

MotherBoard

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This Month At NOPC

Voodoo Ventures by Chris Schultz

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Tweaking Windows' Taskbar

By Gabe Goldberg,
APCUG Advisor; Columnist,
AARP Computer & Technology Website,
www.aarp.org

It's easy to use a key part of Windows' screen real estate, the taskbar, without really noticing it. Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components summarize what's happening on your computer and access running software. But unlike your car's dashboard, the taskbar can be customized for individual needs and preferences.

www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/howto/tweaking_windows_taskbar.html

Fun with Windows' Taskbar

I've read reports that most people can't accurately draw their car's dashboard, no matter how many hours or years they've stared at it. Similarly, many of us look at and use a key part of Windows' screen real estate -- the taskbar -- without paying much attention to it.

Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components -- Start button at one end, notification area icons at the other, and application buttons in between -- summarize what's happening on your PC and give quick access to running software. But the taskbar is more interesting than a car dashboard: you can customize it for your individual needs and preferences.

This article describes Windows XP's taskbar; other Windows versions have mostly similar facilities. People sometimes worry when their taskbar disappears or suddenly looks

(Continued on page 2)

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

Our speaker for September will be Mr. Chris Schultz with Voodoo Ventures. Voodoo Ventures is a business incubator with different ideas about what it means to be a company, not to mention a technology company in New Orleans. Mr. Schultz will discuss Web 2.0, Huckabuck.com, and other company projects.

Chris Schultz is an entrepreneur who is driven by thinking about what's next. In 2001 he launched an Internet travel service offering destination management services in Las Vegas, New Orleans, Miami and Reykjavik, Iceland. Following the acquisition in 2005 of that company, Destination VIP, he shifted his focus to Voodoo Ventures which is dedicated to emerging technologies on the Web.

Chris founded Voodoo Ventures in New Orleans, and for the past four years he has continued to grow his company by leveraging emerging technology trends and incubating simple, scalable business ideas. Currently the company is incubating several projects including a search engine, and outsourcing firm and a Web application that powers marketing Web sites.

Mark your calendars, create an entry in your PDA, modify your Yahoo calendar, update Outlook and join us on Wednesday, September 6, 2006. The monthly meeting of the NOPC club starts at 6:30pm on the first Wednesday of every month. Location of the meeting is the J.D. Meisler school cafeteria at 3700 Cleary Ave. Metairie. Use the entrance through the breeze-

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odd -- or moves to an unfamiliar place on the screen. We'll see how such glitches are easily fixed.

Right-clicking a blank taskbar area displays Windows' familiar context menu, showing available options. Clicking Toolbars lets you display or hide built-in toolbars (groups of icons representing programs, folders, or files) or create your own. My favorite toolbars are Desktop (a handy pop-up list which duplicates desktop icons) and Quick Launch (which holds the few key icons I always want immediately available). Other standard toolbars are Address and Links.

Cascade and Tile options specify arrangement of open application windows: fanned like playing cards or arranged in a grid.

A key option -- Lock the Taskbar -- controls whether you can change the taskbar. When the taskbar is unlocked, you can change its size by dragging its edge away from or towards the screen's edge. You can move individual toolbars by grabbing their handles (perforated line near each one) and move the taskbar by grabbing a blank area.

Clicking Properties brings up a detailed options dialogue box. It's safe to experiment but only change one thing at a time until you learn your way through all the choices.

The Taskbar tab customizes the taskbar itself and its notification area. You can auto-hide the taskbar -- handy on small monitors to reclaim space for application windows. When it hides, moving the mouse near it makes it visible. You can always keep the taskbar on top of other applications, or allow it to be covered. If it's hidden, pressing ctrl-esc displays it.

Similar task bar buttons -- for example, representing multiple Word documents -- can be grouped to save taskbar space, or spread out. If they're grouped, left-clicking the group displays all open files, and right-clicking lets you manipulate the files simultaneously.

You can add and delete Quick Launch toolbar icons by dragging them on or off the toolbar. I trimmed mine to two icons: Show Desktop and Windows Explorer. From a Windows keyboard, these are available by pressing Win-D and Win-E, respectively.

The notification area (called the "tray" in earlier Windows versions) shows icons for small applications or utilities that are running, plus your clock. Mousing over an icon pops up its name. You can control which icons are displayed and whether inactive icons (representing programs you haven't used for a while) are hidden. Each program running consumes PC resources so it's worth monitoring these icons and pruning any which aren't necessary. Right-click an icon to display options. Closing some applications prevents them from automatically starting at system boot, while others offer an explicit option.

Continuing our tour through taskbar properties, the Start Menu tab lets you specify Start Menu appearance and operation. You can pick large or small icons and determine how many shortcuts are saved in it for recently used programs. Key programs can be "pinned" to the Start menu by right-clicking a desktop icon or dragging an icon to the Start button and placing it in the permanent top area. The Advanced tab determines Start menu behavior and lets you select modern or "classic" Start menu format.

Finally, when the Taskbar is unlocked, three extra toolbar right-click options are available: View, Show text, and Show title, for fine tuning your PC's "dashboard".

While Windows operates just fine as it's installed, tweaking taskbar settings and other options can make it faster and more pleasant to use. And since there are usually multiple ways to accomplish tasks in Windows, it's worth exploring -- for example, right-clicking to explore context menus and clicking various options/customize/advanced buttons to see what's available. Don't be afraid to tinker, but remember what you change so you can undo it!

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How to know what's in a file or folder before you open it

by Linda Gonse, Editor, Nibbles & Bytes, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, California

Sometimes you just don't know what's in a file by the title alone. You may have created it so long ago, you've forgotten. Or, you received a file from someone who gave it a cryptic name. Most of the time, if you are like me, you bite the bullet and open the darned thing. This means waiting for an application to load before the file opens. If your attention doesn't wander, you'll spend exasperating seconds -- maybe even a minute or more -- drumming impatiently on the desk. Otherwise, you get distracted looking through papers or books in your To Read stack, and jerk to awareness 10 minutes after the file has opened.

Either way, you don't get the information you need when you want it.

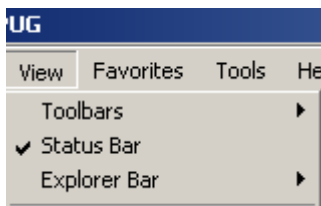
Call it secret, or just overlooked information, but there

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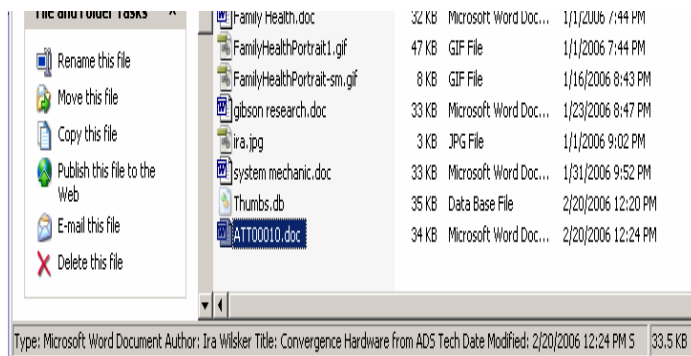
(Continued from page 2)

are ways to glimpse file information so you don't have to open the files or folders to see what they contain.

FILES — Stay with me while I open my ORCOPUG folder in the Details view and click on a subfolder titled Ira Wilsker. There's a list of files in the right window pane that I have saved Ira Wilsker's emails. But, now I'm not sure what they contain. So, I go to View on the menu bar and check to be sure that Status Bar has a check next to it. Next, I click on the file titled "ATT00010.doc."

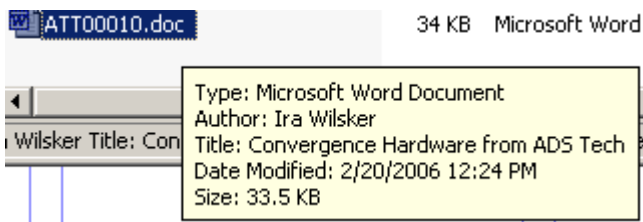


To add the Status Bar to your folders, you have to select it under View.



Information about a file shows up in the Status Bar at the bottom of an open folder.

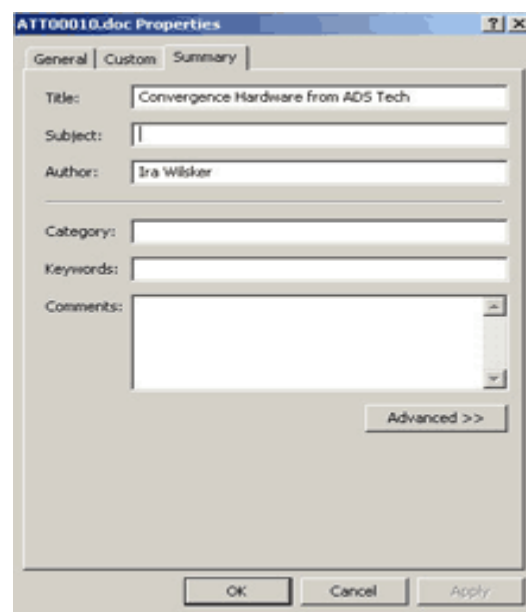
The author of the file, the actual title of the file, the date it was created and the size of the file all appear at the bottom of the pane in the status bar.



Hover your cursor over a file for a popup box with the file information in it.

Or, I could just hover the mouse over the file name for a second or two and a popup will show me the file information. If you don't see a popup when you hover your mouse over a file, in an open folder go to Tools > Folder Options > View. Then, scroll almost to the bottom of the list and check the box next to "Show pop-up description for folder and desktop items."

The third option for checking on file innards is to right click on the file name, and go to Properties in the drop down list. Left click on Properties and go to the Summary tab. The author's name and the title of the document will be there.



The Properties box defaults to author and title. Other information can be added to this file, also, at the time the document is created or modified.

FOLDERS—You can make searching through folders easier (and even more fun) by using a custom picture to remind you of the contents. Or, you could assign a custom icon for the folder so it will stand out from the rest of the folders.

Go to the settings under the View menu in an open folder. First select Thumbnails. Then, go back into the list and click on Customize this Folder

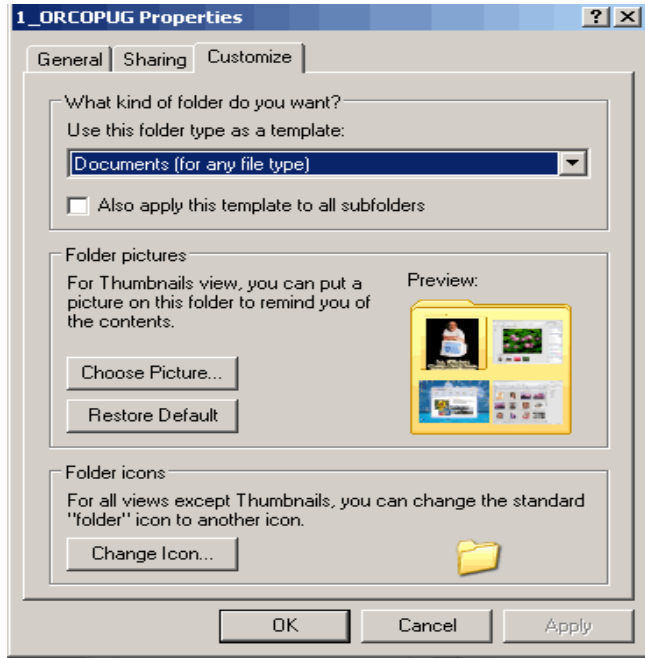
Click on the Customize tab and then the "Choose Picture" button. Find a picture in the folder (or in any other folder) that will remind you of what types of files are in this folder. For example, my folders are filled with articles for

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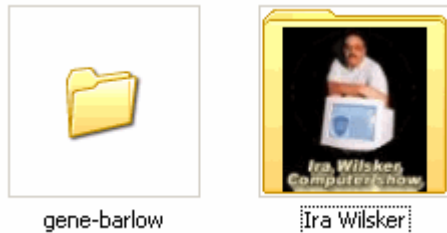
(Continued from page 3)

the newsletter from various writers. One folder contains articles by Ira Wilsker and images for his articles, so it makes sense to put Ira's photo on the folder. I browse to his picture, select it, click Open, then click Apply and OK.

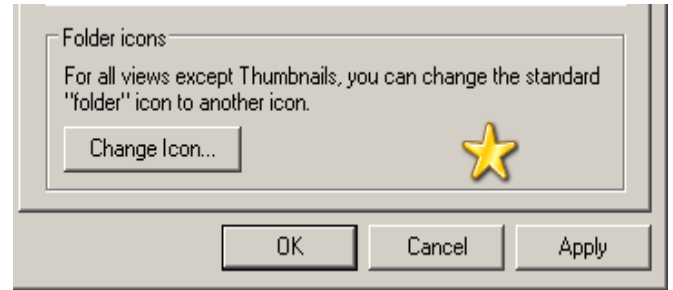
Take a look at the folder now (below) in *Thumbnail* view. There's no way you can miss this folder, or forget what is inside of it!



In other views, such as Icon view, you won't be able to see a picture on the folder. But, you can still make the folder stand out from the rest. Or, if you have a group of folders that are similar, you can change all the folder icons so they will stand out as a group and be easier to locate.



To change a folder's icon, go back to View and Customize This Folder. At the bottom of the dialog box, click on the Change Icon button, and select an icon. Click Apply and OK, and go take a look at the folders in icon view.



It's hard to miss the special icon, isn't it?



Try it yourself and discover how easy it can be to identify the folders you need, instantly and without guesswork.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

Choose Your Own "Home Page"

By Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://my.yahoo.com>
<http://www.live.com>
<http://www.msn.com>
<http://www.theexaminer.com>
<http://www.mozilla.com>
<http://my.netscape.com>
<http://www.google.com/ig?hl=en>

I work on a lot of different computers at a variety of locations, and one factor that consistently astounds me is that many people have blissfully ignorantly never changed their startup "home page" from its default. This is the page that first opens when the user connects to the internet. For example, many Dell computers have the Dell website set for the startup page when the user first accesses the internet, while Windows itself, unless otherwise changed, defaults to Microsoft's MSN home page, making it one of the mostly used startup pages. Many internet service providers (ISP), such as AOL, AT&T, and others changed the users'

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home page to the ISP's selected home page.

Startup or "home" pages are big business because they are commonly advertiser supported, and the more views (also referred to in the industry as "hits"), the more revenue generated by the host. This on-screen real estate is so valuable that a type of malware or spyware, sometimes known as homepage hijackers, will attempt to change your homepage to its client's home page, for which the miscreant receives compensation for each page such changed.

There are many different services offering home pages, and if the user finds one that he likes, it is very easy to make the selected page the new home page. The process for selecting the default home page is the same for most browsers. Using Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE), which is still the most widely used browser in the world, the process is simple. If the user visits a website that he would like as his homepage, he simply clicks on "Tools" on the menu bar, and then that will open a window where the home page can be selected. If the open page is what is desired, then click on the "Use Current" radio button, and the current page will be displayed each time the browser is loaded. If "Use Default" is selected, the home page will revert back to the Microsoft (or other manufacturer) default start up page. On the new Internet Explorer 7 (Beta), which offers tabbed browsing, a different home or startup page can be selected for each tab. For those who do not want to connect to any page at all when loading the browser, IE7Beta offers the option of a blank page. All versions of IE also allow for the manual entering of any selected internet address for a home page. To directly go back to the home page at any time, simply click on the little house or "home" icon on the menu bar.

Firefox (www.mozilla.com), one of the most popular browsers behind IE, offers a simple interface to select or change the homepage. Clicking on "Tools" on the menu bar opens a window where "General" can be selected, and then "Home Page". Firefox allows the address to be manually entered, or the current page loaded can be selected. Other options allow for the home page to be selected from a previously saved bookmark (Internet Explorer calls these "Favorites"), or the option for a blank startup page can be selected. Firefox also offers the little house on the menu bar for instant access to the home page.

There are many choices for a home page, which is totally up to the user. Some users use their web mail accounts as a home page, first displaying their email when connecting to the internet, while others may choose retailers, auction sites, employer web pages, search engines (such as Google or Yahoo), newspapers (such as the Examiner at

www.theexaminer.com), or any other page of interest. While any page can be selected as a home page, the most popular home pages selected are usually news and information based pages.

My personal favorite, which I use on all of my computers, is "My Yahoo", at my.yahoo.com. I have found My Yahoo to be the most comprehensive and flexible home page. Being an information junkie, I have customized my My Yahoo page to include stock and mutual fund listings, news from dozens of sources, weather, lottery results, sports scores, my personal calendar, latest emails received, TV listings, and other information. My Yahoo, which is very easy to configure, directly offers thousands of choices. Many information resources, such as the Examiner, are now using "RSS" or "XML" feeds as a news source, and these can be added to My Yahoo often with a single mouse click. My Yahoo is also customizable with hundreds of backgrounds, color schemes, layouts, or other features to personalize it.

Microsoft is currently testing a new homepage intended to at first supplement its flagship homepage at www.msn.com, and maybe later replace it. This new homepage, currently in beta testing, is currently online at www.live.com. It will be a strong competitor to My Yahoo, offering news, sports, weather, email, and other resources in columns that are infinitely customizable.

There are countless other "My" homepages available, such as AOL's my.netscape.com, and other personalized home pages, including Google's "Personalized Home" link sitting quietly on the top right corner of the popular google.com website. All of these home pages can be easily customized to suit individual needs.

There is no need to continue to use the default startup or home page provided by your operating system or ISP. Investigate some of the alternatives, and increase your enjoyment of the web.

antivirus Company Warns About Firefox Add-Ons

Reports indicate that the Mozilla Firefox browser, an alternative to Microsoft's Internet Explorer, is used by 12 to 15 percent of people in the U.S.

Many choose it because it is presumed to have fewer security flaws than IE, or because it offers what are called extensions, add-ons that can do many things, including put weather or music-player controls in a browser window or add new ways to search without going to a new site.

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But antivirus firm Symantec warns that those extensions could be used by hackers to steal personal information.

The company said that it has located an extension that tries to steal personal information. It monitors all forms submitted online, taking the information and sending it to a remote person. That information could include Social Security numbers, credit card numbers or passwords.

Unlike some security threats in IE, the extension can only go to work if a user chooses to install it. They could be duped into doing so by going to an untrustworthy site or by loading a program that hides the malicious code.

Alfred Huger, senior director of engineering Symantec, said that antivirus software should catch any malicious extensions before they are installed, if the files are scanned.

He also said that there have been fewer than 50 reports of dangerous extensions installed, but there was data stolen.

Extensions should only be installed from trusted sources -- including [Mozilla.com](http://www.mozilla.com).

*Borrowed from WDSU.COM,
Posted July 27, 2006.*

Virus protection

Remember: Don't open e-mail attachments that end in **.vbs**, **.pif** or other unfamiliar extensions. Even if the e-mail appears to come from a trusted source, it could be someone "spoofing" an address. Confirm it's from who you think it's from before you open.

Daffynitions

A lawyer is a person who writes a 10,000-word document and calls it a "brief." (Franz Kafka)

A psychologist is a man who watches everyone else when a beautiful girl enters the room.

A programmer is someone who solves a problem you didn't know you had in a way you don't understand.

DILBERTISMS

"E-mail is not to be used to pass on information or data. It should be used only for company business." (**Accounting manager, Electric Boat Company**)

"Doing it right is no excuse for not meeting the schedule." (**Plant Manager, Delco Corporation**)

"This project is so important we can't let things that are more important interfere with it." (**Advertising/Marketing manager, United Parcel Service**)

Pick up Your E-mail From Any Computer, Anywhere in the World

Sue Crane, Big Bear Computer Club, CA

Sue.crane@charter.net

Your e-mail messages are held on the server of the company you've contracted with for Internet service until you log in and pick up your messages. You can pick up your e-mail messages when you are away from home, too.

Many Internet Service Providers have a link on their web page that allows you to pickup your Mail from any computer that is connected to the Internet. You can also use a service called Mail2web.com.

Simply go to their web site and log in with your e-mail address and password and you will see all e-mail messages you have not retrieved. If you want to save the messages, do not delete them from the server.

Monitor What The Kids View

Adult Photo Blanker guards computer users from the ubiquitous expansion of pornography and violence in our life. This program not only prevents your children from accessing unwanted websites, but also controls the content of video files and photos loaded into your computer memory from the hard disk. This smart tool monitors nearly all multimedia content.

Adult Photo Blanker uses 11 special criteria to reveal objectionable films, websites, images and the like. The program combines this built-in artificial intelligence scanner with the keyword filter, which recognizes unwanted content by specified words, and it is concealed from inexperienced users. Adult Photo Blanker is protected with a password, so if you want to turn it off and watch an adult film, you must use the password you previously specified.

It features Block and Safe lists to customize each user settings individually. Each family member can configure options of the program in his/her own way. By the time you read this, a newer version will be introduced.

Adult Photo Blanker runs under Windows 98 / ME (partially) / 2000 / XP and costs \$49.95 (USD).

Users group members receive a 20% discount.. Just enter DEAL-LSFQ-GUY where it calls for a coupon when downloading the paid version.

A fully functional trial version of the program is available as a free download at <http://www.oreware.com/download_prog.php?id_prog=25> File size:(4.09 Mb)

Product page URL:

<<http://www.oreware.com/viewprogram.php?prog=25>>

Web Page: <<http://www.oreware.com>>

*Space Coast PC Journal September 2006
"From the Deals Guy"*

CLUB SUPPORTERS



**THE SECRET GUIDE
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September 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
3	4	5	6 NOPC Gen Mtg J.D. Meisler School 6:30p-8:30p	7	8	9 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
10	11	12	13 NOPC BOD @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	14	15	16 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
17	18	19 Genealogy SIG 7:00 pm Call 887.5746 for meeting location	20	21 New User SIG Old Metairie Library 6:30p-8:30p	22	23 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 Living with Home Electronics WIST 690AM 10a-11a

The New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC) is a private non-profit organization chartered under the State of Louisiana. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for discussion and education of the membership in the use and application of PCs, peripheral equipment and software. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the NOPCC, its members or its officers. The club does not verify for accuracy the articles in this newsletter and leaves verification of accuracy to its readers. Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated as long as credit is given to the author (s) and the NOPCC. Annual Dues Schedule: Regular Member, \$40/yr.; Family Membership, \$60/yr.;

NOPCC Directory

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Internet	Ray Paternostro	internet-m@nopc.org	737-9099
New Users	Tom Ford	new-user@nopc.org	985-643-3172
Web Lab	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	985-892-4797

Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	887-5746
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	www.nopcc.org