



The name game

Tim Nott comes up with a VB script for **renaming files** to run under DOS 6.22.

Readers Bob Jonas has come up with a request which cannot adequately be covered in our Q & A section: 'I want to transfer a large number of files to a laptop running DOS 6.22. Prior to this I would like to copy the files to another directory, rename them with 8 + 3 file names incorporating sequential numbering whilst preserving the original extensions, and print out a list with the old name and the new name.'

Taking the last bit first, we covered something similar in last month's piece on scripting, so I'm going to concentrate on the issue of the actual renaming. The easy way is to get a utility like QuickKeys. Besides its many other talents, the principal being a souped-up, editable version of the old Windows 3.x Recorder, it offers a bulk sequential renaming facility. But are *Hands On* readers devotees of the easy way? I think not. A surprisingly short bit of VBScripting (see Fig 1) will take care of this task, and with rather more versatility.

First, you need to assemble all the files in one folder then run the script. The script prompts for the source folder path. If it can't find this folder it grinds to a halt (I've built in no error-handling, here). Next it prompts for a prefix. If, say, you were to type 'file' here, you'd end up with file0001.doc, file0002.txt, file0003.bmp and so on. This might be especially useful to someone assembling a load of

graphics for a web page. If you were to leave this blank, each copied file would bear the first four letters of the source file, plus the number. For example: docu0001.doc, read0002.txt, pict0003.bmp.

It next prompts for a destination folder, which must be new. If the destination already exists, the script will bail out without copying any files. This is simply a precaution to keep the new files tidily segregated. Note that VBScript doesn't use the \$ character in string handling so the traditional Basic "Left\$()" is just "Left()". One rather awkward problem is that the existing file extensions may contain more or fewer than three characters: for example, .MPEG or .RA. So, in these cases, a simple Right (filename, 4) won't return a dot plus the extension.

We also have to deal with cases where the first part of the filename contains less than four characters. The InStr function gets the position of the dot and if necessary truncates the extension to three characters, while less than three are left as they are. If there are less than four characters to the left of the dot, then the destination filename is adjusted to suit.

It's still not foolproof. It will, for instance, choke on files with no extension at all and it doesn't check the validity of the user-supplied prefix. A little extra code could cure this but we don't have room so this is left as an exercise for the reader.

Another new thing here is the first statement (lines starting with a single-quote are just for information to humans and are ignored by the



▲ **FIG 2** INTERNET EXPLORER'S SECRETS REVEALED

scripting host): Option Explicit means that any variables which are used in the script but not declared in the DIM statements will generate an error. Not only is this good programming etiquette but it can also save hours of anguish if you mis-spell a variable somewhere and wonder why the script isn't working.

For those who cannot be bothered to type all this you'll find the file in the Hands On section of this month's cover CD as Bulk Rename.vbs. As always, this CD is supplied without guarantee and neither the author nor the publishers are liable for anything you may get up to by using it. So, back up, check your insurance and say a prayer before use.

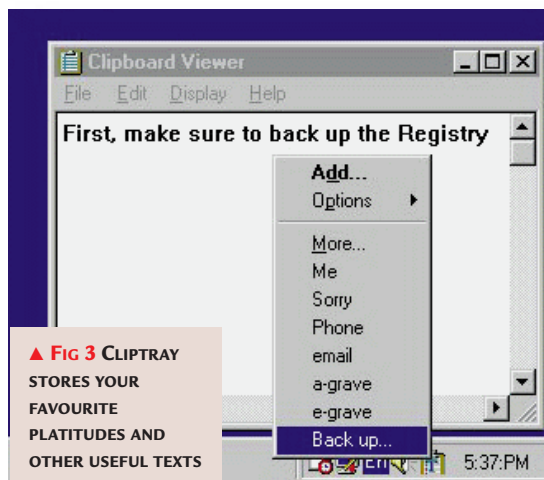
One particular warning: never attempt to copy large numbers of files to the root of a drive (e.g. C:\), as this can cause file system problems.

■ Diversions ahead

Two readers have come up with obscure time-wasters this month.

➔ **First**, Neil Shepherd: 'In the unlikely event that your machine running Win98 does not crash, you can recreate illegal operations at your leisure by making a shortcut to: C:\windows\rundll32.exe user.exe,BozosLiveHere.' Well, thanks Neil. Just what we've always wanted!

➔ **Second**, Alex Pounds sent in the key to the Internet Explorer 4 'Easter egg' or gang screen [Fig 2]. 'Open up IE4 and go to Help, About Internet Explorer. Ctrl + drag the e in the top right corner and waggle it around the left edge of the



▲ **FIG 3** CLIPTRAY STORES YOUR FAVOURITE PLATITUDES AND OTHER USEFUL TEXTS

[FIG 1]

RENAMING AND TRANSFERRING FILES

This VB script prompts for a source folder and a destination folder it then copies each file in the source to the target, renaming each in a numeric sequence. Script cobbled together by Tim Nott, 1999.

'Declaring variables

```
Option Explicit
Dim sourcefolder, targetfolder, count, allfiles, tail
Dim indir, outdir, prefix, newname, eachfile, abort
Dim dotpos, extension, filecopy, myobject, myobject2
```

'Prompt for source and destination folders

```
indir=InputBox("Enter the path to the source folder")
prefix = InputBox ("Enter the prefix for the new files - maximum four characters. Leave blank to use the first four characters of the source files")
outdir = InputBox ("Enter the path to the new destination folder")
If outdir <> "" Then
    Set myobject2 = CreateObject( "Scripting.FileSystemObject" )
    If Not myobject2.FolderExists( outdir ) Then
        myobject2.CreateFolder outdir
        abort = False
    Else
        MsgBox "Folder already exists - script will end", 0, "Cannot create folder"
        abort = True
    End If
    Set myobject2 = Nothing
End If
```

'Call the function unless the destination folder already existed

```
If abort = False then filecopy=DoCopy(indir, outdir, prefix)
```

'Function to copy files

```
Function DoCopy(sourcespec, destspec, head)
    count = 0
    Set myobject = CreateObject("Scripting.FileSystemObject")
    Set sourcefolder = myobject.GetFolder(sourcespec)
    Set targetfolder = myobject.GetFolder(destspec)
    Set allfiles = sourcefolder.Files
    For Each eachfile in allfiles
        count = count + 1
        tail = right("000" & count, 4)
        dotpos = InStr(eachfile.name, ".")
        extension = Mid(eachfile.name, dotpos, 4)
        If head <> "" Then
            newname = head & tail & extension
        ElseIf dotpos > 4 Then
            newname = Left(eachfile.name, 4) & tail & extension
        Else
            newname = Left(eachfile.name, dotpos-1) & tail & extension
        End If
        myobject.CopyFile sourcefolder & "\" & eachfile.name, targetfolder & "\" & newname,
    True
    Next
End Function
```

"Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0" text, which should then move aside to reveal an "Unlock" button. Drop the e and click it. The globe on the left will start to shake. Ctrl + drag the e onto it. A new window will appear showing the names of the IE4 team.'

■ The Cliptray utility

Buried in the Windows 98 Resource Kit is a useful utility called Cliptray [Fig 3] that I happened on all by myself. When run, it sits in the System Tray at the right of the Taskbar, displaying a clipboard icon. Right-click on this and select Add. You'll

then get a box with a space for a name and some text. Type in some text you often use, like your name and address. Repeat and you'll find that subsequent right-clicks show a menu of the names you gave to the texts. Select one and it's copied to the clipboard, ready to paste



Questions & answers

Q For some reason the titles of some of my Windows 98 Desktop icons are truncated. How can I cure this?

GREG KINGSLEY

a You should find that selecting each icon reveals the full text. For an overall solution try going to Control Panel, Display, Appearance and increasing the horizontal and/or vertical icon spacing from the 'Item' list. Click on 'Apply' then right-click on the Desktop and Arrange Icons to update the results.

Q Recently, when I right-click on the Start button, the Open and Explore options are greyed out. Any idea why, or how to restore them?

DILLY KEEGAN

a This seems to be a common problem and one which has had me baffled for some time. There are two things you can try, according to usually reliable sources. Both need TweakUI installed. First, check that you are not hiding any drives in the My Computer tab. Second, check that the path to the Start Menu folder is shown correctly in the Special Folders list in the General tab.

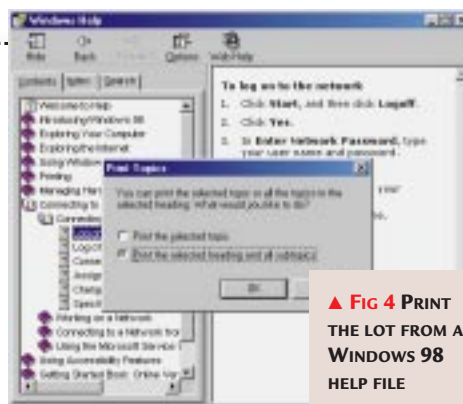
Q I cannot seem to get individual Control Panel property pages (e.g. Multimedia) to appear on the Taskbar when opened. It's annoying when experimenting with settings to have to minimise all the windows 'on top' to get at it.

GREGORY HOLDEN

a This is one of my pet annoyances, too. You can get it back into focus by re-summoning it from Control Panel but a smarter solution is to hold down Alt + Tab. A small window will appear showing icons for each open folder or program. Hold the Alt key and tap the Tab key until the relevant icon is highlighted, then release both keys.

Q With regard to your item in the March column concerning the 'phantom phone menace', I seem to be suffering some of the symptoms you describe, having installed RealPlayer G2. Specifically, the prompt to disconnect the connection when I close my browser no longer appears. Can you tell me how to re-enable it?

STEVE DODMAN



▲ FIG 4 PRINT THE LOT FROM A WINDOWS 98 HELP FILE

a Some permutations of Windows/Internet Explorer have a check box for this buried somewhere in the DUN settings. Some don't, which is the sort of thing that makes supporting Windows such a rich and challenging experience. If you don't have the checkbox, back up the Registry then run Regedit. Go to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Internet Settings and find the EnableAutodisconnect key. Change the data value to 01 00 00 00. Quit Regedit and restart your computer.

Q Is there a method of printing a whole help file without having to visit every topic and print them one by one?

GAVIN BENSON

a For standard .HLP files, the answer is 'no'. Your best bet would be to copy and paste each topic into a single

word processor document. The Windows 98 .CHM (compiled HTML) help files do have the facility to print either the selected topic or the selected heading and all subtopics [Fig 4]. You'll find this by choosing 'Print...' in the Options menu.

Q I have a new PC running Win98, and an older laptop running Windows 3.11. How can I connect them so that I can upgrade the laptop to Windows 98 as well?

MIKE EDMONTON

a Technically, you can do this with commercial software like Laplink. Or, if you want to do it the hard but free way, there is MS-DOS Interlink and Interserver which come with MS-DOS 6 and Win95. I won't go into detail as the relevant DOS help files provide instructions but I've used this in the past to transfer files between a Win3.1 laptop and a Win98 desktop. However, I should point out that your Win98 licence only permits you to install it on one computer at any one time, so upgrading your laptop in the way you describe is in breach of your licence and is illegal. You should find a file named LICENCE.TXT in the Windows folder of the Win98 machine which spells out the gory details.

into any text-input situation. Now I can write things like 'First, make sure to back up the Registry', and other well-worn phrases, with a few mouse-clicks even when writing my column in Notepad.

Although you may be able to winkle out the files necessary to install this on its own, the standard installation routine copies most of the Windows Resource Kit to your hard disk. But it is only 10Mb and there is some useful stuff there, including the indispensable TweakUI. Open up the tools\reskit folder on the Windows 98

CD-ROM and you will find a Readme.doc and a Setup.exe.

■ Updates tip

Following the long-running saga in recent Hands On Windows columns, of getting hold of Windows updates as downloadable files rather than on-line updates, reader Peter Ball recently contacted me to point out that Microsoft does now provide a site for just this, at www.microsoft.com/windows98/downloads/corporate.asp.

Meanwhile, users of other versions of Windows will be able to find updates at its web site at microsoft.com/windows/downloads/default.asp.

PCW CONTACTS

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