software found itself in the year 2002 and obligingly (and irrevocably) entered all his standing orders up to that date.

An operating system gone AWOL

While pondering this problem, I took a weekend break and returned to find that my OS (Windows 98 beta 3) had also been on holiday. It had, according to an eyewitness, gone straight from the start-up screen to the close-down screen without the intermediate ceremony of running Windows.

The next morning, the PC just sat with its brain hanging out after the BIOS check. I didn't get an error message that read "All those with operating systems take one pace forward... *WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, NOTT?*" but it felt like it.

I then managed to make several bad mistakes in quick succession. First, I didn't read the readme file that I had previously printed out. Secondly, I tried to boot from the emergency boot disk without checking that the write-protect tab had been set. That produced a message saying that this version of Windows had expired. Fourth, I still didn't twig what was going on. Fifth, I managed to boot with a Windows 95 boot floppy, then wasted a fair amount of time

waving the dead chicken of DOS virus checkers at the problem. Sixth, I wasted a lot of energy cursing Microsoft for supplying me with a beta version that expired before the stated date.

Seventh heaven

I was just about to make the seventh mistake, when a tiny bell rang from way back. Or was it way forward? I checked my PC's clock. It said 2098 — a world record for late copy posted to the editor. I reset the date, restarted the machine, read the readme, and realised what a total balls-up I'd made. What had happened was that the beta, realising that 2098 was long past its sell-by date, had obligingly removed its presence from first the boot sector of my hard disk, then from that of the floppy.

Having got everything reinstalled and finally working (*don't ask!*) I got to thinking what could be done about this jumping date problem. I'd had it happen before (although it isn't very common) and it can cause problems such as applications refusing to start, invalid page faults and invalid file dates, as well as disasters such as expiring software or screwing-up accounts.

Old friends, new batch file

What seemed to be needed was something that checks the date before Windows loads and any applications can run. Having blown the dust off my ancient copy of *"Ye DOF 5 Manual for the Enlightenment of Fcientifik Gentlemen and Ladief"* (Microsoft Press 1792) and together with a little help from my friends, I came up with the following little batch file:

```
echo. | date > c:\today.txt
find "1998" c:\today.txt > nul:
if errorlevel 1 date
```

This curious incantation works as follows. Since the date command needs the return key pressed after (or a new date entered) it would bring the batch file to a halt. The "echo." followed by the pipe symbol obligingly sends the necessary carriage return to the date command.

The output from this is, in turn, sent to the file c:\today.txt (which is replaced each time). The next line checks that the contents of that file includes "1998" — in other words, that the date command has, in fact, returned the current year.

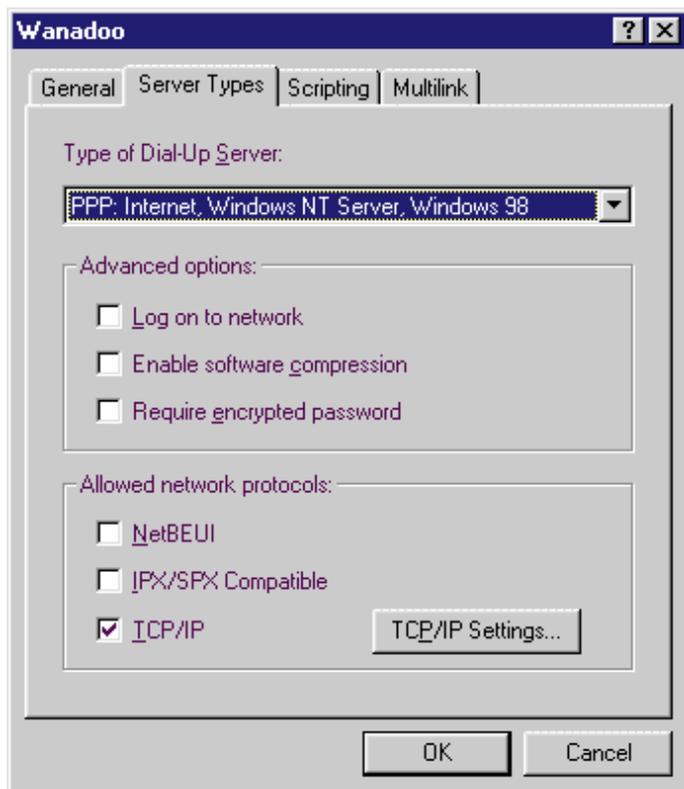
An apparently undocumented feature of the find command is that it returns an "errorlevel" code (zero if the find is successful, or one if it fails). The output of the find is sent to oblivion with > nul: as we don't need it on screen and can't do anything else with it.

Finally, the "if" command tests the errorlevel; if the find failed, the bare date command is repeated. At this stage the batch file halts for the user to correct the date, with the "wrong" date shown on-screen. If the errorlevel is zero, then the batch file ends or continues to subsequent commands.

Disaster alert

I've now got this in my AUTOEXEC.BAT. Unfortunately, it won't solve the Windows beta expiry problem, as the alert cuts in as soon as the PC reads the boot sector, but then, that won't be an issue for long. It will alert the user to potential disasters such as Ted Wlodarczyk's standing order fiasco, however. It's not sophisticated, it doesn't check month or day, but for three lines of code it's not bad.

There's a "known issue" with the pipe symbol, by the way. If you're editing the



Auto log-on:
it's not quite what
you may think

Logging lore

Following on from last month's tip about removing unnecessary protocols from your Dial-Up Networking properties to get faster logons to an ISP, reader Martin Paul goes a step further. In the same properties sheet, there's an option that says Log on to network (see screenshot, above). Now, I'd always assumed

batch file in DOS, you need to use ALTGR + the ` key (top left on main pad). If you're using Notepad (or another text editor) in Windows, you need to use Shift + \.

Floppy file safety net

As mentioned at several points in Hands On, files deleted from a floppy disk don't go to the Recycle Bin, they go straight to oblivion. There is a way to undelete them (see the November 97 column) but reader Iain Watt wins himself a book token for this rather ingenious safety net.

"I created a new folder on the hard drive called Floppy Disk Recycle Bin. I then created a shortcut to this on the desktop, to allow easy viewing of the files in the folder. I placed another shortcut to it in the Windows\Send To folder.

"If I want to delete files from a floppy disk I right-click them and use the Send to... submenu to send a copy to the Floppy Disk Recycle Bin. I can then delete the original file knowing that I can always retrieve it if necessary. Periodically, I empty the Floppy Recycle Bin by the normal method, which sends the files to the standard Recycle Bin. So, in effect, I have two chances to retrieve the files before final deletion."

You could do the copy and delete in one step by holding down Shift before you select Floppy Recycle Bin from the Send to... menu, or by right-dragging the files onto the desktop icon and choosing Move.

that this meant what it said, and that it saved you having to type your user name and password before connecting to the ISP.

Not so, according to Martin: *"When the Logon to network option is selected, the Dial-Up Networking service tries to find a Microsoft Windows network. If it doesn't find one, it times out."*

I tried this, and found I still logged in automatically, but much faster. And sure enough, clicking on the question-mark button and then the box, pops up the information that this will "attempt to logon to the network using the user name and password you gave when you logged on to Windows". Now, before you rush to tell me it doesn't work for you, let me mention that I've only tried this in the Windows 98 beta, with IE4, so your mileage may vary. Worth a try though, I would have thought.

Quick tip of the month

A frequently asked question is how to start Explorer with all the branches collapsed. And, as I've frequently answered, the solution is to have a shortcut with the command line

```
C:\WINDOWS\EXPLORER.EXE
/e,/select,C:\
```

What I never realised until recently is that if you have a Windows key on your keyboard, then this + E has the same effect.

- Thank you, Jonathon Quirk.

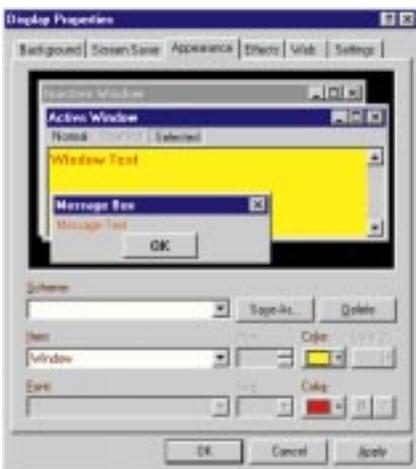
Questions & Answers

Q Whenever I exit from DOS mode, my computer restarts from scratch. It's a small point, but I've got an old, slow computer and am losing two minutes each time.

Alex Pounds

A This is because you're in MSDOS mode, rather than running a DOS session from within Windows.

In the latter, typing Exit closes the session, even if it's running full-screen, and returns to the Windows desktop. In the former, typing Exit restarts Windows. If you just want to close down, you can switch off the PC from the command prompt (usually C:\path>) in MSDOS mode. Don't do this from a DOS session running under Windows, though. Exit back to Windows and close down as normal.



Changing the default text and window background colours

Q How can I change the default font colour used in folder listings? I can change the font itself, but the colour control is greyed-out in the Display/Appearance property sheet.

Gill Kerridge

A You are almost there. Scroll through the Item list to Window. You'll find you can change the colour of the background and the font (see screenshot, above). This will affect all text-based Windows and controls such as drop lists.

Q As part of a recovery process following a system crash, I made an exact copy of my Windows folder and sub-folders on my D: drive. To my astonishment, I discovered that Windows actually revises entries in the

History, Temporary Internet and folders on the D: drive. However, these entries are not cleared if you use Internet Explorer's commands to clear the History and delete temporary files.

Storm Dunlop

A This is all to do with those mysterious DESKTOP.INI files that appear in these folders. We've had a similar problem before with copying the fonts folder to another drive. One reader found that deleting a font in the backup also deleted the original, so be very careful.

The best bet is to rename the DESKTOP.INI files in the backups. This will stop the behaviour. In general, if you want to back up the contents of a special folder such as Fonts, or Favourites, copy the individual files and links to a new folder (but not the DESKTOP.INI) rather than copying the entire original folder.

Q A new icon has appeared in the middle of my desktop. It doesn't appear to do anything, it has no title and I can't move it.

Geoff Hewlett

A Right-click on the icon, choose Properties, and you will almost certainly find that the Display Properties dialog appears (see screenshot, below). On the background tab, look at the Wallpaper settings. What you have here is one of the small wallpaper bitmaps centred on the screen. I'm not laughing, honestly...



The answer to that mysteriously inert icon

Q What are those little icons on the bottom right of the taskbar called, and is there any way to exert control over them? I have two programs I run on startup: one creates a button on the taskbar, the other a little icon on the

right. I'd prefer just the little icons.

Ashley Wakeman

A I don't know of a name for these other than System Tray icons and it's up to the program itself whether they are created. Sometimes there is an option to turn the icon on or off from within the program, but not always.

Q For some reason the Programs sub-menu, off the Start menu, is no longer sorted into alphabetical order. I assume IE4 has messed something up?

Kenwyn Davies

A You assume right, but you'll find that you can drag the items about and access the shortcut properties from a right mouse-click. One of the few worthwhile improvements of IE4, in my opinion.

Q I'm writing in the hope that you'll be able to tell me which font is used by Windows 95 for such things as the maximise/minimise icons. Having tried to housekeep my system, I've somehow moved or maybe deleted the relevant font and I'm now getting just numeric characters on the buttons.

"Superfan"

A Is that a compliment or your regular email address? Anyway, the font you have mislaid is called MARLETT.TTF.

Q I'm setting up a PC designed to be used by junior-school children. Is it possible to get rid of the task bar?

Pete Murphy

A One way would be to drag the top end down so that it's just a line, then adjust the monitor so it disappears from the screen. A better way would be to use a different shell to Explorer. Edit the shell= line in SYSTEM.INI. If you point this at PROGMAN.EXE you won't have a task bar and will be able to configure (and restrict) Program Manager in Windows 3.1 style [see page 239]. You mentioned in your mail that you are using the Applica software interface. I'm not familiar with this, but you could try making it the shell.

PCW Contact

Email Tim Nott at win95@pcw.co.uk or write to him c/o the PCW editorial office (address, p10).



The day the music **died**

Tim Nott likes music while he works but after installing a scanner, he discovered his CD audio disks wouldn't produce a squeak; here's how to prevent the same happening to you.

Music is important to me. So much so that when I first got a CD-ROM drive in 1992 I was so *unimpressed* with the crappy speakers on offer that I went out and bought a second-hand Sony tuner/amplifier and a pair of Mordaunt-Short bookshelf speakers.

A few months ago, I decided that fitting a second CD-ROM drive would be a good idea. All was fine and dandy until I installed a scanner. This entailed fitting a card into an ISA slot on the PC, which is, in effect, an extra parallel port and then installing the TWAIN drivers. (Just to go off at a slight tangent, I am told that this acronym stands for Technology Without An Interesting Name — does anyone know if this is true?). Anyway, all went fine and soon I was scanning away like billy-oh. Except that the next time I stuck a CD audio disk into the drive, no music was forthcoming.

OK, I know about all this stuff, don't I? The volume control wasn't turned down or muted. The CD audio tab in Control Panel/Multimedia was pointing at the right drive. The CD player applet was churning away, so it wasn't an autoplay problem.

WAV and MIDI files were playing loud and clear so I settled down for a good session of ferreting in System/Device Manager for possible conflicts. And then a

Shutdown blues update

An update on shutdown blues, from Alan Wooley, who went through the procedures outlined in my February and March columns: "To add insult to injury, the problem was intermittent. Finally the finger pointed at FlexiCD which will not shut down with a CD left in the drive..." And from Colin Spencer: "If you have an IDE drive, ensure that the master/slave jumpers are correctly set. If they are not, then the machine just displays the 'wait' screen and never displays the 'safe to turn off' screen. I found this by trial and error on my son's machine."



Fig 1 Snagit can capture text where the clipboard dares not go

little bell began to chime. It certainly was something to do with the scanner installation but the scanner hardware and drivers were innocent and walked from the court. A quick exhumation order on the PC casing revealed the true culprit. It was foolish, clumsy Nott, who had dislodged the little cable connecting the CD-ROM audio output to the sound card!

Of fonts and files

Richard Baddiley wanted to create a list of TrueType font names alongside their DOS filenames. A perfectly reasonable request, I thought, but of course the Font folder won't print a list. Furthermore, the DOS DIR command won't display the font names — only the file names. The only solution I could think of was to OCR screenshots of the

out to tender when a tiny bell tinkled somewhere over the other side of the Chinese wall that divides Tim Nott (operating systems) from Tim Nott (application reviews). Yes, Snagit (Fig 1), which I looked at in the *View From The Desktop* column last October, does this very thing. It's a screen grabber that has two killer features in this context: it will grab a window's contents as text and it will grab the entire, vertical, scrollable contents in one swoop. Note that with "vertical" (with the column and window width suitably adjusted) you can optionally exclude the file size and date stamps.

Fonts go AWOL

While we are in the vicinity, here's a common problem: the Fonts folder losing its magical properties.

The latest report comes from Hitesh Jethwa. His "Install new font" command had gone AWOL from the File menu. The easy way to fix this is with TweakUI (part of Microsoft Powertoys) where there's an

Fonts folder. Some might call this stupid — I call it lateral thinking. Some are right, however, as the resolution was far too low.

I was just about to put this

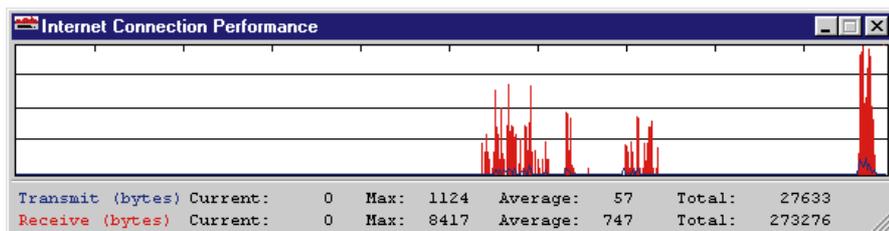


Fig 2 No beauty, but full of vital statistics

option to repair the fonts folder. If this doesn't work, or you don't have TweakUI, or would like to know why the problem occurs, there are three possibilities.

Starting with the simplest, it could be that the Fonts folder has lost its system attribute. To check this, right-click on the Fonts folder in Explorer, choose Properties and look in the Attributes panel: if System isn't checked, this is the problem. However, it will be greyed so you can't change it here. Instead, open a DOS window and, if not already in C:\Windows, type:

```
CD C:\Windows
ATTRIB +S C:\Windows\Fonts
```

If you're the kind of rugged individualist who doesn't keep Windows in C:\Windows or the fonts in C:\Windows\Fonts, alter the above lines to suit.

Restart the PC. If this doesn't do the trick then it's possible that the DESKTOP.INI file in the Fonts folder is damaged or missing. First, put the Windows installation CD (or second floppy) in the drive, open a DOS window and check out Listing 1. Replace <source> with the path to the CAB. If your CD-ROM drive is D: this will be D:\win95\win95_02.cab. If this doesn't do the trick, it may be that the Fonttext.dll file is missing or damaged. This should be in the Windows\System folder, so repeat the DOS stuff to rename the old and extract a new copy, altering the paths and filenames to suit.

Lighting-up time

In April's column, I mentioned Peter McGarvey's tip of getting the System Monitor to display modem transfer rates.

Thank you Stuart Taylor and Michael Medai for bringing Charles Turano's Netmon to my attention

Listing 1 — check out the desktop.ini

```
CD C:\Windows\Fonts
REN desktop.ini desktop.old
CD C:\Windows
extract /A <source> desktop.ini /L C:\Windows\Fonts
```

(Fig 2). This replaces LIGHTS.EXE (the flashing gizmo that appears in the system tray when your modem is online) and shows a graph with the average and maximum send and receive transfer rates. It's shareware, and it costs \$10 to register.

Foxy findings

Back in March, we discussed how to replace the Font viewer's "Quick brown fox..." with "Jackdaws love my big sphinx of quartz". This contains just five repeated letters. By June, Kevin Weedon had upped the ante to just two extra letters with "Quick-blowing zephyrs vex daft Jim."

Alan Cox matches this with "Waltz, bad nymph, for quick jigs vex" and goes on to try for the grand slam of 26 letters with "Jump, dogs, why vex Fritz Blank QC?" Well, if Jim is allowed then so is Fritz, but I'm not happy about the abbreviation QC.

Department of obscure tips

■ Icon with no name

Have you ever wanted to create a nameless icon? If so, you may have tried to use one or more spaces but spoilsport Windows won't let you use space characters on their own. What you can do is use the invisible character produced by holding down the Alt key and typing 0160 on the numeric keypad.

Thank you, Laurie Caton.

■ Log-in leap

If your dial-up networking log-in seems to take forever, try the following tip, from Martin Richter. In the Properties of the connection in the Dial UP Networking folder, clear all "Allowed network protocols" except TCP/IP. I've no idea why this should make a difference but having tried it on both MSN and Wanadoo, France Telecom's ISP, it shaved over 20 seconds off the "Verifying user name and password" box.

Questions & Answers

Q Is there any way of editing the Win95 shutdown routine: a sort of shutdown equivalent of autoexec.bat? My anti-virus software changed the routine to check the boot sector on my A: drive every time I shut down and I would like to make more useful changes.

Benjamin Garrison

A We've had this before but it was back in the mists of time. So, here we go again. You can run applications and then close down Windows with the batch file in Listing 2. The /W switch

Listing 2 — run apps and close

```
START /W MYPROG1.EXE <parameters>
START /W MYPROG2.EXE <parameters>
C:\WINDOWS\RUNDLL32.EXE user.exe,ExitWindows
```

ensures each task finishes before the next commences. However, this may interfere with your anti-virus software.

Q I have a huge file called w95undo.dat on my hard disk. What is it? Does it serve a purpose and can I delete it?

Alex K

A It's the "safety net" file left over when you install Windows 95 over a previous version; it leaves you with the option of returning to the previous version. If you've since installed and become reliant on Windows 95-specific software this won't be a viable prospect. But rather than delete it, get rid of it cleanly by using Add/Remove Programs from Control Panel. Take care that you "Delete Windows 95 Information" rather than "Uninstall Windows 95". As you're ostensibly "Removing Programs" the wording is rather ambiguous.

Q For weeks I have had a DOS notice when I switch on Windows 95 OS: "Invalid setting in the MSDOS.SYS file BOOTFAILSAFE=0". Despite having asked everyone I know, as well as several "experts", I have been unable to solve the mystery.

Richard Aylward

A This is the result of what we "doctors" call a cock-up. There is an

entry that can be put in the [options] section of MSDOS.SYS. If BootSafe=1 is present, the system will start in Safe Mode. If this is set to zero, or not present, Windows will start normally. The Windows 95 Resource Kit incorrectly reports the entry as being BOOTFAILSAFE=, so it looks like an over-zealous techie has configured your system.

The best bet is to find MSDOS.SYS in the root folder of your boot drive. It's a hidden file so make sure you have made these visible from View, Options. It's also read-only (i.e. you won't be able to save changes to it) so right-click and clear the

read-only attribute from the Properties sheet.

Now load it into Notepad and completely remove the BOOTFAILSAFE= line. Don't forget to reset the read-only attribute.

Q After roughly 30 minutes of use, my hard drive pages busily for two or three minutes, hanging applications and stopping work. This also happens straight from bootup, even if I leave the machine alone. I have tried re-installing Windows but it has made no difference.

Andreas Tawn

A I will bet you a hot chicken sandwich that this is the notorious FindFast at work. It comes with MS Office and sporadically creates indexes of your Office documents. I have yet to find anyone with a good word for this and, as noted last month, it can stop Defrag completing. Remove its shortcut from your Startup folder.

If you want to make a thorough job of it, open FindFast, delete all the indexes it has created, (otherwise Office may still try to use them) then Stop indexing and close it.

Q Is it possible to have more than one scrolling marquee screensaver under Windows 95? I have tried saving with different names and the latest overwrites the earlier, even when it has a different name.

Duncan Stewart

A No, the text is not stored in the .SCR file but in a file named CONTROL.INI. But there's a way around it with a hex editor and a sturdy anorak. Make a copy of Scrolling Marquee.SCR under a different



Fig 3 Yes, you can have multiple marquees with a little hackery

name (My Marquee.SCR, for example) in the Windows\System folder. Open this in a Hex editor and go to offset 4192 Hex and change the text of M a r q u e e taking care to preserve the zero-byte spaces between the letters and the length of the string — one letter change is enough.

Save the changes, and you will find that you will have both the original Scrolling Marquee and My Marquee available from Display Properties (Fig 3), each of which will accept its own text.

Q In Help, when I select Print Topic it prints in a bold condensed font that is almost illegible and probably uses tons of ink. Can I change this setting to something like Arial?

Edmund Potter

A In a word, no. According to the MS Knowledge base; although you can change the size of the screen font, all printing is done in 8pt MS Sans. This was never intended to be a printer font and, as you have discovered, looks awful. What you can do, however, is copy and paste the topic into a word processor, then format the text to your liking.

PCW Contacts

Email Tim Nott at win95@pcw.co.uk or write to him c/o the usual PCW postal address (p10).

NetMon pw1.netcom.com/~cturano/netmon20.zip
Snagit www.techsmith.com