



Natural resources

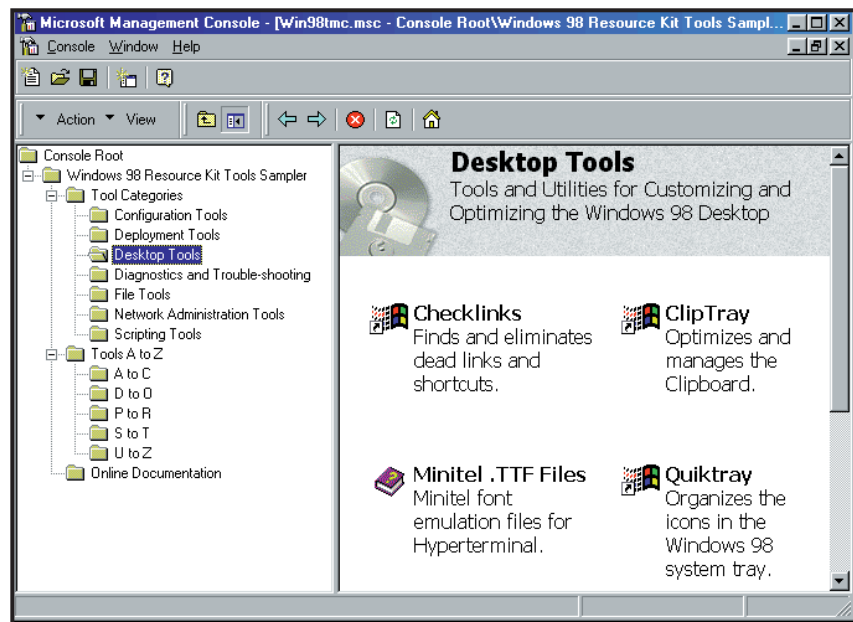
Tim Nott reveals a **mine of curiosities** on the Windows CD-ROMs and has a few tricks of his own.

The Windows Resource kit is one of the hidden treasures of both the 95 and 98 CD-ROMs. In Windows 95 it takes the form of a help file (Admin\Reskit\Win95rk.hlp). In Windows 98 it can be found in Tools\Reskit\Help\Rk98book.chm.

You can copy this to your hard disk – or open it in place. However, if you've got 11MB of disk space going spare, you are far better off installing the entire kit, by running Tools\Reskit\Setup.exe. This gives you not only the 3MB book – to which I'll return – but also a multitude of other (more or less) useful goodies, all gathered together under the umbrella of the rather strange Microsoft Management Console.

Starting with the less useful, the fonts for French Minitel emulation in HyperTerminal take the prize for utter futility. I mean, really. I live in that country, and I've never used them. Still, it's good to support Europe, and let's hope they bewilder Americans even more than they do us.

Next in the sheer lack of excitement stakes is a text-file viewer. Its good point is that you get a two-paned view, with a browser tree in the left-hand pane. Its bad points are that, like Notepad, it can't manage anything bigger than around



The strange world of the Microsoft Management Console

Not all the utilities are installed automatically – you need to go back to the CD to install PWLEDIT.EXE, for example. This rather useful little tool has but one purpose – it removes cached passwords from a PWL file. So, if you've ever clicked an option for Windows to 'remember this password' and subsequently regretted doing so, perhaps

allowing certain programs to be run. It's a favourite with network administrators, particularly in schools.

Another rather useful utility is the File Information tool, which lists every Windows 98 file, where it should be installed, which CAB file it comes from on the CD and, in some cases, a description of the file. A must for the terminally curious, this turns up several surprises, such as the 'hidden' Windows 98 TrueType fonts, and the fact that Windows 3.1 Cardfile still ships with Windows 98!

The Time Zone Editor isn't quite as exciting as its *Dr Who*-like name suggests, but it is useful if Microsoft has got the spring and autumn clock change dates wrong for your country. There's WHERE – a DOS-based file finder, and WINDIFF, a rather bizarre tool for comparing files and folders. There's also a USB troubleshooter, a FAT 32 partition converter, as well as Checklinks, which – as I mentioned last month – weeds out dead shortcuts.

Star of the utilities is TweakUI – but only with Windows 98 First Edition. Microsoft removed it from Windows 98 SE, presumably in case anyone hurt

The fonts for French Minitel emulation in HyperTerminal take the prize for utter futility

60KB, and – worse still – it won't wrap text to its own window.

Also high on the not-terribly-exciting list, is Quicktray, which lets you run programs from icons in the system tray. Personally, I use the Quicklaunch bar for doing this and wage an unending struggle trying to keep rubbish out of the system tray. Remind me to have a little rant about this soon, but I will make an exception for Cliptray, another resource kit tray contender, which lets you store multiple text items for instant clipboard retrieval.

for security reasons, this is the tool to undo the damage. Note that you cannot see the actual passwords, only the service they apply to, so it's quite secure in itself.

Many of the other tools are specialist or aimed at network supervisors, such as the utility to change the DOS code page or create batch scripts for multiple Windows installations.

POLEDIT has made previous appearances in this column – it is used to enforce system policies which can restrict some or all users in various ways, from limiting Control Panel access, to only



themselves with it. Regular readers will need no introduction to this, but if you're new to Windows or have only just returned from another planet, then this is a Control Panel item that lets you customise and repair various aspects of Windows in ways that would otherwise need recourse to registry editing.

Don't overlook the Resource Kit Tools Sampler Help File (pew). Not only does it tell you what all these tools do (how do you think I found out?) but it also sports a rather good glossary.

A bigger and better glossary is in the Resource Kit Online Book itself, so next time an attractive member of the opposite sex walks up to you at a party and says 'Tell me all about Drive Parameter Blocks', you'll be able to. Although the book is aimed mainly at network and IT professionals, with lots about 'rolling out' and supporting Windows in a corporate environment, there's a wealth of information for the small business or standalone user.

It tells you all you want to know about things such as system policies, networking protocols, the registry, Webcasting and the Active Desktop. There's a good range of troubleshooting and tuning guides, plus a list of every Windows keyboard shortcut known to mankind.

If all this leaves you hungry for more, then there's a grown-up version of the resource kit, with a printed book and extra goodies, such as an animated cursor-editing kit (I want! I want!) available from Microsoft Press.

URL history mystery

Chris Giles was rather surprised to find a 'a repository of URLs that I visited a year or more ago hiding on my hard drive'. These were listed in a file named MM256.DAT with a date of 17/12/98. Moreover, the file wasn't visible in Windows Explorer, but did appear in File Manager.

The short answer to this puzzle is that the way Internet Explorer keeps its history

and cache has changed over the last two versions. As far as I can remember, the MM256.DAT and MM2048.DAT formats belonged to IE3: version four replaced these with INDEX.DAT files, and IE5 split these into daily/weekly subfolders.

Exactly three years ago, I reported in this column that clearing the IE3 History still left old URLs visible, if these files were loaded into a text editor. IE5 seems better, but I still found URLs in the main INDEX.DAT file even after clearing the History.

There's a similar problem with the cached files kept in the Temporary Internet Files – once again, this may appear to be empty apart from a load of cookies (depending on how you access it), but examining things in File Manager shows a different story.

Once again, there's more (and less) than meets the eye. For a start, the Temporary Internet Files folder appears as Tempora~1, which is a limit of File Manager's 16bit legacy. Within that folder are no cookies (the ones you see in Explorer are actually in the Cookies folder), but in the CONTENT.IE5 subfolder there is again an INDEX.DAT file,

which may contain URLs even though the cache has been cleared.

The cached files themselves are stored in several randomly-named subfolders of CONTENT.IE5, and I've found that an IE or Windows crash leaves files in these that turn into super-mutants beyond the reach of the IE properties Delete Files button. Should this happen, you can open each of the randomly-named folders in File Manager and delete all the contents except DESKTOP.INI.

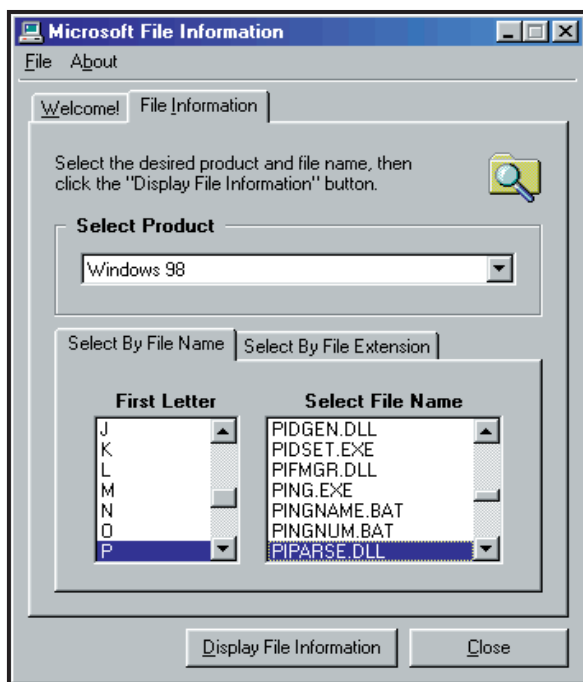
For a more drastic solution (which will also purge the INDEX.DAT file, restart in MS-DOS mode and use the DELTREE command to get rid of the Temporary Internet Files folder and all its contents. IE will build a fresh set next time it is started.

Assorted tips

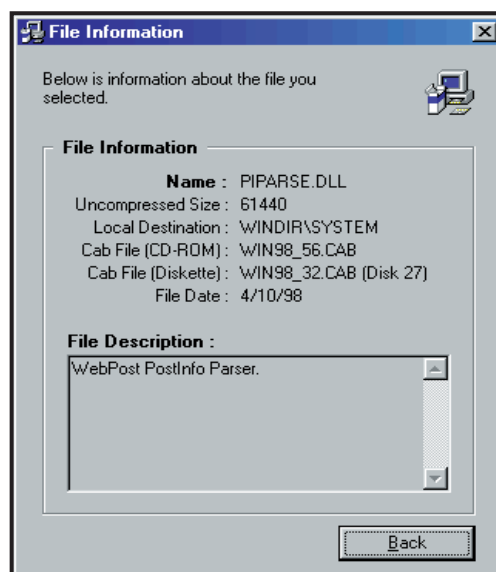
It's an old one, but a good one, and thank you, Benedict Prescott, for reminding us. Rather than juggle with the two-click timing, or waiting for the right-click menu, to rename a file, just hit F2.

And another fine tip, this time from Peter Bradley, concerns defragging. I mentioned in February's column the necessity to close down invisible programs before running defrag, in order to avoid the maddeningly iterative 'drive contents changed, restarting...' message.

Peter pointed me to a file on the Windows 98 CD-ROM to solve this problem. It's called defrag.inf and lives in the Tools\mntutils folder. Right-click on it and select Install. Nothing appears to happen, but in fact it writes to the



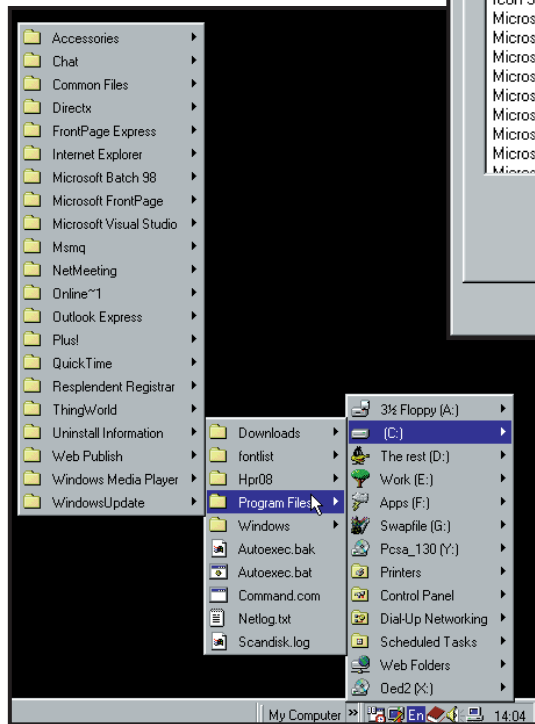
The file information tool lets you find an interesting file...



...and check what it does

registry. If you don't have the CD to hand then you can DIY by going to: HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunServicesOnce and add a new string value with the name Defrag and the value DEFRAG.EXE/ALL.

Now, note that you must have a login enabled for this to work, so if you don't,

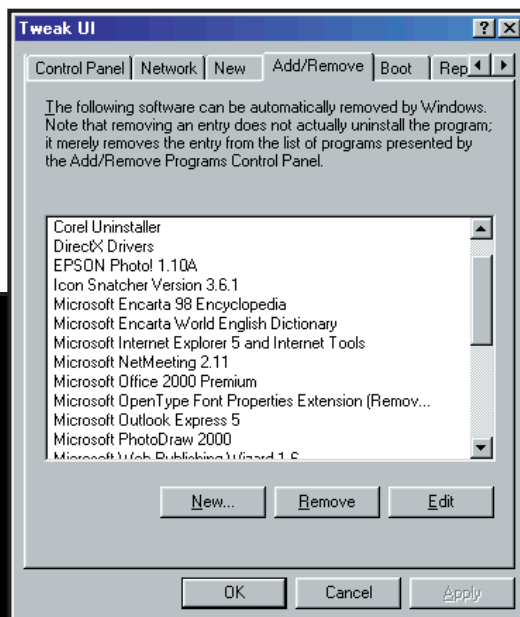


Ease navigation by making a menu of your file system

enable multiple users, or give yourself a password as a temporary measure. Restart the PC, and when the login prompt appears do nothing. Defrag will then start and do its thing before anything else is loaded, and when it has finished you can log in as normal.

But this month's most impressive tip involves file navigation. To use it you'll need the desktop update: ie, either Windows 95 with IE4 or Windows 98.

Drag the My Computer icon on to the Taskbar at the end nearest the system tray. Right-click on the handle and make sure 'Show title' is checked. Grab hold of its handle and drag it towards the system tray until just the words 'My Computer' (or whatever you may have renamed it) are visible. Now click on the double arrow for a cascading menu of the entire file system. It doesn't show hidden files or any file details, but provides a quick way to get at any other file or folder and impresses the hell out of visitors.



Catching ghosts

With the ever-increasing amount of free or trial software available on magazine CD-ROMs or the Internet, many users may have a number of 'ghost' items in Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs. The programs themselves may have been removed, but they are still listed here, and trying to remove them just results in error messages.

This can happen if the

Exorcising ghost applications with TweakUI

corresponding to the installed programs. Some will have names that relate to known applications, others may be less obvious (or even complete gobbledegook).

To find out what's what, click on the key (the folder-like thing in the left-hand pane) and examine the contents on the right. If there is a string entitled DisplayName then its value will correspond to an entry in the Add/Remove list. There should also be an entry entitled UninstallString, and its value corresponds to the command needed to

uninstall the product – it may be worth looking down any paths that are mentioned in here, if you are in doubt.

Other entries may lack a DisplayName. This usually means that they are uninstalled 'quietly' by another method, often daisy-chained from another uninstall. If you see a QuietDisplayName or QuietUninstallString then simply close the key and walk away. If you are sure, however, that you have located a phantom Add/Remove entry, then remove the entire key for that entry.

Windows 95 and 98 versions of TweakUI have an Add/Remove tab for these ghost entries

user has deleted a program from Explorer, rather than using Add/Remove; if the uninstall information is missing or damaged; or if the original installation was not completed or just badly written. Both Windows 95 and 98 versions of TweakUI have an Add/Remove tab specifically for removing these entries. Note that this should only be used for removing leftover entries in the list – it does not uninstall programs. If you don't have TweakUI, then you need to edit the registry, and the usual backing-up disclaimer applies. Under the key: HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Uninstall you will find a set of subkeys

Debugging the code

Finally, apologies to all the readers who couldn't get February's REG file listing to restore multi-columned menus to work. A printer's devil stole the first two lines, which should have been REGEDIT4 all on its own, followed by a blank line, followed by the printed listing.

CONTACTS

Tim Nott welcomes your feedback on Windows, but cannot deal with queries concerning the PCW CD-ROM or website. You can contact him via the PCW editorial office or email: windows@pcw.co.uk