

# COMPUTER TIPS 2006

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What I have done here, is to put all my computer tip articles together from the RPA newsletters, into one place where you can download the whole series. I've attempted to give a index guide for each month during the year indicated and to each months subject so that you find what you are looking for easier. Each month I'll add the newest article to the list and keep it all up dated. If at any time you have a question about something, or want information about something else, don't hesitate to call me at (516) 579-1195 or e-mail me at [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

## Contents

<b>January 2006</b>	<b>1</b>
• One Click Shortcuts, History Of The Internet, Computer Terms	
<b>February 2006</b>	<b>3</b>
• Cut/Copy And Paste Explained, Adobe® Reader®, What is it and why you need it, Defrag Your Hard Drive, How And Why	
<b>March 2006</b>	<b>5</b>
• Computer Tips You'll Use, Set Up Your Wireless Network, Get The Red Out	
<b>April 2006</b>	<b>6</b>
• Mouse Functions, Resizing the screen window History of the Web, What is the web and what it can do for you, What is a domain name?	
<b>May 2006</b>	<b>8</b>
• Startup Folder, Stop Programs From Loading Automatically, No More Floppy Drive, Change An Icon	
<b>June 2006</b>	<b>9</b>
• One Click Shut Down, Send a photo in an e-mail, Print Screen key explained	
<b>September 2006</b>	<b>11</b>
• Computer Running Slow?, Find An Answer, Computer Security For Kids, Language Translator, Spread Sheets and how to get them and use them	
<b>October 2006</b>	<b>13</b>
• Digital Photos and Downloading, Computer Log On Screen, Zaba Search	
<b>November 2006</b>	<b>14</b>
• Copy, Cut and Paste; Finding a particular word in a document; EBay; On Line Banking; Start Menu; Best place for car rentals; Windows Vista; How to get off mailing lists	
<b>December 2006</b>	<b>16</b>
• Computer updates; Slow startup; Where is that download?; Quick Launch Toolbar	

**January 2006**

## **One Click Shortcuts**

Some of you have been having problems trying to install some of the shortcuts that I have been giving you. Rather than trying to explain them here again, the easiest thing would be for you to e-mail me and I'll make out the shortcut and e-mail it back to you. That way you shouldn't have any problem trying to copy or install them. All you'll have to do is download it to your desktop and all of the work will have already been done for you. Just send an e-mail to me [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com) and tell me which one you want.

## **SEARCH ENGINES.....**

There are many different search engines other than using Internet Explorer as its main function is a web browser. One of the most popular search engines is Google.com. Google has many interesting features that you won't find on other search engines. Go to Google.com and type in a telephone number and it will give you the name and location for that number if it isn't unlisted. Another search engine is Zabasearch.com. Zaba search is a collection of thousands of databases from all sorts of places. Type in your name and you will be amazed at what comes up. When people started finding out what was coming up, a lot of them started to complain that it was an invasion of privacy and that the information shouldn't be given out. You have to remember that Zaba is a culmination of many, many databases that are already out there and all they are doing is linking those databases together to give out the information. If you find it offending to have your information listed, you can opt out of the Zaba databases simple by sending them an e-mail and asking to opt out. If you want to get your name *off* their privacy-invading website, try sending mail to [info@zabasearch.com](mailto:info@zabasearch.com) and to [optout@zabasearch.com](mailto:optout@zabasearch.com).

Another search engine is Dogpile.com. Dogpile can do some specific searches. Whatever search engine you use, they all have the same basic features in that they will search the entire web for the information you are looking for. They may come up with over a million different "hits" on the item you typed in. It's up to you to search through all the "hits" to find the exact information you want. It's pretty amazing when you stop to think about it, of all the information they can collect. It would have been great to have all these resources back when we were going to high school or college and were looking for information to do a term paper. It really has been a matter of only about 15 years

## **2 Computer Tips 2006**

or so that computers and the internet have taken over our lives which leads us to.....

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE INTERNET**

1991 saw the introduction of what we now call the World Wide Web, the brainchild of Englishman Tim Berners-Lee. He saw the need for a standard linked information system, which could be accessed by all the various types of computers in use. In 1993 the first properly developed web-browser, Mosaic, took the Internet by storm. Developed at the National Center for Supercomputer Applications (NCSA), it gave birth to a huge boom in Web usage.

## **What is the Internet?**

Today, the Internet is an enormous network of millions of computers allowing constant communication throughout the world. It includes the World Wide Web, electronic mail (e-mail), File transfer Protocol (FTP), Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and USENET (news service).

The World Wide Web is the part of the Internet that most users see and use and which has made it so popular. The web continues to grow at an absolutely incredible rate. Technology has improved to such an extent that the web is now considered to be indispensable for education, business and entertainment. There are billions of pages on the web and thousands more are added every hour.

## **E-Mail**

Anyone can apply for an e-mail address and send and receive messages from their computer. The main benefit is the almost instantaneous delivery of messages. An e-mail to the other side of the world takes a few seconds. You can also sign up to automatically receive newsletters and other information, delivered directly to your computer.

## **File Transfer Protocol, What Is It?**

Web pages are transferred between computers using the HTTP protocol, with other types of files sent using FTP. Users can share files, such as music and videos between themselves and the rest of the world by uploading them to a server and then allowing others to download them to their own computers.

## **Internet Relay Chat (IRC)**

IRC is a service allowing you to connect to your chosen channel and talk to others with the same interests. By downloading an appropriate program, you

can start chatting right away. If you have a video camera or camcorder, you can even have video conversations with people around the world. One of the most popular programs for doing this is MSN Messenger. Want to find out more? Go to <http://webmessenger.msn.com>

## SHUTTING DOWN YOUR COMPUTER.....

A couple of months ago, I gave a shortcut to shutting down your computer with a double click. Most people were able to get it but some were having trouble with it. I spoke to a few of them who had the problems, and what they were doing is making Oh's instead of Zero's and not putting the spaces where they were suppose to go. I guess it is kind of hard to see that when its printed in the newsletter, so here's that shortcut again:

First thing to do is right click on an empty portion of your desktop...then click on new.....create shortcut..

A box will open up and ask you to type the location of the shortcut.

Type this exactly as it is here using all lower case and the spaces where they appear: shutdown -s -t 00 the last two digits are zeros. Please note that there is a space between shutdown and -s and also a space between -s and -t and another space between -t and the two zeros.

If you have a problem with anything, send me an e-mail to [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

## HYPERLINKS.....

You can use automatic formatting to turn file names into hyperlinks. By using the automatic formatting features in Word, you can create a hyperlink just by typing the address of the file you want to jump to. Network paths and Internet addresses can automatically become a hyperlink display text "hot spots" that the reader clicks to jump to the hyperlink destination.

For instance, if you are creating a Word publication that will include several Internet e-mail addresses, Word can automatically format the addresses as hyperlinks as you type. Then, when the reader of your publication clicks one of the hyperlinks, an e-mail message with the correct address already in the To: line is created, provided the reader has an e-mail program installed.

A lot of times you don't want this to happen but your program may have been set up to do it. So how do you turn off the hyperlinks in a word document? Here are the instructions, which you will have to follow

carefully.

On the Tools menu, click AutoCorrect, and then click the AutoFormat As You Type tab. Under Replace as you type make sure the box Internet and network paths with hyperlinks is unchecked.

If you want to add hyperlinks as you type, Under Replace as you type, put a check in the Internet and network paths with hyperlinks check box.

**GOT A QUESTION OR A PROBLEM?** Send me an e-mail and I'll try and help you out. Maybe it's something that someone else would be interested in knowing also.

## February 2006

### Cut/Copy And Paste Feature

One of the most used features you might do on a computer is Cut and Paste or Copy and Paste. As easy as it is, it is also the most elusive thing to try and do until you've done it a few times and it wasn't anything easy for me in the beginning either.

The use of the cut or copy and paste feature can be used from just about any application to another. It doesn't make any difference if you are going from a web page to a word document or from one word document to another or even into another program you are using. That is one of the great things about being able to use the copy and paste feature.

To start off with, you have to highlight the text or object you want to cut or copy. You do that by dragging the mouse cursor over the text or object you want to copy or cut and holding down the left mouse button as you drag it across. When you do that, the type will look like this:

in the case of  
a photo, it will look something like a negative.

Next, place the cursor up to the Edit command on the menu bar and left click on it and then choose the Cut or the Copy function.

After you have done that, you now place the cursor in the spot where you want to perform the other half of the function, being either the Copy or the Paste function. Remember that you can do this with either text or even a photograph. You can copy a photo or text from a web page and paste it into a word document. Try doing these functions a few times and it will become simple to do, I promise you that.

As you do these things you'll also notice that

clicking on the right or left mouse button provides different functions. I spoke about these things in a previous article about using the computer mouse. Now is another good time to give you some more advice about what kind of mouse to use. The best type is an optical mouse. There is no little moving ball to pick up any dust and nothing to clean. It operates better because of that. You can get a mouse that has 2 or 3 buttons on it. You can program the buttons to do various things and while most have the left button for the functions, if you are left handed, you can program it so that the right button becomes the function button. Next time you are at a store that sells computer or computer parts, take a look at the different types and shapes and sizes they have. You can get a wireless mouse as well as a wired one. You can get one that has a track ball on top instead of a scroll wheel. The track ball and the scroll wheel are used to navigate up or down a web page or word document.

Want a mouse with a tail? Go to the control panel and then double click on the Mouse and look at all the different options you have with just that one item. You can adjust the speed of the click on the buttons as well as give your mouse a tail and change the cursor from a line to a finger to an hourglass.

### **Adobe® Reader®**

This is a free program that everyone should have. Often when you are searching for something on the web and you have to download or copy some instructions, it is in a PDF file. A PDF file can only be read if you have Adobe® Reader®. PDF (Portable Document Format) is a file format developed by Adobe as a means of distributing compact, platform-independent documents. A PDF document may contain images and text, as well as hyperlinks. Each document is self-contained, packing text, graphics, and often fonts into a single file. With the aid of Adobe Acrobat, many desktop publishing applications can be used to create PDF files. For this reason and because PDF documents are World Wide Web accessible, yet display exactly as intended, print publishers often favor PDF over HTML. PDF files will display exactly the way they are to everyone that views them using Adobe Reader. We use a PDF file on our RPA web page for the RPA application and the reason we use it is because no matter what type of computer or web browser you are using, the PDF file will display exactly the way I put it up there. In order to make a PDF file, you need a special program from Adobe to make it. Adobe Reader is a free download

offered by Adobe. To get it, you can go to the RPA web site and download it from there by clicking on the Adobe Reader icon or go to <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html> and download it from their web site. If you are on a dialup modem, it will take some time to download it because it is a big file so do it when you have nothing else to do on the computer.

### **Picking An Internet Service Provider (ISP)**

What's the best ISP (Internet Service Provider) and e-mail program to use, AOL, Earthlink, Optonline, MS Outlook, IncrediMail???

People often ask that question and the answer is, the one you are most comfortable with or the one you find the easiest to use. There are many stand alone e-mail programs that are and can be used with the various ISP's. You can even use Outlook for your e-mail program with AOL. Many ISP's are cheaper than AOL. Lots of people started out on one particular ISP and don't want to change their e-mail name. If you are using a broadband connection, you can continue to use AOL at a reduced price because you are using the broadband to connect to the Internet and not AOL. If you do a lot of traveling and want to make sure you can check your e-mail no matter where you are, make sure your ISP offers web based e-mail so you can check it from any computer from any place in the world.

### **Alt-Ctrl-Delete**

Ever notice that sometimes a program or application fails to shut down when you close it? Next time that happens, try hitting the Alt-Ctrl-Delete keys. That operation will open up the Windows Task Manager and from that you can see what programs are running and if you want to close one of them, highlight that particular program and click on the End Task button and that should close it out.

### **DISK DEFRAGMENTER**

What is it and what does it do? It's part of Windows and it is one of the most important tools in keeping your computer operating the way it should. Every time you access a program or any file on the computer, you get that information from the hard drive is where it is all stored. Bits and pieces are constantly changed from their original location on the hard drive. Its like going to the supermarket and taking things off the shelf and putting them in your shopping cart and after gathering a whole bunch of things you decide you

don't want them and put them back on the shelf. In putting them back, they may not always go back to the original location so they are put back in another location. When this goes on like this, the hard drive becomes fragmented and now you have spaces in between these bits and pieces.

What you should do on a regular basis is to go to Start....Programs.....Accessories....System Tools....and click on Disk Defragmenter. When it opens up, click on Defrag your hard drive. If you have never done this or haven't done it in a long time, it can take hours and hours to do, so the best time to do it is when you are planning on having nothing to do on the computer. Let it run until it finishes defragmenting the hard drive. In some cases, you might have to stop and start it several times, especially if you have never done it before. If you decide to sit there and watch it being done, it will move at a snails pace, guaranteed!

If you have Norton's System works, that program contains many different programs to help your system operate properly. In addition to its own Defragmenter, there are tools to correct problems with windows and registry entries and it can help to keep your computer operating the way it should.

## **QUICK LAUNCH TOOLBAR**

You can set up a Quick Launch tool bar that will appear on the bottom of your screen. From that toolbar it is a simple one click on the program icon there to launch a program. To create the toolbar, right click on an empty space on the toolbar.....click on Toolbars.....then check Quick Launch. You've now created the toolbar. You can drag icons from anything on your desktop to this toolbar and even files or folders by creating a shortcut on your desktop and then dragging it to the toolbar.

Remember, if you have a question, send me an e-mail [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

**March 2006**

## **Enlarge Text with Your Mouse**

Do you use a mouse with a scroll wheel? If you use Internet Explorer, Microsoft Word, or many other Microsoft programs, you can enlarge or shrink the text (magnification) to suit your needs. Simply hold down the Ctrl key and scroll the mouse wheel (up to enlarge or zoom in and down to shrink or zoom out).

## **Keyboard Shortcut: "Ctrl+F"**

In your browser and Microsoft Word (as well as many other Microsoft programs), there is a feature called Find. This feature allows the user to locate a key word you may need to find in a document or on a web page. This can come in handy if you are looking for certain features of a product when shopping online. You can also access Find by clicking on Edit and then go down to Find

## **FILES IN RECYCLE BIN CAN BE SAFELY DELETED, .....USUALLY**

A friend called from Binghamton, NY, to ask if files in the Recycle Bin could be deleted. He was concerned that they might be in use. Files go to the Recycle Bin when you delete them. Nothing there is in use. So you can safely delete them without crashing the computer.

The Recycle Bin is actually a safety device. In the bad old days, when you deleted a file, it was gone. You could sometimes rescue a deleted file from the hard drive. But that was pretty chancy. Now, if you discover you need a file that was deleted, you can retrieve it from the Recycle Bin. Click the file, then click File>>Restore. It returns to its original folder. Obviously, if you clear your Recycle Bin, you can't retrieve the file. So be sure you really don't need it first.

## **SETTING UP A WIRELESS NETWORK**

A friend in Lakeland, FL, asked about the difficulty of setting up a wireless network at home. He wanted to know if he should hire someone to do it.

You should be able to do this yourself. You'll need an access point (where you pick up your internet connection, usually at the modem) a router and wireless adapters for your computers. You may need special antennas or other devices to help the wireless signal transit the walls and floors of the house or building but usually the signal is strong enough that you won't need it.

There are several configurations or protocols for wireless operations known as 802.11,b,g and now N. This is an emerging standard that has better range than 802.11b or g and all of them are backward compatible meaning the latest ones work with the older models. Most new laptops sold today have 802.11g already built in and you don't have to buy a wireless card. For desktops and older laptops, you'll need to buy a wireless card in addition to the wireless router. You're talking about \$50 to purchase the router. Linksys, which makes wireless equipment, has a good deal of educational information about wireless networking.

You'll find it at: <http://www.linksys.com/edu/>  
Other manufacturers also have some information. Check them out at:  
<http://www.belkin.com/config/network2/index0.asp>  
[http://www.dlink.com/configurator\\_v2.0/index.asp?vendorID=dlink](http://www.dlink.com/configurator_v2.0/index.asp?vendorID=dlink)

## **Tips to get you up and going!**

### **GETTING RID OF THE RED X IN OUTLOOK EXPRESS**

A friend in Port Angeles, WA, said that he gets red X's, instead of pictures, in Outlook Express. He's not the only one. It continues to be a common issue. If you can't see pictures, you might be blocking them. To find out, click Tools>>Options. Select the Security tab. Uncheck the box next to "Do not allow attachments to be saved or opened that could potentially be a virus." This obviously raises the risks of viruses, so be sure your anti-virus software is up-to-date.

Also, clear the box next to "Block images and other external content in HTML e-mail." You should now be able to see pictures sent as part of the e-mail. You'll also see gross pictures in spam. Lucky you!

Additionally, ask the people who are sending you pictures to check their settings. To do that, click Tools>>Options. On the Send tab, HTML. Settings should be clicked. Select "Send pictures with messages."

If you receive an e-mail with a link to a picture on the Internet, you won't be able to see it if the link is bad. Or, the server maintaining that Web page could be down. If the picture is on an advertising site that has been blocked by a custom HOSTS file, you will not see it.

Finally, if you just cannot solve the picture problem, change e-mail programs. There are a number of free ones, including Eudora, Netscape and Thunderbird. You'll find them at, respectively:

<http://www.eudora.com/download/http://channels.netscape.com/ns/browsers/download.jsp>  
<http://www.mozilla.org/>

You can get red X's in Web sites, too. If you see white boxes with red X's in them, the HOSTS file is probably blocking ads. Or, you may need a small program to run Java applets. You can get one, called a Java virtual machine, at: <http://www.java.com/en/index.jsp>

**April 2006**

## **COMPUTER TIPS AND HARDWARE ...**

While I was at the Laughlin Reunion in December and the Nassau Blue Reunion and the regional meeting the past two months, a lot of people came up to me to thank me for the computer tips that I've been putting into the newsletter each month. That proved to me that there are people out there who are reading my tips and it also proved to me that us older folks are really into computers, much more than I realized. Good for all of you who have doing things on the computer. I know it is frustrating at times, but once you get the hang of it, you won't forget it. I remember when I first started years ago, I use to write things down in a notebook. I got to a point where I had so many things written down that I couldn't find what I was looking for! Don't get discouraged. The more you do something, the more familiar you will become of it and you will find that the computer is a big help in many things you want to find out about and do.

**One of the most asked questions I get and an operation that many first time computer users cannot figure out is the copy and paste or cut and paste function and how and where you can use it.** This function is used to copy any particular text or photo and then paste it into another spot or application in an e-mail, text document or photo editing program.

First step is highlight what you want to copy or cut from the original. Do this by simply pressing and holding your left mouse button down and dragging it over the selected text or photo you want to copy.

You'll notice the text turns white like this and the background is black.

When you have highlighted everything you want, you can now copy or cut out that particular text in one of two ways: 1) After it is highlighted, right click on it and pick the option you want or, 2) Go to the top of your menu bar on the top of your screen and left click on Edit and then pick the option from the drop down menu that appears. Once you have copied that highlighted text or photo, you can now take it to any other application like a word processor program or e-mail program. You can paste it into that application by left clicking on Edit in the application you want it to go to and then use the drop down menu to Paste it wherever you have your cursor set. If you want to entirely cut out the selected text or photo from an open application, you simply use the Cut option and the highlighted material is cut out of your original application. You can always change the last function you did by clicking on Edit and

then selecting the Undo function.

As a last resort if you really get things screwed up and don't remember what you were doing, when you click on the X in the red box in the upper right corner, it will always ask you "Do you want to save the changes to.....?" This is where you make the final decision and check Yes No or Cancel.

The computer mouse is one of the pieces of computer hardware that you will use constantly. Without a mouse, you have to use the arrow keys to navigate around an application and then use certain application keys to perform the same functions you can do with the mouse and menu bar. There are several different types of computer mouse's. Is it mouse's or mice??? It's your choice. The most common mouse is the one with the ball on the bottom and it is also the most troublesome. As you move the mouse around on a hard surface, the ball rolls around and as it does, it moves two rollers that are inside of the mouse. This type of mouse is the cheapest and most trouble prone type there is. As you roll it on a surface, it picks up dust and dirt and the rollers get dirty and don't perform the functions correctly. An optical mouse has a little red laser on the bottom and the laser reads the movements of the mouse and since there is no moving ball on the bottom or any moving parts, you don't have to worry about it getting dirty. The optical mouse is by far the best type. Then there are what they call the track ball. The track ball type is simply a mouse with the ball on the top. Some people like this type because it may be faster for them by rolling the ball with the palm of their hand. Every mouse comes with one, two and even three buttons and most come with a scroll wheel.

The best type of mouse to get would be an optical mouse with at least two buttons and a scroll wheel. A typical optical mouse can be bought for under \$20, and it is a worth while investment. Brand name doesn't make any difference either. Normally the mouse is programmed for right handed people, but you can change the properties to a left-handed person. The two-button mouse is used for operations like cut and paste described above. The third button on a three-button mouse can be used for special operations that you have to set it up for. An example is that one button can be set for a double click option. The scroll wheel on a mouse is used to advance a web page or a word document up or down. By turning the scroll wheel, the page moves automatically up or down and you do not have to click on the side bar to move it up and down.

**Mouse functions** can be changed through

the Control Panel on your computer. Left click on START.....Settings.....Control Panel...double click on the Mouse Icon. From there you can see the various actions that you can change that apply to your mouse. You can change the rate at which it moves, give it a tail, and change the style of pointer and other things. If you change the settings and you don't like them, simply go back and change them to whatever you want.

Clicking on the Display icon can also change display settings. There are various options that you can change including the screen resolution that I've mentioned earlier or the color or style of the active window.

In the upper most right hand corner of your screen with an open application, you will notice three small boxes. The first one has a dash in it; the next one has two small boxes one behind the other and the third is a red box with an X in it. To close out that particular application, left click on the red box with the X. To reduce the size of that active window, left click on the box with the two small boxes and to hide the window, click on the box with the dash in it. The left button of your mouse is the one programmed to make primary functions.

**Spell checks.** Every e-mail program and word processor program has a spell checker built into it. Since we are not all-perfect English students, we do make mistakes in spelling and grammar. In the word processor programs like MS Word or Corel's Word Perfect, place the cursor on the first word of your document and then click on the little arrow with the abc located on the menu bar. This will automatically check your spelling against the programs dictionary. Anything it things is wrong is underlined in red and if you right click on it, it will give you various options. If you know your spelling is correct and it comes up with an autosuggestion, you can add your word to the program dictionary. There may also be autosuggestions for grammatical factions it finds.

You may have an interesting e-mail that you want to forward to other people, but it really isn't necessary to send all the headers and in some cases, pages and pages of other e-mail addresses with it. Have some mercy on the friends you want to send it to. Rather than forwarding the whole thing, left click and drag your mouse over the items you want to copy and then paste it into another e-mail without having to send tons of garbage with it. Other people will appreciate it and they won't have to down load tons of things just to get to a simple picture. In fact, instead of sending the

photo as a download, you can imbed it directly into the body of the e-mail. This works the same with all e-mail clients and with text as well as photos.

Next month I will give you instructions on the quick shutdown and clearing the recent documents list again. I will give the instructions for both Windows 98 and also Windows XP as there are still some people out using Windows 98. In the mean time, I will post the instructions on the RPA web page. You'll find a link to computer tips posted on the Other Links page of the web site.

## May 2006

### **Adding To The Startup Folder or Deleting Programs From Startup**

You can add one, or more, applications to your Startup folder. Right-click on the Start button and choose Explorer. Open Programs, WordPerfect 2000, Utilities. Drag-and-drop the desired application to your Startup folder. Every time you start your computer the application will open automatically.

### **Search engine**

Here's a free search engine that will do a little more than just search one area. Copernic Agent Basic is more than a simple web search engine. Web search engines do not give you access to all the information available on the Internet. Furthermore, each search engine covers different areas of the Web. So even when using the largest search engine, you are missing relevant information.

Copernic Agent Basic gives you the ability to cover more of the Web and to get relevant, high quality results from more than 90 search engines grouped into categories. From a single query, Copernic Agent Basic gives you better search engine results by consulting multiple search engines at once, combining their results, removing duplicates and keeping only the very best of the information gathered from queried search engines.

Regular Web search engines leave you on your own with only a list of search results. Where search engines end, Copernic Agent Basic is only just beginning. Copernic Agent Basic allows you to do a lot more than simply clicking on your search results. From a single click, you can remove broken links, search within results, save pages on your computer for offline browsing, sort your results, e-mail your results to colleagues or friends, generate extensive search reports, and much more. Copernic Agent Basic also saves your searches for later use. The advantage

of this is that you can just click on a previous search to instantly see the results, to modify the search, or to update the results. You can even categorize your search history within a custom folder tree. If you would like to download Copernic, go to their web site at <http://www.copernic.com/en/products/agent/index.html> for the free download.

### **NO MORE FLOPPY DRIVE**

If you are out looking for a laptop computer, you should notice that 99% of them no longer have a 3 1/2" floppy drive. Even some of the desktop computers have done away with them. Most laptop computers have 4 or more USB drives and a CD/RW drive. With the popularity of small USB flash drives, there is no longer any need for a 3 1/2" floppy drive. The floppy disks could only hold about 2MB of data but the flash drives can hold up to 2GB of data. The flash drives have come down in price so much the past year that they are a bargain to buy. There was a recent ad in the paper that with all the rebates and sale price, you could have gotten a 256MB flash drive for \$0. That's right, zero dollars. In case you don't know how to use a flash drive, its very simple. Just plug it into a USB port and transfer any data to or from it to your computer. When you plug it into your computer, it shows up as another drive on your computer, be it D, E, F or what depending if you have a CD ROM drive and a CD/RW drive. If you have a large file you want to transfer to another computer, you can either e-mail it to yourself or the other computer, put it on the flash drive or burn it onto a CD ROM. A CD will hold up to 800 MB. That's a lot of data. If you are buying a new desktop computer, make sure the case has USB ports on the front of it as well as on the rear. With ports on the front, it's easier to plug in your USB cable from your digital camera or any other devise that uses a USB port. If you have an older computer with USB ports on the back of the case, you can add a handy USB hub and add additional USB ports to what you already have. Most hardware being plugged into a computer today uses a USB port. That's how most new printers, scanners and other devises hook up to your computer today. You can add many different hardware items by using the same USB port.

### **INFORM CAMERAS**

Here is another link (just in case you homesick for traffic conditions on LI) >>> [Information FOR Motorists Online](#) Click on the link and then the camera icon in the left column, download the player if

necessary and then pick a camera location and you will get real time traffic conditions of the major roadways on LI. We can also call inform and have them zero in a particular location with these cameras.

## HOW TO CHANGE AN ICON ON YOUR DESKTOP

1. right click the shortcut
  2. select PROPERTIES & WEB DOCUMENT tab
  3. press CHANGE ICON
  4. in the LOOK FOR ICONS IN THIS FILE type:
  5. C:\WINDOWS\system32\SHELL32.dll
  6. Then press OK (not Browse)
  7. scroll across the bottom & select any icon you want to use & press OK
- You can change the icon again by repeating the steps

You can safely delete any shortcut from your desktop. It does not delete anything except the shortcut.

Any bmp format picture can be converted to an icon by saving a new copy & rename-replace the extension from .bmp to .ico. Using this process, you can replace the icon for My Documents with your own picture if you would like.

In most cases if a picture is in a different format, it can be resaved as bmp format.

To preserve the best quality of any of your digital photos, change them to a .tiff file first. Photos that are in a .tiff format can take all kinds of adjustments without losing any quality of the actual image. If you constantly change or adjust colors or sizing of a photo in a .jpg or .gif file, it will lose a little of its quality each time you change something on it.

**June 2006**

### COMPUTER TIPS.....

Somewhere along the line, my March article disappeared and never made it to the newsletter. I had promised that I would repeat the shortcut you can make to shut down your computer. Well, here it is. This first one is for Windows 95, 98 or ME:

Navigate to your desktop. On the desktop, right-click and go to New, then to Shortcut (in other words, create a new shortcut). You should now see a pop-up window instructing you to enter a command line path. Use this path if your operating system is Windows 95, 98, or Me and type in: C:\windows\rundll.exe user.exe,exitwindows Save it to your desktop.

If your operating system is Windows XP: Right-click on any blank spot on your desktop and select New.....Shortcut. The Create Shortcut wizard will pop up.

In the box Type the location of the item, and type in the following command exactly as it appears here with spaces in where they appear:

SHUTDOWN -s -t 00

Type this in noting that there is a space between the n in shutdown and the dash and also a space between -s and -t and another space between -t and the two zeros. Make sure you type two zeros and not two Oh's. shutdown-s -t 00

Click Next. Enter a name for the shortcut, like Fast Shutdown. Click save

Now when you want to shut down your computer, all you have to do is click on the shortcut on your desktop.

### How to shut-down a non-responding program without shutting-down Windows.

You don't need to turn-off your computer to clear a misbehaved program/frozen Window. Hold the **Ctrl** and **Alt** Keys down and press the **Delete** Key (once!), select the non-responding program and Click the **End Task** button. If the program does not shut-down after reasonable period of time, repeat the process. Clicking **Ctrl-Alt Delete** twice will shut-down Windows and reboot the computer.

### Force Windows to remember window size

Try this. Open only one window. Size it the way you want. Hold down the **Ctrl** and **Shift** keys and close the window. It should maintain the same size and position when you open it again. If you want it maxmized maximize it first and then close it as above.

Some people have other questions about Windows shortcuts or problems. Its easy to find an answer to many of your questions simply by typing it in the web browser Address box. Try typing any number of questions you may have, not only computer questions and see what happens. Type in "**why is the sky blue**" and see all the responses that come up. It's amazing that the web will answer all your questions for you.

**Q:** From time to time I receive e-mails with pictures attached. Some of the files take forever to download and when I open the pictures they are so large that I can view only a portion of the picture at a time. There are

also occasions when I send a picture as an attachment and the recipient complains that the picture they receive was too large to view. In Outlook Express, how do I reduce the size of a picture received and how do I ensure that I am sending a size that the recipient can view?

**A:** There are two ways to solve this common quandary. One is to use software that can view the entire huge images by compressing them during display, such as Paint Shop Pro, Adobe Photo Shop, Windows Pictures and Fax Viewer, Microsoft Image Composer or even Windows Media Player or any other photo editing program you may have on your computer. The other is to use some of this same software to make the images smaller which, while reducing their size, may make them less worthwhile for printing, later on paper.

First, find the icon for one of those attachments just below the Subject line in Outlook Express display and give it a right click. Look for the command Save As within the pop up box this creates. Select the Desktop and save the file and then go to your Desktop screen and give the new icon a right click. Now pick Open With and in the display you get, choose Windows Pictures and Fax Viewer. This will open the image no matter how large it is, in a window where it fits the screen.

To reduce the size of images, the quickest method is to use the Paint program built into Windows. Click on Start...Programs...Accessories then find Paint. Open Paint and use the File/Open command to select the image's icon. When the huge image loads, only part of it will be displayed in the Paint screen, so click on the Image tool and select Stretch/Skew. In the command box this summons, Select Skew and you will get a display showing the current dimensions at 100% tall and 100% wide. Change both to 25% and it should fit in the screen. If not, make the number smaller. Be sure to use the Save As command to keep from writing over the superior original and you'll get a file with a fraction of the resolution which will display easily on the computers of folks to whom you send the e-mail. In any of the other programs you use to resize the file, there is a resize command that you can click on to resize the photo and again, you have to save it in its new size.

An easier way to send photos by e-mail, especially when the recipient isn't going to want to print it out on paper, is to embed the photo directly into the e-mail message. In Outlook Express this is done by copying the photo to the clipboard and then with the

write mail window on top, click on Insert and insert the photo from the clipboard. This is perhaps the best ways to send photos by e-mail. Because the files won't need a special program to be opened, the files are optimized for sending by e-mail and are therefore much smaller and don't require a recipient to have to download a file and the photo is visible right there in the e-mail.

Photos are great but some people don't have any consideration for recipients receiving them when they don't take easy steps to reduce the size of the photo they are sending. Not everyone has broadband access where photos take just a second or two to download. Dialup connections take forever to download a photo file and the best way to send them to these people are to embed it directly in the e-mail message. AOL has a very easy way to do it by just clicking on the little camera in the write mail window and then click on Insert Pictures and pick out the photo you want to send.

### **What else are you doing with your computer?**

Mostly we have been talking about e-mails and writing documents on your computer. There are many other things that you can do with it besides that. How about setting up your own web page or making a slide show of photos of your most recent trip. Do you print out photos from your digital camera on your computer? Do you have a scanner where you can scan photos put them on your computer and then make a CD? Are you into making little animations to embed in your e-mails? There are hundreds of different things you can use your computer for. These are just a short list of some fun things you can do. After the summer, we'll talk about editing some of your photos that you may have taken during the summer months. One thing about being able to edit them on the computer is that if it didn't come out right when you took the picture, you may be able to fix it with a photo-editing program. I know one retiree's wife who has taken an interest in making little animated gif files that her husband has been using in his e-mails. She had done a remarkable job doing them and she's gotten very good at doing it.

### **A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words**

Ever try and explain something on your computer screen to someone else and not be too successful? Send them a picture of the screen. You can do it very easily by just clicking on the **Print Scrn** key. Then go to your e-mail message window and click on the Paste command. You have now successfully copied your screen and pasted it into an e-mail for the other

person to see. That saves a lot of time trying to explain what you are seeing on your screen to another person not there.

## **What Are The Kids Looking At On The Computer?**

With all the stories you hear about Internet predators, have you ever wondered what your kids have been looking at on your computer? If you use Internet Explorer to view web pages, you can check it very easily. Next to the big yellow star (Favorites) on the menu bar is a green arrow going in a circle. Click on that and a History box will open up on the left-hand side of the screen. From there you can easily look at the web pages that have been viewed in the past three weeks, past week or day. You can click on those web sites to see if there is anything that isn't appropriate for a non-adult to be looking at. If you are an AOL user, just click on the little down arrow at the end of the web site address bar and it will give you the recent history that's been looked at. If you use AOL and have kids at home using the computer, the best thing to do is to have separate screen names for the kids. As the parent, you should set up some parental controls for that screen name that will limit certain things that they can look at. Another thing, if you don't want them looking at things that you have been viewing, don't give them your password for your screen name. There are a lot of nuts out there just looking to get involved with kids. Make sure that you have set up some kind of parental control over what they can view on the web. Also be aware of any chat rooms they might be going into.

Just recently, one of the school districts put some controls on the school computers so that the kids couldn't access MySpace.com from any school computer. A lot of kids have been using that site to post some pretty specific material about them selves and a lot of it isn't appropriate for kids. There are several sites similar to that one that have been making the news lately. Seems some school kids have been posting hate messages and threatening other kids from the blogs they have posted on their sites. Be aware of what your kids are doing on the computer.

## **September 2006 Computer Slowing Down?**

Has a computer that takes forever to startup, plagued you? There may be several reasons for that. The first thing may be the amount of memory you have installed on your computer. Today, memory (RAM) is so cheap, that it really is a very simple and common thing to have at least 512MB of memory installed

on your computer, whether you are using a desktop or a laptop (notebook).

Most computers bought in the past few years have come equipped with at least 512MB and its not uncommon to have 1GB of memory installed, especially if you are using a lot of graphical programs or are a person who is into computer games. At the price of memory today, it's very affordable to install 1GB of memory. Not sure of how much memory you have installed? Easy way to find out is to navigate to your desktop and right click on the My Computer icon, then properties. It will open to the General tab and give you the information on what computer chip you have and also the amount of memory in RAM. If you have less than 512 MB, a trip down to your local computer store for more memory is in order. In order to find the correct type, go to [www.crucial.com](http://www.crucial.com) and run their wizard that will tell you what kind of RAM you need. Then you can buy additional memory and install it in your computer.

Another reason you may have slow startup, is the amount of programs that are automatically starting up when you start your computer. You may have a dozen or more, different programs starting all at the startup that may be unnecessary. This leads us to.....

## **How To Shut Down Unnecessary Start Up Programs**

The instructions below were originally written for Windows 9.x/ME, but can be used for Windows XP as well: Click on Start, Run, in the typing area put "msconfig" (without the quotes), press OK. When the System Configuration Utility box opens, click on the Start Up tab. You will see a number of listings with boxes and check marks in them. These are programs that run at start up. You can safely uncheck many of the boxes. Don't uncheck System Tray, Scan Registry, or your Virus Scan startup programs. After you're done, click "Apply", then OK, and the computer will ask you to restart. Don't worry too much, if you make a mistake you can always go back to this box and put a check back in any of the listings you want.

Many of your computer questions can be answered by simply searching the web. Just try typing your question in the address bar of your web browser and then click on go. Give it a try. Type in a simple question like "Why is the sky blue" and then see all the listings you get. Here's another spot to get answers from. This website provides a wealth of answers: <http://www.computerhope.com>

### **You're no dummy!**

Remember that you're no dummy. You can solve many of your computer problems yourself with a little help just by looking on the web for the answer. Like I said above, a simple way to look is to just type in your question in the address bar of your web browser. Google.com and also Internet Explorer will search the web for your answer. Once you find your answer, put it into action.

Many of our members have really taken to the use of their computers in accomplishing many different tasks. You may think that many computer tasks are only for the younger people, but it's not true. You learn things by using the tools you have and the more you use your computer, the more you become familiar with the different things you can do with it.

A wife of one of our retired members has put her

computer skills to work for herself and she has attained great skills in computer animations. I looked at some of her work and I am amazed at what she has done. She taught herself all kinds of computer animations and has done a fantastic job. I wish I had 10% of her skills doing them. They are really terrific!

### **On Line Safety**

This is from the Symantec web site, citing the need for online safety dealing with online purchases:

Do you bank or shop online? Probably. Almost everyone connected to the Internet has conducted some sort of transaction online. As you work and play on the Internet, it is important to use effective security technologies and keep your personal information private. Transaction security describes the safety of your confidential information as it is sent across the Internet, and the need to protect it from con artists who try to steal it for their own benefit.

To protect yourself, Symantec recommends following these basic guidelines:

- *Keep your computer updated with the latest patches and updates as soon as they become available.*
- *Make sure your computer is configured securely, especially when it comes to configuring your Web browser and email software.* Security and privacy settings can often be configured without any special expertise, simply by using the "Help" feature of your software, or visiting the vendor's web site.
- *Choose strong passwords and keep them safe.* Strong passwords have eight characters or more and use a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols.
- *Review bank and credit card statements regularly.*
- *Protect your computer with essential security software,* including a software firewall and antivirus protection. We recommend Norton Personal Firewall and Norton Internet Security.
- *Exercise caution when sharing any personal information online.*
- *Keep in mind that online offers that look too good to be true usually are.*

### **Language Translator**

The computer has really opened up the world to everyone. People have been searching the web for their family history and many have found some of their relative's back in Europe. We often forget about other people living in other countries and they are also doing the same thing on their computers. If you are not fluent in

reading a foreign language, don't fret it. There are web sites you can go to that will translate what you write in English to a dozen different languages. Those same sites will also translate Italian, French, German and a dozen other languages back into English so that you can understand e-mails you get from your relatives in the old country. Go to [www.babelfish.altavista.com](http://www.babelfish.altavista.com) and bookmark it so that you can always find the language translator. All you have to do to convert English into another language is to copy your e-mail message and paste it into the Translate box. Then select the from and to language and click on Translate. When you get an e-mail in another language, simply copy and paste that e-mail text into the Translate box and then select the from and to language and click on Translate. Just be sure you don't over exceed the amount of text you place in the Translate box. There is a limit on the amount of words it can accept, so you may have to do it in pieces. It's pretty nice that you will be able to write to your relatives in another country, in their own language.

### **Try Explaining Something On Your Screen To Someone**

I think I've mentioned this before, but it's worth a reminder. Have you ever wanted to take a picture of your computer screen? Are you asking, "What on earth would I want to do that for?" Could be, an error message pops up on your machine or you have something on your screen you want to explain to someone but it would sound too complicated. You do not have to write it down, in just a few seconds, you can have a image of your screen to sent to your grandchild who can tell you exactly what to do to fix it.

There is a key on your keyboard that says "print" or "print screen" or "prt sc" or something like that that does not seem to do anything. What it does, is place an image of your screen on your clipboard.

The next step is to open your favorite photo editing program, (Photoshop, MS Paint, PSP etc.) and paste the screen image into it or even paste it into a word document (click on edit then onto paste). Now you have the screen shot in your photo-editing program or in a word document. You can crop it (select the portion of the image you want to keep) or otherwise edit it then save it to your hard disk. After saving it to your hard disk, it is ready to attach to an email and send it.

### **Spreadsheets**

I recently had a question about alphabetizing a list that was done in Word Perfect. Unfortunately, you can't do it automatically in Word Perfect or even in MS Word. What you need is a program that does spreadsheets like MS Excel. Both MS and Corel offer office products that do contain programs that you can make spreadsheets. The problem is they are expensive to buy. Most computer come with Microsoft Works installed on them and from that program, it can read CSV files and printout mailing labels.

Here is a solution to that problem, a free offer by Google.com called Google Spreadsheets. You can set up the spreadsheet on Google and also share it with other people. A spreadsheet is a great item to have for mailing list, address lists, greeting card lists, club member lists or any list you may have that contains names, addresses, phone numbers or any other pertinent information that needs to be organized and perhaps, make mailing labels from all that information. The only problem with Google Spreadsheets is that you can't print mailing labels

from them. Maybe in the future they will have that capability. You can download your Google Spreadsheet in either Excel or CSV (comma separated values) something that virtually all programs can read and Microsoft Works can print mailing labels as it can read CSV know as comma separated values files and comes with just about every computer.

When you enter data in Excel or Google Spreadsheet, the spreadsheet will automatically alphabetize the listing for you. You also have the ability to sort the list using any of the other cells parameters and not just by names.

Next month we'll discuss spam, phishing, anti virus programs and spyware programs. Until then, if you have a problem or need help with something, give me a call or send an e-mail to [gotscha@aol.com](mailto:gotscha@aol.com)

## October 2006

Thinking of buying a new computer?

Wait until next year when the new Windows operating system Windows Vista comes out. Right now the prices of new computer chips are still falling as newer ones are being introduced. Intel's new Core 2 Duo chip promises quicker computer by running simultaneous operations on two processor cores. AMD has also introduced dual processor computers. In the mean time, Windows Vista is supposed to be released some time as early as January. Along with the introduction of the new Window's operating system, Microsoft is also introducing their new Office 2007 which will be completely different than its predecessors. If you have a place that will give you a free upgrade to the new system when it comes out, then buy the computer now, but you are better off buying a new computer with a new operating system installed fresh and not as an upgrade.

## IPS won't let you e-mail a large file?

How many times have you tried to send a large file only to be told by your ISP that the file was larger than they allow? Well, I found a place where you can send it without any problems for free. It's a great tool to have around. Check it out at [www.sendthisfile.com](http://www.sendthisfile.com) There is no cost to use it and it works great for sending large files.

## How To E-mail Photos

Several people have asked me how they can e-mail photos from their digital cameras to other people. Before we get to how to do it, there is one thing you have to decide on in doing it. You have to remember that not everyone may be on broadband connection like you, using a cable modem to access the internet. So knowing that one fact, you now have to decide if you want to embed the photo in an e-mail or do you want to send it as an attachment? What's the difference? If you just want to send some photos for people to see, directly embed them in your e-mail message. Don't send people huge photo files that take forever to download. Don't send them Zip files that they have to download just to see the photos. Keep things simple and put the photos right into the message itself.

With Outlook Express (that would be everyone not on AOL) go to the top line of the New Message mail window and go to **Insert... Picture...** when the Picture window opens go to Browse and look for the folder where the photo is that you want to send. **Double click on the photo file** and it automatically goes into the box, then click **OK**. The photo is now embedded directly in your

e-mail.

Now here's an important part that you should have taken care of when you took the photos from your camera and put them into your computer:

1. Most cameras will save the photo in a large file.
2. You don't need a large photo file like that unless you are going to print 8X10 photos
3. Set your camera to take 4X6 photos or after you transfer the photos from the camera into your computer, resize them from a huge size to something more manageable..

You should have a photo editing program where you can resize photos, take the red eye out, change the brightness or contrast or crop the photos. Since there are hundreds of these out there, I can't tell you exactly how to do it, so you'll have to figure that one out yourself. If you got a digital camera, most likely they also gave you a photo-editing program with it. Whatever program you decide to use to edit your photos, you don't need any of them larger than a 4X6 postcard size unless you want to print 8X10's. You can even make them smaller than 4X6 if you want to. Smaller photos take less time to send than big ones. The photo editing programs are fairly simple and self explanatory. Fiddle around with a photo to see what changes you can do to it and you'll see what I mean.

If you are going to send someone some photos that are going to be printed either at the local drug store or on a home computer, then you want to send a larger file of the photo and send it as an attachment. To send it as an attachment, click on that little paper clip on the **New Message** window and then locate the photo or whatever file you want to attach to your email, **left click on it once so it is highlighted** and then click on the **Attach** button. It's now attached to your e-mail. You use the Attach feature anytime you want to send along any kind of file along with an e-mail message, not just photos.

## Attaching a file to an e-mail:

To attach a file to an e-mail, start with the e-mail window. Select the file & drag it to body of the e-mail, it will automatically show as an attached file. You can attach more than one file by repeating the process. To try this out, send something to yourself.

How do you drag a file you asked? You can left or right click on the file and while you are holding the mouse button down, drag it to the email and insert it.

It also works to drag a picture file into a word document, as well to Paint Shop Pro.

You can do similar with multiple files if you want. To highlight multiple files that are in order, hold down the Shift button and left click on each of the files. If the files are not in order, hold down the Ctrl button and then left click on each file to highlight it. Then when you have all the file selected, release the shift or Ctrl key and drag the files where you want them.

It's always worth trying.

## Quick way to view multiple picture files:

Select the folder that contains the photos, then on the menu bar select View and then Filmstrip or Thumbnails. All the photos in that folder will now be visible and you can then drag any of them to Word document, Paint Shop Pro, e-mail, etc.

## Forwarding e-mails

This really seems to be a big problem with some people.

How many times have you received an e-mail that has been forwarded to you that contains pages and pages of headers and then the actual message is a link or just two lines of text. Pullezzzzzzz! Stop sending all that garbage! If the message is worth sending to others, then just copy and past the important part into a new e-mail. Stop sending the garbage with the e-mail! If you have a hard time understanding or doing this, contact me and I'll walk you through the steps. There is noting more annoying to a lot of us to receive all these e-mails that contain useless garbage before the message. Furthermore, no one is interested in seeing the 200 e-mail addresses of the poor people who have been subjected to receiving all the garbage.

If you have any problems with this, give me a call or send me an e-mail to [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com) Remember, the first time you do any of this, it may seem difficult. It becomes much easier after you've done it a few times.



### Adobe Acrobat Reader

How many times have you seen that little sign. It is a must have item and it's a free download. Acrobat reader allows you to view, navigate and print pdf files. Downloadable for Windows, Macintosh, and Unix. You can get the free download at [adobe.com](http://adobe.com) Adobe Reader allows everyone to view a file the way it was written. Sometimes when computers read different files from another computer done in another type program, the actual layout of the file could change. PDF files are specifically made so that everyone will see it as the writer intended. PDF files can contain photographs as well as text and the file that you see can't be changed unless you have another special program from Adobe called Adobe PDF Maker. With that program you can write your own PDF files and also make minor changes in a PDF file.

Got a question or a problem, give me a call or send an e-mail to [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

### Computer Tips.....November 2006.....Bob Livoti

Last month at the last minute, I pulled a lot of things from my article because I found that I was getting into too many technical things for most people to do. What I'll do here is just give you a place to read an article on things you can do to hopefully restore a slow acting computer and clean up your system.

Here's an article that appeared in PC World back in 2005. This article is easy to follow and describes just how to do the things to clean things up on your system. You might want to check to see how much memory (RAM) you have installed on your computer. That would be the first thing to check and update your computer to at least 512MB of RAM. After that, follow the steps outlined in this article.

Windows Rejuvenated! Source: PC World JULY 25, 2006 [http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article\),aid,119266,tk,nl\\_urxhow,\)\)asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article),aid,119266,tk,nl_urxhow,))asp)

Now let's get back to basics and maybe have some fun. Here's something that still has a lot of people scratching their head trying to figure out how to do it:

Copy and Paste or Cut and Paste

This basic procedure had me stumped a lot after I had gotten my first computer. You can use this procedure in just about any thing you have on your computer from a word document to copying something from a web page and pasting it into an e-

mail or word document. Go up to the menu bar on the top of the screen of your word document or web page you are looking at. The first things you will see there are File and Edit. The one we are interested is Edit. OK, now let's go to something in a word document or web page that we want to copy. Hold down the left button of the mouse at the start of the material you want to copy and drag it over the information you want to copy. As you do that, you'll notice that the material is getting highlighted, the text is turning black and the type is turning white (on a web page, it turns blue). It looks like this:

The text is turning white and the background is turning black like this. On a web page, it turns blue.

Release the mouse button after highlighting everything you want to cut or copy and then either go up to the menu bar and click on Edit and then down to either Cut or Copy depending on what function you are doing or just right click on the mouse and the options will appear in a dropdown menu right there. If you are cutting the text out of a document, the text you highlighted will be cut out of the document. If you want to copy that text or photo, when you click on Copy, the material is copied to the clipboard. Now remember this, the clipboard is something that you can't see on the screen, but its there. Now all you have to do is place the mouse cursor to wherever you want to copy the material to and then go back to the menu bar and click on Edit again OR right click on the mouse and a menu will pop up and on it you'll see a little clipboard with the word Paste. Then all you have to do is click on Paste and the material will be pasted into the document. One thing to remember is that the material you have copied onto the clipboard will remain there until you close out the program you are working with or you perform another copy or cut function.

Here's another little helper for you: How to find a particular word or item in a word document. Let's say that you have been working on a report for school or business or just been writing something. You've discovered that you made a mistake in a name or something specific you have in the document but you don't remember where you made the mistake. Go up to the menu bar and click on Edit and then go down to a little symbol of a binocular and Find. Click on that and a window called Find and Replace will open up. Now from there you will find several options of finding and/or replacing what you are looking for. All you have to do is enter the words you are looking for and it will find that word wherever it appears in your document. Each time it finds that word, you can have it automatically replace it with something else or format the type to something else or do any of the other functions available in the Find and Replace window. Give it a try next time you are making a word document. This handy little feature also works on spreadsheets.

### Garage Sale

There's an old saying that "One man's junk is another man's treasure." It's very true, so let's look into the world's biggest garage sale..... eBay

Ebay is where you can find anything and everything. Just go to [ebay.com](http://ebay.com) and search for any item you are interested in. You'll find used items as well as new items there. Want to get rid of some of your junk? Then sell it on Ebay. In order to buy or sell something on Ebay, you'll have to establish an Ebay account. It's free to open an account. If you open an account you'll be asked to establish a name you'll be using on Ebay. Take a look at some of

the items for sale on Ebay and look at the buyers or sellers names and you'll get an idea of what kind of a name to make up for your account. I've sold numerous items on Ebay and have also bought things there. As a seller, you'll have to establish your account and a credit card or checking account. When you sell an item you can have the payment deposited into your checking account or if you are buying something, you have the option of having it charged to your credit card or paying by check or money order. Everything is pretty much self explanatory when you sign up and they take you through everything step by step.

A word of caution if you are buying something. Ebay is an auction so you have to have some idea of what the item is really worth and don't forget that shipping charges are also involved in buying or selling an item. Don't get carried away with bidding on something that you can buy locally for less.

### **Online Banking**

Online banking has gotten to be pretty popular with just about every bank and credit union. It is very handy to use and usually easy to do and not only can it save you time but also save you money. Your payments are mailed or made electronically by the bank so you aren't paying postage. All your transactions are posted on your monthly statement you receive from the bank. You have the ability to set up recurring payments that are automatically taken out of your checking account.

You can also transfer money between your savings account and your checking account or between any other accounts you have and with some banks like CitiBank, you can also transfer money between accounts you may have at different banks. You can access your money from any computer at any time of the day or night. All of the banks use a secured web site. At the lower right corner of their web page, you'll notice a little padlock that is locked. That indicates that the web page is secured and all transactions are encrypted for safety. You will need a user name and a password or pin number to access your account just like you would at an ATM machine. Like anything else using a password or pin number, don't leave it anywhere that someone else can find it.

### **Free AOL**

In case you don't already know it, AOL has gone free. After years of having to pay for AOL, you can now have an AOL screen name free. You still have to have your own ISP to access the AOL web site for your mail, but you no longer have to pay to have an AOL screen name. If you still want to continue the full service of AOL using your own ISP, the monthly price has now dropped to \$9.95 a month. Want your own domain name like your name@aol.com ? You can get it free at AOL at <http://domains.aol.com>

### **Start Menu and Quick Launch Toolbar**

Years ago with the older versions of Windows, there was a different Start menu. Most people used it and liked it that way and then when Windows XP came around, Microsoft changed it but still gave you an option to use it. They called it the Classic Start Menu and if you want to revert back to an easier start menu, give it a try. Point your mouse at the Start button and right click and then go to properties. From there, put a dot in the circle for the Classic Start Menu and then click OK. Now when you loof for a program and click on Start, you'll see an easier option to look for

programs on your computer.

The Quick Launch Toolbar is another thing that a lot of computer users don't know about. Right click on the lower blue border on the bottom of the screen. A pop up menu appears and then go to Toolbars and select Quick Launch. Now you can drag any icon or folder from your desktop to the Quick Launch Toolbar. With those icons or folders there, now when you want to access one of those programs or folders, you only have to left click on it to open it. It's a good place to put programs and folders that you use a lot so you don't have to go searching for them on the programs list or on My Computer.

### **Car Rentals**

Often, we get e-mail requests for car rentals and people want to know what car rental deals we have. More often than not, if you're smart enough to send us an e-mail, you're smart enough to go online and find a better deal for a rental car. While we may have a corporate code or discount for our members, often our discount is off the regular rate and if you spend five minutes shopping on line, you should be able to do better. When checking for rates, you should visit all the web sites, not just the Enterprise, Avis or Hertz sites. Check out Hot Wire, Orbitz or just enter in your web browser address bar "cheap car rentals". From there you'll be able to check hundreds of sites. Here's another tip. Your reservation doesn't mean bupkis. A reservation isn't a guarantee. The rental agreement is contingent on availability. In fact, you're not reserving a specific car model, but simply a class of car. What a reservation actually means is that the company is supposed to have some kind of vehicle on the premises for you to rent. So if you get a smaller car than what you reserved, be sure to ask for a rate adjustment. If the lot is empty, the company is supposed to find you a car even if it means calling another agency and covering the difference, so if the clerk doesn't offer, remind him that the company is liable if you wind up paying more for a rental car elsewhere. When you make your reservation, request an economy car. More than likely, they won't have any economy cars when you go for the pick up so they will bump you up to the next class and you'll still pay the economy rate. If they happen to have an economy car when you get there, you can always upgrade, and usually at a cheaper price doing it at the check in counter. It always pays to check around for rentals rates. Just remember when you check and compare, make sure you've added in all the taxes and fees. When you rent at an airport site, there are a host of add on taxes and fees that you have to pay. If you rent in town, a lot of those fees don't apply but its possible that the rental rate is higher in town than at the airport so it always pays to check around.

### **WINDOWS VISTA OPERATING SYSTEM COMING JANUARY 2007**

July 11th marked the end of support for Microsoft Windows 98 and Windows ME. This means, no more security patches from Microsoft for these versions - even if new vulnerabilities are discovered. Currently some new programs aren't compatible with Windows 98 or earlier. Some older hardware such as printers and scanners may require upgraded drivers from the manufacturer. Some new software is compatible only with Windows 2000 or Windows XP. Only Windows 2000 or XP will be upgradeable to Windows Vista but a clean install is recommended. There will be several versions of Windows Vista

available. What is a Windows Vista Capable PC? A new PC that carries the Windows Vista Capable PC logo can run Windows Vista. All editions of Windows Vista will deliver core experiences such as innovations in organizing and finding information, security, and reliability.

### **HOW TO GET OFF MAILING LISTS**

You may request the Direct Marketing Association, a trade group of telephone and mail marketers, to remove your name from national contact lists. The association provides updates of removal requests to companies four times a year. Your name remains on file for five years; you may then re-register. You can also submit requests electronically for a nominal charge of \$1.

Mail your requests for removal from mailing lists to Mail Preference Service, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008 Or use their website: <http://dmaconsumers.org/cgi/offmailinglist>

Got a problem or need help with something, send me an e-mail to [gotsha@aol.com](mailto:gotsha@aol.com)

### **Computer Tips.....December 2006**

#### **The National Do Not Mail List - (Now Free!)**

Here's another way to get your name off of snail mail junk mail. The key to stopping all that unwanted advertising mail you receive at home is **getting your name off the mailing lists**. Of course, that's a lot easier said than done because there are, literally, hundreds of thousands of commercial lists out there. That's where this company comes in. They can use their vast direct marketing expertise to get your name off of those lists for you. As direct marketers themselves, they know that mail-order companies don't want to waste their money sending mail to people who don't want to receive it. They'll gladly take you off their lists when they're asked to. But with countless mail-order companies doing business today, you just can't contact enough of them on your own to make a difference. Just the postage alone would cost an absolute fortune! Go to their web page at <http://directmail.com> and scroll down on the left side to National Do Not Mail List. Click on that link and then fill in your information to be taken off mailing list.

#### **Keep Your Computer Up To Date**

Windows has an automatic update feature that will automatically keep your version of Windows XP up to date with the latest security patches and fixes. Make sure you have your computer set to do this. You can check it by simply going to Start.....then scroll up to Windows Update and click on that and follow the instructions. No information will be given to Microsoft about you by doing this. If you have other MS programs on your computer, it can also check them for any updates and fixes. This is one way to keep your MS programs up to date.

#### **Slow Start Up**

I had mentioned this back a couple of months ago and want to pass on this info. One of the biggest culprits of a slow start up are your anti virus programs. Most of them and your anti spam programs are set to run whenever you start up your

computer. They will definitely slow down your computer and the only way to keep them from automatically starting up is to take them out of the Start Up Menu. Just go to the start up menu and make sure the box is not checked. If you have a name brand computer, many of them also have a feature that will go to their web page and check for any up dates to their software installed on your computer. You can take all these "up date checks" out of the start up and do them manually. Just remember to start them manually so that you provide the security for your e-mail and downloads. Keep your virus definition up to date and make sure the program is running whenever you are on line.

#### **Where Is That Download?**

By default, whenever you download something, it goes to a folder that is buried on your hard drive under the Documents And Settings folder. You can keep everything going to that folder or you can do something simple by making a new folder that you'll be able to find easier. Why not make a simple folder for your downloads by making a folder call "Downloads". To do that, double click on My Computer....then double click on Local Disk ( C: )....when that opens, go to the top and click on File.....New... ..Folder. When you do that, a new folder will appear on your C drive and let's simply name it Downloads. Close out everything then. You have now created a new folder on your C drive called Downloads. Now, if you are an AOL user, go to Settings and click on that. Look for Download Settings on the list that appears and click on that. A window will open up giving you details of your AOL download settings. There is an item near the bottom Specific Folder with a dot next to it. In the box next to that is the folder that is set for your downloads. Click on the Browse button and a Select Path box opens up. Now simply scroll down that list until you find the new folder you made call Downloads. Click on that folder and when it's highlighted, click on OK and make sure that little dot is now in the circle for that location. Now anything you download on AOL will go to a folder that is up front on your C drive called Downloads.

If you are using Outlook Express for e-mails, with your Inbox-Outlook Express window open, click on File.....Save Attachments.....and a box will open up. On the bottom, there is a box with Save To and a Browse button. Click on the Browse button and follow the above instructions for scrolling to the Download folder and high light it. Now your attachments will go to that folder.

#### **Quick Launch Toolbar**

The quick launch toolbar is where you have everything displayed that will open with one click on it. Since finding things on your C drive requires several steps to just local the C drive, make a short cut to it by putting it on your quick launch toolbar. Go to your Desktop and double click on My Computer and then highlight your C drive and right click on it and click on make a short cut and make the shortcut onto your Desktop. Then simply drag that shortcut down onto your quick launch toolbar. Now whenever you want to find something on your C drive, just click on the shortcut on the quick launch toolbar and it will open up.

