Mrs. Wizard's CompuQuickTips
For the Rest of Us

In This Issue ...

*I love hearing from
you dear readers!
I particularly want to know
if any of you have
had a chance
to play with any
of the Portable Tools
I wrote about in July.
Have you tried Firefox?*

*If you aren't getting
enough with the newsletter,
A new BLOG has been started.
Actually I'm just playing
with it at this point,
but it does have an interesting
comment feature you can use
to let me know what you think.
Give it a whirl and we will
see how active a dialog
it can be.*

http://mrswizard.blogspot.com/

Improve Your Browsing ...
with Firefox

It is an amazing browser. If you haven't tried it yet, you are really missing one of the most fuss free Internet experiences available. I don't care if the newest version of Internet Explorer *does* have tabbed browsing. It is only one small part of the Firefox experience.
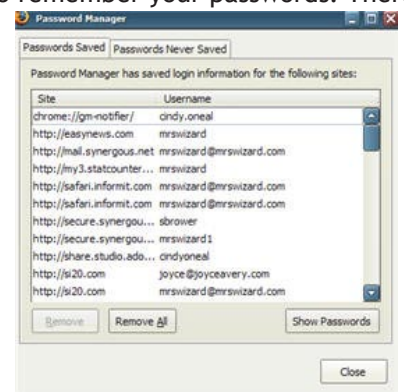
Password Saving ... If you are using *Firefox* on your personal computer, you can save a lot of time by saving passwords to frequently visited web sites. These may be sites you like to shop at and other sites that may require a subscription with a user id and password to access. The neatest thing about password saving on *Firefox* is you always have access to your passwords for all the sites that require them. Say you try to access a site and accidentally put in the wrong password. If you are using Internet Explorer, a window may pop up asking you if you want to save that password. You may still be thinking it is correct and answer *yes*. Well you have just saved the *wrong* password. This may not be a problem if you aren't a type A personality, but frankly it drives me nuts. Internet Explorer gives you no way (that I know of) to edit and remove specific passwords. It is either all or nothing. *Firefox*, on the other hand, gives total access to the passwords you have stored. You can view all of them, delete any specific passwords you want, and the password area is so easy to get to and edit.

Click the word *Tools* at the top of the main *Firefox* window. Then click the word *Options*. When the *Options* window appears, click the *Privacy* tab. Then click the *Passwords* tab in the Passwords area.

In the *Passwords* area, click the box next to the words *Remember Passwords* to tell *Firefox* you want it to remember your passwords. There

is a handy button that will allow you to view all your saved passwords. Click that button and edit to your heart's content. If you are really paranoid, click the *Set Master Password* button so only someone with the master password can view the saved passwords.

In the *Saved Passwords* area, you can easily delete individual passwords by clicking once to highlight, then clicking the *Remove* button. The *View Passwords* button is really nice. It will list each password in an additional column to the right. I'm talking the full passwords too, not that star crap no one can read. The *Set Master Password* button does add extra protection if you share your computer with the rest of the house, or in an office environment, but for most home use, isn't really necessary. It is nice to know the option is at least available.

Improve Your Browsing with Firefox ...

Tabbed Browsing with Firefox ... You have them. Make them work for you. The more you use your tabs in *Firefox*, the more you will wonder what on earth you ever did without them.

When you first install Firefox, you need to make sure your tabs are visible. Click the word *Tools* at the top of the main window, then click the word *Options*. Click the *Tab* button at the top of the *Options* window and make sure there is *not* a check next to the words *Hide the tab bar when only one web site is open*.

When browsing the Internet, instead of just clicking a link, right click the link and choose *Open Link in a new tab* instead. This will let you go off on browsing tangents without ever losing the site you started with. Each tab acts like a new browser window. This can be particularly handy if you are doing a *google* search (or using any other search engine). Quite often you can end up with many promising result links. Clicking each link could end up being its own adventure. By right clicking your search result link and choosing to open it in a new tab, you will never have to worry about losing your main results page, or frantically hitting the back button on your browser to get back to it. Just click its tab and you are good to go again. You can right click on your bookmarks in *Firefox* too, with the same choice.

Tabbing your favorites ... If you have two or three favorite sites open in tabs, click the word *Tools* again, then *Options* and click the *General* button at the top. Click the *Use Current Pages* button to set all your open pages as your "Home" pages. When you open *Firefox* the next time, your most favorite pages will open in nice, neat little tabs.

Empty window tabs ... Any tab you click becomes the active browser tab. This means if you type an address in the address box at the top of the *Firefox* window, that tab will be recycled and the page address you type in will appear there. That's fine, if that is what you really want to do, but any time you want a fresh empty browser window tab, double click to the right of your tab row and a new *empty* one will appear. You can also right click on any tab and choose *New Tab*. There are other right click options too. If it is a page you want to save in your bookmarks, right click the tab and choose *Bookmark this tab*. Right clicking any tab will also give you the option to *Reload* (refresh) all or just that tab, as well as closing an individual tab or all of them for a nice fresh start!
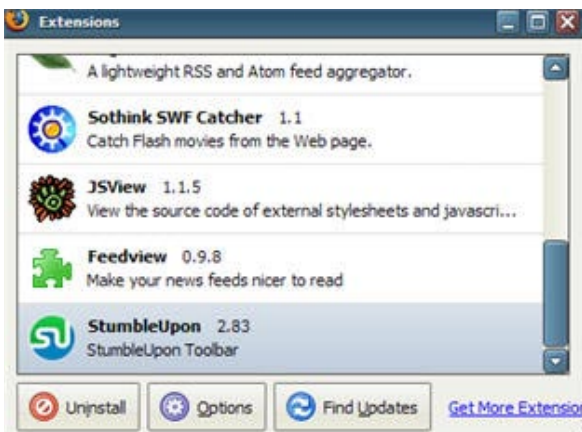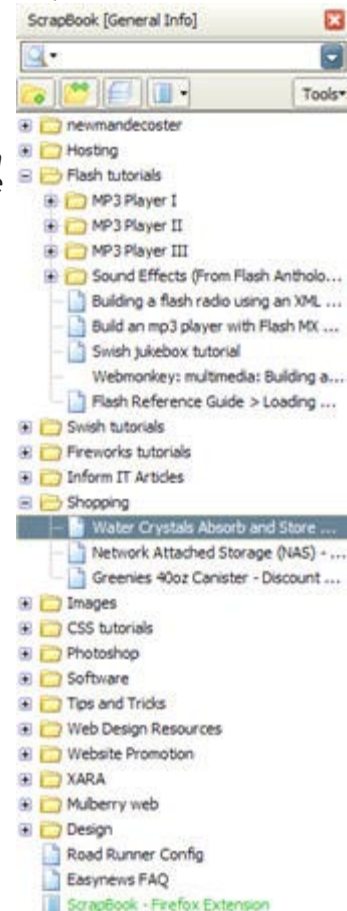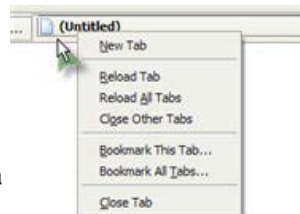
Drag your tabs ... Left click and drag any tab to an empty area of your *Desktop* to make a quick shortcut. You can open any shortcut by dragging it from your *Desktop* right into a tab window.

Scrapbooking with Firefox ... Well, it's not your typical scrapbook, but if you spend much time on the Internet you will certainly appreciate the *Scrapbook Extension* (free) for *Firefox*. It is as easy to install as it is to use. When you have it open (Click the word *Scrapbook* at the top of the main browser window, then click the word *Scrapbook* if it doesn't have a check next to it), it sits as a sidebar. Drag tabs to the sidebar to save entire web pages, pictures and all. You can create folders in your *Scrapbook* for even more organization. You can even create multiple scrapbooks. So save yourself a lot of typing, and pick up your copy now!

http://amb.vis.ne.jp/mozilla/scrapbook/

Speaking of Extensions ... Since everyone has different needs and different skills, *Firefox* uses *Extensions* to literally extend your browser's usefulness according to your own personal needs. A web designer may require tools the average browser will never need to even understand. A researcher may gather up a special set of add-ons that make his browsing experience more productive. It is all up to you. There are hundreds of *Extensions* for you to browse through and decide which ones you would like to use the most. They all seem to be freebies, and every extension I have installed has certainly been useful. To see what extensions are available for *Firefox*, click the word *Tools*, then the word *Extensions*. When the Extensions window opens, click the link at the bottom to *Get More Extensions*. I feel I must warn you though. Don't expect to spend just a few minutes browsing in the *Extensions* area. There are just too many, and the more you look, the more neat stuff you will find. Do *TRY* to *RESTRAIN* yourselves.
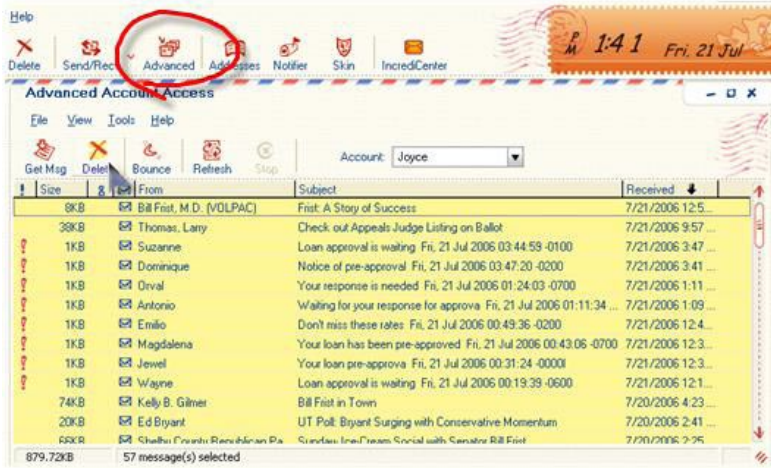
A hangover is the wrath of grapes.

Incredimail Security ...

Incredimail ... It ain't just a pretty face. There are quite a few security options in *Incredimail* that, when added to all the *eye candy* options, can give you more than one very good reason to ditch Outlook Express.
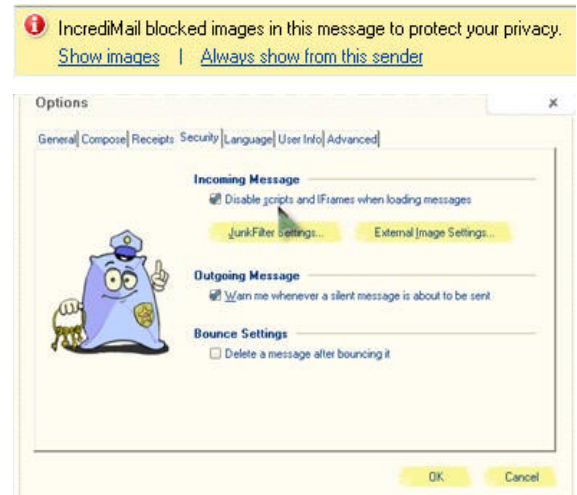
Advanced email account access ... This feature is part of the *Premium* version of Incredimail, but added to all the other nifty features makes your $29 purchase more than worth while. Check out your email on the *server* before it ever makes it to your inbox. This is a good place to delete suspicious emails. When you are ready to do a normal *Send/Receive,* you will only get the good stuff. This is a wonderful security tool and time saver. *Advanced email account access* is as easy as clicking the button in the toolbar. A new window will appear and your email headers (only) will show in the window. Click the ones you don't want and hit the Delete button. When you are finished clearing the crap, highlight the rest of your messages and click the *Get Msg* button.
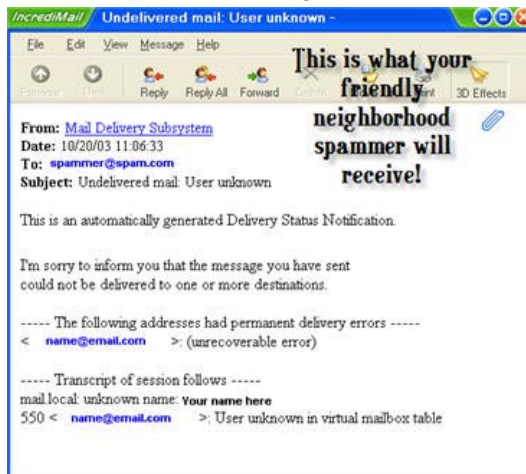
Images not displayed automatically ... Sad to say, but the most innocent looking images in an email from someone you don't know can cause your computer to send out a flag identifying your email address as a valid sucker, just begging for more junk and otherwise obnoxious emails. It isn't an all or nothing choice in Incredimail. When you receive an email with images embedded, they are by default turned off to protect you from hidden cooties, identifying cookies and various web bugs. If the email is from a trusted source however, you don't have to do ten *Hail Marys* under a full moon to see what is there. Just click the little text link to view the images in the email. To get to your security settings, click the word *Tools*, then *Options*. When the *Options* dialog box opens, click the *Security* tab to see your choices. If you have *Disable scripts and IFrames when loading messages* checked, images will be automatically blocked unless you give specific permission.

Stupidy is not a handicap. Park elsewhere!

Bouncing Messages ... This is a great *Incredimail* feature when used properly. A junk mail sender sends you unsolicited email. You certainly don't want to respond to it, because that will only confirm your email address as valid and encourage them even more. With Incredimail, you can right click any email from the header area and choose *Bounce to Sender*. This will fake an *Inactive Account* reply to the unsolicited email, causing the spammer to believe the email account is inactive. They might remove your email address from their mailing list and there is a good chance you will no longer receive junk mail from that specific spammer. Incredimail does recommend you don't do this more than once on the same email message. You would just be defeating your purpose and validating your email address as active after all. A little *Bouncing* can go a long way, but a lot might make things worse. Try to find a happy medium. I'll have to admit, bouncing the occasional email back to the clowns who sent it can be an uplifting experience!

So... If you have been looking for a practical reason to give *Incredimail* a try, this is it. Of course the *FUN* side of Incredimail is an added option. You don't *have* to enjoy all those nifty backgrounds and sounds, but you will! *Incredimail* really is a great way to have fun with your email and be a lot safer at the same time.

Clean Up Startup ...

An easy way to make your computer *FASTER* is to clean out unnecessary programs from your *Startup Group*. This is the folder that contains shortcuts to obvious programs that run when Windows starts. You cannot miss this folder. Click the *Start* button (bottom left of your main Windows screen), then move your mouse up to *All Programs*. When you see the list of all your *Program Group Folders* appear, look for one named *Startup*. The *Startup* folder is a really interesting piece of Windows work. It is a special folder in the special way the contents are treated by Windows. Any shortcut dragged to this folder will run or open when you start your computer and Windows starts.

It can come in handy when you really *want* a program to run when Windows starts, but you need to take control of the contents and make sure the only program shortcuts in that folder are programs you are aware and approve of. Every time you install a new software application, or even update one to a newer version, take a peek at the *Startup Group* folder. You will be amazed at the number of applications that think they are so special, they should be among the first things you see when you crank up your computer.

When it comes right down to it, unless you have LOTS of resources on your machine, there really isn't anything that belongs in the Startup Group folder, unless it has something to do with your antivirus software. In most instances, critical software like your firewall and antivirus don't even use the Startup Group any more. They are a bit more subtle and manage to start when Windows starts by another route, but that's fine. They are perfect examples of something you should certainly allow, if you see them, (even beg) to run at startup.

Caution... Use your common sense and do a lot of checking before you start thinning out things that start up with your computer.

Here's the easy part. After looking over the contents of your *Startup Group*, if you see something that has no business starting up with your Windows, just *delete* the shortcut in the Startup folder. That's right. Right click on that shortcut and choose *DELETE*. You don't need it. And when you restart your computer, it will breathe a sigh and thank you. Think of it this way. Does *Acrobat Reader* need to run in the background so it can jump to attention the next time you open a pdf file? NO, it does not. But when you install the free Acrobat Reader, a little shortcut is placed in the Startup folder that does just that. Delete it, and your Acrobat Reader will open just fine the next time you double click a pdf file. On the other hand, if you like to see what your day is going to look like when you start your computer first thing in the morning, by all means, leave *MiniMinder* in the Startup folder.

Dig a little deeper ... If you want to go a bit further, and don't mind doing a little Google research along the way, here's an introduction to *MSConfig*. Click the *Start* button (bottom left of your main computer screen), then click *Run*. In the next box that appears, type *msconfig*, then press the *Enter* key on your keyboard.
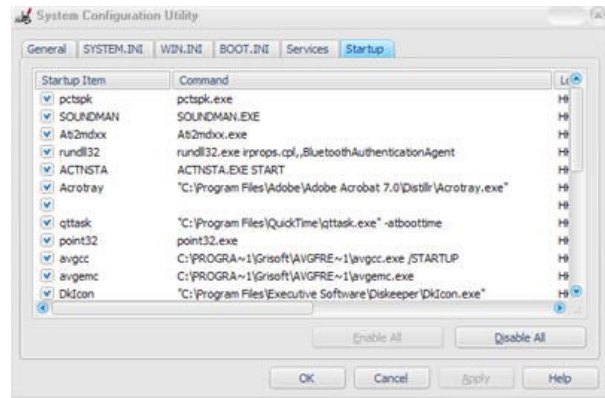
MSConfig is an interesting utility. You can get into all sorts of trouble here if you aren't perfectly comfortable with what you are doing. Click the *Startup* tab and take a look at the list. All that stuff is what starts up when your computer starts. You probably won't see much of anything that matches the simple shortcuts you saw in your *Startup Group* folder. This is much more detailed, and most of the things listed here probably *should* start with your Windows. You will see your antivirus software listed here, maybe a little program that controls your mouse (point32.exe), and other very necessary items. If you do a little scrolling and peeking though, you might find a few blatant examples of items that aren't necessary for proper Windows operation or virus protection. You can turn individual items off by unchecking the box to the left of the item. Before you uncheck anything though, be sure to have your browser open in another window so you can do a quick Google search on anything unfamiliar. Just type in the file name in your Google search box and see what information is available. Taking this extra step will go a long way towards helping you make a more intelligent decision, not to mention keeping your happy fanny from turning something off you really need. This is *not* the place to do any willy nilly house cleaning.

If you happen to find anything safe to turn off, you may need to restart your computer. When your machine starts up, you will also see a window letting you know you made adjustments to your *MSConfig*. If you are satisfied with your changes, it is OK to check the box next to the words *Don't show this message or launch the System Configuration Utility when Windows start*. Click the *OK* button and enjoy your leaner machine!

The trouble with life is there's no background music.

GIMP ...

GIMP is the GNU Image Manipulation Program. In short, it is a great FREE graphics program, and if you don't want to spend a lot of money of Photoshop or even PaintShop Pro, this might be the answer you need. Download size is 7.5 Mb. Some things on this *OpenSource* site may seem a little confusing at first. Be prepared to educate yourself and do a lot of reading.

This software will not hold your hand, but if you have an adventurous soul, you won't be disappointed. *GIMP* is working very hard to rival the likes of Photoshop and other high end graphic programs.

Installing is pretty straightforward. In the download area you will find plenty of instructions on how and what else you need to download and install. The initial installation file does not contain the help files, for example. You will need to download that separately. The website has plenty of information and the link to *Frequently Asked Questions* will explain a lot and help point you in the right direction while you are getting your feet wet.

Smith and Wesson... The original point and click device.

The best way to learn to use *GIMP* is to leap out there and begin using it. If you have been using PaintShop Pro or Photoshop, it will take a bit of time learning your way around, but you can cut that down by doing your homework and spending time on the Gimp website. There are all kinds of resources available, from helpful advice, down and dirty how to's, and links to extra toys and plugins you can use.

The interface is very *floating pallet* and almost Mac looking, with a main pallet, layers pallet, and the open document is an independent window. There is no main "container" type window. Everything sort of floats on your desktop. At first glance, you may be a little uncomfortable, but after a while you will discover it is pretty handy knowing you can move pallets out of the way and have complete access to the entire image you are working on at all times. AND, you will have total access to your desktop! When you need access to a pallet or the main image, just clicking what you want will bring it to the front and ready.

The *Layers Panel* is where you can control different parts of your image. To add a layer, right click any existing layer and choose *New Layer* or *Duplicate Layer*. To delete a layer, right click the layer and choose *Delete Layer*. The right mouse button is *KING* in *GIMP*. Right click anything, including any object in the image you are working on and the relevant options will appear.

The *Tools Pallet* has lots of goodies. The Text tool is a good one to begin tinkering with. Click the T on the tool pallet. Click anywhere on your image. When the text editor box opens, choose the font you want to use from the main tool pallet and set the size and color. Type the text you want to use in the text editor box. You will see a live preview on your image. Click *Close* to lock in your changes. When you use the Text, tool a new text layer will automatically be created. Use the *Move* tool to release the Text tool and move your text anywhere you want on your new text layer.
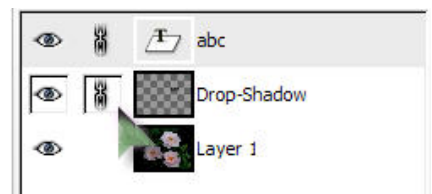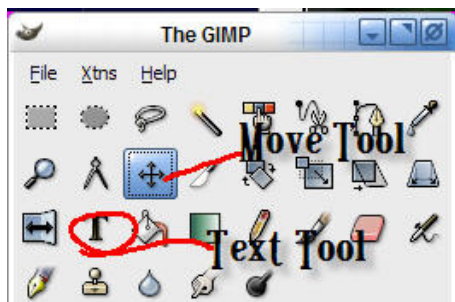
Special Effects are in abundance in *Gimp*. A fun drop shadow can be added by right clicking your text, then choosing *Script-Fu*, then *Shadow,* then *Drop Shadow*. Choose your settings. Feel free to experiment all you want. Click OK. The really interesting thing about drop shadows created with Gimp is that they actually end up on a layer of their own. So, if you don't care for the effect, just delete the layer and do it again. It is really fun to be able to move the shadow to different positions too.

If you want to move your text and shadow layer together (with the *Move* tool), you need to link the two layers by clicking the column to the right of the eye in the layers panel and to the left of the layer thumbnail. Click to place a link icon next to each layer you want to link so they can be moved together.

Next Month ... If you take the plunge and download and install *GIMP*, you will LOVE the next three issues. There will be lots of classic Mrs. Wizard nuts and bolts tips and tricks you will be able to use and *LEARN* with.
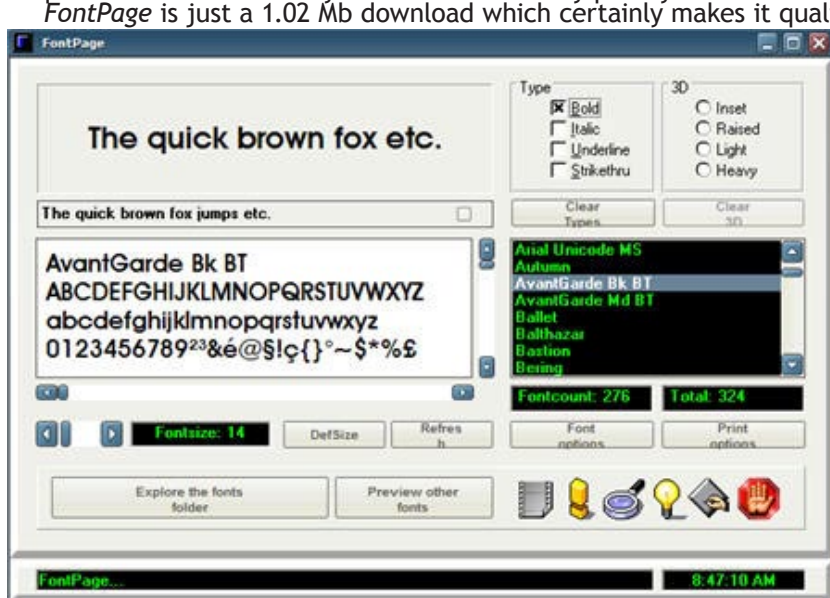
Tiny Treasures ...   FontPage

It's a GREAT little FREEWARE application. You can't get into any trouble installing it or fiddling with it. *FontPage* is simply a simple tool to view your fonts, including all the fonts you have installed on your computer, *and* any font collection you have stashed in other folders. You can't *accidentally* uninstall or install fonts with it, but you can sure see what you've got in quite a few different ways. You can also easily print your font list or a list of sample fonts.

FontPage is just a 1.02 Mb download which certainly makes it qualify as a *Tiny Treasure*

on that score, but there is plenty more. You can view any typeface in bold, italic, underline and 3-D styles. There is also a *Character Table* with *copy to clipboard* and print options. The comparison window has two displays with a user input box where you can type your own sample text. This is really handy when you need to dig through many fonts, looking for one with special characteristics.
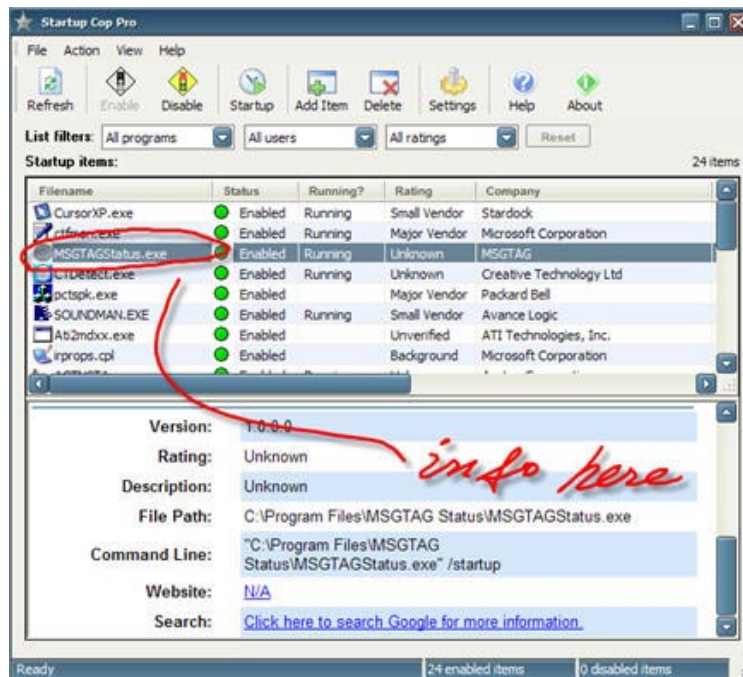
Startup Cop Pro

This is a nice little tool to help you keep your startup nice and clean. It will help you make educated choices about what you want to allow to start when Windows starts and what is unnecessary. Really, with newer computers being as powerful as they are, you can certainly afford the luxury of allowing most programs to do what they want. There are times though, when it is just nice to know what is going on, and Startup Cop Pro can help. Clicking each startup item will cause available information to appear in the bottom window pane. In that information pane is a handy Google link that will cause your browser window to open for even more information.

The zipped installation file is only 1.31 Mb. It is very easy to install and use. You can let it control what starts up on your mcahine or use it for information only, and don't let it start with Windows or let it control the actual programs starting up. To change the settings for Startup Cop, click the *Settings* button and *uncheck* where it says *Run Startup Cop Pro at Startup*. Either way, it is a great way to learn more about some of the inner workings of your computer.
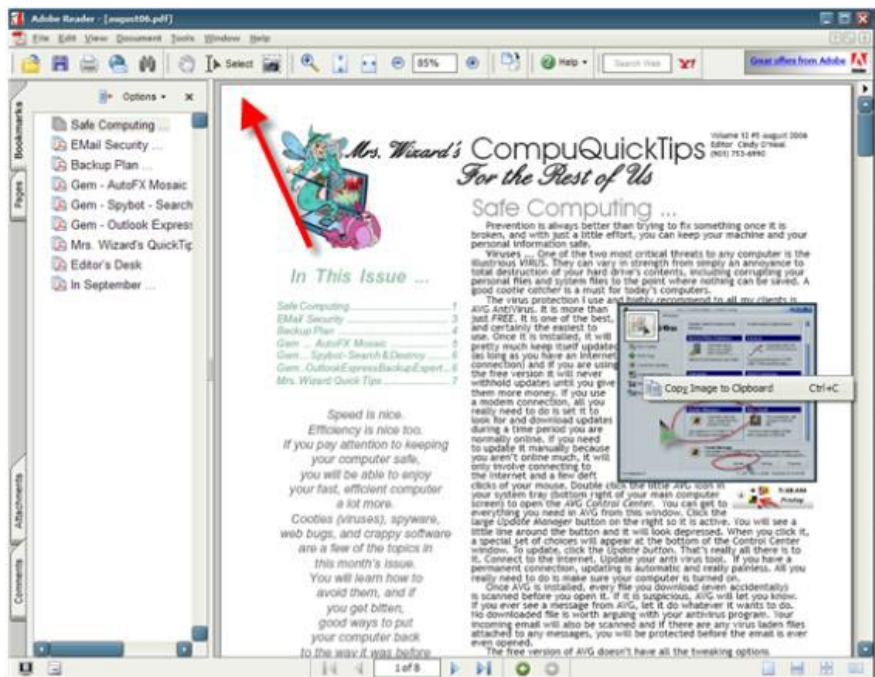
You can only get it from the PC Magazine Utility Library, either as a one time charge download (very reasonable pricing) or if you have a subscription (about $20), you can download all the utilities you want. Believe me... There are enough goodies up there to keep anyone happy for a long time!

Being "over the hill" is much better than being under it!

Mrs. Wizard's QuickTips ...

Copy text or graphics from a pdf file ... The *Portable Document Format* (PDF) is a great way to make sure a page looks as good to the person reading it as it did when it was created. You can pick up the FREE Acrobat reader by going to http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html. The next time you open a pdf document, take a quick look at the toolbar at the top of the main window. The little hand tool allows you to "grab" the page and move it up or down. Directly to the right of the hand tool is the selection tool. Click it once to select text. Move your mouse pointer and position the cursor anywhere on the page to highlight the text you want. Then you can use the standard *copy and paste* commands to copy your highlighted text and paste it in any other document. In the latest version of Acrobat Reader, the same selection tool works for images too. Move your mouse pointer to any image and click it once to highlight it. Right click the highlighted image and choose *Copy to Clipboard*. Paste your image into any other application that will accept clipboard images.

End Key ... You have probably already seen the *End* key on your keyboard, but have you ever used it? Do you avoid it because you aren't really sure what it can do? Well start putting it to work. It needs to be loved.
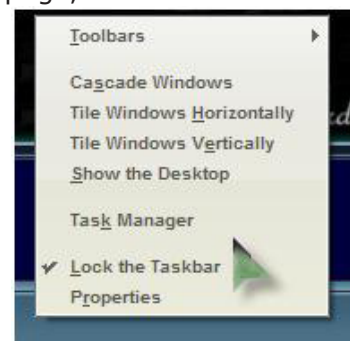
The *End* key can do different things, depending on the program you are using at the time. Its main use is to quickly get you from the top of a page to the bottom. If you are browsing on the Internet and find a great web page that has lots of information, but you want to get to the bottom quickly, press the *End* key once and you will instantly be transported to the bottom of the page. This applies to any web page, document, anything with text on it. If you are working on a document with just a little text, the *End* key will take you to the end of a line, which can also be quite useful.

Select All ... Dragging your mouse from the top to the bottom of a long page to highlight the whole thing so you can copy and paste can be just a little tedious at times. If you would like it *quick and neat*, use this universal keyboard command instead. While holding down the *CTRL* key, press the letter *A* on your keyboard once. This will highlight an entire document page, even an entire web page, pictures and all. Once it is highlighted, you can click the word *Edit* at the top of the main window, then choose *Copy* to put all that information into your *Clipboard* to be *Pasted* anywhere you want to paste it.

Task Manager via the Mouse ... Here's a quick way to get to your Task Manager without having to press *CTRL+ALT+DELETE* (the three finger salute). Right click any *empty* area of your *Taskbar* (at the bottom of your main computer screen) and choose *Task Manager*. It really is that easy!

NyQuil, the stuffy, sneezy, why-the-heck-is-the-room-spinning medicine.

E:\Graphics\InDesign\2006 Newsletterseptember06\september06.indd

Editor's Desk

This *FREE* newsletter is dedicated to taking the mystery out of computers in an entertaining, informative way. If you have any questions or comments, please, drop me a line, give me a call or email me and let me know what you think and would like to see addressed in future issues. I really enjoy hearing from you and am happy to help. You can receive e-mail notification when this electronic version of CompuQuickTips is ready each month by visiting Mrs. Wizard's Web listed below. You will be able to receive it as a pdf file in your browser or save it on your desktop. Download the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader for *FREE* at http://www.adobe.com.

Help support CompuQuickTips by ordering Mrs. Wizard's CD Essentials when you visit http://mrswizard.com. Look in the Special Offer section for more information and other ways to help. Due to popular demand, the latest version of the CD has ALL the Tiny Treasures and Gems on the CD for you to install with one click of your mouse, as well as lots of Mrs. Wizard's favorite wallpapers. There are even a few short videos to help you learn by seeing. This is a terrific learning tool! Just pop in the CD and have fun!

If you want ALL the daily quick tips in one place, as well as lots and lots of custom wallpapers for your desktop, think about joining the Happy Dragon Club at the mrswizard.com website. A very small (one time) donation will get you access to a growing number of *Members Only* goodies.

Sincerely,

Cindy O'Neal

mrswizard@mrswizard.com

Mrs. Wizard's Webs
http://mrswizard.com
http://compuquicktips.com

In October ...

System Restore
More on GIMP

Your Personal Computer Tutor
http://mrswizard.com

Cindy O'Neal
1565 Wood Farms Drive
Cordova, TN 38016
901-753-6990
901-753-6039 (fax)

Mrs. Wizard's Web Designs
http://crwebnow.com