

# Microsoft Windows

**Firefox Portable** If you compute nomadically you work in multiple offices, dual-boot, or just can't figure out which system on your desk is your main computer--you undoubtedly miss having all of your bookmarks, saved passwords, and history everywhere you go. One slick way to bring your browsing environment with you everywhere you go is to use a portable version of Firefox that runs from USB drive. You can download and install a free, customized version of Firefox, and install it on your thumb drive with a couple of clicks

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64589/description.html?tk=nl\\_h\\_sxdwn](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64589/description.html?tk=nl_h_sxdwn)

**Alt-Tab Thingy** This freebie does what Alt-Tab does in Windows XP--but it does it better. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63879-order,3-page,1-c,utilities/description.html>

**ExplorerXP** Navigate your files with this tabbed file manager instead of with Windows Explorer.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,25874-order,3-page,1-c,filemanagement/description.html>

**DriverHeaven TuneXP** Tweak various Windows settings to make the OS start and shutdown faster, among other speed-ups.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63663-order,3-page,1-c,systemresourcestuneup/description.html>

**Desktop Renamer** Rename the Recycle Bin and the "My" icons on your XP desktop. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63291-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**StartRight** When Windows boots, the OS starts all of your autoloading programs almost simultaneously. The autostart app that appears to load last is probably the one that takes the longest time. You need something that lets you control the order and insert pauses between programs. That way, you

can eliminate conflicts caused by multiple programs loading simultaneously, and you can choose which program welcomes you when you start your day. You can't do this with Windows alone. The free StartRight utility lets you reorder Windows' autoloading programs and set delays for each.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63066/description.html?tk=nl\\_h\\_sxdwn](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63066/description.html?tk=nl_h_sxdwn)

**Google Desktop** The search utility and widget engine updates with a new look for the sidebar and gadgets, plus search result previews and enhanced security. [http://www.download.com/Google-Desktop/3000-2379\\_4-10328117.html?tag=nl.e415](http://www.download.com/Google-Desktop/3000-2379_4-10328117.html?tag=nl.e415)

**Data Eraser** It takes effort to truly delete files from your system. In most cases, files removed from a hard drive (using the recycle bin, a disk format or even fdisk) actually remain there until new files overwrite them. Data Eraser claims to let you erase the content of any file without it being recoverable by a data recovery expert or, according to its Web site, "even the most hated spy agencies." The program doesn't actually delete any files, instead it makes the file unusable, and "just about impossible to recover". [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64125/description.html?tk=nl\\_h\\_sxdwn](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64125/description.html?tk=nl_h_sxdwn)

**Clipmarks:** Click this toolbar button; then click and drag to "clip" a section of a Web page. Then save and share your clips, with tags that you define, on Clipmarks' site. You can also use the applet to print a selected portion of a page. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64434/description.html?tk=nl\\_h\\_sxdwn](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64434/description.html?tk=nl_h_sxdwn)

**DzSoft Favorites Search** Search your IE Favorites list with this easy to use tool. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64013-order,3-page,1-c,internettools/description.html>

**Windows Live Messenger** Check out the next-generation version of Microsoft's instant messaging service.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63968-order,3-page,1-c,instantmessaging/description.html>

**Download Accelerator Plus** Speed up your downloads with this free utility.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,7557-order,3-page,1-c,internettools/description.html>

**Restoration** Recover deleted files--or delete them for good--with this small program.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,23108-order,3-page,1-c,filemanagement/description.html>

**Startup Control Panel** Automatically launch programs when your system starts up, with this free utility.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,7976-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**Filemon** Get a real-time view of every running program -- and what it's doing. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,22271-order,3-page,1-c,systemresourcestuneup/description.html>

**BartPE** Create a bootable CD or DVD in case your PC crashes and won't reboot. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63901-order,3-page,1-c,harddisk/description.html>

**PowerMenu** Make your application windows transparent--to the degree you specify—with this freebie.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63881-order,3-page,1-c,utilities/description.html>

**TaskSwitchXP** Multitaskers can save time by seeing a thumbnail preview of open programs. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63854-order,3-page,1-c,utilities/description.html>

**Deskloops Beta** Navigate open windows in an easy-to-follow roundabout pattern. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63839-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**DriverHeaven TuneXP** Tweak various Windows settings to make the OS start and shutdown faster, among other speed-ups.  
<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63663-order,3-page,1-c,systemresourcestuneup/description.html>

**Desktop Renamer** Rename the Recycle Bin and the "My" icons on your XP desktop. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63291-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**The Best Icons** Download this colossal icon collection for free.  
<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,4365-order,1-page,1-c,icons/description.html>

**Process Explorer** Find out what those mysterious processes listed in Task Manager are really up to.  
<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,23780-order,1-page,1-c,utilities/description.html>

**Folder Marker** Give XP the look and feel of Vista with these icons.  
<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64387-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**Visual Task Tips** See a miniature image of a task in the Taskbar.  
<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64386-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**JetStart Free** Get a Vista Start menu without upgrading your operating system. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,61605-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**Tweak UI** Customize your Windows user interface.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,2803-order,1-page,1-c,systemresourcestuneup/description.html>

**Process Explorer** Find out what those mysterious processes listed in Task Manager are really up to.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,23780-order,1-page,1-c,utilities/description.html>

**EasyCleaner** Delete unneeded Registry files to speed your system.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,16180-order,1-page,1-c,systemresourcestuneup/description.html>

**Launchy** Launch programs, documents, folders, and bookmarks with just a few keystrokes. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64515-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**Folder Marker** Give XP the look and feel of Vista with these icons.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64387-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**Vista Start Menu SE** A convenient alternative to the "Start" menu.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,61290-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**Visual Task Tips** See a miniature image of a task in the Taskbar.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64386-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**JetStart Free** Get a Vista Start menu without upgrading your operating

system. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,61605-order,3-page,1-c,desktop/description.html>

**Tweak UI for Windows XP** Free utility makes it faster and easier to change the Windows XP interface.

<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,64146-order,3-page,1-c,utilities/description.html>

Context Menus. Create your own right-clickable context menus with CMenuExtender. This utility lets you create menu items with a simple dialog box. Choose from a list of commands, or add your own.

<http://tinyurl.com/ygad97>

Microsoft's SyncToy. Is your hard drive out of control? It's hard to get a grip on all the files on your computer. And digital cameras and music players only make it more difficult.

Microsoft's SyncToy will tackle the problem of duplicate files. It helps you control your files by creating synchronized folders. First you create pairs of folders. Then, specify how you want to synchronize to their contents. There are several different options. You can even tell the program how to handle renamed and deleted files.

After you set up your folders, the rest is done automatically. Requires Windows XP with Service Pack 2. <http://tinyurl.com/8qhsj>

Windows Installer Cleanup Utility. If you've ever tried to uninstall a program that is listed in the Add-Remove Programs list, but find that it won't go away, you will want to know about a free download program from Microsoft. You won't need to edit the registry to get rid of the 'traces' left over from a bad uninstaller that some program's author didn't code correctly.

<http://tinyurl.com/47d8>

Tidy Start Menu. With Tidy Start Menu, you can file your Start Menu items in categories such as Internet, Games, Security, Office, Graphics, and more.

<http://tinyurl.com/e33wa>

Silent Runners. Deep down in the heart of Windows is the Registry. This giant database plays a large role in making sure Windows functions correctly. When programs are installed on your computer, they often create an entry in the Registry. That way, the program will begin running when

Windows starts. The problem is, programs may leave entries when they're uninstalled. Or spyware and viruses can create entries.

So, if you're having problems with your computer, it could be a problem with the Registry. Well, Silent Runners can help you out. This little piece of software will list the entries in the Registry. You can view the list to see if anything is amiss.

[www.silentrunners.org/sr\\_download.html](http://www.silentrunners.org/sr_download.html)

Liven up your desktop. Is your computer desktop getting a bit dull? Then maybe it is time to download new wallpaper! At Caedes, you'll find thousands of images for your desktop. They're divided into categories such as photography and abstract. You're sure to find at least one that suits your taste.

[www.caedes.net](http://www.caedes.net)

XnView. Keep your system clean and running at top speed with this program, which boasts new features such as the addition of a browser and view mode.

[http://www.download.com/XnView/3000-2192\\_4-10067391.html?tag=nl.e415](http://www.download.com/XnView/3000-2192_4-10067391.html?tag=nl.e415)

TweakNow RegCleaner. Manually digging into your Registry to remove junk entries isn't for everyone. Clean your PC's control center quickly and easily.

[http://www.download.com/TweakNow-RegCleaner/3000-2094\\_4-10262639.html?tag=nl.e415](http://www.download.com/TweakNow-RegCleaner/3000-2094_4-10262639.html?tag=nl.e415)

Regmon. Sheds some light on the Windows Registry by showing you which applications are accessing your Registry and which keys they are accessing.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,8088,tk,wbxdown,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,8088,tk,wbxdown,00.asp)

Power Toys for Windows XP. Vista will show you a thumbnail preview of open files and applications when you hold the pointer over each one's taskbar button. Microsoft's Alt-Tab Replacement PowerToy already gives you the keyboard equivalent: After you download and install the program, simply hold the Alt key and press Tab, as you normally would to switch between running apps, and you'll see a thumbnail preview of each app in succession. You won't see a preview if the app is minimized, however. Alt-Tab Replacement PowerToy is part of Microsoft's free PowerToys for Windows XP suite.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,18220,tk,srxdown,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,18220,tk,srxdown,00.asp)

TaskSwitchXP. If for some reason you don't want the Microsoft version, try TaskSwitchXP and Alt-Tab Thingy--two freebies that do much the same thing, and throw in some extra features besides. Go to NTWind Software for TaskSwitchXP: <http://www.ntwind.com/taskswitchxp>

Alt-Tab Thingy is available from NymTec.com:

<http://www.nymtec.com/?q=taxonomy/term/26>

Desktop Sidebar. You can obtain Desktop Sidebar, a free version of Vista's sidebar feature that displays weather information, stock quotes, RSS feeds, and other timely information. Go to the developer's site for the latest version:

Do you look at your screen and say to yourself, "Could my desktop be any more generic?" With this shell enhancement, you can tweak the style of its title bars, buttons, toolbars, and other items, making your computing experience as personal as you'd like it to be. Create and customize your own skins or download any of the ones available, and create your own themes from your favorite TV show, holiday, operating system, and so on. You can also use it to make your files and applications more accessible by adding buttons (roll-up buttons, always-on-top buttons, program launching buttons, menus, and so on). Use the available plug-ins that users have made for it to control your MP3 player, keep track of the time, or display whatever other information or controls you'd like to have integrated as a native part of Windows. <http://desktopsidebar.com/download.html>

StartRight. When Windows boots, the OS starts all of your autoloading programs almost simultaneously. The autostart app that appears to load last is probably the one that takes the longest time. You need something that lets you control the order and insert pauses between programs. That way, you can eliminate conflicts caused by multiple programs loading simultaneously, and you can choose which program welcomes you when you start your day.

StartRight lets you reorder Windows' autoloading programs and set delays for each. The utility lacks a help file, but it's not too difficult to figure out how to use it. Rather than run an installation program, you save the StartRight.exe file in a convenient location on your system, double-click the file to launch the program, and click the Install button. StartRight then takes control of your autoloading apps. Click the Edit button to bring up a dialog box where you can change the order in which the programs load and set the pause (in nanoseconds) between program loads.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,63066,tk,hsxdwn,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,63066,tk,hsxdwn,00.asp)

Process Library Quick Access InfoBar. Deep in the recesses of any computer, mysterious processes run silently in the background. Process Library Quick Access Info Bar help you identify them.

This Windows Task Manager plug-in provides you process information and advice from ProcessLibrary.com, a free online knowledge Web site that's home to over 9000 process definitions. To access ProcessLibrary.com from Windows Task Manager, click the icon that appears next to processes in the Process tab. Each icon links to ProcessLibrary.com's definition, which details the exact nature and purpose of every known process.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,62794,tk,hsxdwn,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,62794,tk,hsxdwn,00.asp)

Demystify Windows Task Manager. Those running processes shown in Windows Task Manager have unidentifiable, sometimes unsettling, names. Is "DefWatch.exe" watching your data, or is it updating security software definitions? A free Task Manager plug-in called Process Library Quick Access InfoBar helps settle such questions--and your nerves.

Process Library Quick Access InfoBar places an I-for-information icon next to processes listed in Windows Task Manager. When you click one of these icons, a ProcessLibrary.com page opens. If your PC's mystery process is described in one of ProcessLibrary.com's 9000+ process definitions, you get detailed information on the product behind the process—what it does, who makes it, and so forth. Better yet, the Process Library Quick Access InfoBar recommends a course of action, depending on what the file does.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,62794,tk,srxdown,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,62794,tk,srxdown,00.asp)

System Information for Windows. Find out what you need to know about your computer's hardware, operating system, installed programs, and more with this utility. SIW provides detailed information about your PC's properties and settings, as well as specs for your CPU, motherboard, chip set, BIOS, PCI/AGB, USB and ISA/PnP devices, memory, monitor, video card, disk drives, CD/DVD devices, SCSI devices, ports, network cards, printers, operating system, installed programs and security patches, processes, services, and serial numbers (CD keys). It also provides information about your system's users, open files, system uptime, network, and network shares. It offers real-time monitors for CPU, memory, page file usage and network traffic. It displays currently active network connections, passwords hidden behind asterisks, installed codecs, and more.

Because it requires no installation, you can run the program directly from a USB drive. But what you do with the information it provides is up to you--SIW doesn't offer any diagnoses or advice.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,62604,tk,hsxdwn,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,62604,tk,hsxdwn,00.asp)

Avvenu. This free remote-access and file-sharing service lets you and your family members get to files on an Avvenu-enabled computer from another computer.

After installing Avvenu's software on a Windows PC, you can access that PC—and the files it contains—through Avvenu's Web site. You can browse or search through the files on that PC from another computer. You choose the file you need, and decide whether to share it with someone else or

download it to your device. You can share files or entire directories by sending someone an e-mail with a Web link to that folder or file.

Note: You can access your computer through the Avvenu service only when it is turned on and connected to the Internet.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,62603,tk,hsxdwn,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,62603,tk,hsxdwn,00.asp)

TweakNow RegCleaner. Manually digging into your Registry to remove junk entries isn't for everyone. Clean your PC's control center quickly and easily.

[http://www.download.com/TweakNow-RegCleaner/3000-2094\\_4-10262639.html?tag=nl.e415](http://www.download.com/TweakNow-RegCleaner/3000-2094_4-10262639.html?tag=nl.e415)

Make Windows XP Run Faster!

[http://askbobrankin.com/make\\_windows\\_xp\\_run\\_faster.html](http://askbobrankin.com/make_windows_xp_run_faster.html)

Red X Appears Instead of Image

[http://askbobrankin.com/red\\_x\\_appears.html](http://askbobrankin.com/red_x_appears.html)

Tweak more than 1500 functions in Windows, Internet Explorer, and other common programs with simple button clicks. X-Setup allows you to change the appearance of your desktop or browser, modify memory settings, or bump your security up a notch. The Explorer-like interface makes navigating the tweak options a snap. Optional Record Mode and log files make it easy to retrace your steps and even reproduce your work on thousands of computers. You can view the source code of every plug-in before installing it, or you can set X-Setup to automatically update with new plug-ins.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,6906,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,6906,tk,hsx,00.asp)

ExplorerXP: This Windows file manager uses tabs, making it easier to keep track of your files. ExplorerXP shows you folder size information, and it shows you the actual size of compressed files and folders. This program supports USB devices, so it's not a problem if you use an extra USB hard

drive. It also lets you merge and split files and rename several files at once.  
<http://tinyurl.com/o4q5r>

Shortcut Keys. The program searches for existing shortcuts, lists them, and then gives you quick access to modify a shortcut. Chances are good, though, that some members aren't aware of shortcut keys. The idea is that Microsoft Windows lets you assign keystrokes and launch apps without having to use the Start menu. For instance, you might have Ctrl-Alt-W set for Word and Ctrl-Alt-Q for Quicken. Get up to speed on shortcuts by reading a Microsoft tutorial:

<http://find.pcworld.com/54214>

FolderShare: Microsoft's Safe, Free File Sharing Tool:

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,62602,nl\\_sbxdown,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,62602,nl_sbxdown,00.asp)

RemoveWGA: Concerned that Microsoft's Windows Genuine Advantage program is reporting back to Microsoft without your say-so? The free RemoveWGA tool alerts you if WGA notification is active on your system, stops WGA from activating when you turn your PC on, and permanently removes it.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63975;order,1;page,1;c,All%20Downloads/description.html?tk=nl\\_hsxdown](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,63975;order,1;page,1;c,All%20Downloads/description.html?tk=nl_hsxdown)

Create your own right-clickable context menus with CMenuExtender. This utility lets you create menu items with a simple dialog box. Choose from a list of commands, or add your own.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25700,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25700,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Is your hard drive out of control? It's hard to get a grip on all the files on your computer. And digital cameras and music players only make it more difficult.

Microsoft's SyncToy will tackle the problem of duplicate files. It helps you control your files by creating synchronized folders. First you create pairs of folders. Then, specify how you want to synchronize to their contents. There are several different options. You can even tell the program how to handle renamed and deleted files.

After you set up your folders, the rest is done automatically. Requires Windows XP with Service Pack 2.

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=e0fc1154-c975-4814-9649-cce41af06eb7&DisplayLang=en>

Since there are frequent posts in the forums asking about how to uninstall a program that is listed in the Add-Remove Programs list that won't go away, you may want to know about a free download you can get from the following MS link that will do this for you easily so you don't have to edit the registry to get rid of the 'traces' left over from a bad uninstaller that some program's author didn't code correctly.

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;en-us;290301>

PDFs in a Jiffy: For Windows 2000, XP: You can convert nearly any document to Adobe's convenient Portable Document Format without slapping down a cent. Though some free PDF utilities insert advertising or a watermark in the resulting PDF file, Acro Software's CutePDF Writer does not. The application adds a CutePDF printer icon to your system. Point your prints to this virtual printer instead of to your regular printer to get a PDF version of the files. CutePDF Writer requires you to download and install a separate PostScript print language interpreter, such as Ghostscript (available from the same Web page). You won't find anything like Adobe Acrobat's security features, font selections, or optimizing options; in fact, CutePDF's configuration choices are pretty close to nil. But for most of your PDF-creation needs, CutePDF Writer fits the bill very well.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25938,tk,srx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25938,tk,srx,00.asp)

After-Hours Cleanup: If you leave your system on all the time, you can use Windows' Scheduled Tasks tool to automate virus and spyware scans, backups, and other maintenance chores while you're away from your PC.

But what if you prefer to shut off your computer at the end of the day? Use the simple controls included in FileWare's LastChance to add the applications and commands you want to run prior to shutdown. When you exit Windows, LastChance interrupts the shutdown process, runs the commands you specified, and finishes shutting down Windows when they are complete.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25920,tk,srx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25920,tk,srx,00.asp)

**Keep Your Icons in Line:** One day you start up Windows and notice that suddenly your desktop icons are in disarray. Lots of things can bump icons out of place. For an instant fix, give Icon Restore a try. The utility installs two new commands on the right-click context menu of My Computer, as well as on most other system icons. Set your icons the way you like them, right-click My Computer, and choose Save Desktop Icon Layout. Thereafter, anytime your desktop gets cluttered, just right-click My Computer again and choose Restore Desktop Icon Layout. If you've hidden your system icons, you can see the same commands by right-clicking Recycle Bin. The utility has no built-in uninstall capability, so be sure to download the companion UnInstall Icon Restore program just in case you want to remove this freeware in the future.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25934,tk,srx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25934,tk,srx,00.asp)

**A Tidy Taskbar:** In these days of madcap multitasking, nobody runs only one or two applications at any given time. For example, your system's taskbar may be filled with an appalling number of buttons, each of them corresponding to a program that is currently open on your machine. Under these circumstances, even using the Alt-Tab keys to switch between open windows soon becomes a chore. The TaskArrange program lets you drag and drop all of your taskbar buttons into a single window to order them the way you want; alternatively you can arrange the icons using the program's own convenient controls.

If you have Windows XP's taskbar grouping feature turned on (right-click the taskbar and choose Properties to find this option), TaskArrange can reorder items in the grouped item pop-up menu. Just remember to exit

TaskArrange once you have achieved your desired order. That way the program will take up no more memory for itself, nor will it require a pesky tray icon of its own.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25936,tk,srx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25936,tk,srx,00.asp)

Hide Tray Trash: Icons representing your many (but vital) always-on utilities can clutter your system tray. Make more room with Two Pilots' Tray Pilot Lite which adds a button near the system tray for toggling the tray--including the clock--into and out of view. Click to see your system tray icons, and click again to clean out unnecessary ones.

<http://www.colorpilot.com/hidetray.html>

A Better Clock: Windows' own clock (in the taskbar tray) is small and plain. It doesn't display seconds, and it has no alarm. Replace it with ClocX, a freebie that lets you set alarms to go off once or on a regular schedule. The alarms can play a sound, display a message, launch an application, or even exit Windows. You can display a pop-up calendar for a quick check of the date, or see both the date and time on your clock face. Use the program's antialiasing, its transparency levels, or one of its downloadable faces or "skins" to improve the clock's readability. Set ClocX to stay on top of open windows, or activate its "click-through" to place it beneath windows.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25937,tk,srx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25937,tk,srx,00.asp)

ExplorerXP: Windows Explorer could do so much more than it does. Luckily, ExplorerXP goes the extra mile. For starters, this file manager uses tabs, making it easier to keep track of your files. ExplorerXP shows you both file size and folder size information, and it shows you the actual size of compressed files and folders. This program supports USB devices. It also lets you merge and split files and rename several files at once.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25874,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25874,tk,hsx,00.asp)

ClocX combines the look of an analog clock with advanced functions. It can set multiple alarms with sound and keep a simple calendar. You can change and configure the backgrounds. Not only can you make ClocX transparent, you can choose from 256 levels of transparency. If you like, you can give it mouse-over transparency.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25937,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25937,tk,hsx,00.asp)

CutePDF helps you create PDFs for free. The program works with Windows apps to make PDFs when you print to the program.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25938,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25938,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Some people like their wallpaper showing through the titles on their desktop icons; others hate it. To change this setting in Windows XP, right-click My Computer and select Properties, Advanced. If you don't like the resulting color blocks behind your icon names, check out this free program by Jay Guerette that makes your wallpaper shine through.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,26046,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,26046,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Do you miss the days of typewriters, when you heard a distinctive sound each time you pressed one of the keys? Those days are back when you use Noisy Keyboard. This free system tray-based utility lets you hear seven different types of sounds as you hunt and peck your way through another computing session: one that plays when you hit the Spacebar, another that's heard when you touch the Enter key, and a third that's played when any other key is pressed. The setup program installs the sound events in the Windows Control Panel/Sounds module, which means it's easy to modify the sounds that are placed. Take advantage of the three crisp-sounding .wav files provided, or use your own. Need a quiet keyboard for a moment? Just click on the program's system tray icon to instantly mute the sound.

[http://www.leeos.com/noisy\\_keyboard.html](http://www.leeos.com/noisy_keyboard.html)

Have you ever tried to delete a file or folder, only to get a Windows error message saying it can't be done? Try downloading Force Delete, a utility

that works with all Windows versions to force delete the stubborn file. The program runs from a DOS command window.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25367,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25367,tk,hsx,00.asp)

With Tidy Start Menu, you can file your Start Menu items in categories such as Internet, Games, Security, Office, Graphics, and more.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25760,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25760,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Use CloneSpy to find identical files or file names, no matter where they hide. CloneSpy finds files that have the same content, even if they have different names. It can also find files that have the same name, but different content. CloneSpy shows you the details of the files and their doppelgangers, letting you decide which one's for real.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25759,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25759,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Free yourself from the tyranny of ordinary Windows with this extra set of tools (also called PowerToys) created by Microsoft developers. Adjust menu speed and window animation. Move the StartUp folder up the Explorer hierarchy, or move the My Documents folder to another drive. If you get the "No Help topic is associated with this item" message when you access the help menu, Tweak UI may have answers. The tool set also offers quick fixes for adding and removing items to your right-click New menu. And you may get a second chance at recovering lost uninstall options. (Note: These tools are not supported by Microsoft's technical support team.)

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,2803,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,2803,tk,hsx,00.asp)

If you have a partitioned hard drive, you may be wasting precious disk space harboring the same files in different areas. DoubleKiller hunts across single or multiple partitions and folders for identical files. It skips over files with important extensions like .dll, but it scans other files for duplicates. It checks the files' names, sizes, dates, and CRC32-checksums to see if any of them

mirror one another. Once DoubleKiller locates the duplicates, it shows you a list of all of them so you can decide which ones to keep and which ones to delete or move.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,24152,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,24152,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Agent Ransack displays the text found inside each file, so you don't have to separately open each search result. You can also search for text inside of documents. Agent Ransack integrates into the Microsoft's Windows Find menu, so it can easily replace the File Search function.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,16100,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,16100,tk,hsx,00.asp)

TaskArrange lets you set the order of your PC's taskbar icons. This version works for NT-based systems.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25936,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25936,tk,hsx,00.asp)

With ObjectDock, you can mimic the Mac OS shortcut dock or make one that's uniquely yours. ObjectDock lets you place shortcuts, running tasks, and more in a dock of your choosing. The icons expand when you mouse-over them, making it easy to store a great deal of information in a small place and still find what you're looking for. ObjectDock is skinnable, and you can customize its appearance in several ways.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25932,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25932,tk,hsx,00.asp)

This desktop utility lets you configure some programs to run just before shutdown. It catches intercepts the shutdown request and runs the configured programs before finishing the shutdown.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25920,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25920,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Equipped with a full set of time-management tools, this program helps you get organized with a clock, a timer, a stopwatch, and reminder modules that use Winamp skins.

[http://www.download.com/TimeLeft/3000-2350\\_4-10034817.html?tag=nl.e415](http://www.download.com/TimeLeft/3000-2350_4-10034817.html?tag=nl.e415)

CDs can be rendered useless. When the CD in question holds your Windows Product Key, that could keep you from getting necessary upgrades.

Keyfinder looks in your Windows registry to find the Product Key, then lets you copy the key to a file or print it.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,29085,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,29085,tk,hsx,00.asp)

The "Microsoft Management Console" (MMC) is one of the lesser-known elements of Windows 2K and XP; items with the "msc" extension open inside the Management Console, and may be altered from there. The MMC is a very powerful way to access and control a huge array of system features and functions.

More info: Search on "mmc" in Windows' Start/Help function; or see "Step-by-Step Guide to the Microsoft Management Console" at

<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&lr=&q=Management+Console+MMC>

or: <http://www.google.com/search?&q=Management+Console+MMC>

Imagine this: You have a big file or two, or a folder stuffed with a couple of gigabytes worth of files. You want to share them all with a buddy. You thought of sending them as a file attachment or maybe popping them onto an FTP server. A better idea is to create a folder on your PC, move the files or folders to it, and let your friends see it on their PCs almost instantly. You can do this easily with FolderShare. In late 2005, the company was scarfed up by Microsoft, and now FolderShare is a freebie. Take advantage of this terrific, easy-to-use service, with unlimited file transfers. About the only restriction is that files can't be larger than 2GB. Here's the site:

<http://www.foldershare.com/>

Starter allows you to view and manage all the programs that start automatically when your computer boots up, giving you control over what starts and when. You can view hidden registry entries, start-up folder items, and even edit initialization files.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,27165,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,27165,tk,hsx,00.asp)

There are many things that can go wrong with your computer. The toughest part of solving a computer problem is identifying its cause. Microsoft offers a handy diagnostic tool called Windows Memory Diagnostic. The test is accurate, and it's easy to use – provided you read the instructions first.

<http://oca.microsoft.com/en/windiag.asp>

Brian Livingston, InfoWorld's Windows expert, provides WinFind, the Windows Tips Search Engine that lets you search 14 top-rated tech sites simultaneously.

[www.briansbuzz.com](http://www.briansbuzz.com)

The free version of SiSoft's diagnostic utility Sandra 2005 can tell you what kind of memory you have installed (use the Mainboard Information module, and look for the information category labeled Memory Modules). You can download a copy from:

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,4005,tk,urx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,4005,tk,urx,00.asp)

Process Explorer is an advanced task manager. It is an indispensable tool for both beginners and power users. Kill tasks that refuse to be killed, or find which processes are still holding on to a particular file or DLL so it refuses to be deleted.

<http://www.sysinternals.com/Utilities/ProcessExplorer.html>

FileZilla is a fast and reliable FTP (file transfer protocol) client and server with lots of useful features and an intuitive interface.

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/filezilla/>

StartupRun displays the list of applications that are launched automatically when Windows boots. For each application, additional information is displayed in order to allow you to easily identify the applications that are loaded at Windows startup. If StartupRun identifies a spyware or adware program that runs at startup, it automatically highlights it in pink color. In addition, you are allowed to edit, disable, enable and delete the selected startup entries. You can also save the list of startup items into a text or HTML file.

<http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/strun.html>

A-Spy displays a categorized list of all applications that are launched during Windows startup. You can add/delete/edit entries, move them from one place to another. It also provides a way to automatically remove orphaned entries i.e. entries that have broken links.

<http://vipmeister.com/dl/aspy/aspy.html>

TimeSentry is a small, multi-purpose calendar and time application designed to make finding out date and time information easy and fast. It features a customizable calendar, a date/time calculator to calculate the difference between two dates and times to the millisecond, and also an atomic time synchronizer. TimeSentry can also access local setting info, daylight saving time info, GMT bias, system uptime, and simple time zone info.

<http://www.xtort.net/xtort/timesentry.php>

WinKeyFinder can help you locate and identify your Microsoft Windows or Office product keys. Not only does WinKeyFinder find your keys in the Registry, but it also lets you generate unique passwords to keep them safe.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25154,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25154,tk,hsx,00.asp)

AutoHotkey is a free, open-source utility for Windows. With it, you can:

Automate almost anything by sending keystrokes and mouse clicks. You can write a mouse or keyboard macro by hand or use the macro recorder. Create hotkeys for keyboard, joystick, and mouse. Virtually any key, button, or

combination can become a hotkey. Expand abbreviations as you type them. For example, typing "btw" can automatically produce "by the way". Create custom data entry forms, user interfaces, and menu bars. Remap keys and buttons on your keyboard, joystick, and mouse.

<http://www.autohotkey.com/download/>

ActivIcons shows you the typical icons on your desktop, such as the Recycle Bin, the My Computer icons, Briefcase, Network Neighborhood, and your folders. It then allows you to select the icon you want to change. You can change icon groups or specific icons. You can also change the Windows mouse pointers, make the text labels transparent, alter the color of the text, or change the icon cache. The program also lets you restore your default Windows icons.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,7654,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,7654,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Restoration: Restoration can rescue your accidentally deleted files and permanently delete the files you want good-and-gone. It can live on a thumb drive, so it leaves no trace of its activities.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23108,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23108,tk,hsx,00.asp)

WhoLockMe Explorer Extension: If you're having problems deleting a file, you might consider using WhoLockMe. The program has a handy Explorer extension, which shows which Windows process is locking the file. One click kills the process (a virus, Trojan horse, spyware, or perhaps a dialog box enhancer), after which you can delete the tenacious hanger-on.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25368,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25368,tk,hsx,00.asp)

The mother lode of clip art: Clip art can enliven any document or presentation. But you can spend hours hunting it down on the Internet. Well, Microsoft's put together a generous collection of free clip art. There are photos, drawings and animations. They'll add a little pizzazz to whatever you're working on. Browse through the categories – there are almost 50! Or you can do a search. Enter your keywords and then select the type of file you

want. When you see something you want, simply select it. You can continue browsing and download them all at once. There are hundreds of clips available. The clips are free, but you must agree to Microsoft's terms. You may also be prompted to download additional controls.

[www.tinyurl.com/4gof9](http://www.tinyurl.com/4gof9)

Process Explorer: Windows Task Manager tells you what applications and processes are running, but some process names aren't very clear to the casual reader. Process Explorer helps you get to the bottom of things by digging down to see which application started a process and which resources that application is currently using. This excavation can be a big help when you're trying to figure out which background processes you dare shut down. It can even help sniff out spyware, too.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23780,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23780,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Iconico's Magnifier is thought by many to be superior to the Microsoft Magnifier program that comes with Windows. It will add magnification up to 50X. The optional grid overlay comes in handy for finding problem spots in digital images.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25560,tk,srx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25560,tk,srx,00.asp)

FreeUndelete v1.0: Ever hit "delete" and wished you could undo it? FreeUndelete helps you rescue data that would otherwise be lost. It works on any NTFS file system, the default file system used by Windows XP. FreeUndelete lives up to both halves of its name, undeleting your files and doing it for free: free of charge, free of adware, free of spyware. Note: Before using this program, please read the Proper Usage Techniques at the vendor's Web site. It will help you avoid further damage to lost data.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25465,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25465,00.asp)

PC Inspector File Recovery: This data recovery program recovers lost files and finds partitions automatically, even when the boot sector of your machine has become damaged or erased. Even when a file's header entry is

no longer available, PC Inspector File Recovery can recover the file. The program lets you save recovered files on network drives. It recovers files with the original time and date stamp.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23069,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23069,tk,hsx,00.asp)

JR Directory Printer Utility: JR Directory Printer lets you make a text file that lists the names of files in a folder. Simple check boxes let you choose the bells and whistles you want. You can choose to include or ignore the files in subdirectories. JR Directory Printer can pull in extra information--such as Display Size, DateTime, and Attributes--if you need it, or can omit it if you don't. If you prefer, you can instruct JR Directory Printer to limit the file name length or to make all file names lowercase.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25110,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25110,tk,hsx,00.asp)

The first step to keep your Windows operating system running smoothly should be Microsoft Windows Update. [www.windowsupdate.microsoft.com](http://www.windowsupdate.microsoft.com)

For those who don't want to spend a lot of time looking for information, WinPlanet is a beautifully designed site that makes finding the right patch or driver a breeze. [www.winplanet.com](http://www.winplanet.com)

A useful resource guide for Windows: [www.activewin.com](http://www.activewin.com)

Another great network of Windows sites: [www.winguides.com](http://www.winguides.com)

Here is an excellent URL for Questions and Answers on Outlook Express.

[www.tomsterdam.com/insideOE/index.htm](http://www.tomsterdam.com/insideOE/index.htm)

This guide, compiled by fellow Windows users, will tell you how to fix (and avoid) common PC problems. [www.annoyances.org](http://www.annoyances.org)

Microsoft issues regular security warnings. You can get them directly. Sign up for e-mail alerts from Microsoft. They tell you which products are affected and give you a link to the full announcement. Stay vigilant. Keep the bad guys out of your computer!

[http://www.microsoft.com/security/security\\_bulletins/alerts2.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/security/security_bulletins/alerts2.asp)

Microsoft maintains a huge collection of free clip art that can be pasted to a Word document. For instance, if you want to add a flower, Microsoft has hundreds of designs. <http://office.microsoft.com/clipart/default.aspx>

Microsoft offers free templates for letters, labels and forms. These are a huge timesaver. You'll find templates for brochures, reports, time sheets and more. <http://office.microsoft.com/templates/default.aspx>

Removing programs using Add/Remove in Windows doesn't always work. Sometimes the program is removed but is still listed. MyUninstaller removes programs safely and eliminates the listing. It also provides the program's name, version number, company information, description and more.

<http://www.nirsoft.net/utills/myuninst.html>

Power Toys (TweakUI) for Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000, and XP: This is a collection of little applications that make Windows run better. They were written by Microsoft programmers, although the company does not officially support them. In fact, Microsoft warns that it can't take responsibility for them. Don't let that throw you off. They work well. Cost: Free

<http://www.systemsmedic.com/TweakUI.htm>

Your computer can slow considerably without you knowing why. Process Explorer displays active processes. This can tell you which ones are draining your resources. While the processes are displayed in the top pane, you can view the associated DLLs in the bottom pane. This can give a better indication if there are DLL-version problems. The link to download the program is at the bottom of the page.

<http://www.sysinternals.com/ntw2k/freeware/procexp.shtml>

PrintKey-Pro is a screen capture program. Just press the Print Screen key and it will capture whatever is displayed on your monitor. Or, draw a rectangle around a portion of the screen to capture a section. After the screen is captured, the brightness, size, color balance and other aspects can be adjusted. You can save the picture in a number of formats such as JPEG, BMP and GIF.

<http://www.warecentral.com/download.htm>

Open programs and files with a few strokes on the keyboard. HotKeyz allows you to add parameter controls, such as launching your e-mail program and automatically composing a new e-mail. Shortcuts are created by using the Ctrl, Alt, Shift and Start keys with another key.

<http://www.skyenergy.com/hotkeyz.html>

EscapeClose will close or minimize any active window with the press of a button. It has several modes. Mode 1 will move the cursor to the upper right-hand corner of the active window when the Escape key is pressed. Click the mouse and the window will close. Or, mode 2 will close the active window when the Escape key is pressed. You can substitute the Escape key with other keys. \*NOTE\* The download link for the free version of EscapeClose is at the bottom of the Web page.

<http://www.sanapesoft.com/escapeclose.htm>

Autoruns shows you what programs are configured to run during system bootup or login. These programs include ones in your startup folder, Run, RunOnce, and other Registry keys. There are a lot of programs running at startup. You will be able to see how much you can increase your boot up time. Always backup first before making changes. Autoruns works on all versions of Windows.

<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb963902.aspx>

RegScrubXP is a very popular utility designed to delete unnecessary information from the System Registry of Windows 2000 & XP operating systems. This "junk" is often left behind when programs are uninstalled, and the information is not needed anymore. Programmers mistakenly load the Registry with junk as well. The result of cleaning out the junk is a smaller,

faster Registry. Your operating system accesses the Registry a lot, so keeping it clean is a good idea! RegScrubXP also helps you tweak your Registry to provide a more pleasant computer experience.

[http://www.sofotex.com/RegScrubXP-download\\_L7528.html](http://www.sofotex.com/RegScrubXP-download_L7528.html)

TuneXP is a radical new tool from DriverHeaven that allows you to tweak your Windows installation more easily than ever before, and with tweaks that no other tool has. This program walks you right through the program step by step, and is very easy, even if you know nothing about optimizing your operating system. Give TuneXP a try, it's free and a great little tweaking program.

[http://www.download.com/TuneXP/3000-2086\\_4-10290929.html](http://www.download.com/TuneXP/3000-2086_4-10290929.html)

Microsoft's Outlook Express is a popular e-mail program, but it doesn't have a built-in spell checker. It relies on the dictionary from Microsoft Word or Works. If you don't own Word or Works, Spell Checker for OE can help. It's a stand-alone program and works on Windows 95 and higher. It requires Outlook Express 5 and higher. <http://www.geocities.com/vampirefo>

PowerToys are additional programs that extend the functionality of Windows. One of the most popular PowerToys is Tweak UI. With it, you can clear your Internet tracks, manipulate mouse functions, get rid of arrows on shortcut icons, and more. Tweak UI is available for Windows 95 and higher.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.msp>

The Windows Explorer interface is one only a mother could love. Geoshell, a replacement shell, lets you customize the Explorer interface. Its geoBars can be placed anywhere, making navigation more comfortable. GeoShell is Free Open Source software, so check out the vendor's site to see the latest useful plugins and attractive skins that developers have created for it.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=24155&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=24155&fileidx=1)

Of course you know how to make shortcuts to folders, but the shortcut function has changed little since the days of Windows 95. SnapFolders helps you create faster, more powerful shortcuts. Instead of forcing all shortcuts to open the target folder in a folder window, SnapFolders gives you the choice of having shortcuts open Explorer windows with the target folder either selected or as the root folder. SnapFolders' shortcuts automatically appear on the Start Menu; from there, you can copy, move, rename, or delete them.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=24158&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=24158&fileidx=1)

There's no reason to leave your PC decorated in Microsoft Modern. Put the "personal" back in personal computing with the new version of WindowBlinds, a tool that lets you change the look of your desktop, from the taskbar color down to the font in pull-down menus. WindowBlinds lets you apply themes to your desktop and to many programs. It's similar to adding a skin to an MP3 player or using the Windows XP visual style engine. Stardock, maker of WindowBlinds, offers free and for-pay themes at its Web site:

<http://www.stardock.com/products/windowblinds/>

Why yet another toolbar for Windows Explorer? Because Folder View gives you buttons representing the subfolders (or shortcuts to folders) in its Main Folder (which you choose). Right-click a button to see an "Open in New Window" option. If the folders have subfolders, each button has a companion that shows those folders in a menu. Even though Folder View recommends that you make My Documents your Main Folder, I find it's more flexible to set the program's Main Folder to one that I create and fill with my favorite shortcuts. Folder View provides a pop-up menu of recently used folders, and you can add a menu version to the taskbar, as well as to the Open and Save dialog boxes in most programs. Last but not least, Folder View is free--and you can download a copy from us:

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25148,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25148,00.asp)

If you find the images in Thumbnails view too big and clunky, download and install Tweak UI, the free customizing tool from Microsoft. After you install it, open Tweak UI, double-click Explorer, select Thumbnails in the

left pane, and change the Size number in the Thumbnail box to something smaller, like 64. Then click OK. You may need to close and reopen the folder to see its thumbnails regenerated in the new size.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,2803,tk,srx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,2803,tk,srx,00.asp)

If you can't find a picture to describe the contents of your folder, visit Google Images and type in a keyword. <http://images.google.com/>

It's not always easy to remember the exact file name of a document, and opening each file to look inside wastes a lot of time. Agent Ransack displays the text found inside each file, so you don't have to separately open each search result.

You can also search for text inside of documents using this application. Agent Ransack integrates into the Windows Find menu, so it can easily replace the File Search function included with Windows.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,16100,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,16100,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Fresh UI lets you configure virtually everything about Windows. Among other things, you can specify what launches at startup, optimize your system and hardware settings, add new items to right-click menus, and change your mouse settings. The program lets you tweak settings for Internet Explorer and Windows Media player. It also protects your privacy and enhances your system's security.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,22766,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,22766,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Talking Time Keeper is a fully featured desktop time package. Its features include the ability to announce the time using built-in voices (either at the click of a button or at specified intervals), plus chimes, alarms, and timers, which display messages and pictures, run programs, speak, and play sounds and MP3s, all with a snooze option. The application includes a calendar displaying upcoming alarms; more than 250 world-time locations (editable); a day-and-night world map; the phases of the moon; stopwatches with lap

timers; and atomic time synchronization. The program also includes a voice-building tool. All you need is a microphone to make your own voices. You can decide exactly what is heard or displayed, and even add a personal touch by displaying a photo. 30-day free trial; \$19.95 to buy.

<http://ct.cnet.com.com/clicks?c=144016-56889950&brand=cnet&ds=5>

File Sieve creates 27 directories labeled # through Z and sorts files from the source directory you choose into them. It checks the first character in the file names and sorts them alphabetically into the correct folders. This saves you time and fuss, and it makes sure every file gets into the right folder.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,24151,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,24151,tk,hsx,00.asp)

DoubleKiller hunts across single or multiple partitions and folders for identical files. It skips over files with important extensions like .dll, but it scans other files for duplicates. It checks the files' names, sizes, dates, and CRC32-checksums to see if any of them mirror one another. Once DoubleKiller locates the duplicates, it shows you a list of all of them so you can decide which ones to keep and which ones to delete or move.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,24152,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,24152,tk,hsx,00.asp)

GeoShell, a replacement shell, lets you customize the Windows Explorer interface. Its GeoBars can be placed anywhere, making navigation more comfortable.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,24155,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,24155,tk,hsx,00.asp)

SyncBack simplifies the process of backing up your files while offering a number of options and features. The program integrates with Windows Scheduler so you can schedule automated backups easily. You can back up or sync your files to another drive, directory, or network. SyncBack creates detailed HTML log files for your review and verifies that files are copied correctly. It lets you run simulations, include and exclude based on file types, exclude specific files, and select which subdirectories to back up.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23166,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23166,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Don't you hate it when you press Ctrl-Alt-Delete and find a dozen mystery programs running you didn't even know were running? WinPatrol gives you greater control over what can run on your machine. You can set it to display additional information about--and approve of--startup programs. You'll also be alerted when something tries to load an IE plug-in or set a cookie. And to get rid of a particularly nasty piece of spyware, you can use the "Delete File on Reboot" feature, so Windows will get rid of it before any other program can protect it or relaunch it. Scotty the Windows Watchdog barks if he spots trouble. If you'd like to download the regular, free version, click the following link.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=22728&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=22728&fileidx=1)

Tired of always launching the same programs when your system boots up? This applet allows you to automatically launch programs when your system starts up. Of course, you can do that manually, by changing entries in your Registry. But this program's simple interface lets you avoid that confusion--and best of all, the program is free.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=7976&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=7976&fileidx=1)

Tired of your yellow folders and your uninspiring, pale-gray Recycle Bin? Express your individuality with custom Windows icons. ActivIcons is one of the most popular icon managers. This program shows you the typical icons on your desktop, such as the Recycle Bin, the My Computer icons, Briefcase, Network Neighborhood, and your folders. It then allows you to select the icon you want to change. You can change icon groups or specific icons. You can also change the Windows mouse pointers, make the text labels transparent, alter the color of the text, or change the icon cache. The program also lets you restore your default Windows icons, in case the novelty of custom icons wears off. Note: Depending on your Windows version, some functions may be redundant or unavailable

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=7654&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=7654&fileidx=1)

Of course you know how to make shortcuts to folders, but the shortcut function has changed little since the days of Windows 95. SnapFolders helps you create faster, more powerful shortcuts. Instead of forcing all shortcuts to open the target folder in a folder window, SnapFolders gives you the choice of having shortcuts open Explorer windows with the target folder either selected or as the root folder. SnapFolders' shortcuts automatically appear on the Start Menu; from there, you can copy, move, rename, or delete them.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=24158&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=24158&fileidx=1)

We PC users may pretend that Macs are all flash, but they certainly do have style to spare--and sometimes, the style offers usefulness as well. Aqua Dock gives PCs a dash of Mac-fashioned goodness, imitating OS X's animated launchbar. When you run your mouse over the bar, it reacts, expanding the icons for the items you mouse over. This helps you be absolutely sure you know what you're opening. And heck, it does look neat--even more so when you customize the look of the items in the bar.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=24810&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=24810&fileidx=1)

Need to see more on your screen--or maybe to see everything at a bigger size? 1st QuickRes Light can help you see clearly. This utility gives Windows XP the functionality of the QuickRes program integrated with Windows 98 and Me. With 1st QuickRes installed, you can change your monitor's resolution and color-depth settings with a simple click of a taskbar icon, and it lets you save your three favorite modes.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=22560&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=22560&fileidx=1)

Researching for anything online can make you long for a way to navigate the profusion of browser windows from your keyboard. This little utility gives you a "page to next IE window" key. It elevates the lowly (and rarely used)

Scroll Lock key from disuse, converting it to an IE-specific window-switcher.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=22975&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=22975&fileidx=1)

This program lets you create a DOS boot disk that can access NTFS partitions in Windows XP, 2000, or NT. To use the program, insert floppy disk, run the file (NtfsFloppySetup.exe), and follow the instructions.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=25181&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=25181&fileidx=1)

Ever wish you could close out of active windows more easily? EscapeClose lets you do so by pressing the Esc button. This little utility, which lives in the system tray, can be set to run automatically at Windows startup.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=23738&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=23738&fileidx=1)

Some programs open windows that are too small to be useful. AutoSizer lets you open these windows at full size: Just set AutoSizer to make certain programs always open maximized. AutoSizer sits quietly in your PC's system tray, so you needn't sacrifice any desktop space for it.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=25158&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=25158&fileidx=1)

Sometimes you don't need to open every file in a folder--just to have a list of the titles. JR Directory Printer lets you make a text file that lists those file names. Simple checkboxes let you choose the bells and whistles you want. You can choose to include or ignore the files in subdirectories. JR Directory Printer can pull in extra information--such as Display Size, DateTime, and Attributes--if you need it, or can omit it if you don't. If you prefer, you can instruct JR Directory Printer to limit the file name length or to make all file names lowercase.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=25110&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=25110&fileidx=1)

Ever get annoyed when a file you need to work with is tagged "Read Only"? Read Only Zero will zero-ize the "Read Only" attributes. This tiny utility works on all files in the directories you select.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=25152&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=25152&fileidx=1)

If you don't want to use a mouse, but wish to avoid memorizing tons of keyboard macros, Mouse Emulator could be the solution. Mouse Emulator is a tiny program that lets you use keyboard keys to control the mouse pointer or cursor. This is particularly handy if you're using a notebook computer with a touchpad or other awkward input device.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=25155&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=25155&fileidx=1)

Imagine the power to make your PC do your bidding with just a keystroke. WireKeys Lite helps you set up all sorts of keyboard macros. You can launch programs, run JavaScript and VBscript macros, and even control Winamp.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download.asp?fid=25153&fileidx=1](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download.asp?fid=25153&fileidx=1)

Back4Win lets you customize your backup so your PC's downtime is minimized. Its variable compression rate gets the best backup speed for every supported OS. It lets you make disk-spanning files and restore damaged backups, too.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23146,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23146,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Back It Up helps keep your data safe by compressing and archiving the files that you choose. When something goes awry, you can go back to the previous snapshot of your system. There are options that allow you to delete specified files by choosing the files' extension. You can also schedule backups to run unattended.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,15980,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,15980,tk,hsx,00.asp)

EZBack-it-up backs up your data where and when you tell it to do it. It can compare thousands of files in mere seconds. Check EZBack-it-up's logs to see what it's done.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23149,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23149,tk,hsx,00.asp)

PolderBackup lets you back up your data in .zip format. You can select all your data, or you can exclude certain files. PolderBackup can do incremental backup, so you back up only what's changed.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23150,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23150,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Cursor XP is a utility that allows you to jazz up the cursors you use to mouse around with Windows. CursorXP integrates tightly into Windows, providing you with additional tabs on your Mouse control panel that let you access additional features. You can improve the look of your cursor by choosing graphical, animated options. You can add special effects that come to life when you click or take other actions.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,22461,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,22461,tk,hsx,00.asp)

How would you like to be notified every time Microsoft publishes a new Knowledge Base article regarding the particular applications that concern you most? KbAlertz.com does just that. The site scans Microsoft's Knowledge Base daily for new or updated articles, and sends out an e-newsletter when anything changes. Sign up for free and specify the Microsoft products that you want to be kept apprised of--operating systems, Office applications, e-mail clients, and other software:

<http://www.kbalertz.com/>

Monitor all your system resources, including your central processing unit, memory usage, and available disk space. [www.tiler.com/freemeter](http://www.tiler.com/freemeter)

FreeSnap: Manually resizing windows can be a pain, and getting them to line up along the side of the screen is an unwelcome dexterity test. With FreeSnap, you can move and resize windows with your keypad. Just fire up the program, and you can use hotkeys to center windows or send them to all corners of the screen. You can use the "plus" and "minus" keys to resize windows without tiresome clicking and dragging.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25420,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25420,tk,hsx,00.asp)

CutePDF Printer is PDF creation software that installs itself as a "printer subsystem.". This enables virtually any Windows application (must be able to print) to create perfect PDF documents with just a push of a button. It's easy to install and easy to use. It contains no watermarks or pop-up advertisements.

<http://www.cutepdf.com/>

Clipboard Buddy. If you use the same text over and over, you probably have it in a Word file that you have to open so you can cut and paste it elsewhere. Clipboard Buddy removes a step by letting you save data directly to your Clipboard. Even if you shut down your system, your saved text (or rich text or images) stays put on the Clipboard. Clipboard Buddy saves up to twenty of your most recent Clipboard items.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25157,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25157,tk,hsx,00.asp)

PC Wizard. This utility detects all kinds of hardware, from Bluetooth devices to the boards in the guts of your PC. PC Wizard 2005 updates its lists monthly to make sure your PC recognizes the newest devices. Not only does PC Wizard tell you about your peripherals and components, it can benchmark your system so you see how it's doing with all that hardware.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25444,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25444,tk,hsx,00.asp)

X-Setup Pro. Tweak more than 1500 functions in Windows, Internet Explorer, and other common programs with simple button clicks. X-Setup

allows you to change the appearance of your desktop or browser, modify memory settings, or bump your security up a notch. The Windows Explorer-like interface makes navigating the tweak options a snap. Optional Record Mode and log files make it easy to retrace your steps and even reproduce your work on thousands of computers. You can view the source code of every plug-in before installing it, or you can set X-Setup to automatically update with new plug-ins.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,6906,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,6906,tk,hsx,00.asp)

**AutoSizer:** Some programs open windows that are too small to be useful. AutoSizer lets you open these windows at full size: Just set AutoSizer to make certain programs always open maximized. AutoSizer sits quietly in your PC's system tray, so you needn't sacrifice any desktop space for it.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25158,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25158,tk,hsx,00.asp)

**FreeUndelete:** Ever hit Delete and wished you could undo it? FreeUndelete helps you rescue data that would otherwise be lost. It works with Windows NT, 2000, and XP. Note: Before using this program, please read the proper usage techniques at the vendor's Web site. It will help you avoid further damage to lost data.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25465,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25465,tk,hsx,00.asp)

**Insert Toggle Key:** Rarely, if ever, will you want to type over something already written. It's far too easy to unintentionally change from insert mode to overtype mode. Insert Toggle Key makes a noise to alert you when you bump the key by accident.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25457,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25457,tk,hsx,00.asp)

**Fast Destination Finder** indexes your hard drives' directories to let you find folders and files in a jiffy. It works on individual PCs or network drives, and it can index in the background while you work on other things.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,22941,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,22941,tk,hsx,00.asp)

Create PDF files for free from any application. PDF ReDirect is fast, includes basic (40-bit) encryption, and offers the ability to append your PDF file to an existing file. PDF ReDirect has no restrictions, no watermarks, no spyware, no adware, and no pop-up advertisements.

<http://www.exp-systems.com/>

KeyTweak. Remap your keyboard with KeyTweak. Chances are, there are a few keys that are inconveniently situated, and a few others that you don't use at all. This utility lets you change the function of almost any key. Note: This software may not work with some wireless keyboards.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,23203,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23203,tk,hsx,00.asp)

JR Directory Printer lets you make a text file that lists the name of every file in a folder. Check boxes let you choose the bells and whistles you want. You can choose to include or ignore the files in subdirectories. JR Directory Printer can pull in extra information--such as Display Size, DateTime, and Attributes--if you need it, or can omit it if you don't. You can instruct JR Directory Printer to limit the file name length or to make all file names lowercase.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25110,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25110,tk,hsx,00.asp)

ActivIcons. This icon manager shows you the typical icons on your desktop, such as the Recycle Bin, My Computer, Briefcase, Network Neighborhood, and your folders. It then allows you to select the icon you want to change. You can change icon groups or specific icons. You can also change the Windows mouse pointers, make text labels transparent, alter the color of the text, or change the icon cache. The program also lets you restore your default Windows icons.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,7654,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,7654,tk,hsx,00.asp)

If you're having problems deleting a file, you might consider using WhoLockMe. The program has a handy Windows Explorer extension, which shows which Windows process is locking the file. One click kills the process (a virus, Trojan horse, spyware, a dialog box enhancer), after which you can delete the tenacious hanger-on.

[http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,25368,tk,hsx,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,25368,tk,hsx,00.asp)

MyUninstaller is an alternative to Windows' Add or Remove Programs tool. But it does more than mimic what Windows provides. MyUninstaller shows much more information about your programs. And it can help you with programs that don't include an uninstaller. MyUninstaller provides extra information including product descriptions, registry entries and installation dates. It also displays programs lacking uninstallers and others that don't show up in Windows Add or Remove Programs. You might discover old programs you had forgotten about. Of course, you can also use MyUninstaller to remove programs just as you would the Windows tool. You can also select multiple programs to remove them at the same time.

<http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/myuninst.html>

In business classes, widgets are fictional products made by fictional companies. But in the computer world, widgets are the latest, greatest thing. Apple fans have already heard about them – they're part of the new Mac OS. These little programs run on your desktop. With a broadband connection, they display information updated from the Internet. Others will show system information. If you use Windows, like most of us, don't feel left out! Konfabulator will bring widgets to your desktop. So whether you use Mac or Windows, there's a download here for you. First, download the free software, then choose your widgets. There are more than 1,000. Some are serious, while others are whimsical like the typing speedometer! I zoom!  
[www.konfabulator.com](http://www.konfabulator.com)

Find and Run Robot searches for any installed program on the fly, as one types in the program name, and then launches it with a single keypress. It even searches for data files!

<http://www.donationcoder.com/Software/Mouser/findrun/>

Pure Text quickly takes the formatting out of text and allows it to be copied and re-formatted. <http://www.stevemiller.net/puretext/>

ObjectDock. An improved icon zoom effect and a new mouseover feature keep you launching your apps in style.  
<http://www.stardock.com/products/objectdock/>

StartupRun. The StartupRun utility displays the list of all applications that are loaded automatically when Windows boots  
<http://www.nirsoft.net/utils/strun.html>