TechTV

TechTV'S Windows XP Tips

TechTV brings you the flavor and charisma of their network with _TechTV's Microsoft® Windows® XP for Home Users_—your guide to Windows XP fundamentals. We've boiled down some of the book's best tips right here to help you master Windows XP keyboard shortcuts, download photos, speed up your workflow, watch DivX movies, customize your browser, and more!

By **Michael Miller** and TechTV

Secrets of the Windows Masters

By Morgan Webb, Associate Producer of _The Screen Savers_

There are subtle ways to tell the humble Windows user from the practiced Windows master. For one, the Windows master is familiar with a variety of slick keyboard shortcuts that make the mouse seem like a comparatively clumsy instrument. Keyboard shortcuts are always quicker than a reach for the mouse, and the more obscure shortcuts you know, the higher your mastery of the art of Windows.

F6

In the fast-paced world of Internet surfing, there is no time to drag the mouse all the way up to the address bar when you want to leave a page. Hit **F6** to toggle your cursor between your page and your address bar to surf with the pros.

The Modified Drag

You already know that you can drag an icon with the right mouse button to get the option to move, copy, or create a shortcut, but there's an even easier way: Drag the icon with the left mouse button, like you were going to move it, then hold down **Alt** while you're dragging to create a shortcut, or **Ctrl** to make a copy. If you have trouble remembering whether to use **Alt** or **Ctrl**, look at your cursor. You get a tiny shortcut arrow when you hit **Alt**, and a little plus sign when you hold down **Ctrl**. You can also remember that "**Ctrl**" and "copy" start with the same letter.

Rename with F2

To rename a file or folder, select the icon by clicking once, then hit **F2**. You can begin typing immediately. Hit enter when you're finished.

The Linux Dual Boot

At some point, most true Windows masters have felt the limitations of their chosen OS and have looked to potentially greener pastures for stability, convenience, and flexibility. Whether or not the Penguin sticks, the Windows master is, above all, curious.

An Intimate Knowledge of DOS

Whether learned clumsily from frantically booting a sick computer with a startup disk or progressively before there ever was a thing called Windows, any Windows master worth his or her salt can "cd" with the best of them.

Constant Use of the Run Box

Not only do the masters know what **Run** does, they use it to do everything from opening programs and documents to configuring their systems. With even the youngest among us typing 70 words per minute, a couple flicks of the fingers are quicker than drags and clicks.

Some common shortcuts for programs (there may be some slight variations between operating systems and individual computers):

Run Box Shortcut	Program
winword	Microsoft Word
iexplore	Internet Explorer
notepad	Notepad
calc	Windows calculator
conf	Microsoft NetMeeting
aim	AOL Instant Messenger
msmsgs	Microsoft Messenger
winamp	Winamp
msimn	Outlook Express
excel	Microsoft Excel
wmplayer or wmplayer2 Media Player 6.4	Windows Media Player or Windows
mspaint	Microsoft Paint

Add Captions to Your Photos

It's fun to add quirky text to your digital photographs. You can do it without any expensive third-party software; everything you need is in Windows. You can create some cool titles and captions right in **Microsoft Paint**. Here's how to get the most out of your photo-titling experience.

1. Open your photo in MS Paint (you can open Paint by going to the Start menu, selecting Run, then typing mspaint in the box).

2. Click the **A** button on the floating toolbar to add text to your photographs. You can change the text color by choosing a color with the left mouse button, and you can change the background color by choosing a color with the right mouse button.

3. You can make the text background transparent by selecting the Transparent option for the text tool on the floating toolbar.

4. You can make the illusion of a text shadow by typing the text twice, once in black, and once in the color you want.

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Downloading Photos to XP

Assuming the drivers are installed, when you plug your USB digital camera into your Windows XP machine your computer will recognize your camera and a wizard will appear to walk you through downloading your pictures.

No Plug and Play? No problem.

Here's what you do if your camera isn't Plug and Play:

1. Plug in your digital camera.
2. Open My Computer and scroll to the camera icon.
3. Right-click the icon and choose Properties.
4. Click the Events tab and choose to save all your pictures to a specific folder.

Who needs a Mac when it's this easy to download your photos into Windows XP?

Watch DivX Movies on Your Windows Media Player

DivX is a compression standard based on MPEG-4 that allows video to be compressed to a fraction of its former size. A lot of DivX video is traded on the Internet due to its manageable size, but you can't play it back in a player without the free codec from DivXNetworks (**www.divx.com/divx/**).

Download the free 3MB DivX package. (Don't download the ad-supported DivX Pro.

You don't need all the extras for playback.) This package comes with a free DivX player, but when you install the package you can choose to install only the codec you need to play back DivX in your Windows Media Player. You don't have to play DivX in the DivX player. Once this codec is installed, you can play DivX movies in your Windows Media Player.

Restrict User Logon Hours

You can keep Little Johnny off the computer when you're not there to watch with the help of a command line utility called net user. On a standalone computer, there is no way to log a user off when his allotted time is up. However, you can keep someone from logging on until 5 P.M. Monday through Friday, for example. Here's how:

1. Log in as an administrator.
2. Go to your command prompt.
3. Type **net user username /time:M-F,5pm-9pm** (and with the correct username instead of username, of course) to allow a user to log on only between 5 P.M. to 9 P.M.

The user will not be able to log-on before 5 P.M. Another example is **net user username /time:M,3pm-5pm;W,4pm-7pm**.

Customize Your IE Logo

Windows XP Professional has a great interface for customizing your browser, allowing you to get crazy with any throbber you want! Your throbber is the logo at the top-right corner of your Internet Explorer browser that rests when you're reading a page and spins or flaps when a page is loading. You can follow the steps below to add any picture you want—even animations!

Note: Older versions of Internet Explorer would accept strips of images 220 pixels wide and 22 pixels high, meaning the film strips were flipped on their side. If you find any throbbers on the Internet with this format, do not try to use them. They will not work with current versions of Internet Explorer.

Transform Your Throbber

1. Go to **Start**, choose **Run**, and then type **gpedit.msc**.
2. Go to **User Configuration, Windows Settings, Internet Explorer Maintenance**, **Browser User Interface**, and choose **Custom Logo** from the right-hand pane.
3. Check the boxes to add customization, and browse to add any files you would like to see as resting images. They must be bitmaps (extension **.bmp**) and they must conform to the proportions indicated.
4. Now for the animation. Your small, animated image should be a strip of 10 slightly different individual images pasted together so it appears like a strip of film.

   You have a series of 10 (or more or less) images that are 22x22 pixels, creating a bitmap that is 22 pixels wide by 220 pixels high (if there are 10 images). Go to **http://accesscodes.hypermart.net/download.html** to download a command-line animated bitmap utility called Animated Bitmap Creator (also included in the Internet Explorer Administration Kit). It will take a series of sequentially numbered bitmaps and turn them into a strip appropriate for use as a throbber. *Note:* This utility does not have a GUI.
5. The large animation bitmap will be 38 pixels wide by 380 (or more or less) pixels high.