



Mystery folder

Tim Nott answers the question most other **newsgroup respondents** simply dance around.

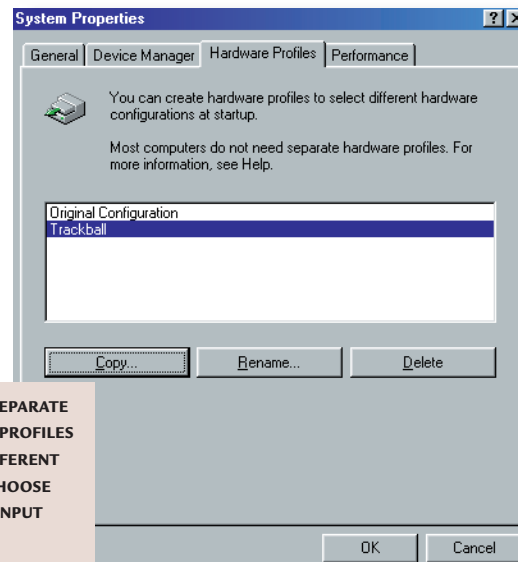
One of life's little mysteries is the phantom folder that opens at startup. It's a favourite topic among Windows newsgroups and conferencing systems. Usually the discussion goes for several rounds of 'if you leave folders open when you close down, they re-open when you restart...' followed by various methods of avoiding this with TweakUI. The accepted strategy is to enable the 'Save Explorer window settings' until such time as you have folders looking the way you want them, then disable the feature so they stay that way and don't reopen automatically.

At this point the churlish ingrate who posted the original query pipes up to say that yes, they know all about that and don't leave any folders open on shutdown anyway. The agenda then shifts to the myriad of possible ways that folders can be opened from the Startup folder or registry. Someone then points out that in Windows 98 you can hit the lot at once from the Startup tab of MSCONFIG.EXE. The discussion then takes a leap sideways into the ethics of software that parks its icon in the System Tray without being invited. Meanwhile, the poor instigator of this discussion is still stuck with the mystery folder. Nothing anywhere in the Startup folder, registry or .INI files is pointed at this folder. And usually the discussion peters out with the original problem unsolved.

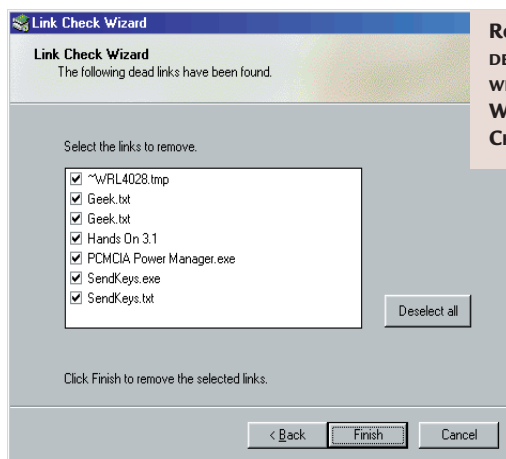
Things went differently the last time this came up in the Windows 98 forum on the CIX conferencing system, and this time the story had a happy ending. Now I'm not going to name names, but if you think of famous motorcycles and

infamous utilities, you won't be far away. And the owner of the problem folder had a blinding flash of inspiration. He didn't have anything calling C:\BSA, but he did have a registry setting calling C:\BSA CRASHGUARD\SOMETHING.EXE. For reasons too mysterious to fathom, Windows was having one of its 'can't handle spaces in path names' turns, and would only read as far as the space. And as he had another folder named C:\BSA, up it would come.

Renaming the intended target folder to remove the space, then editing the registry to reflect the name change solved the problem. You can reproduce this problem if you create a shortcut to C:\BSA CRASHGUARD\SOMETHING.EXE and then edit the shortcut properties to knock off just the initial quote mark



CREATING SEPARATE HARDWARE PROFILES ALLOWS DIFFERENT USERS TO CHOOSE DIFFERENT INPUT DEVICES



ROUNDING UP DEAD SHORTCUTS WITH THE WINDOWS 98 LINK CHECK WIZARD

surrounding the target. A rather obscure problem, admittedly, but if it saves just one reader from the

brink of insanity, then my exposition will not have been in vain.

■ Burying dead shortcuts

If you've ever spent time cleaning up dead shortcuts from your system, then you might be surprised, as I was, to find out there is a utility that does this automatically. If you install the Resource

Kit from the Windows 98 CD-ROM, then Start, Run, Checklinks, a Wizard will run that lists all the dead shortcuts on your system. You can right-click on a link to see details, or check its box to have it removed. One strange thing I noticed while testing this is that it sometimes doesn't pick up dead links until you hit the 'Back', then 'Next' buttons a few times.

■ Family affair

Tim Goldingham installed a trackball for a disabled user who couldn't use a mouse. This worked fine, plugging into its own card, but the user's children didn't like the trackball and wanted to stick with their PS/2 mouse. Some hardware – such as drawing tablets – will co-exist happily with another pointing device, but usually it isn't possible to use two pointing devices simultaneously.

It is possible, however, to alternate between them on a per-session basis by using hardware profiles. Go to Control Panel, System, Hardware Profiles, and then copy the existing profile, giving it another name.

With the new profile selected, go back to the Device Manager page, select the mouse branch and expand it. Go to the mouse properties and 'Disable in this profile'. Then add the drivers for the trackball to the new profile, but not the old. Reboot and you'll be asked to



hands on windows



TEA BREAK – A RARE SIGHTING IN THE 3D PIPES SCREENSAVER

■ Custom exercise

Further to last month's session on customising Internet Explorer and Outlook Express, I made a further discovery. To

recap, the toolbar background for Internet and Windows Explorers is set from a string value 'BackBitmap' in HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\

choose between profiles: each will load only the relevant drivers.

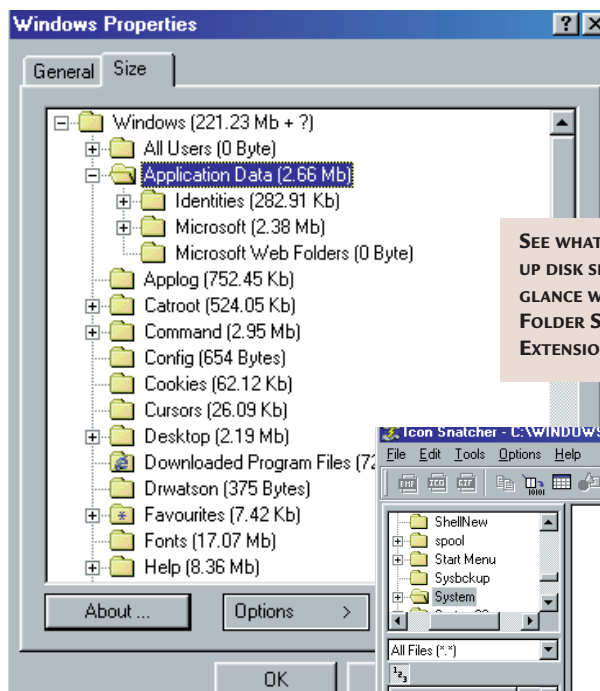
■ Cutting corners in IE5

Last December, I replied to a query from Jennii Wallace concerning the ability to type, for example, 'hotmail' into Internet Explorer, and have it automatically fill in the 'www.' and '.com'. This was a feature of IE4 that seems to have disappeared in IE5. So my thanks go to Henry Gallagher, Nick France and Rufus Chapman for pointing out that this is still possible – just hit Control & Enter after typing in the partial URL, and the top and tail will be added automatically. It doesn't, however, seem possible to customise this or use multiple suffixes such as .co.uk or .net.

■ Giving a wide berth

I've mentioned before the trick of double-clicking on the joint to the right of a heading in Explorer's details view to fit the column width to the longest entry.

However, Mark Edmonds points out that you can optimise all the column widths at once by holding down the Control & Alt keys and then pressing the plus sign on the numeric keypad.



SEE WHAT'S TAKING UP DISK SPACE AT A GLANCE WITH THE FOLDER SIZE SHELL EXTENSION

Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Toolbar. This points to the .bmp file used. However, after meddling about a bit with the IE Personalizer I discovered that a slightly different string value 'BackBitmapIE5', again containing the path to a .bmp, only affects Internet Explorer itself. The two settings can co-exist quite happily, so you

can have different toolbar backgrounds for IE and Explorer.

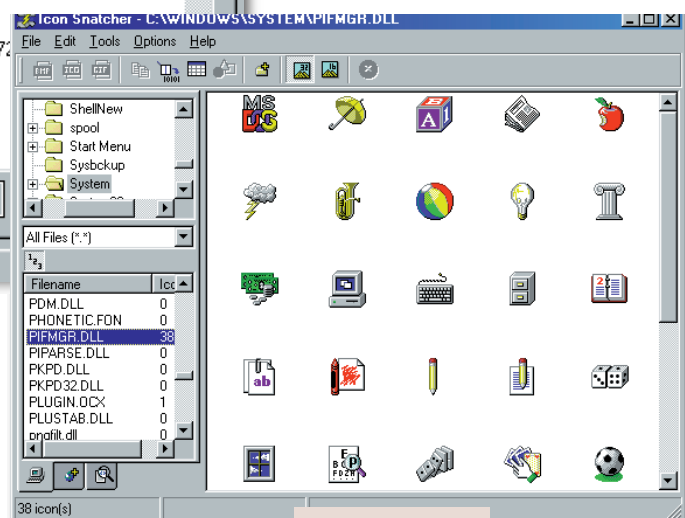
■ I'm a little teapot

If you have Windows 98, or a later version of 95, then you probably have the set of 3D screensavers. One of these is 3D Pipes, and folklore has it that if you set the joint style to 'mixed', then sooner or later, one of the ball-style joints will appear as a teapot. I'd always dismissed this as the sort of groundless rumour that one starts in rival companies to bring their productivity crashing down. Now I must admit I was wrong – I have seen the teapot, as the screenshot (left) shows.

■ Free stuff

There were two useful free utilities suggested by readers this month. Henry Bevan told me about the Folder Size Shell Extension. This adds a page to the properties of a folder, giving a tree view that shows the size of each sub-folder. You can find it at www.essi.fr/~berger/Windows/dfolder.html.

The other, suggested by Colin Howard, is called Icon Snatcher, and can be found at www.cdiware.com. This, as the name implies, allows you to copy icons from any file. Equally as useful, it also tells you where to look, by listing how many icons are contained in each file of the selected folder. It's a little rough around the edges, as it



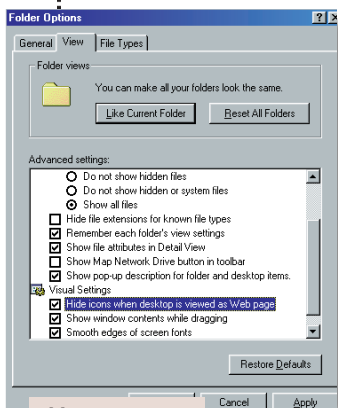
ICONSNATCHER – FREWARE THAT DIGS OUT ICONS FROM ANYWHERE

doesn't indicate when it is busy searching, (you just have to wait)

and the filter to exclude icon-less files does not appear to work.

Questions & answers

Q Something I've always liked to maintain is an icon-free desktop. The only



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ICON-FREE ZONE**

icon I've found indispensable is the wastebasket, and this is now situated in the task bar, by placing a shortcut to the recycle bin in the Quick Launch folder. However, I cannot find any method to remove the 'My Computer' icon. Have you any suggestions?

DAVE VAUGHAN

a If you enable the Active Desktop and opt to view it as a web page, you'll find that in Explorer, View, Folder Options you can choose to hide all desktop icons.

Q When I download a file as text, the computer I use displays the file correctly. But when I open the text file in Notepad it is no longer word-wrapped. If I select Edit, Word Wrap, save and quit, and re-open the file, there's still no word wrap.

KEITH SCOTT

a This is a double buglet that goes back to the days of Windows 3. The Windows 98 version of Notepad does remember the

word-wrap setting between sessions, unlike its predecessors, but this is a global option — it isn't stored in individual text files, which are just a stream of characters. The other half of the bug is if you turn word wrap on or off, without making changes to a text file, you'll get a prompt to save the file when you exit Notepad. The contents of the newly saved file are identical to that of the original.

Q Is there a Windows 95 utility that makes multiple backups of the registry (as seen in Windows 98) so if the last backup is corrupt, you can go to the previous one?

COLIN CHOW

a Windows 95 has two registry backup utilities. The Configuration Backup tool can be found on the CD-ROM at Other\Misc\Cfgback, and lets you keep up to nine Registry backups in compressed form. However, you have to be running Windows to restore them. The Emergency Recovery Utility, (Other\Misc\Eru) lets you back up not just the registry, but other essential files. It defaults to backing these up to floppy, which can then be used to restore a defunct system, but it's unlikely the average registry files will fit on a floppy. You can, however, specify a hard disk location, then in the event of catastrophe, restore the files from MS-DOS mode, using the ERD.EXE command.

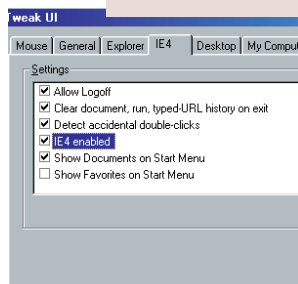
Q My Quick Launch toolbar, which I use a lot, has mysteriously disappeared. When I right-click on the taskbar, all the toolbar options are greyed out. I have tried everything including reinstalling Win98 and IE5 over the top of my original Win98. All

my original Quick Launch shortcuts are still residing in C:\WINDOWS\Application Data\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Quick Launch.

BRIAN DEVANY

a The official MS answer to this is you have disabled IE4 in TweakUI, even though you are actually using IE5. Open TweakUI, go to the IE4 tab, and check that IE4 Enabled is ticked.

**THE ANSWER TO
THE DISAPPEARING
QUICK LAUNCH
TOOLBAR**



Q What is the _wutl95.dll file? When loading Windows 98, I get the message that there is 'no association for this file and it is unable to be loaded: associate it or remove it...'

ALAN PRITCHARD

a It's left over from a failed installation. You'll probably find it in the Windows\Temp folder, where it can be deleted.

You'll also need to clobber whatever is calling it. Run MSCONFIG.EXE, go to the Startup tab, where you should be able to find the culprit and disable it.

Q Something strange has happened to my friend's computer. When we installed Windows it asked for his name and company, which was shown in System Properties under general. Somehow this has changed to Dr Mountain Dew.

NURHAFIZ ZAINAL

a This sounds like the aftermath of the virus attack that you wrote to me about some months ago which produced the 'stupid jerk' message in Word 97. This virus, which was apparently brought to a wider audience by a Japanese bank's email publicity campaign, has the side effect of sometimes changing names to Dr Mountain Dew. As you've now removed the virus, you can reinstate the correct name and company by using REGEDIT and going to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion: the relevant entries are RegisteredOwner and RegisteredOrganization.

Q I have just discovered a directory on the drive with Windows 98 SE installed called CONFIG.MSI which contains 12,141 files all with RBF and RBS extensions. What is it and can it be deleted?

DAVID BANNISTER

a This is what Microsoft calls the 'rollback' feature when installing Office 2000. The files are backups and scripts, which means your previous installation of Office can be restored even if you cancel setup, or suffer a power failure in the middle of overwriting your Office files. The folder and its contents should be removed automatically after a successful Office 2000 installation, if not you can remove it manually. You can do this from MS-DOS mode if Explorer won't let you.

PCW CONTACTS

Tim Nott welcomes your feedback on the Windows column, but cannot deal with queries concerning the PCW CD-ROM or website. Contact him via the PCW editorial office, or email win@pcw.co.uk