

## PRODUCTIVITY IS GOOD

What is the main reason we buy computers. Games? Entertainment? Internet & email? Business? Impress somebody?

We all have a reason for buying one of these, and we think our reason is the best. But, raise your mouse if you are fully utilizing the computer you bought for a very good reason! I would like to think there are a lot of mice raised up right now, but I doubt it. But maybe this issue will help you get more out of your computer than you did before.

I build my systems for a specific purpose, and bought my laptop to be my business system. If I am running my accounting on my laptop, I am getting my money's worth, Right? WRONG! To think I spent almost \$ 3000 to write a cheque and collect money is obscene. By adding more software, some of it included, some of it free, some of it not free, we can greatly improve the usability of our computers, and in return increase our Return on Investment. Here's how...

## SURF'S UP

One of my additions to increase my productivity was Microsoft Office. I have Office 2000 on my desktop, and Office XP on my laptop. One great place to start is the [Microsoft Office Template Gallery](#). Everyone knows that Office comes with a wide variety of templates for doing letters, invoices, resumes, faxes, etc., but what if what you want isn't there? It may just be here!

The Microsoft Office Template Gallery is a storehouse of formats to get you started. Do you want set up a Garage Sale, Inventory your house contents, make a Wedding Invitation, Create a business brochure, decide on a Marketing plan, do Personal Finance, ... And the list seems endless. All the templates you could want are here for the taking (as long as you don't plan on selling them).

Other Links from the Microsoft Office website include the Assistance Centre where you can get specific help using the Office Suite, Design Gallery Live where you can get increase your clip art collection, and this site even has links to updates for your office programs. So visit the [Microsoft Office Tools on the Web](#) and get more out of your copy of Office.

Software today costs a lot of money. Almost every software product I have bought has been over \$ 100 and many just get started at \$ 300.00. There has to be a better way. For commercial titles, No! That is why they are commercial titles like Office, Simply Accounting, Quickbooks, Corel, because these companies know that people will buy them. But what if you don't have to have Office to write letters, or Winfax to send/receive faxes. What if great software was available for the asking. Using Copernic (free at <http://www.copernic.com>) I did a search on Freeware. Here is just a hint of what I found... (Disclaimer - not all computer programmer or web designers are fluent in the English language. Sometimes free is used to get you to the site, but the software may actually be Shareware [Try before you buy])

<http://www.freewarefiles.com> - Warning - this site uses popups and the first one I encountered had Bikini screensavers available. Use a popup blocker. There are 14 different categories featuring Games, Organize/Business, Utilities, Drivers, and Web Development to name a few. Each category links to a further breakdown (sub category list), which leads to the software available. I started at Organize/Business after my troubles with Quickbooks, and found free software for limited accounting, invoices, even Point of Sale.

<http://www.absolutefreesoftware.co.uk> - All the software on this site is billed as Absolutely Free, Forever. The programs range from Games, to Utilities, to Internet, to Office, and more...

<http://www.karenware.com> - This is a great site if you are looking for utilities. WhoIs will tell you who owns the domain name you wanted, Show Stopper gives an alternative method to Shutdown, Power Off, Reboot, Log Off, Suspend or Hibernate your system, Drive Slack Checker tells you how much of your hard drive space is actually wasted, and there is lots more.

<http://freeware.intrastar.net> - Seems to live up to it's name. This site runs the gamut of software including Answering Machines, Anti Virus, Compression, Disk & File, Email, Internet, HTML, Science, Tweakers, Web stuff, and lots more.

Want to know more about your computer, but don't know who to ask? Try [Tech Tutorials](#). This site also has a freeware section.

Here is another free app for the Palm group. It helps keep track of your mileage. I may have to get a Palm just for this program. The one expense I don't keep track of is mileage and even though I can probably prove I drive more than I claim, recreating it would be a major headache. The site labels this for Palm OS 3.5+ <http://software.palm.com/PlatformProductDetail.jsp?productId=53323>

## TEKQUESTIONS

**Lately, when I sign on to the Internet, my Internet Explorer 6.0 goes to the Microsoft "Scan for updates" page, not my home page. How can I stop this?**

Your default home page may have been inadvertently changed in the settings within Internet Explorer. To reset it, open Internet Explorer and click on Tools and select Internet Options. In the dialog area marked Home Page, key in the URL you want to use for your home page, click Apply, then OK. Close and reopen Internet Explorer and your home page will have been reset. Alternately, you can type the URL in the address bar and navigate to the page you want. Then click on Tools, and Internet Options, and in the Home Page dialog section click on Use Current to reset the page, then click on Apply and OK. Closing and reopening Internet Explorer will show you the change has been accepted.

**I am using Windows XP and lately my system seems to be slowing down. Is there anything I can do to speed it up?**

The obvious and most unacceptable answer is reformat the hard drive and reinstall Windows from scratch. This is generally unacceptable because you have to backup all your data before reinstall or accept the fact that everything will be lost.

Other considerations however include regular defragmentation of your hard drive, regular cleaning of your temporary and other junk files, and freeing up memory space by unloading any background idle tasks. Defragging your hard drive is relatively simple using the Defrag system tool included with Windows. I have personally found Norton Speed Disk (usually only found on Norton System Works which has a lot of unnecessary programs) to be a better alternative. However, my personal choice is Executive Software's [Diskeeper](#). This product can be programmed to run whenever it is required and it monitors your disk's fragmentation report to keep it at a minimum. With Diskeeper running in the background, I know my drives are always fragment free. There is a free trial of this software at their website.

While you are on the Internet, or installing new programs, or even uninstalling existing programs, temporary files are being created on your hard drive. Once the operation that creates them is finished, they really aren't required, but they don't clean up after themselves and eventually clutter up your hard drive. Every entry (File, folder) on your hard drive must be accounted for and maintained. If you clutter it up with useless temporary files, your system will spend a lot of time keeping track of junk

files, and therefore slow down your system. One method to begin limiting the temporary files is in Internet Explorer. Click on Tools, Options, and the Advanced tab. Scroll down to the Security section and make sure there is a check mark in the option to “Empty Temporary Internet Files folder when Browser is closed. If you want an automated solution, check out Webroot’s [Window Washer](#). Their claim is that Window Washer “Washes away all traces of your PC and Internet Activity and improve system performance”. There is a free trial of this software at their website.

The third step in freeing up more power is to unload idle tasks running in the background. Here’s How: In the Run box, type, “Rundll32.exe advapi32.dll,ProcessIdleTasks”. I haven’t tried this option on an operating system except Windows XP Pro, so use it at your own risk.

## TIPS & TRICKS

**Save the display resolution in Windows 9x** - Use this Registry setting to disable the Display icon in Control Panel, as well as the Properties option when a user right-clicks on the desktop. By disabling these options, you will stop the user from changing settings that control monitor resolution as well as screen saver and wallpaper options.

Open the Registry Editor and navigate to HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\System  
Edit the value “NoDispCPL” (DWORD value) and set the value equal to “1”(without quotes) to disable the Display icon (if the value/key does not already exist, create it). To re-enable the option, delete the above value or set the value to “0”. The setting will take effect immediately and does not require a reboot.

**Unsigned Active X controls** - While you are surfing the ‘Net, a simple ActiveX control box pops up asking you to install something to make it better to view or do something on the page you are navigating to. If you press the wrong button, you may get something you don’t want. Our parents always told us “Never take candy from strangers”, and we didn’t, so why should the ‘Net be any different. Only if you know explicitly what will be added to you system, and you know you really need, should you ever think about installing from one of there popup dialog boxes.

If after the fact you decide you really didn’t want it, you can’t get rid of it using Add/Remove Programs because it usually isn’t there. However, you can view the Active X controls added to your system via the Internet Options, General tab by pressing on the Settings command button and then selecting View Objects. This pops open a window showing all the installed Active X controls. To learn more about a control, and whether you really need it or not, right click and select Properties to see the programs dependencies. Then you can make an informed decision of what is good and what goes.

## VIRUS ALERT

The latest threats according to Symantec Research are:

**W32.HLLW.Lovgate.J@mm** - is a variant of W32.HLLW.Lovgate.I@mm. It has been repacked to make it harder for existing antivirus software to detect. It is also a mass mailing worm that attempts to email itself to all the email addresses that it finds in the files whose extensions start with “ht.” If the infected computer runs Windows NT, 2000, or XP, the worm will attempt to disguise itself as the normal Windows process, “LSASS.EXE.”

**W32.HLLW.Shynet** - is a worm that attempts to spread itself through the KaZaA file-sharing network. Due to a bug in the code, the worm’s filename must be Regstr.exe to execute.

There are also a number of IRC related Trojans which can give someone else control of your system

without your knowledge.

There is also a new worm, identified on May 19th, which claims to be from support.microsoft.com and isn't. The worm will deactivate on May 31, 2003. There are different subject lines and a .pif attachment. Do not open this attachment, and make sure your anti virus software is up to date. If your software is old, or out of warranty, or you don't have any, contact us for a copy of Norton Anti Virus 2003 for \$ 45.00 plus tax. We will deliver it.