

## Windows XP Tweaks, Maintenance and Troubleshooting Tips<sup>1</sup>

### Windows activation information is in C:\Windows\System32\Wpa.dbf

Copy this file before you reinstall windows (i.e. clean install on a new hard drive) and you won't have to go through the annoying software activation/registration process (nay harassment).

### Cleanup Add/Remove Programs list is in:

HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Uninstall

### Enable Boot Defrag (places boot files together):

HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Dfrg\BootOptimizeFunction

(Change "Enable" key value to "Y")

### Speed up Disk Cleanup by disabling compression of old files:

HKLM\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\VolumeCaches\Compress old files

Delete the value of the "(Default)" key (The value is: B50F5260-0C2111D2-AB56-00A0C9082678).

### IE – delete individual entry in the Auto-Complete drop-down list of the web address text box:

Open the list with the drop-down button (arrow) > highlight the item by using Down Arrow keyboard key > press Del.

### Reset TCP/IP configuration to defaults:

Command Line = netsh int ip reset IPlog.txt

Netsh.exe is in C:\Windows\System32, IPlog.txt is a log file of changed registry keys.

### Network Connection utility:

Command Line = netstat -a complete list of open network connections.

Command Line = netstat -o Windows process ID for each open connection.

### Speed up HDD by using DMA (Direct Memory Access) technology:

Device Manager > Primary IDE Controller > Primary (Secondary) IDE Channel > Advanced Settings > select "DMA if available".

### Lock Kernel in RAM (disable moving system code from RAM to HD virtual RAM cache):

HKLM\System\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session Manager\Memory Management

Select "DisablePagingExecutive" key and change value from 0 to 1.

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<sup>1</sup> If you don't understand instructions in this document, you probably shouldn't use it.

Manually editing the Registry or other system files may render Windows operating system inoperable.

**Specify start folder in Win. Explorer** (Edit Windows Explorer shortcut to expand root folder):  
Target = %SystemRoot%\explorer.exe /n,/e,c:\

**Restore the Show Desktop icon in Quick Launch toolbar:**

Create a Desktop.scf file (use Notepad) in: C:\Documents and Settings\[user]\Application Data\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\ Quick Launch\

Text in the Desktop.scf file:

```
[Shell]
Command=2
IconFile=Explorer.exe,3
[Taskbar]
Command=ToggleDesktop
```

**Create Windows XP Shutdown shortcut:**

Target = C:\WINDOWS\system32\shutdown.exe -s -t 10 -c "Shutdown Message"

Start in = C:\Windows\System32\

Switches:

- l log off
- s shut down
- r reboot
- t xx time to shutdown (xx=seconds)
- c "text" warning message before the shutdown
- a abort (use "shutdown.exe -a" in Start > Run to abort the countdown)

**IE – control initial window size, position and home page:**

Tools > Internet Options > Home Page > Address

```
javascript: resizeTo(800,600);moveTo(0,0);document.location.href='http://www.xx.com'
```

**Windows 2000-style login: \***

Control Panel > User accounts > Change the way users log on or off > *uncheck* "Use the Welcome screen", (also disables Fast User Switching).

Note: If using Windows XP Welcome Screen and it's not showing Administrator login, press Ctrl+Alt+Del > release Del and press it again, while still holding Ctrl+Alt (displays Win2000 login).

**To force users to press Ctrl+Alt+Del to login (Windows XP): \***

HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Winlogon

Select "DisableCAD" key and change value to 0, (if the key doesn't exist, create a DWORD Value).

Note: This setting can also be changed in Local Security Settings (Start > Programs > administrative Tools). Change: Security Settings > Local Policies > Security Options > Interactive logon: Do not require CTRL+ALT+DEL = Enabled.

**To stop displaying last logged user name: \***

HKLM\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\System

Select "dontdisplaylastusername" and change value from 0 to 1, (if the key doesn't exist, create a DWORD value).

Note: This setting can also be changed in Local Security Settings (Start > Programs > administrative Tools). Change: Security Settings > Local Policies > Security Options > Interactive logon: Do not display last user name = Enabled.

\* For top three tweaks, you can also use the Windows 2000-style User Accounts management utility. Location: C:\WINDOWS\system32\control.exe (switch: userpasswords2)

Start > Run > control userpasswords2

\* Create Shortcut:

Target = C:\WINDOWS\system32\control.exe userpasswords2

Start In = %HOMEDRIVE%%HOMEPATH%

**Send a Messenger Service message:**

Command Line = Net Send \* *some text*

**Outlook – Stop blocking specific attachment:**

HKCU\Software\Microsoft\Office\11.0 (10.0 for Office XP)\Security

New string value: name = "Level1Remove"; value = "pdf;doc;xls;mdb;jpg;tif;gif" [*string of extensions, separated by semicolon*]

**Clean up custom Notification (Show Hidden Icons):**

HKCU\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Current Version\Explorer\TrayNotify

Delete keys: IconStreams and PastIconStream (Binary)

Note: This is an extreme step that will completely clear the Notification Area. Also, restart Explorer to clear the current list. Ctrl+Alt+Del > task Manager > Processes > select explorer.exe > End Process (*DO NOT CLOSE TASK MANAGER!*) > File > New task > type Explorer > OK.

**Control a Window with the Keyboard:**

Even when the title bar or sizing frame is off-screen and not reachable by the mouse cursor, you can still move or resize a window. Click on the visible part of the window and press *Alt-Spacebar* to bring up its system menu. Then press *S* (for Size), press the *right arrow* key to select the right-hand edge of the window, and press the left arrow key repeatedly. When the window is reduced to a manageable size, press *Enter*.

To move a window whose title bar is not visible, click the window or its corresponding taskbar button and again press *Alt-Spacebar*. Even if the window is entirely off-screen, not visible at all, the system menu will appear as close to it as possible, so you can use the menu's location as a pointer to the "lost" window. This time press *M* (for Move), use the arrow keys to bring the window back into view, and press *Enter* when you have it back under control.

**Internet Explorer's Kiosk Mode:**

Internet Explorer offers a Full Screen mode, invoked by pressing F11. This is called kiosk mode. You can launch IE in its true Kiosk mode by entering *iexplore -k* in the Start menu's Run dialog, appending the URL of the Web site you want it to open. You could also create a shortcut containing this command line. The resulting window will totally fill the screen with the selected page—no frame, no title bar, no menu, and no toolbar.

Savvy users could still get around this limitation by controlling IE through the keyboard. By typing *Ctrl-O* or *Ctrl-L* they could invoke the Open dialog. *Ctrl-N* would open a new window that's not in Kiosk mode, and *Shift-clicking* a link would open that link in a non-Kiosk window. *Alt-F4* or *Ctrl-W* would close the Kiosk-mode window.

You can lock down these key combinations using restrictions in the Registry.

HKLM\SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft Internet Explorer\Restrictions

Find or create each of the following DWORD values and setting its data to 1:

NoBrowserClose (disables closing the browser window)

NoBrowserContextMenu (disables right-click context menu)

NoFileOpen (disables use of Ctrl-O or Ctrl-L to launch an arbitrary URL)

NoOpenInNewWnd (disables opening a link in a new window via Ctrl-N or Shift-click)