

COMPUTER TIPS (Document #10)
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Some things Man was never meant to know. For everything else, there's Google

06/28/2008 Using Smiley Faces in your Documents

Creating smileys is a popular activity for many using the computer. This Computer Tip shows you how to make smileys and indicates the meaning that accompanies each smiley.

The following list provides you with the major smiley emoticons (emotional icons). Most of them are drawn sideways - that is you might see the intended image better if you tip your head to the left.

:) Happy
:(Sad
>:(Angry
^_^ Cute
(-_-) Sleeping or Asian
*_ * Dizzy or starry eyes (not sideways)
: "> Embarrassed (blushing)
:^) Happy (profile)
:->) Happy (with cool nose: Alt+0172)
☺ Happy, Alt+1
☻ Happy, Alt+2
:-/ Perplexed, frustrated
:*(Sad (crying)
:,(Sad (crying)
:-x Speechless or sick
:o Surprised
:O Surprised, OMG (Oh my God)
:-& Tongue tied
:)) Very happy
:((Very sad
=)))) Very, very happy
:-S Worried

(_/)
(='.'=) Bunny
(")_(")

07/09/2008 Text Messages to Cellular Phones

Many cellular carriers assign email addresses to cellular phone numbers and support SMS or text messaging by e-mail. You don't need to install special add-ins in Outlook to send text messages, but the recipient will need text messaging enabled on their cellular plan (most carriers enable it by default) and have a phone capable of receiving text messages (most new phones are text-capable.) To use, compose a short e-mail message using fewer than 160 total characters in Outlook (or any e-mail client) and address it to the cellular number at the carrier's e-mail domain (see below.)

Example: 3522085214@messaging.sprintpcs.com (this is not a real number). Remember to remove

your signature or stationary from the message before sending. Note that some carriers will break apart larger messages into 160 character messages, and others will deliver only the first 160 characters.

The phones only support plain text messages but the carriers strip multipart HTML, so you do not need to remember to switch to plain text format.

Important: E-mails sent to cell phones are billed to the subscriber as a text message.

I tested the message sending using Outlook to a T-Mobile cell phone and it worked fine.

The major US cellular carriers use the 10_digit_number@cell.carrier_domain.com format for SMS to text capable cell phones, with a limit of 160 characters in the subject and message body (total.)

Carrier Send Email to phonenumber@....

Alltel @message.alltel.com

AT&T @mms.att.net

Nextel @messaging.nextel.com

Sprint @messaging.sprintpcs.com

SunCom @tms.suncom.com

T-mobile @tmomail.net

VoiceStream @voicestream.net

Verizon @vtext.com (text only)

Verizon Wireless users can register an alias at vtext.com to give out instead of their phone number.

Both alias@vtext.com and phone_number@vtext.com will be valid addresses for the phone.

Web Based Interfaces: If you know the phone number and carrier, you may be able to send SMS from a web page.

Verizon <http://www.vtext.com>: You may want to test if your cell phone works by sending a text message to yourself and find out how a recipient may see the message.

07/10/2008 Feeling Artistic?

At bomomo.com, you can make abstract art with your mouse and the options they provide for you. Choose one of the buttons at the bottom of the application and then swirl or move your mouse around the blank canvas and watch as it comes alive with color.

It is recommended to begin by trying all the different buttons to see what they do. Once you have the hang of that, start a new canvas. You make the canvas blank again by clicking on the button in the bottom right corner of the application that has the image of a blank piece of paper. It's between the Save button and a button with an arrow on it. The arrow button has multiple options for you to pick from, such as Save As and About.

The two rows of buttons under the blank canvas are the creative options. There are 20 different options in total, which gives you room for individuality.

<http://bomomo.com/>

07/12/2008 Tab Back with the Shift Key

If you hit the Tab key, you can hop forward from control to control in a program. If you hold the Shift key while you Tab, you can go *backwards* through the controls.

Controls are the "objects" you interact (play) with in a program - stuff like buttons, checkboxes, text boxes, lists, etc. If you can do something with it, it is considered a control.

For example, if you are filling out a form on a web page: You fill in your first name and accidentally tab right past the last name box. You can get back to the last name field by holding down the Shift key and hitting the Tab key.

07/14/2008 Fly Over Snowed Mountains - in 3D

and with appropriate background music. Move the cursor to control the fly.

<http://www.electricoyster.com/electric3d/index.html>

07/19/2008 Computer Desktop Battery

Most computers do contain a small battery, usually about the size of a quarter. The same type of battery is used in other devices, such as digital cameras and camcorders. The battery is not typically visible, as it is often located on the motherboard. They usually come in a type of small holder as well, so even though you cannot see them very easily, they can be replaced without much trouble.

The main reason for the computer battery is to keep time. In a computer, the battery usually powers a small chip called the Real Time Clock (or RTC.) The RTC usually runs at all times, even when the computer is not powered up. When you boot up your computer after it's been turned off for awhile, the battery charges the RTC and it's able to clock the right time and date.

The battery is not the only thing the RTC is used for. It contains approximately 64 bytes of your computer's RAM. The battery only uses 10 bytes of that, which leaves 54 bytes open for other uses. If you have trouble booting up your computer, or if you have a wrong time and date once you get it turned on, that usually involves the RTC.

It is very important to keep the battery in good shape as well. If you do not, you could run into more problems than just having the wrong time shown in the corner of your desktop. The RTC is a quartz watch type battery; they usually last five to seven years. After that, you need to think about replacing the battery for your PC.

07/20/2008 Windows Vista Recovery Disc Download

Most new PCs & laptops come with Windows Vista. The major manufacturers, like Dell, HP, Toshiba, Lenovo, & Acer do not give you a real Windows Vista installation disc with your purchase. Instead, they bundle what they call a "recovery disc" (that is if you are lucky - otherwise you will have a recovery partition instead) with your machine and leave it at that.

It doesn't matter that you just paid a thousand dollars for a machine that comes with a valid Windows Vista license - your computer manufacturer just don't want to spend the money (or perhaps take on the responsibility) of giving you a Windows Vista installation DVD to accompany your expensive purchase.

The problem is, with Windows Vista, the installation media serves more than one purpose. It is not just a way to get Windows installed; it is also the only way of recovering a bad installation. The Windows Vista DVD has a "recovery center" that provides you with the option of recovering your system via automated recovery (searches for problems and attempts to fix them automatically,) rolling-back to a system restore point, recovering a full PC backup, or accessing a command-line recovery console for advanced recovery purposes.

Microsoft seems to have realized this problem, and have thankfully made a recovery disc for this purpose. It contains the contents of the Windows Vista DVD's "recovery center," as we have come to refer to it. It cannot be used to install or reinstall Windows Vista, and just serves as a Windows PE interface to recovering your PC. Technically, one could re-create this installation media with freely-downloadable media from Microsoft (namely the Microsoft WAIK kit, a multi-gigabyte download) but Microsoft makes this available to Windows' users who might not be capable of creating such a download on their own.

NeoSmart Technologies hosts a copy of the Windows Vista Recovery Disc. It is a 120 MB download, and in the standard ISO format.

To download the Vista Recovery Disc and/or to read the above and some comments from other people, click here: <http://neosmart.net/blog/2008/windows-vista-recovery-disc-download/>

07/27/2008 Boost your Vista productivity

Windows Vista keyboard shortcuts:

Hold Shift when inserting a CD
Prevent the CD from autoplaying

F4 in Windows Explorer
Display the address bar location list

F5
Refresh the screen

Ctrl and Z
Undo an action

Ctrl and Y
Redo an action, in case you have used undo incorrectly

Shift and Delete
Delete the selected file(s) without moving to the Recycle bin (*be careful*)

Shift and F10
Display the shortcut menu for the selected item

Alt and Tab
Switch to the previously active window

Alt and F4
Close the active window

Windows key and D
Show the desktop

Windows key and E
Open Windows Explorer

Windows key and F
Open a Search window

Windows key and G
Cycle through Sidebar gadgets

Windows key and R
Open a Run window

Windows key and T
Cycle through and preview all the applications on the taskbar

Windows key and 1
Launch the first program on your Quick Launch toolbar

Windows key and 2

Launch the second program on your Quick Launch toolbar

Windows key and Tab

Use Flip 3D to cycle through all currently open applications

Windows key and Spacebar

Select the Windows Sidebar

Ctrl and Mousewheel

Changes the view of your current folder

Left Alt and left Shift and Print Screen

Toggles the highcontrast display

08/01/2008 Recommended Speed Test sites:

<http://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest/> = my PC download was 16465kbp, upload was 1034kbps

<http://whatismyip.com/speedtest/index.asp> = my PC download was 15639kbps, upload was 1042kbps

These numbers record encouragingly the recent Comcast speed update. Before, downloads were in the 6000s kbps levels and uploads at 350s.

I do have a Router installed. My system is running a Vista Home Premium, 32bit.

System is protected actively by BitDefender 2008 and Firewall Comodo Pro.

Previously I was using ZoneAlarm as a firewall. It was slowing down my system running Vista. I found out that ZoneAlarm was not doing a good job at protecting my system and was conflicting with Vista and my Router. Comodo Pro is FREE, as ZoneAlarm was. When I replaced ZoneAlarm with Comodo Pro, the system took off.

Warning: initially, Comodo Pro goes through a learning phase to accept your approval of running programs. It protects both inbound and outbound.

08/02/08 Windows XP and VISTA Have Built-in CD-Writer Software

To start the CD Writing Wizard, in Windows Explorer: right-click the CD drive, click Write these files to CD, and follow the instructions in the Wizard. For more information about using the Wizard, see Windows Help and Support (click Start, and click Help and Support) or go to www.microsoft.com and search for XP CD-Writer software.

1. Right click START click EXPLORE.
2. Locate the files you wish to copy and select them by clicking once. If more than one file, hold down the Ctrl key and click the files individually while still holding down the Ctrl key until you finishing selecting files. All files selected will be highlighted.
3. Right click in the blue area and select SEND TO: CD Burner or if you are adding additional files, the choice will be the letter of your CD burner and the name of the CD already created.
4. A message screen will pop up in the startup tray with the message, "you have files waiting to be copied to CD; to copy now, click this balloon.
5. A new screen will pop up with a shortcut to the selected files. Click WRITE THESE FILES TO CD. The files will be copied to the blank CD, or added to the already non-finalized- created CD.
6. If the files are in the MY PICTURES folder, right click folder and select Copy these files to CD. Select the drive letter that is your CD burner as the destination.

If you use VISTA, you may use Windows Explorer (click Windows symbol key and letter E) to get Windows Explorer and use Burn on the Explorer Bar.

08/07/2008 Backup

My new computer configuration is a Windows Vista Home Premium, 3GB memory, 640GB hard drive. Although I regularly backup critical files in my computer using DVDs and the software Genie Backup Manager, I realized that my best bet with over 260GB of files (including programs) was to backup my whole hard drive using an image backup. I already had the image backup software Acronis Home11. To easily perform full image backups, I purchased an external hard drive: a Seagate FreeAgent Pro Desktop Hard Drive - 500GB - 7200rpm - USB 2.0 - IEEE 1394a - FireWire, Serial ATA/300 - External SATA.

My full image backup of over 260GB took just over one hour. I did not have to create backups on multiple DVDs and I feel better knowing that I can restore rapidly if I get a crash. I hope that I will not have to tell you how my first recovery functioned.

Imaging programs differ from data backup programs in that they can back up the Windows Operating System itself.

You can use that backup image to recover from system failures, spyware infections, installations gone wrong, or any of the dozens of other things that can seriously mess up your PC.

Imaging programs can be used to backup data as well as your Operating System but are not ideal for that task. Recent versions of imaging programs have improved in this area but many users prefer to use imaging programs to back up Windows and programs, but use data backup programs like Genie to backup regularly changing data. My e-mails and frequently changed files are backed up with Genie on DVDs.

For George's Tips specific to Digital Photography, see the Digi Photo SIG Tips Docs on the SIG page