

## Beta blues

**Tim Nott had cleaned up his PC act, installed Windows 98 from scratch and loaded Office 2000 beta. Great, but where had the configuration backup and emergency recovery utility gone?**

**T**hree exciting things happened this month. First, I decided to do something about my monstrous Windows 98 over Windows 98 beta, over Windows 95, plus various patches installation. So I bit the bullet, double-checked my emergency boot disks, backed up the bits and pieces I might need, and vapoured the rest. I then reinstalled a squeaky-clean Windows 98 from scratch. The second exciting thing (which rather undid the hygienic effects of the first) was to install the beta version of Office 2000. The third was to back up the Registry. Well, actually, it was the second, chronologically, for obvious reasons, but it makes a better story this way around.

### Now you see them...

So I set off to look for those old stalwarts, the Configuration Backup and Emergency Recovery Utility. And there they weren't. A thorough search of the CD revealed no trace of Cfgback or Eru and, as far as the Windows 98 help files and Resource Kit were concerned, these un-programs had

been written out of history. Happily, however, I did find a replacement and although it's early days yet it does look rather good. It's to be found under the Tools menu of the System Information utility, which gets installed on the Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools menu. If you can't face the seven mouse actions involved, create a shortcut to (or simply Run) Scanregw. Under Windows 95, each successful boot created a backup copy of the Registry files, System.dat and User.dat, with the extension .da0, the idea being that if your Registry became corrupted you could replace it with these last known good versions. What usually happened, though, was that your Registry would get corrupted in non-fatal stages, so that these backups were often equally useless. So, all prudent users would use one of the aforementioned utilities, or other manual methods, to create registry backups. But both utilities were flawed. Cfgback would let you make nine different backup versions, but you needed to be running Windows to restore them. Your life-jacket

is back at the airport, so to speak. Eru, on the other hand, though it backed up other vital files and could be restored from DOS, tried hard to persuade you to back up to a floppy disk which, as anyone with a fully-fledged Registry will realise, is somewhat inadequate, size-wise. And, no, it wouldn't span disks. It just left what it couldn't fit, not backed up.

### Don't boot, back up!

Windows 98 seems to have addressed this mess quite well, as far as I can tell. Every day, rather than every boot, it backs up the Registry to the Windows\Sysbackup folder which, as with 95, contains spare copies of vital DLLs and so on in case the originals get copied over by third-party software. Both Registry .DAT files, Win.ini and System.ini get backed up to a CAB file. This has the same compressed format as the Windows installation CAB files, and you can View the contents and extract

***I bit the bullet, backed up the bits and pieces I might need, and vapoured the rest***

individual files from Explorer. By default, Windows maintains five copies, though you can alter this by editing the Scanreg.ini file. You can also opt to include extra files for backup, too. The other half of the package is the DOS-mode utility, Scanreg (without-a-w).

## Questions & answers

**Q** When I create a new shortcut and type in a folder's name that contains a space, such as C:\My Documents, I am helpfully informed there is no such folder as C:\My. I've got SP1 installed. Is this a bug?

NICK LEE

**a** Bug, Nick? Surely not. It's a feature — one that continues on into Windows 98. To stop this happening, enclose the target in double quotes, thus: "C:\My Documents". Alternatively, use drag-and-drop to create shortcuts.

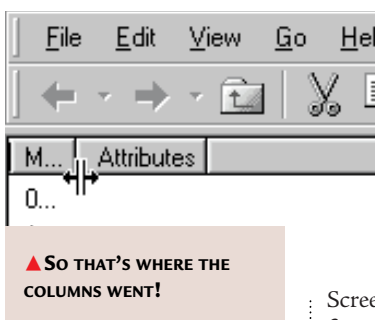
**Q** Every time I restart MS Exchange and Compose New Fax, the "Do you want a cover page" option is greyed, leaving me to trawl through Options, Select a Cover Page, Browse. I choose one, then it tells me that it is already in the list of available cover pages: do I want to overwrite it? I click yes, and all the cover pages suddenly appear as options. We are then OK until the next time I shut down, when I have to start all over again.

SARA BOURKE

**a** It sounds crazy, but this happens when the Archive attribute has been removed from the .CPE files — for example by backup software. You can cure it by right-clicking on each one, choosing Properties and ticking the Archive attribute box. A more radical cure is available from a patch: navigate to the Knowledgebase on the Microsoft web site and search for COVERPG.EXE.

**Q** With Active Desktop installed, the content of any Explorer window with detailed view selected becomes invisible except for file attributes. The number of items in the window is given correctly but I just can't see them. Any ideas, other than uninstalling the active desktop?

GORDON FEENEY



**a** It's not drastic enough for uninstalling the active desktop. What has happened is that someone or something has messed with the columns. Move the cursor to the column headings (or in

your case, heading) and move it to the left until it becomes two parallel vertical lines with an arrow sticking out each side. If you get just a double-headed arrow, you've gone too far. Drag this cursor to the right and you should see the first of the missing columns (Modified) revealed. Repeat to uncover the rest of the missing details.

**Q** A while ago I noticed that my screensaver would not come on; after a while, the screen would just go blank. I checked the Properties-

Screensaver dialog and found it set to None. After changing it back, I now find that whenever I reboot, the setting is reset to None. How can I return to having a screensaver as a default when I boot up?

MIKE CLAYTON

**a** Log in as the default user by restarting the PC and hitting the Cancel button when prompted for a name and password. You are now logged in as a "default" user. Set the screensaver, shut down Windows and you should find that this screensaver will now not only have "stuck" for all users, but that each user should be able to select their own, which will also be remembered.

**Q** Where has Fax support disappeared to under Windows 98? I can't find it anywhere on my machine or install CD.

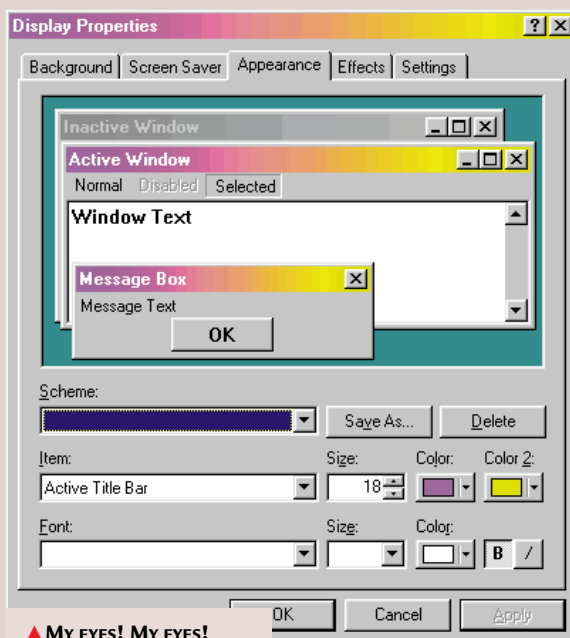
DAVE OLDORN

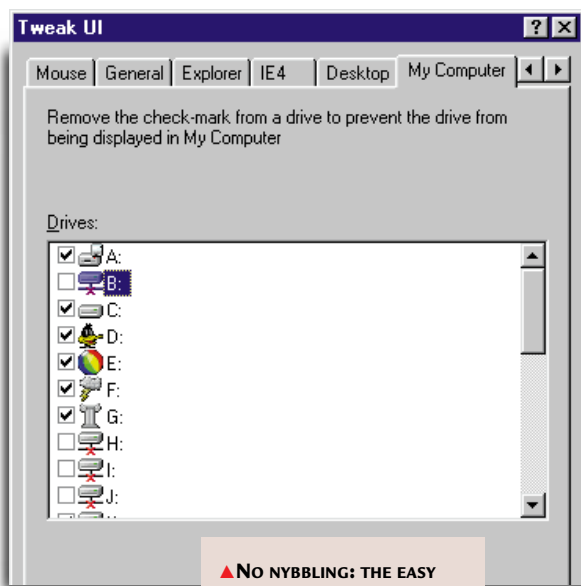
**a** Diligent research reveals that this is buried on the CD under tools\oldwin95\message\intl. You'll see a file called wms-fax.txt, which contains instructions on installing the fax software.

**Q** All the windows on a friend's PC have rather elegant title bars that "shade" from dark to light blue. Mine are boring old solid blue. How can I change them?

MARK HUTCHINSON

**a** This, again, is a Windows 98 or IE4 enhancement. Right-click on the desktop and choose Properties (or go to Control Panel, Display), then click on the Appearance tab. Choose "Active title Bar" from the Item list, or simply click on the title bar in the sample picture and if you have this facility you'll see two "Color" buttons that control the start and end colours of the shading.





If the Registry is found to be corrupt on starting, this will automatically replace it with the last known good version (pretty much as before). However, you also get the opportunity to run this manually and select which backup set you'd like to restore. As mentioned before, you can have more than the default five (up to 99, in fact) backups, and a command line switch with the Scanregw.exe can be used to add comments which become visible in DOS Scanreg. You can find out more from the General Troubleshooting chapter of the W98 Resource Kit.

**But despite** the improvements, there does seem to be something left on my wish list. The back-ups are replaced on a first-in, first-out basis and I'd really like to see a way of keeping key backups, such as "this is my original working Registry with just X, Y and Z installed" or "how it was before I installed Bloatware 6.0". The only way to do this seems to be to copy the CAB files elsewhere, then extract them (but not to the Windows folder), then restart in DOS mode, then copy them back over the existing .DAT files remembering to clear and set the Hidden, Read-only and System attributes.

**I decided to install** Visio 5 this month. Having got through the various options of what I wanted installed where, it then asked where I wanted the Start Menu shortcuts put. Declining the default choice, I told it to stick them in my

need. And not a trace of any of the original shortcuts, which had disappeared beyond the reach of the Recycle Bin or even DOS mode undelete. So, if you install this fine product, be warned — don't specify an existing Start Menu folder.

**Thanks to** Sam Edge, Dave Johnson and Graham Mayor, who pointed out, *vis-à-vis* September's column, that there is another way of loading CONFIG.SYS devices for MS-DOS mode. To recap briefly, if you want to use, say, a CD-ROM drive in real-mode MS-DOS rather than a windowed DOS session, you have to specify new CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT commands in the relevant PIF. However, there is a utility that lets you load CONFIG.SYS entries from a batch file. Hence, you can load both components of the CD-ROM drivers from DOSSTART.BAT, saving considerable restart time. It's called DLOAD.COM and comes with SoundBlaster cards. <ftp://ftp.creaf.com/pub/creative/patches/ctload.exe>.

**Remember I wrote** in last month's Q&A section about using TweakUI to hide drives and how this was related to a Registry setting? I wrote that "no doubt some bright spark will write in to tell us how the other drives are calculated." Well, just to recap, the setting is at HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer

[FIG 1]

## Behind the mask

```
#####ZY XWVUTSRQ PONMLKJI HGFEDCBA
00000011 11111111 01111111 10001110
03          ff          7f          8e
```

"Graphics" sub-menu, alongside the regular residents such as Paint Shop and about ten temporary guests which were taking part in a group test on which I was working. I ended up with a fulsome system of stacked menus encompassing shortcuts to all the Visio templates one could ever possibly

[FIG 2]

## The nybble table

| HEX | BIN  | HEX | BIN  |
|-----|------|-----|------|
| 0   | 0000 | 8   | 1000 |
| 1   | 0001 | 9   | 1001 |
| 2   | 0010 | A   | 1010 |
| 3   | 0011 | B   | 1011 |
| 4   | 0100 | C   | 1100 |
| 5   | 0101 | D   | 1101 |
| 6   | 0110 | E   | 1110 |
| 7   | 0111 | F   | 1111 |

It's a binary value labelled Nodrives, which defaults to 00 00 00 00 hex — in other words, all drives are visible. And the bright spark who actually got in before the column was published, as we were discussing related matters, was Peter McGarvey, upon whose anorak may the sun never set. To see how the mask works:

**1 WRITE DOWN** the drive letters in reverse order, separated into four groups, with the first group containing six leading "padding" characters.

**2 ASSIGN** a 1 to each drive to be hidden, and a zero to each one to be visible. You should get four binary bytes.

**3 WRITE** the hex code of each byte below. You should end up with something like [Fig 1]. If, like me, you can't do this in your head and find it equally painful using the Windows calculator, use the nybble table in Fig 2 to translate each half-byte. Then reverse the order of the bytes and this will be the value that appears in the Registry. So, 8e 7f ff 03 will hide all but drives A, E, F, G. And P. 04 00 00 00, as reported last month, just hides the C: drive.

## PCW CONTACTS

Tim Nott can be contacted via the PCW editorial office (address, p10) or email [win@pcw.co.uk](mailto:win@pcw.co.uk)