

English Academic Technology Bulletin 6 (May 3, 2003)

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Welcome to the **English Academic Technology Bulletin**. This monthly publication of the English list communicates basic information regarding the use of technology in the preparation and imparting of instruction. The English list is a close, moderated list restricted to the staff of the English Department of the College of Humanities of the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras campus and other authorized users. If you are interested in subscribing to the English list or contributing content to the bulletin, please notify Alicia Pousada (apousada@earthlink.net), the list moderator. To post to the list, just Reply to this message. Remember that what you post will go to every subscriber.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Academic Technology survey report has been completed. Copies will be placed in mailboxes this week. Thanks again to all who cooperated with this effort. You will soon see the effects of your input in our department.

The Primer Congreso Virtual sobre Aprendizaje con Tecnología sponsored by the UPR's Distance Education Institute will be held May 5-9. There will be 75 presentations from 20 different countries. Participation is free. All you need is an internet hookup to be part of the action. For details on the presentations and to register, go to: www.universia.pr/congresovirtual. For more information, you can

also email the organizers at: cvirtual@rrpac.upr.clu.edu or call (787) 764-0000, ext. 3598.

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NEWBIE CORNER

Using portable computers

Notebooks and laptops are rapidly replacing desktop computers for many people and serving as a useful supplement to the desktop for others. Let's take a look at some of the issues involved in living with a portable computer.

One of the biggest problems with notebooks or laptops is the battery. The most energy efficient of them (found in Mac Ibooks and Powerbooks) last only 6 hours. Most other notebooks give you at most 2-3 hours on a charge. This is clearly not convenient for many people and requires careful management of power.

Use of power management tools and decreasing screen brightness can stretch battery life by 30 to 45 minutes. Go to the Control Panel and open Power Options. You'll see half a dozen tabs (the layout varies slightly among notebooks). Make sure that your notebook can go into Standby mode (in the Power Schemes tab), meaning that the system stops most activity and uses the battery to refresh system memory.

A computer in Standby loses 10 to 15 percent of its charge each day. You should set your system to go into Hibernate mode after Standby, meaning that it writes an image of the memory contents to the hard drive and then shuts down. (Windows 98 doesn't offer Hibernate.) In Hibernate, there's no loss beyond the battery's own gradual discharge.

[Source: PC Magazine, December 10, 2002]

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More useful shortcuts for Windows

Ctrl-O opens a new document.

Ctrl-Z and Alt-Backspace undo the last thing you did (often repeatedly).

Ctrl-Y undoes the last undo (or redoes).

Ctrl-A selects everything in the open window, whether it's all the files in a folder, or the entire document.

Ctrl-F and F3 launch the program's search or find tool.

Ctrl-Home moves the cursor to the beginning of the open file or document.

Ctrl-End moves the cursor to the end of the open file or document.

Ctrl-Tab, Ctrl-Shift-Tab, Ctrl-Page Down, and Ctrl-Page Up move you from tab to tab in a dialog box.

Cutting and pasting in Word

Cutting and pasting text can cause headaches for inexperienced Word users. Consider what happens if you cut a block of text and then get distracted and forget to paste the text before closing the document. That text may be lost forever, unless you've saved a backup copy of your document.

To avoid the possibility of cutting and losing text, Word 2000 offers a "no-cut" method for moving text within a document: Go to View | Outline to display the Outlining toolbar. (It doesn't matter whether the document contains any heading-level styles.)

The Outline view lets you manipulate text without cutting and pasting. Just click anywhere in a given paragraph, then click the Outlining toolbar's Move Up or Move Down buttons. Word moves the current paragraph up or down within the document. To exit the Outline mode, go to View and choose Normal, Web Layout, or Print Layout.

Source: Tech Republic <http://www.techrepublic.com>

Bridging the gap between Word Perfect and Word

If you use WordPerfect but most of your colleagues use Microsoft Office, it can sometimes be a pain to share documents. A quick solution: save your Word Perfect documents with the filename extension .doc. This lets Word open them automatically and display them in its File | Open dialog box. When you save a file, simply add .doc at the end of the filename. When your coworkers double-click on the file, their Word program will open it and automatically convert it into Word format.

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INCORPORATING TECHNOLOGY INTO YOUR TEACHING

On-line Medieval and Classical Library

If you or your students need to consult Anglo Saxon, Middle English, or classical texts, try out the Berkeley On-line Medieval and Classical Library at: <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/OMACL>. Once you get there, be sure to scroll all the way down so you don't miss any of the offerings, including classical Greek and Latin mythology, Old Germanic mythology, The Anglo Saxon Chronicle, Icelandic sagas, the Arthurian cycle, the Roland cycle, Chaucer, etc. The texts are searchable, so you can find mentions of particular characters, places, or events, and you can search via genre, language, author, or title.

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Smartboard

If you would like some orientation regarding how to utilize an electronic whiteboard (like the one we have in our computer room), check out the following webpage: www.thejournal.com/thefocus/feature.cfm

Pinpoint

Pinpoint is a new tool that helps students access and use the best web resources for their research. Pinpoint collects, evaluates, and reports the most relevant search results from different sources, including library catalogs, proprietary databases, intranets, Web sites, and Web search engines. It allows students to clip and save text and images with citation information. For more information on Pinpoint, visit www.sagebrushcorp.com/tech/pinpoint.cfm.

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MAC NUGGETS

Virtual PC 5

If you find yourself regularly using programs only available for Windows or moving frequently between Mac and Windows operating systems, you may want to check out Virtual PC 5 from Connectix [www.connectix.com]. Virtual PC simulates the Windows environment on your Mac. You can run Windows full-screen or within a smaller window. The program comes packaged with fully licensed copies of various versions of Windows and Linux, and the price ranges from \$90 to \$200, depending on the OS you chose to emulate.

Terminal

For those of you who have upgraded to Mac OS X (Jaguar), you may find it interesting to note that this operating system is based on Unix, a keyboard-based system that's been around for a long time. While you probably don't want to leave the comfort of your mouse and graphic interface, there are some aspects to keyboarding that you may want to investigate once you are fully proficient in the Mac OS. To explore these options, go to the program called Terminal, located in the Utilities subfolder of your Applications folder.

i-Alarm

Here's a new, free, downloadable program that turns your computer into a sophisticated alarm clock that plays iTunes, announces the local weather and the headline news, delivers a customizable oral message, or just emits a standard beep. Go to:

<http://earthlink.com.com/3000-22678957610.html?tag=pop>

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TIPS FOR WINDOWS USERS

Reducing Boot Time

When Windows starts, it looks in several places for programs to run immediately on startup. Some of these programs might run in the foreground, but most sit quietly in the background and eat up system resources. If you have a lot of programs that have opted to start up automatically (whether or not you plan to use them), your startup can take an eternity. This is particularly irksome when you have had to restart your machine due to some installation or problem, and then you have to wait and wait while every little program kicks in before you can get back to work.

Begin streamlining the startup process by looking at the Startup group (on the Start menu) and removing any programs from there that you don't need to run automatically when you boot up your computer. (Right click on each icon and then click on Delete. You will see a message telling you that you're not deleting the program, just the icon. Click OK, since that's what you want.)

A more effective way to hurry the startup is to use the System Configuration Utility (available on Windows 98 SE and later versions). Click on Start, then Run, and type msconfig in the Run dialog to invoke the System Configuration Utility. Click OK. Then choose the Startup tab at the top of the window. Here, you can disable items you think are unnecessary by clicking on the checkmark next to their names. Make sure you look carefully at the full description of each item. If you have any doubts regarding what it does, leave it alone. When you're done, click on Apply and then on Close. You will receive a message that you need to Restart to make your changes take effect. Do so.

If you disable only programs that are not essential to the computer's operations (e.g. audio and video players, word processing programs, spreadsheets, e-mail programs, etc.), the only effect should be a speedier start-up. Since you're disabling and not removing these applications from the start-up, you can easily re-enable them later. Remember, you're not disabling the programs themselves. You're just preventing them from starting up automatically when you log on. If you need to use them, you can just click on their icons and start them manually.

Note: if you like having these programs start up automatically, then don't disable them in the Startup tab. Good programs to have start up automatically are your anti-virus programs, pop-up controllers, firewalls, Windows automatic update, volume control, printer, scanner, etc., since you'll know they're on the job without having to think about them.

If all of this scares you a bit, an easy way to deal with unwanted start-up items is to use the PC Magazine utility [Startup Cop](#), which you can download for free from www.pcmag.com/utilities.

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INTERNET SAFETY

HoaxBusters

Tired of getting petitions, pleas for financial aid, and other requests in your e-mail which you think may be questionable? Before forwarding or responding to such missives, check them out with HoaxBusters. This site lists all the currently known hoaxes and urban legends so you can verify whether the letter you've received is for real and worthy of your support or just a hoax.

<http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/HoaxBustersHome.html>

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TECHNOQUOTES

"The state of security in the software industry is 'don't worry, be crappy.' "
--Maryann Davidson, Oracle's chief security officer.

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COMPUTER LINGO

Disk vs. disc—A curious linguistic distinction has arisen between these two spellings. Disk (with a k) is used to refer to your hard drive or a floppy, while disc (with a c) denotes a CD or DVD.

Alias vs. shortcut—These terms refer to the same thing, but the first is a Mac term while the second is a Windows term. You create these icons on your desktop when you want a quick link to something else in your computer. In both the Mac and Windows worlds, these links are marked by tiny curved arrows and can be renamed to remove suffixes or extra-long titles.

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USEFUL DOWNLOADS

EasyBrowse

This free Internet browser runs on Windows 95 and above. The new

version adds the Pop-Up Disabler option to a standard list of features including plug-ins, direct linking to 11 search engines, a plug-in checker, a large browsing window, favorites, and a history list.

Version: 2.0

Price: Free

Download EasyBrowse now at:

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fd,22596,tk,hsx,00.asp

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Copernic Agent Basic

Here's another useful mega-search engine (brought to our attention by Clifton Armstrong) that integrates itself seamlessly into your Internet Browser. You get to select up to 8 different search engines that you want to use (including Yahoo, Google, Altavista, Hotbot, Lycos, Euroseek, Netscape Netcenter, etc.). You can also decide how many results you want to draw from each search engine. It further allows you to search the Web in Spanish, set Favorites, highlight key phrases in different colors in your search, search e-mail addresses and newsgroups, and track your searches. It even lets you suggest search engines you would like to add. Overall, it's a nice complement to your existing search engine. Get your free download of Version 6.01 at: <http://www.copernic.com>.

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Outlook Contacts Scrubber

Outlook Contacts Scrubber processes your Contacts folder, looking for possible duplicate items. As it finds duplicates, it presents them to you, displaying field-by-field comparisons of item data, and proposing a logical way of merging the item data into one unique Contact item. You can then opt to use the program's proposed merge, or you can override it with your own choices, on a field-by-field basis.

Version: 2.1

Price: Free

Download Outlook Contacts Scrubber now at:

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fd,22907,tk,hsx,00.asp

COMPUTER HUMOR

Why Computers Sometimes Crash

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port,
and the bus is interrupted at a very last resort,
and the access of the memory makes your floppy disk abort,
then the socket packet pocket has an error to report.

If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash,
and the double-clicking icon puts your window in the trash,
and your data is corrupted 'cause the index doesn't hash,
then your situation's hopeless and your system's gonna crash.

If the label on the cable on the table at your house,
says the network is connected to the button on your mouse,
but your packets want to tunnel to another protocol,
that's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall.

And your screen is all distorted by the side effects of gauss,
so your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse;
then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang,
'cuz sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang.

When the copy on your floppy's getting sloppy in the disk,
and the macro code instructions is causing unnecessary risk,
then you'll have to flash the memory and you'll want to RAM your ROM,
and then quickly turn off the computer and be sure to tell your Mom!

Abort, Retry, Ignore (With apologies to Edgar Allan Poe)

Lines Found in the Wastebasket of a Vacant Office

Once upon a midnight dreary, fingers cramped and vision bleary,
System manuals piled high and wasted paper on the floor,
Longing for the warmth of bed sheets,
Still I sat there, doing spreadsheets:
Having reached the bottom line,
I took a floppy from the drawer.
Typing with a steady hand, I then invoked the SAVE command

But got instead a reprimand: it read "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

Was this some occult illusion? Some maniacal intrusion?
These were choices Solomon himself had never faced before.
Carefully, I weighed my options.
These three seemed to be the top ones.
Clearly, I must now adopt one -
Choose: "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

With my fingers pale and trembling,
Slowly toward the keyboard bending,
Longing for a happy ending, hoping all would be restored,
Praying for some guarantee
Finally I pressed a key --
But on the screen what did I see?
Again: "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

I tried to catch the chips off-guard --
I pressed again, but twice as hard.
Luck was just not in the cards,
I saw what I had seen before.
Now I typed in desperation,
Trying random combinations.
Still there came the incantation -
Choose: "Abort, Retry, Ignore".

There I sat, distraught, exhausted, by my own machine accosted;
Getting up, I turned away and paced across the office floor.
And then I saw an awful sight,
A bold and blinding flash of light,
A lightning bolt that cut the night and shook me to my very core.
The PC screen collapsed and died,
"Oh no -- my database", I cried.
I thought I heard a voice reply,
"You'll see your data -- Nevermore!"

To this day I do not know
The place to which our data goes
Perhaps it goes to Heaven where the angels have it stored.
But as for productivity - well,
I fear that it goes straight to Hell.
And that's the tale I have to tell -
Your choice: Abort, Retry, Ignore.

[Source: <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/eric.price/humour/hum0066.htm>]