



Box of delights

Tim Nott keeps it small and sweet with a selection of delectable shareware utilities and other goodies. And for those feeling jaded with mammoth applications, these are strictly lightweight.

After last month's descent into the bowels of the Registry, I thought we all needed a break. Well, I certainly do. So this month we'll take it easy with a look at some new shareware utilities, a selection of your letters and email, and ten more tips.

We've grown so used to the assumption that "bigger is better", what with 70Mb office suites and 26Mb fax packages, that it's wonderfully refreshing to see some genuinely tiny applications. First out of the box is Trayexit, weighing in at a small but perfectly-formed 21Kb. If you're tired of seeing the Shut Down Windows dialogue, then this is for you. Run Trayexit (preferably from a shortcut in your Startup folder) and you'll be rewarded with an icon of an open door in the System Tray — the recessed part of the Taskbar that contains the clock. Left double-click exits Windows, right double-click restarts your PC — both without further ado. You do of course get prompted to save any open files. And that's it, except to say that it's by Joe Cotellesse (joecot@netaxs.com.), it's free, and like the rest of the utilities mentioned here, it's on the CD-ROM (Trayexit.zip).

Lunar module

One question must be off on the mind of PC users: "What is the current phase of the moon?" It is this, after all, that apparently controls many Windows 95 settings, and from which we get the word "lunatic". So let's give a warm welcome to the Beta version of Locutus Codeware's Moon-phase, well worth the sacrifice of 54Kb of disk space. Another one for your Startup group, this deposits an icon in the System Tray showing the current state of that influential celestial body. Linger the

pointer over the icon, and a pop-up will give the age of the moon* in days. Be careful, though; the documentation warns that due to the non-linear rotation of the Earth and the difference between ephemeris and universal time, the lunar date is not 100 percent accurate. The Harvey algorithm used is only accurate to one day, so don't go scheduling your favourite rite — such as a full hard disk back-up — by it. Locutus is at <http://www.wimsey.com/locutus>, and registration for this shareware product is a very unastronomical \$3. The author, Argun Tekant, can also be contacted on Compu-Serve — 76300,2572. Look for Moonphas.zip on the CD-ROM.

*And before you all write in complaining that the moon is billions of years old and there wouldn't be room on the screen for all the digits, I'm talking phenomenologically rather than selenologically.

Little Imp

A third contender for the Startup/System tray stakes is George Harth's Imp Virtual Window Manager (<http://www.kent.edu/~gharth>). If you've ever used anything like Bigdesk or Dashboard, which

give you multiple desktops on which to park applications, then this might interest you. The icon in the tray lets you turn Imp on and off, as well as accessing several options. With Imp turned on, you get a small but resizeable free-floating grid showing miniatures of up to nine virtual screens. Windows are shown as plain white rectangles on this, with pop-up titles, and you can drag them from one section to another — the real Windows will follow suit. Right-clicking on the contents of that section, though the Start bar and all Desktop icons "move" with you.

With "Motion Switching", moving the mouse pointer to the edge of the screen jumps to the adjacent Desktop. This takes some getting used to: I was starting to get motion sickness as the screen suddenly lurched from this column to a screen full of blue sky; but you can adjust the sensitivity of this feature or turn it off completely.

Other options include customising the colours on the mini-screen and, amazingly, this all packs into 68Kb. It's shareware, not freeware, and registration is \$15. Look for Impvwm.zip on this month's CD-ROM, and please do read the documentation — there are limitations with screensavers.

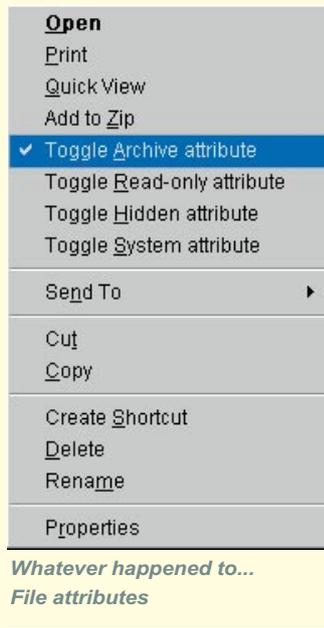
One-note Samba

Postit is yet another utility for the System Tray. Double-click on the little yellow square, and, as you may have guessed, a little yellow Post-It style note appears on the Desktop, into which you can type text. Unlike similar applications, such as Notez or Winpost, you can only have one note, and there isn't a bell or whistle in sight. The note isn't resizeable and can only contain eleven lines of text — about 320 characters, which are saved in an .INI file between sessions until you delete them from the note. You can select some (or



with Ctrl + A, all) of the contents and copy to the clipboard as normal. You can't change the font or colour — in fact, the only option is "always on top". I can't make up my mind whether I like it in spite of, or because of, these limitations, but like it I do. It's great for those moments when you suddenly need to jot something down — an idea, a reminder, a phone number — and you can't find a pen or be bothered to load your word processor, contact database or to-do list. The Readme file makes no mention of registration so I assume

it is freeware, and well worth 34Kb of anyone's hard disk. The author can be contacted at Mathieu-MARCIACQ@Coktel-Vision-FR.cmail.compuserve.com, and



Postit.zip is the file to look for on the CD-ROM.

Since the System Tray is now getting rather loaded, we'll move on to the Context (right-button) menu while still maintaining the "Small is beautiful" theme. Remember File Attributes? In File Manager, you had the option to view whether a file had its System, Read-only, Archive or Hidden attributes set. In Windows 95, you have to dig into the Property sheet to find this out.

To install, unzip Attrmenu.zip into a temporary folder, right click on Attrmenu.inf and select Install. When I tried this, the installation routine complained it couldn't find the .DLL, even though the path in the dialogue box seemed correct. This seemed to be a

Top Ten Tips & Tricks

1. Autoplay To disable Autoplay of audio CDs and CD-ROMs by default, go to Control Panel/System/Device Manager. Select your named CD-ROM drive — you may have to expand the generic CD-ROM or SCSI controller entry by clicking on the plus sign. Click on the Properties button, then the Settings tab. Click on the tick by Auto insert notification to remove it.

2. Explore or Open? Shift + double click on My Computer, any of the icons in it or any folder Explores, rather than Opens, the drive or folder.

3. Folder icons Though you can't change the default icon for a folder — well, I haven't found a way — you can change that of a shortcut to a folder, which is useful if you have shortcuts to folders on the desktop or in a Favourites folder. Right-click on the shortcut, choose Properties, select the Shortcut tab and hit the Change icon button.

4. New folder You can create a new folder on the fly when saving a file from a Windows 95 application. Choose Save As... from the File menu, then use the drop-down Save in list to navigate to where you want to create the folder. Click on the button which has a folder icon with a star on one corner. The new folder will be created — type in a name to replace the default New Folder.

5. Paint A great improvement on the old Paintbrush is that you can now Undo up to three actions.

6. Taskbar You can move this to the top or sides of the screen by dragging. Resize by

dragging the edge nearest the centre of the screen. Move by dragging an "empty" part of the bar: you may have to close down some windows to do this, but using a steady hand you can drag on the tiny area between the buttons.

7. Start menu Ctrl + Esc is the keyboard shortcut for clicking on the Start button. Now read on...

8. More start menu Use the keyboard to jump to an entry on the start menu by typing an initial letter. If you have more than one entry with that initial, type the letter again to cycle through them. This works at any level, so if, for example, you have shortcuts for Paint and Phone Dialler and a sub-menu for Publishing, then the first P will highlight Publishing (sub-menu folders get listed first), another P will highlight Paint, a third Phone Dialler. Pressing Enter will then start the program, or open the sub-menu so that you can repeat the process.

9. Yet more start menu If you right click on the start button, select Open and re-order the icons, this has no effect on the order they appear in the menu. Annoying, isn't it? A workaround is to rename them with a number in front of the name. Sub-menus will still precede programs, but each will be arranged in their own numbered order, e.g. 1 Utilities >, 2 Games >, 1 WordPad, 2 Paint.

10. Even more start menu (yawn) Drag any object from the Desktop or a folder and drop it on the Start button. This will add a shortcut to the first-level Start menu.

Points of view

Fellow journalist Alexander Singleton wrote from Purley, with some complimentary winks and critical nudges, referring to my “going on” about how Office Applications put the application name before the document name. He points out that this is because of the Windows Interface Guidelines for Software Design, as published by the Microsoft Press. According to this, programs supporting a single document interface (such as Notepad, where you can only have one file per instance of program) should put the filename first in the Title bar or Taskbar button. However, the multiple document interface (MDI) is implemented differently, for a very good reason. If the “child” window — the one containing your document — isn’t maximised, what would you place on each title bar? He writes: “You’d have to have the application name on the ‘parent’ — the application’s — window, and the document name on the ‘child’ window.” Which is, of course, what happens. He continues: “Now, if you were to maximise the ‘child’ window so that it fills the ‘parent’, what would you do?”

Well, I’m obviously still missing the point, as it seems logical to me to have the “parent” window titled as “active document — application”. Alex has a more interesting idea, though: “It would be better for each new Word file to appear in a separate window, have a separate Taskbar icon, and do this with only one copy of the program loaded. What do you think?” I think I rather like that idea — what do you all think?

Architect Michael Hohmann of Kent had been having no luck installing Windows 95 on his 20Mb 486, even with a freshly formatted C: drive with “nothing on it but a freshly installed DOS and Windows 3.11.” Hohmann reports that it always fell over at the “setting up your hardware” message. “For over a month I have been talking to Microsoft Support, but nothing they came up with worked. In desperation, I copied my

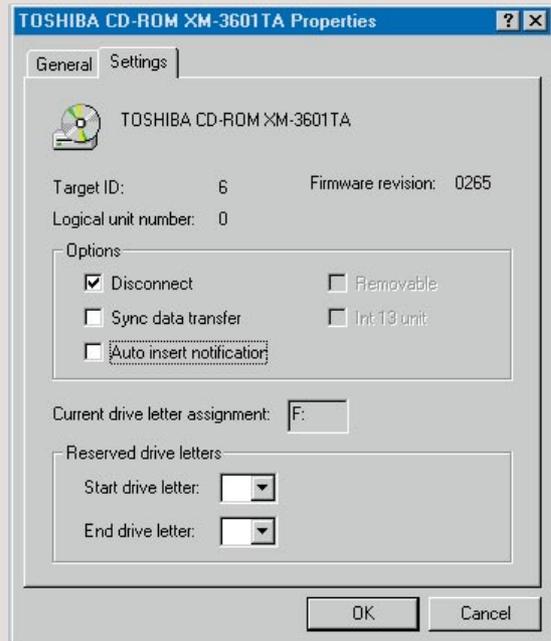
old CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files from Windows 3.1 into the root directory. Hey presto, Windows 95 began to load fully and ran.”

It gets a bit confused here, but it seems that he had edited the existing .SYS and .BAT files to pick up the new (32,935 bytes dated 11/07/95) rather than the existing (29,136 dated 31/05/94) HIMEM.SYS. Now, if I’ve got this right, he was trying to install Windows 95 over Windows 3.11 while the latter was running the former’s HIMEM.SYS. Which must rank high in the catalogue of self-inflicted injuries. If I’ve got this wrong, and he means that Windows 95 won’t run with its own HIMEM.SYS, then I apologise and confess I’m equally baffled.

Chris Dane faxed from Rugby stating: “I’m not sure whether you know of the Tips file in the Windows Directory, but it gives Hints and Tips for Windows 95 you have featured already... and more which have not yet been featured.” Yes, Chris, I did — but I was hoping many readers had overlooked this. I have a living to make and sources to protect here, so cannot possibly confirm the existence of “TIPS.TXT”. Oh, and lose three points for saying “Directory” instead of “Folder”.

Russell Gardner thanks us for including the Powertoys on the February CD, but adds: “Shouldn’t there be some sort of install procedure?” It is explained in the Readme file, but not very well. Having unzipped the .ZIP file and/or run the .EXE, you should have a folder containing all the separate Powertoys and several .INF files. Right click on an .INF file and you’ll see an Install option.

Colin Mahoney emailed from Barcelona to complain that: “The default behaviour on inserting a CD-ROM is to start up the Autorun program if present. So every time I inserted the



Turn off autoplay for CDs

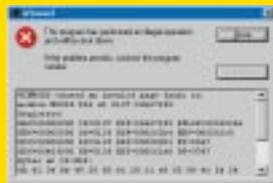
Win95 CD to look something up in the Resource Kit, it starts up that daft program with the pictures of clouds and Microsoft propaganda. This is not only highly annoying, it’s also dangerous in that it provides a pathway to your hard disk for viruses which might be lurking on the CD.”

Well, not on the Windows 95 CD, we sincerely hope. But I agree, it is annoying, and potentially dangerous with CDs of dubious provenance. We’ve already had this tip — it was published in October’s issue — but holding down the shift key when inserting a disk prevents the CD Autoplaying. For a more permanent solution, see this month’s Tip 1, which should also please Ashley Beeson, who emailed me with a related problem.

I’d like to chip in here, and say I find it equally annoying that having closed the “daft program with the pictures of clouds”, double-clicking on the CD icon in the “My Computer” folder just starts it up again. This is because the default behaviour — shown in bold in the right-click menu — is Autorun. To avoid this, right click, then select Open or Explore.

Bug of the Month

To continue the Iberian theme, reader Miguel Sérgio Branco brings tidings of joy from Oporto with news of a bug in Word and Excel 7. If he selects Help/About..., presses any alphanumeric key followed by F1 he gets: “This program has performed an illegal operation and will be shut down.” And no, he hadn’t been sampling his city’s famous product, because the bug happens here, too.



long filename problem, cured by the Browse option. A 28Kb .DLL will be added

good conduct points are awarded for the correct use of the Uninstall option in

to your System\ShellExt folder, and whenever you right-click on a file you’ll see four new entries, one for each attribute. Clicking on each toggles the attribute, with a tick for on. Further

Control Panel/Add-Remove Programs. Attribmenu is free, and is written by Frenchman Patrick Philipott (72561.3532@compuserve.com, or <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mainssoft>.)

PCW Contacts

Tim Nott can be contacted by post via PCW or by email at timn@cix.compulink.co.uk