



Hidden agendas

Tim Nott fiddles with some fonts and shares his joy at the **ability to tweak** again with TweakAll.

Recently, I've had a few enquiries about fonts in general and Marlett.ttf in particular. One person wanted to know what this font was for. In some versions of Windows it is hidden in the fonts folder, but nevertheless appears in the font lists of applications. It contains symbols used by Windows on scroll, maximise, minimise and restore buttons, check boxes, option (radio) buttons and other controls. As a font is scalable all these can be represented at various sizes, and display faster than bitmapped symbols.

All of which pretty well answers the next query, which is 'my scroll bars and buttons have all gone funny...' To replace a damaged or missing Marlett.ttf in Windows 95, use the MS-DOS EXTRACT command to fetch a new copy from Win95_05.cab on the CD-ROM. Typing EXTRACT /? at the command prompt

broken and the up and down arrows look strange. After a scan of the web, I failed to find a suitable cool or different-looking replacement. Any suggestions?' I couldn't find any either – it appears that nobody has yet ventured down this avenue of customisation.

However, I didn't return empty-handed; having downloaded two shareware font editors I was ready to have a poke about with Marlett.ttf, as well as help Alan Middleton, who wanted to 'print some special music symbols which are not included in Chopin or any other similar typeface'.



He asked if there was any way he could substitute a character in an existing font, as he could with an Atari font editor.

Softy was created by David Emmett of Aylesbury – it's shareware, costing £15 to register. You can download it

from <http://home.iclweb.com/icl1/d.w.emmett> – although at the time of writing this site was impossibly slow, and I eventually found another source: <http://epix.freethemes.com/editfont.htm>. Despite the name it's not for softies or the faint-hearted. You really need to be happy with technical terms to get the most out of this.

The Font Creator Program, from High-Logic of Holland is also shareware, costs \$35 (£22) to register, and can be downloaded from www.high-logic.com/fcp.html. This is a rather more ambitious effort with Office-style toolbars, an

HTML tutorial, Unicode compatibility and the facility to trace bitmaps – the latter, for example, lets you incorporate a scanned signature into a font. Neither application lets you apply hinting to glyphs – this is a way of distorting the glyphs at smaller sizes to get a better fit to the pixel grid on screen.

Unhinted or badly hinted fonts can look lumpy and malformed at small sizes, but this shouldn't be too much of an obstacle if you just want to add custom characters or play around with Marlett.

■ Close down, restart or crash?

I've had reports that one of the tips in October's issue does not work. Ever since Windows 95 launched, it has been an open secret that holding down the shift key with the Restart option in the Shut Down Windows dialog reloads Windows, rather than rebooting from scratch. Under Windows 98SE, it seems this crashes the system. If you are using Windows 98SE, don't try this tip unless you've saved any open files first.

Further to Colin Green's query in October about starting Internet Explorer without connecting to the Internet, Anthony Atkinson came up with a more elegant solution than my blank HTML file.

Starting it from a shortcut with the following target:

```
"C:\Program Files\Internet Explorer\IEXPLORE.EXE"
-nohome (Key: code string continues)
```

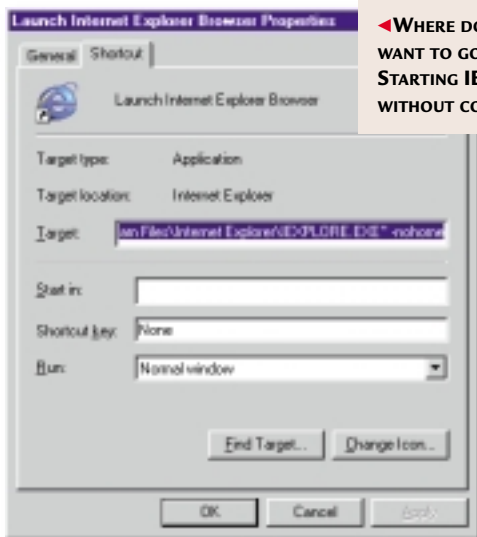
gives full instructions, so I won't go into detail. Windows 98 users have an easier method – run System Information, then from the Tools menu of this, the System File Checker. If the problem persists you will have to rebuild the font cache by deleting the file Ttfcache (no extension) from the Windows folder, then restart.

■ Glyph hanger

Reader Ian Quigley cheerfully admitted he'd 'used a simple font editor to mess up the glyphs in Marlett.ttf, and now have some stupid-looking icons in my windows. The checkbox buttons are



hands on windows



◀WHERE DON'T YOU WANT TO GO TODAY? STARTING IE WITHOUT CONNECTING

does the trick in IE3, 4 and 5. Obviously, you need to change the path if your copy of IEXPLORE.EXE resides elsewhere.

■ Carry on tweaking

Further to the sad demise of TweakUI in Windows 98SE, I'm happy to report on a free alternative. TweakAll is available from www.abtons-shed.com and performs a similar function to TweakUI in getting at hard-to-reach corners of the interface.

Although it shares a lot of common ground with old favourites such as 'Save Explorer Settings' and 'Menu delay speed', it misses out some of my favourites, such as the ability to hide Control Panel items and editing the 'New...' list. However, it tries very hard to make up for this with some unique features of its own.

To start with, it has a page dedicated to the Windows startup and shutdown screens. Not only can you change these, but there's also an impressive range of image-processing filters available. There's a page dedicated to backing up

opportunities to get their anoraks muddy. Don't forget to visit the backup tab first, and please remember this column regrets it cannot offer technical support for TweakAll.

One last, excellent feature is an option to hide each page, so you don't have to scare yourself witless with the more arcane options.

■ Heavy load

Why does Windows take so long to load? This is really a rhetorical question, but it corresponds to a hardware/software cycle. Buy a fast, new computer and you'll notice Windows loads at record

the registry and other configuration files, and another page of security settings, similar to the System Policy Editor.

Then it starts to get scary. You want to change your disk cache chunk size? Alter the maximum segment size used by your modem? Change the MipMap levels for your nVidia TNT Detonator drivers or the Over-clocking settings for a 3dfx Voodoo Banshee? Personally, I try to avoid even contemplating this sort of stuff, taking the wimpishly sensible attitude that if it isn't broken it doesn't need fixing, but dedicated Windows meddlers may enjoy these new

To take a slightly less cynical and more literal approach to the question, part of the answer can be found in Bootlog.txt. This is a file optionally created when Windows starts – you need to interrupt the boot process by pressing F8 then choosing option 2 from the menu. Having done this, you can analyse Bootlog.txt at your leisure. The hexadecimal numbers at the start of each line are related to the time, which isn't really helpful to the human brain. Enter Bla – a freeware boot log analyser from <http://www.kwiktek.com/files.htm>. This turns those hex numbers into conventional time units, and shows how long each component has taken to load – there's an option to filter this to just those that exceed 0.25 seconds or fail.

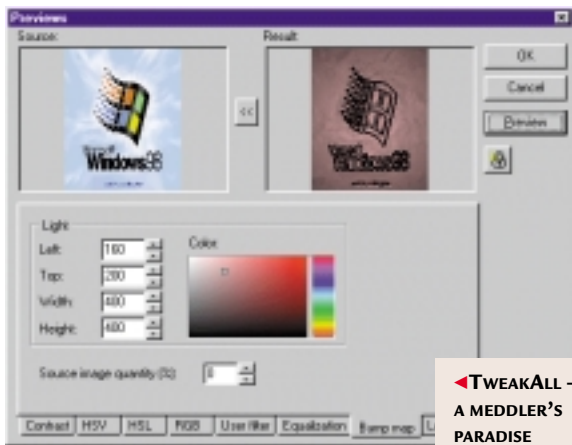
Unfortunately, when I've tried this,

▼NOW YOU KNOW – WHAT WINDOWS IS DOING WHILE YOU GAZE AT THE STARTUP SCREEN

Time	Duration	Event
17:06:24	0.278	Dynamic load device: C:\WINDOWS\system\OSUB818\cdm
17:06:24	0.278	Dynamic load device: C:\WINDOWS\system\OSUB818\mes-
17:06:28	0.687	DEVICENIT = NDIS
17:06:29	0.444	Dynamic load device: ppsmac.vxd
17:06:29	0.389	Dynamic load device: vfat.386
17:06:30	0.389	Dynamic load device: vlp.386
17:06:30	0.389	Dynamic load device: vltg.386
17:06:30	0.333	Dynamic load device: vltcp.386
17:06:31	0.389	Dynamic load device: vnt.386
17:06:33	0.580	DEVICENITSUCCESS = VVAT
17:06:33	0.278	DEVICENITSUCCESS = VDEF
17:06:33	0.278	Initing hllapp.pdr
17:06:34	0.778	Initing esd_506.pdr
17:06:35	0.611	Initing esd_506.pdr
17:06:35	0.722	Init Success esd_506.pdr
17:06:40	0.556	INITCOMPLETE = DOSMGR
17:06:41	0.580	INITCOMPLETE = VCOMM
17:06:42	0.580	Dynamic load device: lptdm.vxd
17:06:42	0.444	Dynamic load device: C:\WINDOWS\system\serial.vd

the Bootlog file gives up the ghost on the hex numbers at the point when it starts to record the system.driv, keyboard.driv, various dlls and fonts. So the time these take to load isn't recorded. Nor does it record how long all those bits and pieces that load after Windows take. Nevertheless, it did reveal that a number of fonts were failing to load as they were being referenced by shortcuts in the fonts folder to a folder on a CD-ROM.

Finally the presence of 'failures' in the Bootlog file doesn't necessarily indicate a problem. I covered this in depth in June 1998, but to recap NDIS2SUP.VXD will fail if Windows doesn't find any NDIS-2 network drivers in need of support. Other common but harmless failures can include EBIOS, VPOWERD, DSOUND, VSHARE and SDVXD.



◀TWEAKALL – A MEDDLER'S PARADISE



Questions & answers

Q I have bought a new PC. All is fine except when it is starting up I have to go through the 'Windows 98 Startup Menu' screen where it gives me a choice of normal or games startup. Is there a way of bypassing this so it automatically goes to normal Windows?

ROBERT COOK

a Yes. First make sure that 'Show all files' is enabled in Explorer, View, (Folder) Options. Then find C:\MSDOS.SYS, right click on it, Properties. Untick the hidden and read-only attributes. Open the file in Notepad, and in the Options section change BootMenu=1 to BootMenu=0. Save the file, close, then reset the hidden and system attributes. You can still access the menu if you press F8 as the computer boots. Windows 95 put a little helpful 'Starting Windows' message on the screen for two seconds, but that doesn't seem to appear in Windows 98. You still get the two-second time slot, but have to use your skill and judgement to find this – it comes just after the BIOS shows what disk drives you have.

Q I have a Pentium III 550MHz processor, but it is only identified as a Pentium II with MMX technology in the system properties. I am running Windows 98 and I thought Pentium IIIs were supported – could you tell me more?

GORDON O'DONOVAN

a I don't think this is a problem, just an inaccurate message, as the Pentium III was not around when Windows 98 launched.

Still, you might want to open the box and check the label on the processor!

Q I have created my own Accounting Program using Access and I market the product in Kenya. I was just wondering if it is possible to restrict a user from changing the system date in Windows 95/98.

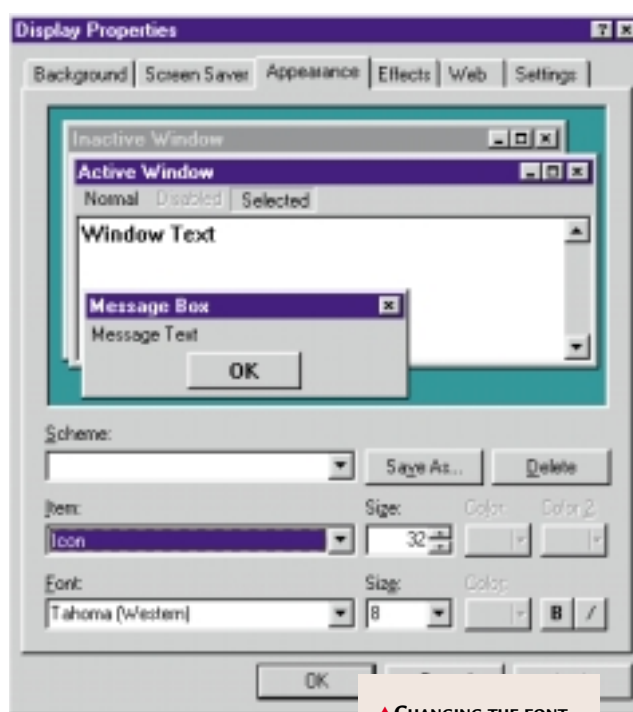
MOHAMMAD IMRAN

a You can delete Windows\System\Timedate.cpl. This will stop users changing the date from Control Panel or by double-clicking on the taskbar clock. However, they will still be able to change it from a DOS prompt using the DATE command. Since this is built in to DOS you can't remove it in the same way. One way round this would be to use the system policy editor to disable both the MS-DOS prompt and single-mode MS-DOS applications.

Q I have heard of various utilities that enable you to print out a directory listing. Can you point me in the direction of one? I would prefer one that can be edited in Word or Notepad so that I can put them all together into a file, to keep track of all the files on my floppies (including Zip disks). Previously I have used Corel Capture, but this only gives me a bitmap and cannot be manipulated.

DUNCAN EDWARDS

a The simplest way is to start an MS-DOS window, change to the relevant folder and use the DIR command with its output redirected to a file. As an example, the following will create a text file named FILELIST.TXT in the



▲ CHANGING THE FONT USED FOR ICON LABELS AND EXPLORER DETAILS

Windows\System folder listing the contents of that folder:
CD \WINDOWS\SYSTEM
DIR > FILELIST.TXT
For a more elegant solution involving the Scripting host that comes with Windows 98, see last May's column. Finally, if you want to take the screen capture approach, then SnagIt will grab the contents of any window (including folders) as text. It will capture the entire contents – not just the part visible in the window – and does many other things besides. You can download a trial version from www.techsmith.com.

Q I have Plus 98 for Windows 98 and recently McAfee virus scan (provided with Plus 98!) has been opening every time I turn on or log on to the computer. Is there a way of stopping this as it is annoying me?

THOMAS CHAPMAN

a Yes – the easiest way is to Start, Run MSCONFIG.EXE and turn to

the Startup tab. Find the McAfee entry and untick it. There may also be entries in AUTOEXEC.BAT or CONFIG.SYS, so check those tabs too.

Q I know you can change the font for window title bars, but is it possible to change the font of the text underneath desktop icons such as 'My Computer' and 'Recycle Bin' in Windows 98?

BEN COOKMAN

a Yes. In Display Properties, Appearance, select 'Icon' from the Item list. The box below will then spring to life, offering a choice of fonts. However, remember that this affects all the text in both Explorer and folder listings.

PCW CONTACTS

Tim Nott welcomes your feedback on the Windows column. Contact him via the PCW editorial office, or email win@pcw.co.uk