

WELCOME BACK

It has been about six months since we last published this newsletter and a lot has happened. The most notable is our new web site. We took a course in FrontPage 2000 and designed a new site from scratch that is our new focus for 2003. The HELP!!! section is revamped with added content and a better division of help topics. Check out the new site at <http://www.mbts.mb.ca>

Since we had a lot of great feedback about the content and style of our original newsletter, we will continue in the same vein. However, since this publication is primarily for your benefit, if there are sections you would like to see added or changed, drop us a note at tekjournal@mbts.mb.ca and tell us how we can improve.

BITS, BYTES, & NIBBLES

Everyone loves to bash Microsoft, probably because they are so visible. However, in 2002 there were twice as many security holes found in the up and coming Linux operating system as were identified in all versions of Windows. How come we never hear about the little guy...

Microsoft Windows 95 is now officially an unsupported product. The technology is old enough that Microsoft has decided to stop creating fixes for it. Their primary effort now hinges on Windows XP and the new .Net family which is still labelled as a future release.

In order to maintain our OEM System Builder license with Microsoft during 2003, MicroByte TekSolutions will be selling Windows XP Professional at cost plus installation. Call us for details at 771-8930

SURFING THE 'NET

The Internet has become an extension of everything we (or most of us) do today. According to current statistics, by May 2002 over 580 Million people were connected to and using the Internet on a regular basis. With all those people using it, there must be something interesting to look at. But how do you find it...

The best search engine we have found so far isn't Google. It's Copernic. There is a FREE download available of this popular search engine driver at <http://www.copernic.com> Their description states "The entry-level Web search tool, used and trusted by millions of users worldwide, combines many search enhancement features along with an intuitive user interface, making your Web searches faster and easier than ever. Moreover, it's free!" In short, this tool acquires search from a host of different engines and prioritizes its findings. You search Google, Hotbot, Lycos, MSN, Altavista, and many more all at the same time, returning only the best hits from each one. This product gets you to what you are looking for faster than any other method.

Even though a lot of people have Microsoft Office installed on their computers, Outlook Express still seems to be the E-Mail client of choice. A great number of users also use their E-Mail client as a database, rarely (if ever) getting rid of old mail. But what happens if you have a system crash? All that mail and data is lost. Until now... QSX Software Group Marketing and Distribution, located at <http://www.outlook-express-backup.com> have a product to save your data. This product saves your email and attachments, folder structure, address book, etc. everytime you run the backup making it easy to save your data or transfer it between systems. But don't take my word for it, download the FREE 30 day trial and see for yourself.

With all the hype about who has the fastest Internet access speed, have you ever wondered if you are really getting your money's worth from your current ISP? At <http://bandwidthplace.com/speedtest> you can test your current connection and compare it to other connections. We have been testing our MTS ADSL connection over the past several days, and each time the results are a whopping 1 Megabits per second. Send your test results

with a general area of the city and type of connections (MTS or Shaw or Skycable) and will will publish a cross section in a future issue. If you don't like your results, and want to tweak the speed constraints on your system, check out <http://www.askmarvin.ca> and/or <http://cable-dsl.home.att.net>

FREWARE

Why pay for software, when there is freeware. Commercial software probably has more bells and whistles, and may be a bit more stable, but not necessarily so. Freeware generally fills a niche of here's a quick solution to a unique problem.

Many people don't like tinkering with the Windows Registry because it can severely hurt their system if they do something wrong. But what about programs that do it for you...

[RegSeeker](#) is a FREE Utility that has a tweak section to help optimize your Windows system, but it's main function is to help keep your Registry clean and optimized. Every time your system starts, the Registry is used to create the environment. It knows about system components, drivers, software that is supposed to start, links and shortcuts, etc. However, when some programs are uninstalled, they leave remnants of themselves in your Registry. These "broken" links help to slow down your system. This utility helps to keep it clean.

To help keep the proper programs starting, and to turn off the ones you don't want - like Roxio EZ CD in Windows XP, the [Startup Control Panel](#) from Mike Lin is a must for your toolbox.

TEKQUESTIONS

When I originally played CD's on my computer Windows Media Player would start, now Winamp starts. How come?

Windows automatically sets up a relationship between a particular file type and a particular program. This is to make your computer experience easier. There are now two ways to access something from your computer: Open the proper program and select File -> Open, or locate the desired file in Windows Explorer and double click on it. When you double click on a particular file, Windows checks that files header information for the appropriate file type, and then checks an association database to identify which program is associated with that particular extension, and then open the proper application and opens the particular file in that application.

When you install applications that have specific associations to specific file types, you are generally (but not always) given the opportunity to select which files types will be associated with the new application. Many applications allow you to select, or deselect, the file associations - So if you want Windows Media Player to play all media clips except MP3's and CD's, this can be chosen during the installation of another player.

You can edit the file associations in Windows manually by selecting Folder Options from the View or Tools menu item in Windows Explorer (depending on the operating system version) and selecting the tab marked File Types. File Types contains a list of all Registered File Types and the default or

assigned application used to open that particular file.

Shortly we will create and upload a document to our website showing how to edit these associations. Just remember, if the application you expect to open a given file doesn't, this is the place to start looking.

VIRUS ALERTS

On Christmas Eve a virulent worm was discovered, which was really a reincarnation of a worm first introduced in July 2002. **W32.Yaha.K** is a variant of **W32.Yaha.J** which is a work that terminates some antivirus software, firewall software, and uses it's own SMTP engine to email itself to your contacts contained in Windows Address Book, MSN Messenger, Yahoo Pager, .NET Messenger, and any file that has HT in it's extension. The email randomly chooses the Subject Line, Message, and Attachment. Another offshoot of this worm is that it may inhibit the use of your system claiming you no longer have the authority to run any program on your system and suggesting you should contact you systems administrator for help. If you think you are being bothered by this virus, call us for help.

Since December 24th, more than a dozen additional viruses have been reported. The current priority list includes:

Trojan.Ivanet - this virus attempts to conceal itself as an AVI file and will try to remove the regedit.exe program. It will also try to forc the system time to 06:06:06 AM.

JS.Seeker.J - This is a Trojan Horse that tries to change the settings in Internet Explorer. It will also attempt to change the last 15 visited web sites to the same Adult Site.

W32.ExploreZip.L.Worm - This is a variant of Worm.ExploreZip which uses Outlook, Outlook Express, or Exchange to mail itself to unread email in your inbox. This worm will also search networked drives in order to ingrain itself on your network.

Backdoor.OICQSer.165 or **Backdoor.OICQSer.17** - this is a Trojan that will allow unauthorized access to your system by listening to ports 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012.

TEKFUTURES

Future issues of this newsletter may also contain Tips and Tweaks for Windows 98, Xp, Applications, etc. In our next issue and all future issues after that we will bring back the TekSpecials to offer system components at expectional pricing, available for the current run of each newsletter only.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. If you have comments, suggestions, or critiques, please send them to us at tekjournal@mbts.mb.ca and be sure to visit our web site at <http://www.mbts.mb.ca>

See you next time...