

Did you know...

1. **Welcome** to xplorer² !! We've got some great tips and tricks for you, so please leave this option on for a while. You'll learn about many small details with big impact on your daily productivity.
2. All menu commands show a descriptive line of text on the **status bar** as you are traversing the menu system. They help you understand commands and see the effects of slight variants when keyboard modifiers like <Shift> or <Ctrl> are pressed.
3. The status bar also shows short messages about command outcomes and errors. These messages go away after a while automatically.
4. You can move toolbars around, dragging them from their handles on their left side. [View | Toolbars](#) allows you to show or hide any toolbar separately.
5. You can **customize** a toolbar by right-clicking on it and selecting which command buttons you want, text labels etc. You can reorder buttons by dragging them while holding the <Shift> key.
6. If you find xplorer² menus too taxing, you can switch to a simpler set with fewer commands, checking [Plain menus](#) in the Window property page ([Tools | Options](#)). Even in this plain mode you can use commands you can't see pressing their shortcut keys or placing their buttons on the toolbar.
7. Some input fields in dialogs may be hard to understand. Just hover the mouse over them and a balloon help tip will pop-up with a brief description. You can turn off this dialog help from [Tools | Options](#).
8. You can see the contents of up to two folders in a single window ([View | dual pane](#) mode) but you can work with only one at a time. The active panel has a lighter background color. You can swap the active/inactive folders hitting <Tab> or just clicking on the folder you want to work with.
9. You can have the dual view panes stacked one below the other instead of the default left-right arrangement. For changing this and many other options please use [Tools | Options](#) menu.
10. Filenames and other column text may be cropped if wider than the available space. If you hover the mouse over such clipped names a **tooltip** is shown revealing the obscured text. If you enable infotips from [Tools | Options](#) then the tooltip will additionally include information like size and modification date.
11. You can use the arrow keys to change the active item (*focus*) of the active view. You can also use <PageUp> and <PageDown> to move a page at a time and <Home> & <End> to quickly go to the start or end of long listings.
12. To arrange items while in detailed view mode just click on the column header of interest. This is the only way to sort items by extended columns like **Comment** etc. Clicking on the same column again will flip the ascending/descending order.
13. When you type letters or digits the focus moves to the first matching filename; e.g. typing **sa** will take you to the first file whose name matches this substring (e.g. **sa**mple.txt). This feature is called *incremental search*.
14. You can use incremental search to locate files with particular *extensions*, too. Typing e.g. **tx** while *holding down* <Shift> will take you to the first filename that matches this extension (e.g. readme.**tx**t). This comes handy when you sort items **by type**.
15. Incremental search is not limited to filenames. Just bring any column in the leftmost (first) position and *its* contents will be used to match the partial strings you type.

16. Press <Space> to toggle the selection status of the focused item on/off. Pressing <Insert> does the same but moves the focus to the next item at the same time. This way you can select a lot of items using just one key.

17. If you want to move the focus without affecting the existing selection, keep the <Ctrl> key pressed while using the keyboard or mouse. Or you can turn the **sticky mode** on from [Mark](#) menu to avoid pressing <Ctrl>. Thus you can roam large lists hand-selecting items safely.

18. You have several ways to select files using the **mouse**. To grab many consecutive items, click on the first and then <Shift>-click on the last. <Ctrl>-click to select/unselect individual items. Finally you may *click and hold* the left button to draw a rectangle around the items you want selected. This is called "lasso" selection.

19. Before you execute a command you must **select** the items you want to be affected. There is an abundance of methods to select items, using the keyboard, selection filters, synchronization, etc (see [Mark](#) menu for commands comprising the **selection engine**). Using a combination of selection and unselection elementary procedures you can build up a set of files that perfectly match your criteria. Vivid imagination is all that's required!

20. Whereas more than one items may be selected at any time, there is a *single* item with a unique status called the **active** or **focused** item. You can tell it apart by the dotted rectangle that surrounds its name. Its details (size/date) are shown on the status bar, and it is the one that gets launched when you press <Return>. Note that the focus does not necessarily have to be selected, e.g. if you move around while holding <Ctrl> pressed.

21. When a command is unavailable the respective toolbar button and menu item will be *disabled*. As soon as you select a few items it will usually be enabled, unless the command is meant for filesystem folders only and you are currently browsing a virtual folder like Control Panel.

22. You can **save** the current selection using [Mark| Selection](#) submenu. You can reuse this special "clipboard" at a later stage to select (or unselect) items with the same names in a different folder or even in a different window managed by the same process!

23. You can reuse a previously saved selection as a **mask** via [Mark| Selection| Combine](#). This advanced mode combines the existing and saved selection so that only items that are in both lists end up selected (boolean **AND** operation). So an item must be both already selected and part of the list stored with <Ctrl+F11> to remain selected; otherwise it is cleared. This command is handy for refining selection patterns.

24. [Mark| Select group](#) command is *additive*. If there is an existing selection items matching the new wildcard will be added on top. To start from a clean slate just unselect everything in advance (e.g. click "nowhere"). When you aren't sure whether there is a previous selection you can check the rightmost status bar pane.

25. When you have finished entering information in any of the program **dialog** windows, you can usually dismiss the dialog pressing <Return> instead of clicking on OK button. If you want to cancel, just hit <Esc>.

26. Selection can be assisted by intelligent use of **sorting**. E.g. the easiest way to select all files modified within the last day is to sort by date, click on the first (topmost) item and <Shift>-click on the last file whose date is within the last 24-hour range.

27. If you have many non-consecutive items selected, you can quickly jump to the next or previous selection using <Alt+DownArrow> and <Alt+UpArrow>, respectively. The command will also *cycle* to the first selection if you use it when the focus is on the last item (and vice-versa for the reverse direction).

28. If you want to know the "row number" of an item (its order within the list) you can use [Mark | Select range](#) and read its position from the dialog window title. We are sure there must be a good use for this information only we can't think of it right now! :)
29. To calculate the **total size** of a folder use [Mark | Select all](#) <Ctrl+A> and read the number on the rightmost part of the status bar. If you have previously used [Tools | Subfolder size](#) to get the size of all subfolders' contents, the tally will include those too!
30. You can **map network drives** by right clicking on "My Computer" icon in the tree. To **format** a removable disc right-click on its icon (e.g. A:\). In general you'll find different commands in such context menus depending on the type of object clicked. Try right-clicking on several items and see what you get!
31. Before you can **format** a floppy disk you must ensure no program is accessing it, including explorer²! Make sure you are not browsing A:\ in any pane and collapse any tree nodes. If windows still cannot format it, browse a folder like **c:** ensuring that explorer² isn't locking the drive.
32. The context menu for most shell items has a **Properties** command. Different files have different kind of properties, so e.g. executable files have a program version tab, zip files have information about the compression, etc. Checkout the properties of various items and see what you'll discover!
33. If you press <Shift> as you are right-clicking on a file, the context menu will include some *extra* commands, depending on the file type. For example, the context menu of executable files will include a **Run As** command that allows you to run a program impersonating a different user.
34. Press <Shift> while deleting files to avoid placing them in the recycle bin. **WARNING:** you cannot recover files permanently deleted so be careful! Some files can't be placed in the bin anyway, e.g. those deleted from floppy discs. Use the recycle bin **properties** to ensure that the delete confirmation is enabled for safety.
35. In detailed mode you can select which columns you want by right-clicking on the list header. You can **reorder** columns via drag-drop. Double-clicking on the divider between columns will autosize the one on the left to fit the largest name. To autosize all columns use the respective command from [View](#) menu.
36. The **comment** column shows file descriptions that you may set using the command from [Actions](#) menu. **NOTE:** the comment feature is only available for files on NTFS formatted partitions. If you subsequently move a file to a FAT volume (e.g. floppy disc) you will **lose** the comment; you may or may not receive a warning for this. The workaround is to use a backup program or WinRAR to pack the file including its alternate streams during the transport.
37. You can set comments for many files simultaneously. [Actions | Set comment](#) will *insert* the text you provide in the comment of *all* selected files, on top of any existing keywords. To **clear** the comments just supply an empty text string.
38. The **checksum** column shows a plain numeric sum of the file contents. It may be used to check for modifications and to quickly compare files. If 2 files have different checksums then they are definitely not same. On the other hand, same checksums do not necessarily imply identity; further checks are advisable.
39. The **creation** date of files can be newer than the date **last modified**! When you create a new copy of a file, its creation date is updated whereas the modification (last edit) date remains unchanged. You can use these facts with the creation & modification date columns to figure out special situations.
40. The modification date of **folders** (NTFS) will tell you the last time some of its *immediate* contents was modified by copying, creating or renaming. It will *not* change if you merely edit an existing file or if you change contents in deep subfolders. Unfortunately folders on FAT32 formatted disks do not

convey this information at all!

41. The difference between **Size** and **Size on disk** columns is that the latter shows the actual space occupied for storing each file. This is usually *larger* due to the way hard disks are organized. However for *compressed* files size on disk will be smaller!

42. On NTFS partitions you can create multiple copies of the same file without taking any extra space on disc! These are called **hard links** and can be created using the special paste command in [Edit](#) menu. There's a relevant column, too, showing how many links each file has.

43. The **attributes** column shows subtle information bits for files. For instance the "**A**" (archive) bit is automatically set every time you edit a file. You can *clear* this attribute at will or with backup/zip programs. At a later stage you can check which files have the archive bit back on and you'll immediately know they were changed since the last backup.

44. On NTFS you can use the **compressed** attribute either for individual files or whole folders to save on disc space. You can enable compression using [File| Properties| General| Advanced](#). This way you can enjoy near-regular use without resorting to cumbersome zip files.

45. On NTFS you can use the **Summary** tab of file properties dialog to set details like Author, Title, even comments. There are columns for many of these fields for convenient browsing of this information.

46. Many columns appear *twice* in the column customization dialog. This is because xplorer² knows how to get columns that windows explorer also offers. In such cases you're better off using the xplorer² versions (called **stock**, & carry **[S]** after their name) since they are faster and will also work in older windows versions where multiple columns aren't supported anyway.

47. [Edit| Copy names](#) puts the full paths of all selected items in the clipboard as text. This is useful e.g. for opening a file in *another* program, pasting its name in the standard windows **Open** dialog. If you press <Shift> you get the short 8.3 path name.

48. What's an 8.3 name? In the old days files were limited to names with **8** characters and **3** letter extensions, and no spaces and other fancy letters were allowed. Modern filesystems have done away with this limitation but support 8.3 names too. They are useful when you want to avoid embedded spaces or try to minimize the length of a command.

49. A command in [Edit](#) menu enables to copy all the information you see in a pane, including the columns for the selected items, as a tab-separated list. You can then import (paste) into a text editor for **printing**, even to Excel for advanced manipulation.

50. The [Edit| Copy columns](#) command also works when the folder tree is active. There you get a hierarchical list of all the open branches beneath the active one, copied in the clipboard as text for further processing. <Alt+RightArrow> will expand all the branches starting from the focus.

51. When you traverse the folder tree with the keyboard, normally (unless you have used [Tools| Options](#) to prevent it) the folder where you rest for a short while will be automatically loaded in the active pane. If you want to temporarily prevent that happening you can hold down <Alt> while pressing the arrow keys.

52. Whenever xplorer² is busy working in a lengthy command, it offers a way to interrupt or cancel, usually if you press the <Escape> key. This will be mentioned in a status bar busy message. Whenever possible there will also be a **progress bar** giving an estimate of the time remaining to completion.

53. xplorer² grows with your system. When you install new *namespace extensions* or *column handlers* (e.g. for MP3 tags) more often than not it will be able to integrate with them immediately just like windows explorer.

54. You can control which items are visible in a pane using **wildcards**. These are DOS templates made of the special characters ***** and **?** mixed with regular letters and numbers. ***** matches anything and **?** matches any *single* character. So ***.txt** will allow **file.txt**, **1.txt** but not **1.dat**. Similarly **a*.xl?** will allow **aFile.xls**, **a.xll** but *not* **a.xl**. You can type them directly in the addressbar.

55. You can ask for more than one wildcard at a time using **commas** to separate the individual templates. So ***.cpp, *.h** will show all files that have either **cpp** or **h** extensions. A **minus** sign in the start of a substring acts as exclusion, e.g. ***.cpp, -a*** will select all files with **cpp** extensions except for those that begin with the letter **a**. So **file.cpp** is in but **another.cpp** is out.

56. Wildcards are also used to select (or unselect) items through **Mark| (Un)Select group**. Just specify the template for the filenames using the special ***** and **?** characters as in visual filters. You can also use **multiple** comma separated wildcards, leading **-** (minus) symbols to exclude filenames etc. Finally **<Alt+Plus>** will repeat the last selection command using the wildcard typed earlier in the dialog (ditto for the unselection command).

57. The **File| Change type** command can be used to change the **extension** of files, even when those are normally hidden from Control Panel's Folder Options. Naturally not all possible changes make sense but you can use it to change a file from e.g. **readme.txt** to **readme.dat**.

58. You can access **FTP** sites by typing the login details alongside the URL in the addressbar using the format **ftp://username:password@ftpsite.com**. But this may not be an option for many users, since it implies revealing your passwords which will be stored unencrypted in the registry. Still it may be reasonable for lightweight FTP users.

59. The fastest way to get to a local or mapped drive is to use the **<Ctrl+Shift+driveLetter>** keyboard shortcut, where *driveLetter* is substituted by **A**, **C**, etc, depending on your intended destination. In a dual-pane setting, try keeping **<Alt>** pressed at the same time and see what happens!

60. **Go to| Quick bookmark** is meant to be assigned and reused frequently, in contrast to long-term favorites listed in the **Bookmarks** main menu. So if you want to have a quick look around your namespace but get back to the original folder afterwards, just hit **<Ctrl+Shift+F1>** to store it as the "quick" (or scrap) bookmark, without worrying about overwriting any important favorite.

61. You can have bookmarks on favorite **files** too. Use **Bookmarks| Add** to insert the file's parent folder and then edit the fresh bookmark's *description* (from **Bookmarks| Organize**) to append the filename. Then you can browse the folder and simultaneously select your favorite file in one stroke!

62. When you right-click on a pane's titlebar where the current folder path is shown, you get a list of folders visited recently in this pane. You can also double-click this titlebar to go to the parent folder or click on a highlighted subpath (e.g. **E:\Documents and Settings\Administrator\My Documents**) to jump directly there. If some of the subpaths are hidden due to width limitations, right-click while holding **<Shift>** to reveal them all.

63. You can type *file* names in the addressbar too (not just folder names). In this case the parent folder is loaded and the file in question highlighted. You can also type wildcards alongside paths, so **c:*.bat** will browse **c:** and set ***.bat** as a visual filter at the same time.

64. Whenever any kind of filter limits the visibility of items in a folder (see **View| Visual filter**) a filter icon will appear in the rightmost status bar pane, as a reminder.

65. You can access **shared folders** on computers in your network using a UNC path like **\\computerName\share**. If you have administrator privileges or can logon to a remote PC, you can even access unshared folders using **C\$** for **C:** drive, **D\$** for **D:** etc.

66. For slow network folders and removable media, you can **abort** reading the contents via hitting

<Esc>. You can tell whether xplorer² considers some folder to be slow or not by checking the message on the status bar while reading is in progress.

67. From windows 2000 onwards, **virtual folders** like control panel, recycle bin, etc have "pathnames" too in the form `::{funny number}`, using a CLSID-like number. For instance "My Computer" is addressed by `::{20D04FE0-3AEA-1069-A2D8-08002B30309D}`. You can see all these paths in the addressbar when you browse such special folders.

68. The **addressbar** is a valid drop target. A usual scenario is to drop a shortcut onto it (from the desktop or the quicklaunch bar) to jump to its location and then use [Go to](#) | [Find target](#) to reach the actual file pointed to by the shortcut.

69. [Go to](#) menu offers easy access to a few interesting special system folders. **Recent** holds items you accessed or launched recently (the list shown in [Start](#) | [Documents](#) and more). **Startup** is a folder containing shortcuts to programs that automatically start whenever you logon. You can experiment with the rest of them for even more revelations!

70. Using [Window](#) | [Save layout](#) you can save different window configurations for different tasks. For instance you can have a layout where there is just one pane with a big previewer window and no toolbars, and another with dual panes and a tree for regular file management. You can then clone instances from each type at will from [Window](#) menu.

71. **Cloning** is a quick and efficient way to get another window for file management. So instead of opening a folder in the same window you can "clone" a fresh one and browse it there, keeping the original intact. You can even clone windows of particular type (registry key) using those available from [Window](#) menu.

72. The easiest way to switch among top-level windows controlled by xplorer² process is to use [Window](#) | [List](#) or <Ctrl+W>. This command is useful when windows from other running programs clutter the system <Alt+Tab> list.

73. In dual-pane mode, pressing <Alt> while double-clicking (or pressing <Return>) on a folder opens this folder in the *inactive* pane. Likewise, <Alt+BackSpace> forces the inactive pane to go to *its* parent folder. <Alt> can be used in this fashion in most places where you browse for folders, e.g. typing paths in the addressbar.

74. The inactive pane is a natural target for copy or move file operations. The Copy To command <F5> normally brings up a dialog, but you can suppress this if you press <Ctrl+F5>, sending the files to the inactive pane directly. <Alt+F5> will send the active selection to the folder last used (typed) in the [Here](#): field of the CopyTo dialog. The same principles hold for [Edit](#) | [Move To](#) (<F6>).

75. The fastest way to divide a window in two equal portions is to double-click on the **splitter** bar. In dual pane mode you can also press <Ctrl+E>.

76. To compare the contents of two panes use [Mark](#) | [Sync wizard](#). It uses the *filename* as a guide to match items left and right and a user-selected comparison rule to figure out whether they are identical, or which one seems to be *newer*, i.e. modified later. You can use this information to select items that are either identical or to check which items need to be copied across to make the two folders identical. <Alt+F9> **repeats** the last synchronization command with the same options.

77. [Actions](#) | [Sync-touch](#) forces the modification dates from the active pane to name-matching items in the inactive pane. It is useful for eliminating phantom differences introduced by changes in daylight saving time between NTFS and FAT drives. [Actions](#) | [Change attributes](#) on the other hand sets the *same* date/time to all selected items, acting like a normal **touch** command.

78. The default file operation when drag-dropping files depends on whether the source and target folders are on the same logical drive or not: if they are, then **move** is performed, else the files are

copied. You can override this default behaviour using keyboard modifiers while dragging: <Shift> forces a move, <Ctrl> a copy and <Ctrl+Shift> pastes a shortcut. Have you ever tried dragging with the *right* mouse button?

79. Pressing <Escape> while dragging cancels the operation. If you can't see the window you want to drop on you can use <Alt+Tab> till the target shows up. Another option is to **hover** the mouse on the windows taskbar over the button of the window; after a short while the window will be restored for you.

80. You can also drop files on non-folder targets. Dropping on an executable (or shortcut) icon is the same as starting the application with the dropped files as arguments. Dropping on zip icons usually adds files in the archive. Finally you can drop files even on running applications; try dropping a text file in an open Notepad window and see what happens!

81. While dragging you can **hover** the mouse on some folder in the tree pane (wait over the folder icon while maintaining the mouse button depressed) to automatically *expand* the branch, revealing a subfolder where you want the drop placed. You can turn this and other usability features on/off using [Tools | Options | Window](#).

82. While dragging in a pane with many items, you can **scroll** the contents by hovering on the window edge closest to the direction you want to see revealed. This trick works in the tree too.

83. xplorer² senses changes occurring in any part of the filesystem (in most cases) and will automatically refresh all affected folder views. Sometimes this behaviour can be a nuisance e.g. when you browse a folder while files are being downloaded within it. [View | Hold autorefresh](#) comes handy in such cases, suspending all time-consuming refreshes. Don't forget to turn the autorefresh back on later!

84. xplorer² is fully aware of shell item **shortcuts** (links), those with the little arrow on the left of the icon. It will help you create them and manage the target object. For instance, when you drop files on a folder shortcut, they will be sent to the actual folder.

85. When a shortcut item is highlighted, you can use [Goto | Find target](#) to jump directly to the actual file object it points to. This is especially useful for *file* shortcuts.

86. [Actions | Merge files](#) will join all the selected files in the order they are shown in the active pane. So make sure they are ordered properly (e.g. **alphabetically**) before proceeding with the merging, to avoid corrupting the originally split file.

87. xplorer² accepts **command line arguments**. You can control details like the folders you start browsing, what kind of window you want displayed initially, the registry key to use for options, etc. See the help file for more information.

88. You can search for text in files using the command in [Mark](#) menu. The command automatically senses the text file **encoding** if a BOM (identification number at the beginning of the file) exists, allowing searches within Unicode and UTF-8 files. For some cases you may have to *force* the encoding e.g. when trying to locate OEM text.

89. You can search for special characters in text contained in files using the **\$xx** format, where **xx** is the 2-digit hexadecimal code that corresponds to the character in question. For instance searching for **hello\$0D** will only select files that contain "hello" at the end of a line (0D is hex for 13, the character that is usually found at the end of text lines). You'll find useful escape sequences in a drop-down box in the dialog box.

90. You can search for multiple words in files using comma separated substrings as those used in visual filtering. You can assign a boolean context to substrings too using a leading **+** (AND) or **-** (NOT). E.g. searching for **help, +me, -god** will mark files that *must* contain "me", *maybe* contain "help" and *not* contain "god". Note that spaces around the separator commas are *not* significant.

91. Multistrings used in text searches within files are very flexible but all these special characters may backfire. If you want to find text that contains commas, dollar characters etc, you'll need to "escape" them using the [Special characters](#) drop-down box in <Ctrl+G> command's dialog. So if you want to find ",", search for "\$2C" instead, where 2C is the hex code for comma. Or, just check the [Verbatim](#) box to disable boolean multistrings altogether.

92. The text previewer window will sense when a file has matched a previous text search and will automatically scroll near the hit location, **highlighting** the word. Pressing <F3> (when the previewer is clicked) will take you to the next match, if any. Don't forget to right-click in the previewer window for some more interesting commands!

93. The quick viewer pane offers **previews** of many file types, including text, graphics, HTML, office documents, it even plays music and video clips! When you turn it on it automatically shows the preview of the *focused* item in the active pane. As you use the keyboard or mouse to change the focused item, the quickviewer will follow (after a short delay) so you can easily preview many files just by scrolling the contents of a pane.

94. xplorer² won't extract thumbnails and quick previews for large files, especially those within slow folders (zipfolders, FTP, etc). Exactly how large is "large" is user-configurable from [Tools| Options| General](#) (size limits group box).

95. If you want to see the raw text in a HTML file instead of the graphic preview, select [Text only](#) from the previewer context menu. If a file appears as binary (hex preview) and you know it is Unicode without a BOM, force the [Encoding](#), again from the right-click menu. The previewer can also show UTF-8 and OEM text.

96. xplorer² and editor² share the same search options. Thus, if you search for text contained in files and then you **view** the matching files pressing <F3>, editor² will be prepared to search for the matching text. Once the file is loaded, a simple <F3> will take you straight to the hit! That is why using editor² as the default file viewer is highly recommended.

97. You can associate separate (text) **external viewers** and editors via [Tools| Options](#). They will be used if editor² can't be found in the installation folder. If editor² exists then *it* will be used for [File| View](#) <F3> and your external editor for <F4>. You can reverse these roles if you hold <Ctrl> key down, e.g. <Ctrl+F3> will use the external viewer even when editor² exists.

98. You can switch among various panes using the keyboard. <Tab> on its own takes you to the inactive view, which becomes active. <Shift+Tab> takes you to the addressbar, <Ctrl+Tab> to the tree (if visible) and <Ctrl+Shift+Tab> to the quick previewer. To get back to the active folder pane, press <Escape> or <Tab>.

99. Most combo boxes including the addressbar support 2 kinds of **autocompletion**. You can start writing a path and hit <F1> to get the first possible match, another <F1> to get the next match etc, in a similar fashion that the <Tab> key works in DOS boxes. The second mode allows you to type a small part of a string contained in the combo history (drop-down) portion and hit <UpArrow> to fetch the complete string; another <UpArrow> brings the next match and so on.

100. You can use the addressbar to **execute commands**, in a similar fashion to [Start| Run](#) utility, if you start the command with the special characters > or \$, for normal and DOS commands respectively. Perhaps more useful is the DOS mode \$ which runs commands that require the command processor like `ren`, `xcopy`, etc.

101. While typing commands in the addressbar you can press <Ctrl+Return> to grab the active filename from the active pane and use it as part of the command. <Ctrl+Arrows> move the focus around in the active pane while *remaining* in the addressbar, so that you can pick even more filenames. <Ctrl+Alt+Return> picks the whole path of the focused item. Holding <Shift> all at the

same time pastes the 8.3 name.

102. You can type addressbar commands in a **reusable** fashion, using special \$-tokens supported by the [Tools | Command script](#). E.g. instead of executing **>windiff file1 file2** which is fixed and not reusable, try **>windiff "\$N" "\$I"**. This means that you compare (windiff) the currently focused file represented by **\$N** (whatever it may be) with a file with the same name in the inactive pane path (**\$I**). This variable formulation can be reused time and again with different files. Command history is available from [Tools](#) menu.

103. When you use the special \$-tokens for commands or scripts, you should watch out for embedded spaces in pathnames that may confuse the application that executes the arguments. It's best to surround the tokens in quotes, as **"\$N"**. Alternatively you can use the lowercase version e.g. **\$n** that stands for the short 8.3 name that is guaranteed to be free of space characters.

104. Command templates may include **environmental variables** like **%WINDIR%**. These are automatically expanded for the actual pathname e.g. **c:\winnt**. You can also type such variables in the addressbar and other input fields accepting paths in dialogs. Try typing **%TEMP%** in the addressbar and see what happens when you press **<Return>**!

105. DOS commands are not supported for UNC paths in the form **\\computer\share**. If you want to execute a \$-prompted command on a remote computer you must first map the network drive onto a local drive letter like **F:**.

106. When executing commands you should keep in mind the whereabouts of the **current directory**. If the files you want to act upon are in the active pane then you can address them with their simple name **\$N**. To access files in the *inactive* pane or in situations where there is no active folder (e.g. in scrap containers) you should use **\$F** or **\$G** and generally only use tokens that include path information.

107. Programs launched from the addressbar may require a full path as in e.g. **> c:\tools\windiff.exe \$n \$i**. You can omit the program path if you extend your **%PATH%** environmental variable to include folders where you store your utilities. If your search path includes **c:\tools** then you can type the same command simply as **> windiff.exe \$n \$i**.

108. The syntax of command templates is identical whether they are used in the addressbar or in the script generator ([Tools](#) menu). The difference is in the context: addressbar commands apply only to the *focused* item whereas in scripts as many commands as there are selected items are emitted. Some \$-tokens don't make sense in all situations, like using **\$01** counters in the addressbar or tokens that represent all the selection (e.g. **\$A** or **\$S**) in scripts.

109. Within the script wizard **<Ctrl+B>**, you can generate **multiple** commands for each selected file. Just type all the commands you want within the dialog's [Template](#) field separated with commas, in the usual fashion. E.g. you could specify **encrypt \$N \$B.xxx , del \$N** to encrypt files into a new name and then delete the originals.

110. You have two ways to execute scripts generated with [Tools | Command script](#). The *DOS* way uses the command processor and *shell* launches 32-bit windows applications. Use the first for commands like *ren*, *copy* etc and the second for programs like MP3 converters. There is a slight performance advantage running 32-bit tools in their natural environment, but you can also run them under DOS. The reverse is not possible, e.g. you can't run a script containing *ren* commands with shell execution.

111. **Mass renaming** in [File](#) menu is also furnished with \$-tokens. For instance a rename template of **\$B\$001.\$E** uses the original base name (**\$B**) and extension (**\$E**) and adds an automatic counter inbetween. If you apply it on files *a.jpg* and *b.jpg* you'll end up with filenames *a001.jpg* and *b002.jpg*. If instead of **\$001** you used a counter like **\$02**, you'd get a number sequence of *02*, *03*, *04*,...

112. With **mirror browsing** mode enabled ([Go to](#) menu), the inactive pane tries to follow the active

one as it traverses the folder hierarchy. So if you are browsing **c:\temp** on the left and **d:\aux** on the right and you get into a folder called **code** in the left, the right pane will try to follow switching to **d:\aux\code**, if the folder exists. This feature is convenient for comparing folders and subfolders.

113. When **mirror scrolling** is on ([Go to](#) menu), the inactive pane tries to follow the active pane *focused item* as you scroll around using the keyboard. So if `file.txt` is focused in the active pane and a file with the same name exists in the inactive pane, it will be brought into view, handy for comparing individual files left & right. While you are at it, try bringing a column other than **Name** in the leftmost position and see how mirror scrolling behaves!

114. xplorer² uses advanced **multi-threading** techniques to extract some pieces of file information that are time consuming. The advantage is that you can start working with your files *immediately*, while the view is possibly still being updated. This is particularly evident in detailed view modes where some slow columns are filled in long after you started your work with the contents; you just don't have to wait at all!

115. The free version of xplorer² has a few less commands than the "pro" version. That's why you get some menu items permanently disabled, no scrap containers, etc. Extra features available after registration are marked as [\[PRO version\]](#).

116. [\[PRO version\]](#) If you are on windows NT/2000 or XP you are most likely using the special **Unicode** build of xplorer² (see [Help](#) | [About](#) version information). It is more efficient and the only option for dealing with some locale-related problems for far-Eastern and non-English users in general.

117. [\[PRO version\]](#) You can see the **real contents** of some special folders like the **Recycle Bin** using [View](#) | [Raw contents](#). This offers the same kind of access as a DOS `dir` command so you can check what *really* goes on under the covers!

118. [\[PRO version\]](#) You can **save** a folder's view mode settings ([Actions](#) menu) so that every time you browse this folder it switches to the same format. This makes sense for folders like "My pictures" that you'd probably want to browse in **thumbnails**, or the windows system folder where you'd want to have the **version** column shown to check those DLL files.

119. [\[PRO version\]](#) When you place a file in a **scrap container**, you don't change its physical location on disc. You can think of these windows as "bags" where you put notes about actual files that can be located in *more than one* folder. So you can roam your folders hand-picking items with [File](#) | [Send to](#) | [scrap](#) command and in the end switch to the scrap window and deal with them simultaneously, just like as if they were on a *single* folder!

120. [\[PRO version\]](#) Scrap containers are fully operational file managers. You can do *mostly everything* on a file in a scrap window as in normal windows. So you can drag-drop, use context menus, preview contents, etc. You can even have **dual-pane** scrap frames.

121. [\[PRO version\]](#) When you press <Delete> in a scrap container, it forces [File](#) | [Remove](#) command that merely *removes* items from the window without actually affecting the files on disk. If you really want to *delete* the files use [File](#) | [Delete](#) (keep <Ctrl> pressed).

122. [\[PRO version\]](#) If you enable **infotips** in a scrap container (via [Tools](#) | [Options](#) | [Window](#)) you'll see the *path* of each item in a popup window as you hover over it, as well as the normal shell infotip.

123. [\[PRO version\]](#) The **Find files** command can be used to fetch files using *any and all* column attributes, combined in a boolean context. For instance you can search files by **Owner**, or for files that contain some text within their **Comments** etc. Similar super-filters can be used for selecting and unselecting files ([Mark](#) | [Matching rule](#) command).

124. [\[PRO version\]](#) To locate files by name, it is easiest to type part of the filename *without* wildcards and they will be added for you automatically. So if you type **sys** in the [Named](#) field of the find dialog, it is equivalent to ***sys*** and will match anything containing "sys" in their names, e.g. `system32`,

config.sys, etc. If you type any wildcard characters (*?) yourself then none will be added by xplorer².

125. [PRO version] When a search rule tries to locate text *within some column*, you can use boolean expressions as in the [Mark| Containing text](#) command discussed in a previous tip. So to search for files that have the **Archive** attribute but not the **Hidden** one, add a rule for the **Attributes** column that looks like **+A,-H**; note the use of the **+** and **-** special characters to denote the boolean operators AND and NOT, and the comma that separates the 2 substrings **A** and **H**.

126. [PRO version] The **Look In** field where you specify *where* to search for files in the Find files dialog accepts multiple folders if separated by commas, e.g. **c:\, d:\, f:** will search all three hard discs. You can also specify folders to *exclude*, e.g. **c:\, -*temp*** will search all c:\ except for folders that contain **temp** in their name. Note that *only* excluded folder names can contain wildcards.

127. [PRO version] The registry key `.global\Find Blacklist` under the main program key lists folders that are always excluded from searches, since they are more trouble than worth. You can add or remove folders from this list by editing the registry, after quitting xplorer².

128. [PRO version] You can search for files within **FTP** and **zipfolders** (if you have windows XP) too, by ensuring you have [Archived content](#) box checked in the Find Files dialog. The only limitation is that you can only use *stock* properties (columns) in the search rules. Keep in mind that these searches are much slower than those in regular filesystem folders, so only check this option if you want to get in such slow folders.

129. [PRO version] You can **refine** a search as follows: after the main search command has filled a scrap container with the rough results, issue an `<Alt+G>` command within the same window, where you can specify a similar or completely different filter. Out of the original files only those that match the secondary criteria will be highlighted! Another possibility is to issue another search `<Ctrl+F>` command making sure you check the [Local search](#) box.

130. [PRO version] Pressing `<Shift>` while attempting to browse a folder will open a scrap container and **flatten** the subtree, filling in all the files contained in the folder and recursively in all its subfolders. You can then manage all the files simultaneously just like as if they were in the same folder.

131. [PRO version] Unlike Find files command, [File| Browse flat](#) will not step into slow folders (FTP, zipfolders, webfolders etc) unless the root (where you start flattening from) is itself a slow folder. It also won't get into folders listed under the registry key `.global\Find Blacklist`.

132. [PRO version] To compare files in two folders, including their **subfolders** ("deep" synchronization), use a dual-pane scrap container. *Right*-drag the first folder in one pane and pick the [Flatten here](#) command from the context menu; likewise flatten the second folder in the right pane and then use `<F9>` or [Mark| Sync wizard](#) to specify the comparison options. Once differing items are marked, use [Edit| Sync-o-paste](#) to overwrite older files in the appropriate subfolders.

133. The **Path** column is especially useful for items in scrap containers, since they usually come from different folders.

134. [PRO version] You can **save** the contents of a scrap container and reload them at a later time. There are many possible uses for such a feature: save the results of searches, keeping files with similar content from throughout your filesystem in a single "database" file, maintaining lists of favorite folders for bookmarks or copy targets, etc.

135. [PRO version] Have you tried typing a path in a scrap container's address bar to see what happens? You can also use it to execute commands on the focused item in the active view as in regular windows, too.

136. [PRO version] By default the output of all DOS commands (started with **\$** prompt) go to a special **console window**, much friendlier than the standard DOS box. It is nearly an independent command

processor on its own. Its *current directory* follows the folder you are browsing in the main program automatically (you can read it off its titlebar). Its toolbar keeps a history of past commands and also supports <F1>-based **autocompletion**: type a few characters from an existing path and press <F1> a few times to see what happens!

137. If you need a standard DOS console for the current folder, just type a solitary **\$** in the addressbar (without any command) and press <Return>.

138. **[PRO version]** Holding <Ctrl> while launching a file or folder in a scrap container will "load" the parent folder in a regular xplorer² window and select the original item. Still keep in mind that within a scrap container you can do pretty much all the file management that single-folder windows allow, so you don't have much use for this <Ctrl> modifier after all!

139. **[PRO version]** You can search your whole hard disc for **duplicates**. First flatten the logical disc (e.g. C:\) in a scrap frame; use [Tools| Check duplicates](#) to begin the detection process. Most of the true duplicates will have the same name and size but other possibilities are available as options. In the end all suspected duplicates are grouped together for further inspection (the **checksum** column is ideal for this). Files that are unique are hidden from view.

140. **[PRO version]** When you instruct xplorer² to select all duplicates as part of the detection process, it automatically turns on the **sticky** selection mode. This way you can roam freely examining the suspected duplicates, without accidentally losing the selection. When you are done you can turn this mode off using [Mark| Sticky selection](#).

141. **[PRO version]** You can permanently store your favorite commands using [Customize| User commands](#). So instead of searching for `windiff $N $I` in the command history, just add it in the user menu. If you associate a keyboard shortcut for it, it will be at your beck and call with a single keystroke!

142. **[PRO version]** A number of keyboard **shortcuts** are user-configurable through various [Organize](#) menus. You can associate combinations of <Ctrl>, <Alt> and <Shift> and keys within 0-9 with any command in a customizable menu, like bookmarks, user commands, layouts etc. To aid memorisation it is best to organize shortcuts by subject, e.g. bookmarks with <Ctrl>, layouts with <Alt> etc.

143. **[PRO version]** You can add up to 14 extra toolbars using [Customize| Toolbars| Add](#) and place user-configurable command buttons on them, like bookmarks, layouts, columns etc. For these it makes sense to enable **text labels** from the toolbar's context menu so that you can tell them apart.

144. The targets appearing in **Send To** context menu are actually files in a folder accessible via [Go to| Special folders| Send to](#) menu. For example you can add a *shortcut* to notepad.exe in that folder so you can send text files to it for editing, even when notepad isn't associated with them.

145. If you want to preview larger portions of text files, increase the text preview size from [Tools| Options| Window: Quick viewer](#). The downside is that you'll have to wait longer for them to load!

146. **[PRO version]** [Tools| Subfolder size](#) will calculate *total* subfolder sizes and display them in the **Size** column, if any. [Tools| Folder statistics](#) on the other hand will gather the *detailed* breakdown of a folder's disk usage and present it in a tree, so that you can see how much space each subfolder is using. You can even extract this information as text for printing etc.

147. If you want to include a **comma** as part of a script command template, then use *two* commas in a row. This escapes the default meaning of comma as a command separator. So "`foo,bar`" will produce two separate commands (foo & bar) whereas "`foo,,bar`" will use the comma verbatim generating "`foo,bar`".

148. xplorer² is constantly evolving. Please use [Help| Check for updates](#) every now and then to keep up with any new developments, see if there are any new versions, bug-fixes etc.

149. This is the last tip. We hope it has been a fruitful journey for you! If you want a printable version of all tips please open the file called **x2tips.rtf**, within the installation folder. By the way, have you read the manual? Loads of information there too! Please start your next journey with [Help](#) | [Contents](#).