XP TRICKS & TIPS –III

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Care to read this…??

- ➲ This is an honest effort to help people who are madly looking for ways to customize their Windows machines. But this guide is in no way a complete source to computer tweaking. More can be obtained by searching the World Wide Web using 'Google' 'MSN' 'DogPile' 'Yahoo!' 'HotBot' and other search engines.

- ➲ I do not claim full rights on the contents discussed here. Many people- hackers, crackers, administrators, computer geeks, teaching faculty, user groups- have also contributed their wisdom and they wanted it to be shared and discussed. I have 'compiled' the data into a single file along with what I had so 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.

Sandeep Narayanan

0. Backup and Restore Your Registry

I have been giving lectures on how to edit registry. But I never talked even a single word about backing up or restoring the registry. Well, it is my honest mistake. I admit it. One incident prompted me to write this section. I received an mail from "Ajith Kumar" who while editing his system registry, accidently changed the file associations. Well, thank God, it was not a major one! But what would have happened if he had done something else?? So this time I'm not taking any chances. You back it up or not, here is my tip *to backup* and restore your system registry settings.

We use the XP Backup utility for backing up the registry. To get this utility go to: START→ PROGRAMS→ ACCESSORIES→ SYSTEM TOOLS→ BACKUP. The wizard will launch, Then click next. Choose BACKUP FILES AND SETTINGS. Click next. Choose LET ME CHOOSE WHAT TO BACKUP. Click next. Expand the section for MY COMPUTER (click the minus sign next to it) and place a check mark in the box next to SYSTEM STATE DATA. Add the drive containing XP or at least the WINDOWS folder. However this does add considerable time and size to the backup.Click next. Now choose a place to store the info and name it. If you are proficcient, you may choose a different type of backup by using the advanced tab.

Now let us see *how to restore* the backed up registry in case of an emergency:

Go to START→ PROGRAMS→ACCESSORIES→SYSTEM TOOLS→BACKUP. The wizard will launch, Now click on the ADVANCED button. Click on the RESTORE WIZARD button. Click next on the following screen. Choose the backup you want. Follow the remaining screens. Done

Most probably you don't see the Backup option in XP Home. Put the XP CD in the drive and exit out of the screen that pops up. Go to My Computer and Right Click on the Drive containing the XP CD. Please choose Explore. Now click on the following file VALUEADD→ MSFT→ NTBACKUP→ NTBACKUP Installer.

1. Customize Your Login prompt

So let us get into some serious business. We shall start with a tip to customize your log in prompt. Open Registry editor by going to Start→Run→Regedit and Navigate to the key: *HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Micrsft\WindowsNT\CurrentVersion\Winlogon*. In right pane, do a right click to create a new **string value** and give its name **LogonPrompt**. Set its value to whatever text you want to see displayed at login screen. Reboot the machine and see the log-in prompt for the change. You can see the text you entered above the text fields that ask for username and password.

2. Closing "about" Window:

Certain web sites force the opening of a popup window with an advertisement that can not be minimized or maximized like the other ordinary windows. These windows are a headache as they do not have any Minimizing or maximizing buttons on them. This happens in MicroSoft Internet Explorer 4/5/6 (that comes bundled with 98/Me/2000/XP). They do this by using the "about:" browser built-in command into their HTML/DHTML/XML code. If you want to get rid of such troubling windows during your surfing, then follow me. I have the fix. As usual open the registry editor and navigate to the following registry key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Internet Settings\ZoneMap\ProtocolDefaults

Now right click on the right window pane. Create a new **Dword** entry and name it **about**. Set it's value to "00000004" (hex). Please note that they are zeros and not the letter 'O'.

Once again right click on the right window pane. This time create another **Dword** entry and name it **about:** (Note the **:** symbol introduced here). Set it's value to "00000004" (hex). Please note that they are all zeros and not letter 'O'.

This will place all "about:" URLs into the MS IE Restricted Zone (the hex code 00000004 stands for Restricted Zone), and hence will not open anymore while surfing the net.

3. Type URL without a Mouse Click

In IE you can use Alt + D key combination to highlight the address bar. This allows you to enter a URL without the mouse click. This will be helpful for the laptop users who find it uneasy to use their touchpad every time they want to type a URL.

4. Clear Type Fonts Right From the Log-in Window.

I have already discussed this tip during the last issue. But I realized that the clear type will be activated only after the user logs in. To activate the clear type right from the windows log-in screen you have to do a registry hack in two different areas. Let us start with one area. Open the registry editor and navigate to the following key first.

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\ControlPanel\Desktop. Now on the right window pane try to find the string key titled *FontSmoothing*. Change it's value to 2. Now find another DWORD key *FontSmoothingType* and set its value to 2. This section is over. Now move to the other.

Navigate to the registry key *HKEY_USERS\.DEFAULT\Control Panel\Desktop*. Find the string key titled *FontSmoothing* and set its value to 2 as we did before. Now find the other DWORD key *FontSmoothingType* and set its value to 2. Now reboot the computer.

5. Alignment of Start Menu panel

Start menu has all the entries aligned to left by default. But if you insist on aligning it to the right, then here is the way to achieve it. The objective can be met by a registry tweak. Open the registry editor and navigate to the following key:
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Desktop and look for key *MenuDropAlignment*. Set its value to 1 to align the menu entry to right. If you have any regrets in future, turn the value back to 0.

6. Change the Default Search Engine from MSN to Any Search Engine of Your Choice ..

Microsoft has set the default search engine in Internet explorer as MSN. But here is your chance to set the default according to your wish. The tip is from MS-KB. First close the Internet Explorer and open the registry editor (Start→Run→Regedit). Then navigate to the following registry key.

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\SearchUrl. Change the value of the string key named ***default*** to any one of the following values:

• To specify ***Metacrawler*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://www.metacrawler.com/crawler?general=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***AltaVista*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://www.altavista.com/cgi-bin/query?q=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***HotBot*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://hotbot.com/?MT=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***Google*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://www.google.com/keyword/%s" (without quotation marks).
• To specify ***Infoseek*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://www.infoseek.com/Titles?qt=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***Excite*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://search.excite.com/search.gw?search=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***Lycos*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://www.lycos.com/cgi-bin/pursuit?query=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***Magellan*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://www.mckinley.com/searcher.cgi?query=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***Ask Jeeves*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://askjeeves.com/AskJeeves.asp=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***Yahoo!*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://search.yahoo.com/bin/search?p=%s" (without quotation marks).

• To specify ***GOTO.Com*** as the default search page, change the default value to "http://www.goto.com/d/search/?type=topbar&Keywords=%s" (without quotation marks).

 Quit Registry Editor, and then start Internet Explorer.

7. Disable the Win Key in a Keyboard

If you do not have a windows enabled keyboard you can disable its use. Navigate to the key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\KeyboardLayout. Look for value of "Scancode Map". Its binary data. Set its value to "00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 03 00 00 00 00 00 5B E0 00 00 5C E0 00 00 00 00" to disable the win key. Please be cautious while entering this lengthy key.

8. Disable Automatic Modem Connections at Startup

The system may try to initiate an Internet connection at Windows startup or at the start of many applications. This setting can be disabled by a small registry hack. Navigate to the key HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Ole.

Create a new String value, or modify the existing value, called *EnableRemoteConnect* and edit the value to "Yes" or "No" accordingly. Yes = enable automatic connections and No = disabled.

9. Customize the HTML error pages

Some times, when you type a webpage address you might see an error page. A very common error page that we come across is "Page not found" page. These error messages do not come from any server. They are all stored in a DLL file in our system itself. The name of the dll file is SHDOCLC.DLL file. If you don't trust me then copy the following address and paste it in your IE address bar and see for yourself.

res://c:\\Windows\\System32\\SHDOCLC.DLL/*servbusy.htm*

Now replace servbusy.htm with other html files given below .
http_400.htm, http_404.htm, http_406.htm, http_410.htm, http_500.htm, http_501.htm, http_gen.htm, servbusy.htm, syntax.htm, navcancl.htm, offcancl.htm, policyerror.htm, policylooking.htm, policynone.htm, policysyntaxerror.htm, privacypolicy.dlg, preview.dlg, printerr.htm, printnf.htm, printnof.htm, printunk.htm, wcee.htm, ietext.bmp, ietext256.bmp, world.bmp, world256.gif, ie.gif, ie256.gif, orgfav.dlg, about.dlg, analyze.dlg, bidifind.dlg,

docppg.ppg, error.dlg, find.dlg, findic.dlg, ieerror.dlg, imageppg.ppg, orgfav.dlg, and pstemplate.dlg (Do you trust me now???)

If you need to customize these messages, write an error message and store it somewhere on your hard disk. We can replace all these HTML error pages with our own. Navigate to **HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\InternetExplorer\AboutURLs**. You can change entries associated with various keys and provide complete path name to your own custom html file.

10. Fifth zone in Internet Explorer 6.0…?

Is there a fith zone in Internet Explorer 6? I think so. It is called my computer and is diabled by default. If you want to enable this, Open registry editor and then navigate to the key **HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\InternetSettings\Zones\0** and look for the dword data value called "Flags". Its default value is 0x00000021(hex). Chage its value to 1 and reboot. Now you should see an option called my computer in Internet Explorer 6 Zone settings.

11. Improve DNS resolution.

If you would ask me how XP handles DNS resolution, I would have to admit that it is simply great. But there is still a room for improvement. This can be done by increasing the DNS Cache size. To do this you would have to add following entries in registry. Please navigate to: **HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\Dnscache\Parameters**. Create or modify (if already present) the following four DWORD keys to following values.

CacheHashTableBucketSize	00000001(hex)
CacheHashTableSize	00000180 (hex)
MaxCacheEntryTtlLimit	000fa00a(hex)
MaxSOACacheEntryTtlLimit	0000012d(hex)

12. Clean Prefetch Data

The prefetch directory can get full of junk and obsolete links which can slow down your computer noticeably. I would suggest that you do this once a month or so to improve the speed. Do not follow this on a daily basis as prefetching of most commonly used programs will speed up the execution of those programs. To perform this trick go to *C*(SystemDrive)*:/windows/prefetch*, and delete everything and reboot.

13. Way to Skip the "Open With Web Service" Prompt

To do this open up the registry editor and navigate to the following registry key: ***HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer***. Now create or modify a dword key named ***InternetOpenWith***. Give a value of 0 (zero) to hide the web services or 1 to display web services.

14. Reduce Modem Timeout

If you are experiencing a lot of modem timeout with you system, you can change the ***slownet*** value in the Registry. Navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\System\CurrentControlSet \Services \Class\Net\0000 (0001 etc) Change the ***slownet*** value from 01 to 00.

15. Active Desktop Completely Explained

This lengthy session is dedicated to fully explain the various registry hacks associated with active desktop. To remove the ability to disable Active Desktop, navigate to the following registry key.

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Micrsft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer Create or modify a dword key called ***ForceActiveDesktopOn***. Give it a value of 1 to enable the key.

To remove the Active Desktop options from Settings on the Start Menu follow this tweak. Go to the following key.

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Micrsft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer
Create or modify a dword value called **NoSetActiveDesktop** give it a value of 1 to enable the restriction.

To restrict any changes to the already enabled active desktop settings navigate to the following key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Micrsft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer
Create or modify a dword key called *NoActiveDesktopChanges* and give it a value of 1 to enable restriction. To disable it give it a value of 0 (zero).

Other Features of the Windows Active Desktop that you can enforce is explained below. First go to the following key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Active Desktop. Now create or modify the following dword keys for the functions explained.

NoChangingWallpaper	Disable the ability to change wallpapers.
NoComponents	Disable components.
NoAddingComponents	Disable the ability to add components.
NoDeletingComponents	Disable the ability to delete components.
NoEditingComponents -	Disable the ability to edit components.
NoCloseDragDropBands	Restrict adjustments to toolbars
NoMovingBands	Restrict adjustments to desktop toolbars
NoHTMLWallPaper	Only allow bitmaps (BMP) as wallpaper

16. Where is the Conformation Message?

When you first choose to download a file in Internet Explorer, you receive a Confirm File Open dialog box. The "Always ask before opening this type of file" check box in this dialog box is selected by default. But if you clear that check box, the registry entry for this setting is changed and you do not see the Confirm File Open dialog box in subsequent download sessions. Instead, Internet Explorer automatically opens files instead of downloading them.

If you regret the action and you want the message box back, here is a way: go to

HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\exefile and modify the underline third octet for the *EditFlags* value in the value from 01 to 00.

17. Remove "Log Off" from the Start Menu

To remove the Log Off line on your Start menu do the following registry hack. Navigate to *HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer*

Create a new DWORD value and name it *NoLogOff*. Now add the value 1 to the key. You need to logoff or reboot for the settings to take effect.

18. Unable to Open Certain Web Sites? Try These Steps

➢ From the IE window, go to Tools➔Internet Options➔Advanced and uncheck the option **Enable third party browsing extensions**. Now restart IE.

➢ Go to Start➔Run and type *regsvr32 actxprxy.dll* (follow next bullet point too)

➢ Go to Start➔Run and type *regsvr32 shdocvw.dll* and reboot.

➢ Open Tools➔Internet Options➔Privacy tab and put one of these web sites in the list which can be located by clicking the S*ites* button.

➢ Try putting the web site in the "Trusted Zone" and if this fixes the problem, you can begin to diagnose cookie/script problems with that site and your Internet zone settings.

➢ If you are a dial-up user and your ISP have more than one local number for dialup, remove the primary number that is dialing up first and use the secondary dialup number. Clear the checkbox for **Negotiate multilink for single link connections** under the PPP settings.

➢ A file in your Windows folder called 'hosts' (no extension) may have an incorrect IP address for the page. To find out, open Windows Explorer, select your C:\Windows folder, and look in the right pane for a hosts file. If you can't find it in your Windows folder, this isn't your problem. If you do find a hosts file, open it in Notepad and look for a line referring to the page that's giving you trouble. If it's there, enter # at the beginning of the line. Save and exit the file.

➢ Go to Tools→Internet Options→Connections→Lan Settings. Uncheck *Use a proxy server.* Now restart IE.

These steps will definitely solve the issues.

19. Modify the Internet Auto-Dial Settings

In Windows there is an option to automatically dial your Internet Service Provider (ISP) to establish an Internet connection. This option can be controlled using this tweak. Navigate to:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\InternetSettings

Create a new binary value named *EnableAutodial*, and set the new value to equal *01 00 00 00* to enable autodial or *00 00 00 00* to disable it. Please take care while giving the values.

This restriction can be used on a computer wide basis by adding it to keys corresponding to *HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Micrsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\InternetSettings.*

20. Clear Most Recently Used (MRU) List From MS Word

When you try to save a document in MS Word; Save as window open, and on the file name text field, if you click the arrow down, you will see the history of saved documents. Don't like this idea? You wish to clear that? Ok. Here we go. First open the registry editor and navigate to the following key and delete accordingly:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Office\10.0\Common\OpenFind\Microsoft Word\Settings\Save As\File Name MRU.

21. Change the Default Download Directory in Internet Explorer

If you have created a directory and you want all the downloads to happen to that directory instead of the default IE download directory, do this. Start→ Run → Regedit and navigate to

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer.

Change the value of the string "Download Directory" to the new path you want to assign as IE's Default Download directory. I use **C:\Sandy\Downloads.**

22. Auto Disconnect Creating Problems?

If you are having problem setting the auto disconnect feature in Internet explorer 6 , here is a tip. Open registry editor and enter the following area:

HKY_LOCAL_MACHINE\System\CurrentControlSet\Services\LanmanServer\Parameters Llook for A**utoDisconnect** parameter. Change its value to whatever you want. Note that the value mentioned here are in minutes.

23. Tuning MTU to Boost Internet Speed

Value of MTU decides the size of Internet data packet. Bigger the size, more is the time take to transmit the packet over the internet. The maximum that you can put as the value of MTU is 1500. Note that it may not make sense making it smaller than 68. It is therefore wise to use a value between 1000 and 1500. Again this is a registry tweak and I **STRONGLY** recommend the use of a tweaking utility that can do it for you. If you do not have any utility as such at least make a system restore point so that in case you have some trouble you can roll back to the previous system settings through the system restore facility provided by the Microsoft.

Open registry editor and Navigate to:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\Tcpip\Parameters\Inter faces\ID_for_the_Adapter.

For this right click on right pane and add a DWORD key by the name MTU. Use a value from 1000 to 1500. Higher values are recommended.

24. Automatic MTU Size Detection

If MTU size is not optimized, this job has to be done by a router which would mean a significant waste of time resulting in poor throughout. We have a solution to this issue. All you have to do is to enable a key called *EnablePMTUDiscovery* in the following area.

 KEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\Tcpip\Parameters\Interfaces\ID_for_the_Adapter. Right click on right pane and add a DWORD key by the name *EnablePMTUDiscovery*. A value of 1 will enable the TCP to attempt to discover the MTU size over the specific path to host.

25. Disable Automatic Private IP Addressing

This registry hack will disable Automatic Private IP Addressing, but not DHCP. If you want the APIPA feature to be disabled, then navigate to: *HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\System\ CurrentControlSet\Services\VxD\DHCP*. Add a new DWORD entry with the name *IPAutoconfigurationEnabled* and give it a value of 0 (zero). Now restart the computer.

26. Disabling Last Access feature

NTFS file system in XP maintains a list of access/update details for each file and directory. This information is useful but for an average user. To do the tweaking navigate to: *HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\FileSystem* and look for the key *NtfsDisableLastAccessUpdate* and set its value to 1.

27. Automatic Window Refresh

Whenever you make a change to your windows you have to press F5 or do a manual refresh. With this tweak you can tell windows to increase the rate at which it does the refreshing. Navigate to the key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Update. Create a new DWORD value, or modify the existing value, named *UpdateMode* and set it to equal "0" for faster updates. Restart Windows for the change to take effect.

28. Enhance Network Throughput? Try This Out

Network throughput depends on a variety of factors and as such you never no what could be the bottleneck. One of things that we can try out is the network redirector reserves.Open registry editor and navigate to the key

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\LanmanWorkstation\Parameters. Click on right window pane and add the following Dwords. Valid values should be between 0-255. Keep both values same.

MaxCmds   00000068 (hex)

MaxThreads   00000068(hex)

29. Delete Addresses Stored by AutoDial

AutoDial recordes a list of names and addresses. To see the list , type the following command at a command prompt: *rasautou -s*
Now to delete a name or address entry from the list, open the registry editor and navigate to:
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\RAS Autodial\Addresses. Delete whatever you want.

30. Restrict Certain Users From Running An Application

You can selectively restrict access to few apps and file names. To do this, open registry and navigate to:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer

Now look for a subkey by the name *DisallowRun*. Within this key, add many string keys you like each mapped to an application or file that you want to be restricted.

31. Enable Fast Shutdown

To enable fast shutdown open the registry editor. (Start➔Run➔Regedit) and go to the key: *HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\ System\CurrentControlSet\Control\Shutdown.* Create a string key called *FastReboot* and give it a value of 1.

32. Make XP Remember the Folder Settings

Sometimes you'll customize a folder and upon restarting you will be shocked to see that the changes haven't been saved. In some cases the settings work for few days and then XP forgets it. Ever wondered why this happens? Well, This is due to that fact that Windows XP remembers the settings for only 400 folders, by default. When you customize more folders the old settings are lost. To prevent Windows XP forgetting the folder customization, we can increase the limit till 8000 (which is the upper limit).

Set the *BagMRU* Size to 6000 (Decimal) in the following registry keys:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\Shell

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\ShellNoRoam

Let me remind you that the value that we set is in Decimal and not hex.

33. Set CPU Priority

This setting will boost the priority of foreground applications. The tip will override the default priority setting given to the programs currently running and hence the reader is advised to take necessary precaution. Though the trick is found to be working fine so far in all system that I tried; I **strongly** recommend creating a system restore point and a registry backup (to be on a safer side) before attempting this tip.

To do the tweaking, navigate through the following registry hive:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\PriorityControl

Modify (or create) a DWORD key named ***Win32PrioritySeparation*** and set its value as 00000026 (hex).

34. Need More Disk Space??

Clean up by going to Start→All Programs→Accessories→System Tools→Disk Cleanup. In 'More Options' click the button to remove all but the most recent restore point. Delete the hidden folder ***C:\Windows\$NTServicePackUninstall***. There may also be a large folder ***C:\Windows\SoftwareDistribution\Download***. That can also be deleted. There will also be a large folder ***C:\Windows\ServicePackFiles***. Do NOT delete this but ***compress*** it to save about 200MB of disk space. To compress it, Right click on it, Choose Properties, click the Advanced button, and select 'Compress'.

35. Shortcut to Lock Your PC

We have already discussed about shortcuts to shutdown, restart and logoff XP machines. This time I'll show you how to lock it with a shortcut. Create a new shortcut on your desktop using a right mouse click, and enter ***rundll32.exe user32.dll,LockWorkStation*** in the location field exactly as it is. Give the shortcut a name. Just double click on it and your computer will be locked. Enter passport to log back in.

36. Stop XP from Tracking User Information

XP tracks user information such as the programs users run, the paths they navigate, and the documents they open in order to customize Windows menu and other related features. We can stop XP from doing this so as to free the system resources. To do so, navigate to the key:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer

Create or modify a DWORD key named ***NoInstrumentation*** and give it a value of 1 (hex).

37. Stop Users Changing Desktop Settings

If you are running a cyber cafe (or a public machine) and do not want users to change desktop settings,navigate to the following key:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\WindowsNT\CurrentVersion\Program Manager\Restrictions.

Create or edit the DWORD *NoSaveSettings*. Now to disable saving desktop settings, set its value to 1. Reboot the machine for the settings to take effect.

38. A Tip for the Taskbar

Navigate to the following registry hive for this small but cute registry hack: *HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Explorer* Create or modify a DWORD key named *NoToolbarsOnTaskbar* and set its value to 1 (hex).

39. Security Tip: Clear Page File

Some programs can temporarily store unencrypted passwords and other sensitive information in memory. By clearing the Windows paging file (stored in hard disk as Pagefile.sys), we can prevent any unsecured data from being contained after the shutdown process is complete. This tip will enhance the security but will *slow down the shutdown* process by another 5 to 8 seconds. If you do not want to compromise on security, follow the tip.

Open Control Panel→Select Administrative Tools→Choose Local Security Policy→Local Policies. Now Click on Security Options. In the right hand menu, right click on Shutdown: Clear Virtual Memory Pagefile and Select Enable. Reboot the machine. Now for the guys, who love to edit the registry for this setting, navigate to:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\SessionManager\ MemoryManagement. Double click on *ClearPageFileAtShutdown* and Set Value = 1.Click OK and Reboot.

40. Clear the Temporary Files Automatically

You can tell IE 6 to automatically delete temporary files. To do so Start the browser, select Tools →Internet Options→ Advanced. Go to the Security area and check the box to Empty Temporary Internet Files folder when browser is closed.

41. More DNS Tweaks

Failed DNS lookups get cached and to prevent it from occurring, we have to change following three registry keys under the hive:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\ Dnscache\ Parameters

Now create or modify the DWORD key named ***NegativeCacheTime*** and set its value to 0(zero) .The default value is 300 seconds. This key determines how long an entry for a negative answer remains in DNS cache.

Create or modify the DWORD key ***NetFailureCacheTime*** and set the value as 0 (zero). The default is 30 seconds. It determines for how long the DNS client stops sending queries when the network is not responding.

Create or modify the DWORD key ***NegativeSOACacheTime*** and set the value as 0(zero). The default value I think is 120 seconds. This key determines how long an entry for a negative answer to a query for an SOA remains in the Domain Name System (DNS) cache.

42. Increase the Maximum Recording Time

In the Sound Recorder utility the maximum time of recording is 1 minute. You can increase it to any number of minutes of your choice by applying this trick. First make sure that your microphone is muted so it will not pick up sound. Click Record, and then let Sound Recorder run for 60 seconds. This will create a blank wave file of length 1 minute. After 60 seconds, click Save As on the File menu, and name the file ***loops.wav***

Click Insert File on the Edit menu, and then insert the ***loops.wav*** file. This increases the maximum recording time by 60 seconds. You can repeat this step once for each additional minute of recording time that you want to add. For example, for a 10-minute recording time, insert the ***loops.wav*** file 10 times.

43. Killing Tasks from Command Line

First get the command prompt by following Start→Run→cmd. Find out the tasks and its process id by typing ***tasklist*** in the black window.You can now get rid of tasks on the

computer by using **taskkill /pid** followed by the process number, or just **tskill** and the process number.

44. Task Bar Grouping

If you want to change the default number of grouping in task bar do this tweak. Go to START→RUN and enter regedit. Navigate to **HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\ Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced**. Look for value of the key titled **TaskbarGroupSize**. Set it to any value you want. Default is 3.

45. Turn Off Descriptions

When you place the cursor on explorer objects, a description of the object pops up. To disable the pop up description, you can use the following registy hack . Navigate to the registry key : **HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Micrsft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced** Look for the data key **ShowInfoTip** and set its value to 0 to disable it.

46. Display Wallpaper Right from Log On

To display wallpaper during the logon itself, navigate to the following registry key : **HKEY_USERS\.DEFAULT\Control Panel\Desktop**. In the right pane, change the path to Wallpaper. It will be useful if you are looking for ways to display your company logo during all user log in sessions.

47. Find the Details of a Web Update

If you use Microsoft Internet Explorer, you can easily determine when a page was updated last. Navigate to the page you want to check and type into the Address Bar: **javascript:alert(document.lastModified)** and press Enter. Please make sure that you have entered the line exactly as above. A dialog box will open display the date and time of the last update.

48. Disable ZIP files Being Shown as Folders

In Windows Experience (XP) the Zip files are shown as a folder. If you are using a third party zip utility like WinRAR, and you do not want them to be handled by XP, do the following registry tweaking. Click Start and go to Run. Now enter the string given below in the run box , and click OK:

regsvr32 /u zipfldr.dll

You should receive a dialog that says "DllUnregisterServer in zipfldr.dll succeeded."

To restore the default behavior, simply do the same with another string:

regsvr32 zipfldr.dll

49. File hosting- How to Get It Free

Now it is learning time guys. This time I would like to share URLs of some free online file hosting servers. These servers are far better than rapidshare and megaupload. Try them out.

- *esnips.com*
- *4shared.com*
- *allmydata.com*
- *mozy.com*

If you have something great to share, upload them to any of those servers and provide the others with the link to your file. This is what I call "Information at the Click of a Mouse"

Conclusion

The idea of releasing tricks and tips in PDF format came into my mind after seeing the postings in some Orkut communities, where people are being asked to provide their e-mail for getting some trick/tip delivered to their address. Some postings even promised the delivery of 'genuine' softwares for hacking Yahoo! and Gmail. If you are one of them, then here is a reminder for you: "Real hackers do not need e-mail addresses. They just need a sharp brain and a beautiful mind".

See you all soon with the next release guys ☺. **Special thanks to Dr.Nik.**