

## SELF HELP - A PRIMER

Our reintroduced newsletter was well received and we thank you all for your kind words of encouragement. Deciding on a theme is usually difficult because there is a plethora of information to pass along. But with everything, the areas of interest from the preceding two weeks are usually foremost in my mind so that is where I tend to write from.

## BITS, BYTES, & NIBBLES

I was taken aback recently when I visited a few clients after releasing the newsletter. I wanted to see how it turned out in the “real” world, so I clicked on the link. Horror of horrors! The type faces didn’t transfer like they should have. All of the headings are supposed to be in Algerian typeface and none of them were. I rushed back to my laptop to see what happened, and they were ok. The problem - Windows will substitute a “close” font if the actual one doesn’t exist. The easy solution - give everyone the typeface. The problem with the solution, someone owns the typeface Algerian and it costs \$ 34.95 US to buy it. So, in the future I will be using graphics to replace the headings of each section. (If you have Microsoft Publisher on your system you probably already have the Algerian typeface.)

It seems that children have too much computer and too much time on their hands. Viruses are still running rampant, several new ones and revamped one that are more virulent are being released every other day. Or so it seems. And those troublesome people who don’t have the smarts to write a virus are passing emails once again to get you to cripple your system by deleting valid files. If you receive an email about: (a) A friend of a friend, or (b) A virus has been found that Norton can’t fix, or (c) there are files dormant on your hard drive that will wake up in 14 days and erase your system if you don’t remove them, or ... This list can seemingly go on forever. If you receive one of these emails, DELETE IT. DO NOT PASS IT ON TO ANYONE! More on this later.

Windows 95, like DOS, is toast. According to Microsoft, both these products have outlived their usefulness and have been removed from the support program. With the new 64 bit operating system due out in 2004, will anything before XP be long in being supported? Only Bill knows for sure.

## SURFING THE NET

We titled this issue, Self Help - A Primer for a reason. The Internet is a giant library everyone with a computer should have access to, and if you know where to look, and don’t mind reading a little, you should be able to fix minor problems, and tweak a little more power from your systems yourselves. Here is the short list...

One good place to start is our site: <http://www.mbts.mb.ca> where we suggest clicking over to HELP!!! Our help section is divided into sections where most of our queries to date have come from. Check back often as we will be updating this area, and subdividing it further each month.

If you are curious about what tasks are running on your computer, even though you haven’t actually started anything, a really good site is Answers that work. <http://www.answersthatwork.com> Click over to the Task List and then open your Task Manager to see what is really necessary, and what is just wasting resources.

If you have Windows XP, Home or Pro, Black Viper has probably the best site for straightening what is supposed to be turned on and off. <http://www.blackviper.com/> The area of most interest is XP Services Configuration where each service is described in detailed and highlighted as required (Automatic), optional (Manual), or useless (Disabled).

If you are into tweaking your systems here are a few sites that may enable you to speed up your

systems. The first is for XP Only <http://www.windowsexpatoz.com/> Since not everyone has XP, and not everyone is comfortable editing the registry, X9000 has an automated program you can download and tweak your system by description. Check it out at <http://www.x9000.net> A variety of tweaks and tips for all Windows platforms is available at <http://www.mydesktophelp.com/tips/wintip1.htm>

If you are really adventurous and you downloaded Copernic from the last issue, you can enter your search criteria. Using things like Windows tweaks, XP Utilities, Software Tips, yields a ton of information, some of which might just be very useful for your systems.

Has anyone ever wondered about email etiquette? I was curious the other day so I went looking for help. A great site, (and there are probably very many equally good ones) that I found is <http://www.emailreplies.com/> What are the Do's and Don'ts of using email? We all know how to use snail mail, so we just use email the same way. Right? Maybe not...

On the topic of email, one thing almost everyone uses are those cute little acronyms to describe something: FDD for floppy diskette drive, TTFN for Ta Ta for Now, BRB for Be Right Back. But what about the obscure acronyms that people use. No one wants to be a dweeb and asks what the sender meant. If you want to find out what one of these offbeat jumbles are, try these sites: Acronymy Finder and/or The Acronymy Dictionary

Here is a neat site for the inquisitive person in your life. How Stuff Works Answers your questions on computer related items, electronics, even the NASA Space Shuttles...

And if you are tired of learning things and want to unwind reading about other peoples stupidity, two sites not to be missed are the [Darwin Awards](#) and [Dumb Crooks](#). To quote the site directly "The Darwin Awards honor those who improve our gene pool by removing themselves from it in really stupid ways." It really is amazing what some people will do because they are curious.

## TEKQUESTIONS

How do I identify my IP address using Windows 98 and Windows XP?

Windows 95, 98, and Me have a graphical utility called WINIPCFG which you invoke from the Start->Run command line. Without going to the More Info >> button, all the information you require in most cases is presented on the main screen. If you have more than one Ethernet card in your system, you select the one you want but using the down arrow where the adapter card is highlighted in blue in the diagram. The Adapter Address is the hexadecimal identifier given to the adapter card when it was manufactured. The IP Address is the unique address your card, and therefore your system, has on the Internet. The Subnet mask, and the Default gateway may be of interest to troubleshooters, but for most purposes all you need is the IP Address.

If you are using Windows 2000 or XP, the command that you use is IPCONFIG. Unfortunately, this command must be run from a command line and cannot be done from the Run command. First you must open a Command Window, by selecting Start, then Programs, then Accessories, and finally Command Prompt. This will open what looks like the old DOS window. At the c:\ prompt you will key in IPCONFIG (upper or lower case doesn't matter) and if you press enter, you will be presented with the IP Address, Subnet Mask, and Default Gateway of the default Adapter card in your system.

The reasons for knowing the IP address of a particular machine are primarily for debugging network related issues, but also becomes important for using FTP to transfer files between computers, and using programs like Microsoft Netmeeting to have a face to face video conversation with another party.

## VIRUS UPDATES

As we stated at the beginning of this newsletter, some people have too little regard for others and too much time on their hands. These are the people that write viruses. But they also include a group of people who originate notes like the following:

A friend of mine received an email from his girlfriends brother identifying a new virus which cannot be detected by McAfee or Norton. Microsoft is also aware of the virus but is unable to help. The name of this virus is jdbgmgr.exe and it is sent automatically by the Messenger and by the address book too. To save your system use the Find Files feature in Microsoft Windows to locate the file jdbgmgr.exe and delete it before your system gets trashed.

**\*\* NOTE \*\* THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH IS A HOAX !!!!!**

The easiest way to tell a hoax from the real thing is the relationship of where it came from. The friend of a friend thing is too vague. Also, McAfee and Norton are in the virus business and chance are really good that if they don't know about it it doesn't exist. Lastly, if it reads really well, and it seems like it "might" be true, save your self some grief. Check it out for yourself at the different virus hoax sites on the Internet. Site 1 Site 2 Site 3 Make a point to bookmark all three so that you can verify at more than one site when it happens to you...

According to Symantec, the latest viruses to be careful of include:

**Backdoor.Krei** - a backdoor Trojan that uses Trojan.Slanret to hide its malicious activities. Backdoor.Krei opens a listening port (port 449 by default) on the infected computer and it gives a hacker full access to the infected system. Trojan.Slanret is a Trojan horse that allows a hacker to gain full access to your computer. If a program was set up to use this Trojan, the Trojan makes the program completely stealth when the program runs. The Trojan hides the file, process, and registry keys of the program. So, it is not possible to see the program using Windows Explorer or any other normal, user-level application. Any registry keys that the program created will not be visible using applications such as the Windows Registry Editor. Backdoor.Krei was discovered on January 31, 2003, and is a low threat.

**Backdoor.Sadhound** - a backdoor Trojan that creates the file, %System%\Mswinsock.exe. This file performs unauthorized actions on the infected computer. Symantec has received reports that many users are receiving spam with this Trojan. This Trojan does not have the ability to spread itself. Discovered on January 30, 2003 and is a low threat.

**Backdoor.Udps.10** - a typical backdoor Trojan that gives a remote attacker full access to your computer. By default it listens for incoming connections on ports 101 and 1700. The existence of the files udps.exe or isatray.exe may indicate a possible infection. Discovered on January 30, 2003 and is a low threat.

**W32.SQLExp.Worm** - W32.SQLExp.Worm is a worm that targets the systems running Microsoft SQL Server 2000, as well as Microsoft Desktop Engine (MSDE) 2000. The worm sends 376 bytes to UDP port 1434, the SQL Server Resolution Service Port. The worm has the unintended payload of performing a Denial of Service attack due to the large number of packets it sends. Proceed to Symantec Security Response for more information.

## TIPS & TWEAKS

Disclaimer: Modifying the registry can cause serious problems that may require you to reinstall your operating system. We cannot guarantee that problems resulting from modifications to the registry can

be solved. Use the information provided at your own risk.

### **Windows XP only**

Windows by default opens a task bar entry for every window (application) that you begin by selecting the application from the menu list. If you are like most people, three or four tasks will fit nicely, and then the task bar is too cluttered to allow for easy readability. Windows XP has come up with a fix for this very problem. Its called Taskbar Grouping. What it does is groups like tasks together and provides a popup menu access by application name. You will still run into readability problems if your have too many applications open, but if all the windows belong to Word or Internet Explorer for example, they will now be placed in one task menu on the task bar. Here is the tweak...

Open Regedit and Navigate to

HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced

and look for the dword "TaskbarGroupSize". If it isn't present, right click on the right pane, and create a new dword value. Double click the value, and enter value as identified by 0 - (default) Group by age (oldest group first), 1 - Group by size (largest group first), 2 - Group any group of size 2 or more, or 3 - Group any group of size 3 or more . My preference is 2, which groups all app's individually once the second instance has started. Exit regedit to save the changes.

### **Automatic Logon to Windows 95, 98 and Me**

Many users ask me how to bypass the Logon Screen in Windows because they find it annoying. It may be annoying but it is used to properly setup the networking function of Windows so you can see others on your network, or access the Internet. But it can be very annoying clicking the OK button every time you start your computer. Here is how to automate that task with a quick registry edit.

Open Regedit and Navigate to HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\Network\Logon. Right click on the right pane and create a new string value for Default Password. Modify the value of this new string to be the exact phrase used for a password of the default user of the system. Exit regedit to save your changes, and restart the system in the normal manner to see your fix take effect.

That's all for another issue. See you next time...