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V 2.0

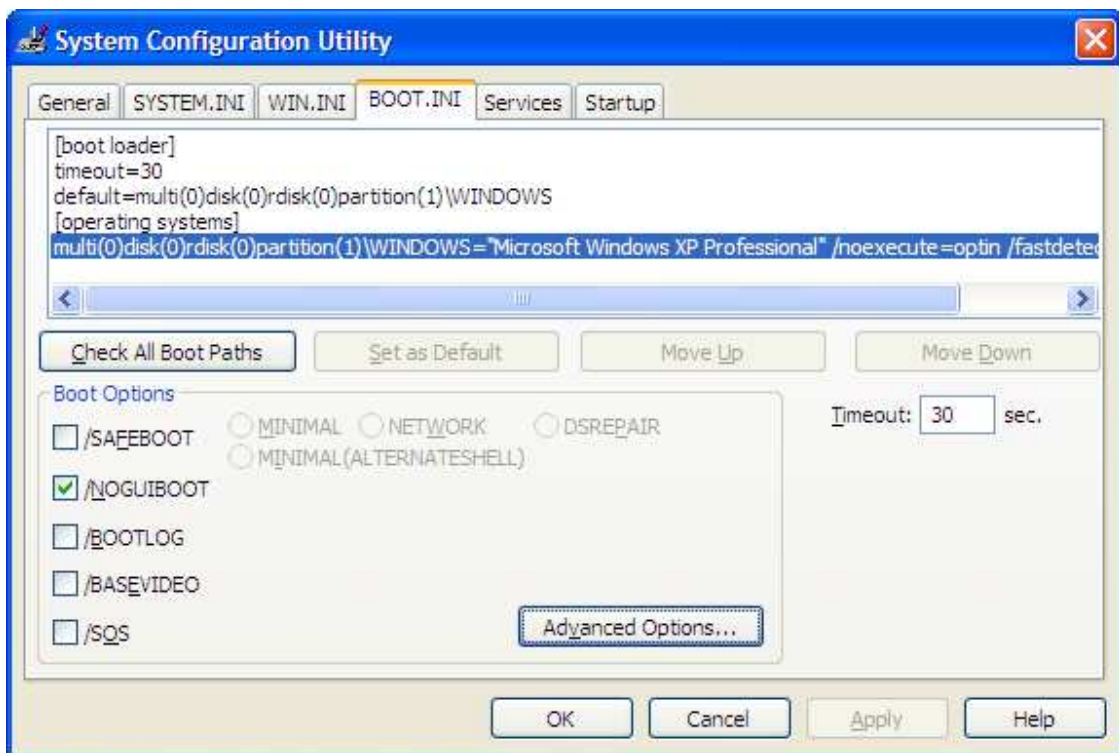
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Avail At – Orkut –The Community of friends

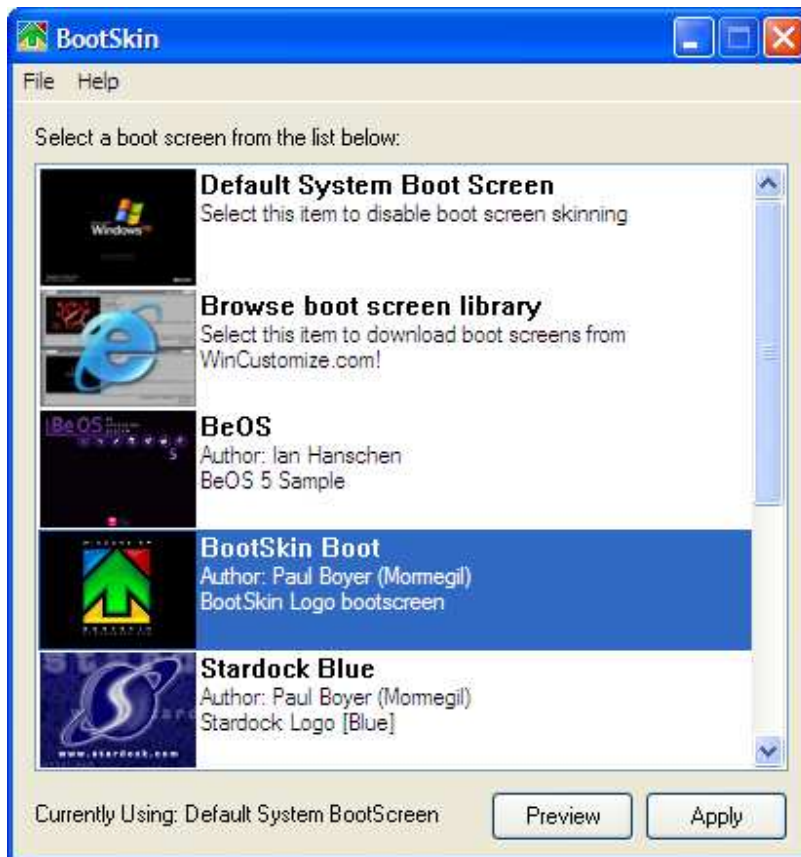
Changing the Windows Boot Screen

I'll start with the Windows boot screen, since that's fairly easy and doesn't necessarily require any direct modification of system files. There are several ways to approach changing the boot screen. One option is to eliminate it completely, opting to display a blank screen until Windows completes the boot process. To turn off the boot logo, Click Start > Run and type MSCONFIG in the run dialog box to launch the System Configuration Utility. On the BOOT.INI tab, check the box next to /NOGUIBOOT and click OK. The next time you reboot your computer, you'll see the BIOS screen and then nothing until Windows loads completely. The downside to this option is you won't get any feedback if your PC gets hung up somewhere in the boot process.



To maintain a more visual boot process, while also eliminating any boot branding, you might simply want to replace the boot image. The easy way to do this is to download a freeware app from WinCustomize called [BootSkin](#). The app automatically overrides the default Windows boot screen, replacing it with one of the many options in the WinCustomize [BootSkin library](#). With some practice you can make your own custom BootSkin as well.

[Download Boot Skin now !!!](#)



[Download BootSkin](#)

If you want to get really geeky, a third option is to edit the operating system file where the boot screen information resides. You need to be careful in doing this or you can end up with a computer that won't boot. The first part of the process is to create or find an image you want to use. If your computer simply has the all black Windows XP boot screen, with the XP logo like the one pictured below, you don't need a very large image.



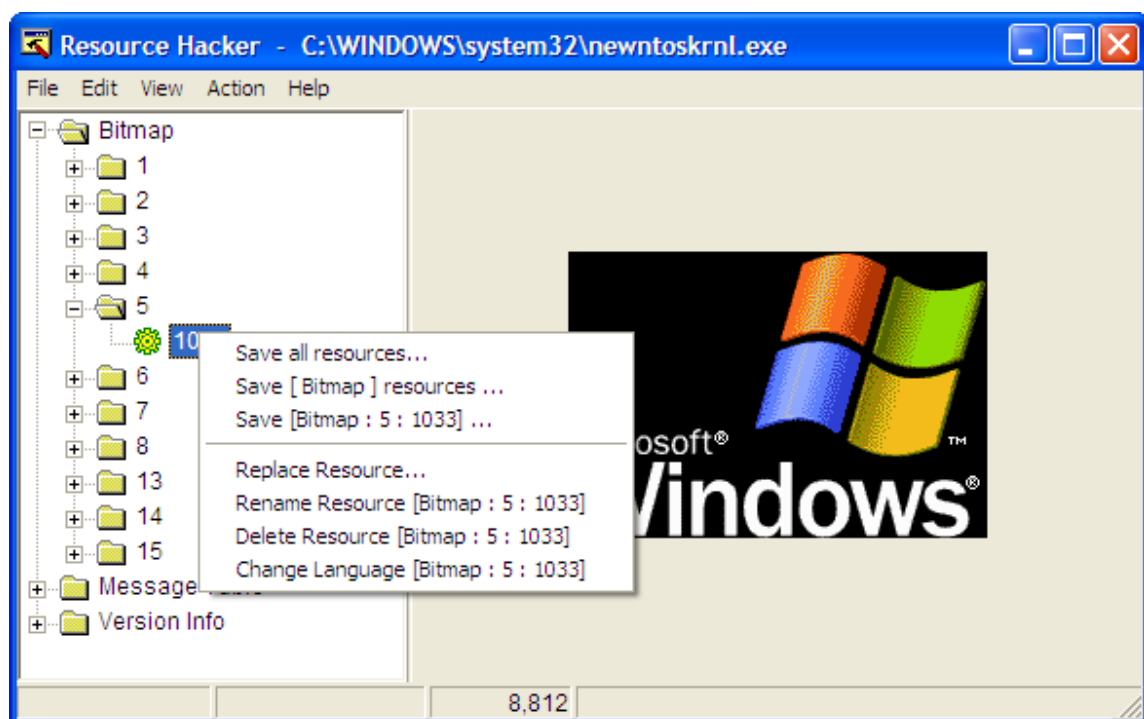
Simply create a 215x147 .bmp file with 16 colors (NOT 16-bit) in any image editor and you've got a working replacement. If your computer manufacturer overrides this default screen with something else, you may need to get creative to eliminate all the branding. In general, using a black background looks more consistent, but you can use any of the 16 colors in your palette.

With your new image created, you need a freeware app called [Resource Hacker](#) to make some changes.

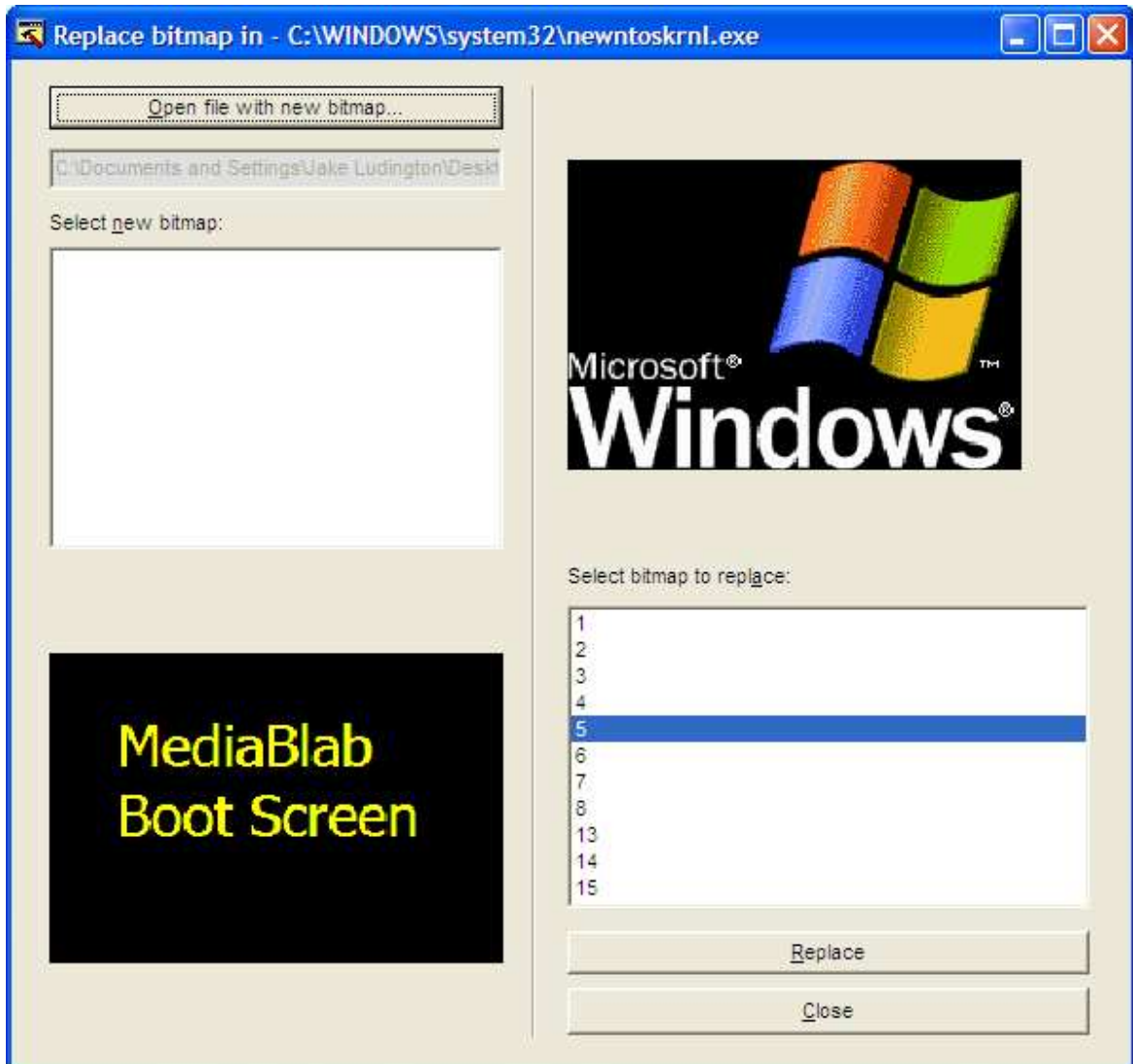
Before proceeding, locate ntoskrnl.exe in your Windows > system32 folder. Make a copy of the file called newntoskrnl.exe or something equally easy to remember and leave the copy in the system32 folder.

Make a second copy of the ntoskrnl.exe on your desktop (this is the one you will edit).

Open ntoskrnl.exe in Resource Hacker. Expand Bitmap > 5 and highlight the 1033 folder. Right-click the 1033 icon and choose Replace Resource.



Click the Open file with new bitmap button and locate the image you created earlier. Click the Replace button. Save and exit Resource Hacker. You can optionally replace all elements of the boot screen by editing each portion of the Bitmap.



Reboot into SafeMode and copy your newly created ntoskrnl.exe file into the Windows > system32 folder.

Note: If you are using Windows 2000, you can simply replace the image in the Bitmap > 1 > 1033 location with a 640x480 16 color Bitmap to modify the Win2k boot screen in a similar fashion.

Changing the BIOS Splash Screen

To eliminate the branded splash screen associated with your BIOS, you need to obtain the firmware update for your BIOS and edit the logo file that's part of the BIOS filesset before applying the update. Since every computer model and manufacturer uses a slightly different BIOS configuration, it's important to get the BIOS specific to your computer from the support section of the manufacturer's Website. In some cases, like my HP

laptop, it's become virtually impossible to replace the logo because the BIOS flash process is contained in an .exe file that runs locally in Windows rather than from a separate disk.

Assuming your PC manufacturer has you create a floppy designed to flash the PC bios, you can fairly easily make a change to the logo displayed. In following the directions to create the BIOS boot disk, simply replace the included logo.bmp file in the BIOS update package with a logo.bmp file created by you. The key here is to use a 16 color (NOT 16-bit color) 640x480 BMP file. Copy your logo.bmp file onto the disk used for your BIOS update and run the bundled logo.bat file by double-clicking it. This converts the logo.bmp to a format ready for the BIOS update.

It's vital to keep all the files in the BIOS update named exactly as they were or your computer may not work after the update. Any changes made to BIOS update files should be done at your own risk and with extreme care.



Delete files when the Recycle Bin is hidden

I actually discovered this tip accidentally recently and thought it was appropriate for the Tips page, even though it's probably been a feature of Windows for years. (UPDATE: Sure enough, it's been around for a while. It's still a cool tip and proof that one learns something every day).

By default, the Windows XP Recycle Bin sits at the bottom right of the desktop, just above the tray notification area and system clock. If you've got a bunch of floating windows open, however, it's possible to obscure the Recycle Bin and make it impossible to drag files and folders there for deletion. However, Microsoft must have thought of this event, because you can automatically hide all of those open windows during a drag operation. The first time it happened, I thought it was a fluke. But it's not. Instead, it's a cool hidden feature of XP.

Here's how it works: Make sure a bunch of windows are open on the screen, with at least one of them hiding the Recycle Bin. Then, find a file or group of files you'd like to drag to the Recycle Bin. Pick up the files with the mouse and move them to the lower right of the screen. As you reach the bottom area of the screen, pass the mouse cursor over a blank area of the task bar, hover there for an instant, and--*voila!*--the open windows all minimize, leaving the Recycle Bin available to accept the dragged files. Good stuff. This tip also works when windows are maximized, assuming the file(s) you want to delete are visible in one of the available windows.

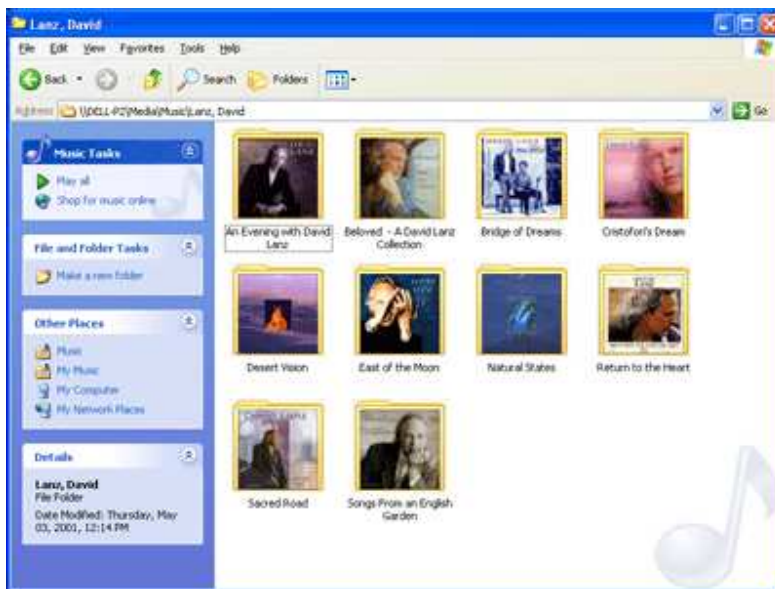


Add album art to any music folder

This is easily my favorite tip! One of the coolest new features in Windows XP is its album thumbnail generator, which automatically places the appropriate album cover art on the folder to which you are copying music (generally in WMA format). But

what about those people that have already copied their CDs to the hard drive using MP3 format? You can download album cover art from sites such as cdnow.com or amguide.com, and then use the new Windows XP folder customize feature to display the proper image for each folder. But this takes time--you have to manually edit the folder properties for every single folder--and you will lose customizations if you have to reinstall the OS. There's an excellent fix, however.

When you download the album cover art from the Web, just save the images as *folder.jpg* each time and place them in the appropriate folder. Then, Windows XP will automatically use that image as the thumbnail for that folder and, best of all, will use that image in Media Player for Windows XP (MPXP) if you choose to display album cover art instead of a visualization. And the folder customization is automatic, so it survives an OS reinstallation as well. Your music folders never looked so good!



Album cover art makes music folder thumbnails look better than ever!

UPDATE: In addition to the *folder.jpg* file mentioned above, you can also optionally create a smaller version of the image called *albumartsmall.jpg*, if desired. This is the image used to display album art in MPXP when its sized so that the display area is smaller than 200 x 200 pixels, and in the folder thumbnails for folders that contain album folders. If you don't create *albumartsmall.jpg*, however, Windows XP will automatically scale *folder.jpg* in these cases.



Automatically defrag drives with a new context menu item!

Create a new Registry import file named context_defrag.inf in Notepad (be sure to save with it with the *Save as type* set to *All Files* and not *Text Documents*) and place the following text inside:

```
; context_defrag.INF

; Adds Defrag to the right click context menu in Windows XP

[version]
signature="$CHICAGO$"

[DefaultInstall]
AddReg=AddMe

[AddMe]

HKCR,"Drive\Shell\Defrag\command",,, "DEFRAG.EXE %1"
```

Then, right-click and choose *Install*. This will add a context menu to XP that allows you to automatically defrag drives, using the command line version of the built-in defragmentation utility. To use it, navigate to a drive in My Computer, right-click, and choose *Defrag*. A command line window will appear, and that drive will be defragged. When it's complete, the window just disappears.

UPDATE: To remove this functionality, Open regedit.exe and navigate to the following location:

```
HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\Drive\shell\
```

Then delete the *Defrag* folder and close Regedit.



Add/Remove optional features of Windows XP

I first mentioned this technique in [an old Technology Showcase for Windows 2000](#), but it still works in Windows XP, and can be quite useful: For some reason, Microsoft has removed the ability to specify which Windows components you want to install

during interactive Setup, and when you go into *Add/Remove Windows Components* in the Control Panel, you still don't have the full list of applications and applets you can add and remove. Thankfully, this is easy to fix.

To dramatically expand the list of applications you can remove from Windows XP after installation, navigate to *C:\WINDOWS\inf* (substituting the correct drive letter for your version of Windows) and open the *sysoc.inf* file. Under Windows XP Professional Edition, this file will resemble the following by default:

```
[Version] Signature = "$Windows NT$"  
DriverVer=06/26/2001,5.1.2505.0  
  
[Components]  
NtComponents=ntoc.dll,NtOcSetupProc,,4  
WBEM=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,wbemoc.inf,hide,7  
Display=desk.cpl,DisplayOcSetupProc,,7  
Fax=fxsocm.dll,FaxOcmSetupProc,fxsocm.inf,,7  
NetOC=netoc.dll,NetOcSetupProc,netoc.inf,,7  
iis=iis.dll,OcEntry,iis.inf,,7  
com=comsetup.dll,OcEntry,comnt5.inf,hide,7  
dtc=msdtcstp.dll,OcEntry,dtcnt5.inf,hide,7  
IndexSrv_System = setupqry.dll,IndexSrv,setupqry.inf,,7  
TerminalServer=TsOc.dll, HydraOc, TsOc.inf,hide,2  
msmq=msmqocm.dll,MsmqOcm,msmqocm.inf,,6  
ims=imsinsnt.dll,OcEntry,ims.inf,,7  
fp_extensions=fp40ext.dll,FrontPage4Extensions,fp40ext.inf,,7  
AutoUpdate=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,au.inf,hide,7  
msmsgs=msgrocm.dll,OcEntry,msmsgs.inf,hide,7  
msnexplr=ocmsn.dll,OcEntry,msnmsn.inf,,7  
smarttgs=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,msnsl.inf,,7  
RootAutoUpdate=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,rootau.inf,,7  
Games=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,games.inf,,7  
AccessUtil=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,accessor.inf,,7  
CommApps=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,communic.inf,HIDE,7  
MultiM=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,multimed.inf,HIDE,7  
AccessOpt=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,optional.inf,HIDE,7  
Pinball=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,pinball.inf,HIDE,7  
MSWordPad=ocgen.dll,OcEntry,wordpad.inf,HIDE,7  
ZoneGames=zoneoc.dll,ZoneSetupProc,igames.inf,,7  
  
[Global]  
WindowTitle=%WindowTitle%  
WindowTitle.StandAlone="*"
```

The entries that include the text *hide* or *HIDE* will not show up in *Add/Remove Windows Components* by default. To fix this, do a global search and replace for *,hide* and change each instance of this to *,* (a comma). Then, save the file, relaunch *Add/Remove Windows Components*, and tweak the installed applications to your heart's content.



Cool, eh? There are even more new options now under "Accessories and Utilities" too.



Remove the Shared Documents folders from My Computer

One of the most annoying things about the new Windows XP user interface is that Microsoft saw fit to provide links to all of the Shared Documents folders on your system, right at the top of the My Computer window. I can't imagine why this would be the default, even in a shared PC environment at home, but what's even more annoying is that you cannot change this behavior through the shell: Those icons are stuck there and you have to live with it.

Until now, that is.

Simply fire up the Registry Editor and navigate to the following key:
`HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE \ SOFTWARE \ Microsoft \ Windows \ CurrentVersion \ Explorer \ My Computer \ NameSpace \ DelegateFolders`

You'll see a sub-key named `{59031a47-3f72-44a7-89c5-5595fe6b30ee}`. If you delete this, all of the Shared Documents folders (which are normally under the group called "Other Files Stored on This Computer") will be gone.

You do not need to reboot your system to see the change.



Before: A cluttered mess with icons no one will ever use (especially that orphaned one).



After: Simplicity itself, and the way it should be by default.



Display the Sharing Tab in Folder Properties

In Windows 2000, getting to the Sharing options for a folder was simple: Just right-click, choose Properties, and you'd see a Sharing tab. In Windows XP, this feature is missing by default, but you can make the system display the Sharing tab if desired. Simply open up Folder Options (My Computer, then Tools, Folder Options) and navigate to the View tab. In the Advanced Settings section, scroll down to the bottom and uncheck *Use simple file sharing (Recommended)*, a Mickey Mouse

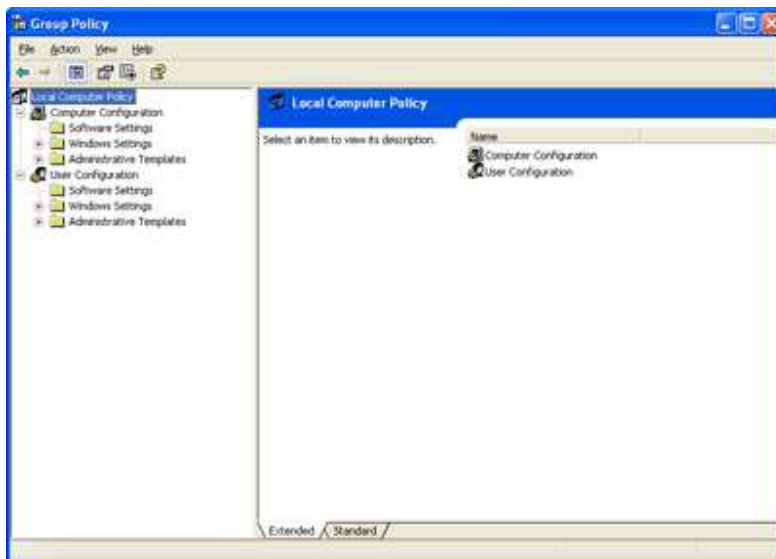
feature if there ever was one. Now share your folders on the LAN as you would in Windows 2000.

Use the ultimate configuration tool (Professional Edition only)

One of the most full featured Windows XP configuration tools available is hidden right there in your system, but most people don't even know it exists. It's called the Local Group Policy Editor, or gpedit for short. To invoke this editor, select Start and then Run, then type the following:

gpedit.msc

After you hit ENTER, you'll be greeted by gpedit, which lets you modify virtually every feature in Windows XP without having to resort to regedit. Dig around and enjoy!



GPEDIT: It's your best friend for XP configuration.



Use the Windows Sound Scheme

Windows XP ships with a really nice new sound scheme, but it's not loaded by default for some reason. So once you've installed Windows XP, one of the first things you should do is get that new sound scheme loaded.

To do so, open up Control Panel and navigate to Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices. Then, choose the task titled *Change the sound scheme*. In the dialog that appears, choose *Windows Default* for the sound scheme. Windows will ask you whether you want to save the previous scheme, which is usually a brain-dead question, since no scheme was previously loaded. So choose No, and then click OK to exit the dialog.



Rip high-quality MP3s in Media Player for Windows XP (MPXP)

The relationship between Media Player for Windows XP (MPXP) and the MP3 audio format is widely misunderstood. Basically, MPXP is able to playback MP3 files out of the box, but encoding (or "ripping") CD audio into MP3 format will require an MP3 plug-in. During the Windows XP beta, Microsoft supplied a sample MP3 plug-in for testing purposes, but it was limited to 56 Kbps rips, which is pretty useless, leading some to report that Microsoft was purposefully hobbling MP3 to make its Windows Media Audio (WMA) format look better. This is not the case.

To enable MP3 encoding in Windows XP, you'll need to purchase one of three MP3 Creation Add-on packs for Windows XP. For more information, please visit the [Microsoft Web site](#).



Speed up the Start Menu

The default speed of the Start Menu is pretty slow, but you can fix that by editing a Registry Key. Fire up the Registry Editor and navigate to the following key:

`HKEY_CURRENT_USER \ Control Panel \ Desktop \ MenuShowDelay`

By default, the value is 400. Change this to a smaller value, such as 0, to speed it up.

If this doesn't work for some reason, then you might try the following: Navigate to *Display Properties* then *Appearance* then *Effects* and turn off the option titled *Show menu shadow*. You will get much better overall performance.



Enable ClearType on the Welcome Screen!

As laptop users and other LCD owners are quickly realizing, Microsoft's ClearType technology in Windows XP really makes a big difference for readability. But the this feature is enabled on a per-user basis in Windows XP, so you can't see the effect on the Welcome screen; it only appears after you logon.

But you can fix that. Fire up the Registry Editor and look for the following keys:

(default user) HKEY_USERS \ .Default \ Control Panel \ Desktop \ FontSmoothing (String Value)
HKEY_USERS \ .Default \ Control Panel \ Desktop \ FontSmoothingType (Hexadecimal DWORD Value)

Make sure both of these values are set to 2 and you'll have ClearType enabled on the Welcome screen and on each new user by default.



Stop Windows Messenger from Auto-Starting

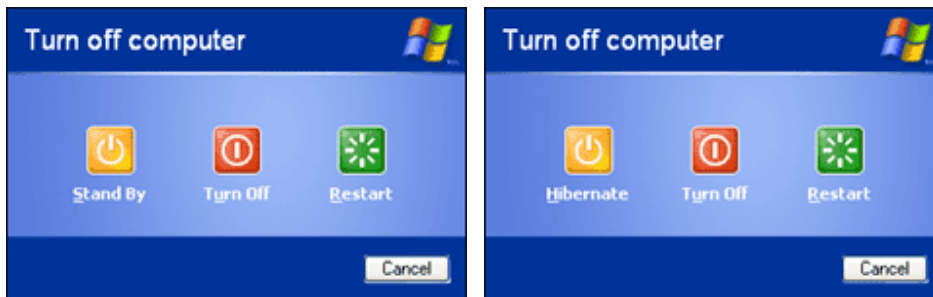
If you're not a big fan of Windows Messenger, you can use the tip "Add/Remove optional features of Windows XP" above to remove it, or simply delete the following Registry Key:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run\MSMSG



Display Hibernate Option on the Shut Down dialog

For some reason, Hibernate isn't available from the default Shut Down dialog. But you can enable it simply enough, by holding down the SHIFT key while the dialog is visible. Now you see it, now you don't!



Why this isn't just there by default is unknown.



BIOS

You need to ensure that you have configured your BIOS correctly. The BIOS is software embedded on your motherboard that loads and configures hardware before the operating system. Failure to do so can easily slow down CPU and disk performance. Consult your computer or motherboard's manual to ensure that all CPU caches are enabled, memory timings are set correctly, and that IDE data transfer modes are set correctly.

You can speed up the boot process by enabling "Rapid Bios Boot" or "Fast/Quick boot". Also turn off auto detection of IDE devices and detect them manually. Set System and Video BIOS Cacheable to OFF as well as Video RAM cacheable to off, as these are legacy operating system DOS settings.



Drivers

You need to ensure that you have the latest versions of all your hardware drivers. The ones on the original Windows CD-ROM are usually out of date. Updated Video and SCSI drivers can significantly improve the performance of your computer.



Video Performance

If you experience slow screen redraws and you are running the latest drivers for your video card, try selecting a lower quality video resolution. In the **Display** icon of the **Control Panel**, select the **Settings** Tab. If the system is set for True color try lowering it to High Color (16-bit). Many LCDs cannot show a full 32-bit color pallet. You can also reduce the Desktop Area. Upgrade to a new video card if this does not help. Using the latest Microsoft DirectX drivers can increase game performance.

Reducing XP's screen effects will also speed up performance. Goto My computer, Properties, Advanced Tab, Performance Settings, Select adjust for best performance.



Hard Drive Port

Make sure your hard drive is not connected to the same IDE port as your CD/DVD-ROM. Each IDE port is programmed to operate at the slower of the two devices on the port, so you could be slowing down access to your primary hard drive by leaving a CD-ROM on the same channel. Put your CD/DVD-ROM on the Secondary IDE port.

[Intel](#) Application accelerator lets you independently set tranfer rates for devices on the same cable.



IDE DMA

Windows does not automatically utilize faster DMA IDE data transfer modes on IDE slave drives. Programmed I/O mode is the default setting.

- 1)) Right click on "My Computer", select the Hardware tab, and Select Device Manager.
- 2) Expand "IDE ATA/ATAPI Controller" and double-click on "Primary IDE Channel"
- 3) Under "Advanced Settings" tab, check the "Device 1" setting. Set it to "DMA if available"
- 4) Repeat the step for the "Secondary IDE Channel" if devices are present there.



SCSI Write Cache

Many SCSI drives do not have their write caches enabled. Use a Mode Page Editor such as the one built into EZ-SCSI to enable Write Caching on all your hard drives. Windows XP allows you to enable Write Caching in the Properties page of a SCSI Drive.



Minimize Background Applications and Services

Press CTRL-ALT-DEL while in Windows and bring up the **Task Manager**. Notice how many programs are running in the background. Each program steals memory and CPU cycles. Offenders include: Adobe Gamma Loader, Fast Find, msmsgs (Messenger), Office Startup, qttask (Quicktime), System Agent, Real Player, Norton. To stop programs from automatically starting, remove the file from the Programs - Startup folder, left click on the icons in the System tray and turn off automatic loading, or consult the help file of each program to turn it off. Run MSCONFIG to get a list of programs that run on startup and remove unnecessary ones.

Disable Alerter, File and Print, FTP Publishing, Indexing Service, World Wide Web Publisher, Messenger, Computer Browser, Routing and Remote Access, Smart Card, Smart Card Helper, Terminal services, Uninterruptible Power Supply if they are not being used. You can always turn them off and test your machine, before setting them to be disabled on startup. Run "services.msc" from the Run.. menu and Disable any services that are unnecessary. [BlackViper](#) has additional information on services.

You can also Configure Virus scanning to only scan incoming files.



Removed Unused Programs, Protocols, and Fonts

Uninstall any Programs that you do not use. Also remove any Fonts that are not used. This will free up disk space and make the machine boot faster. You should also remove any temporary files located in the C:\TEMP, c:\windows\prefetch, or C:\WINDOWS\TEMP directories. Also remove any unused Network Protocols such as NetBEUI or IPX.



Unload DLLs

Windows does not unload dll files a program has used after it has been closed, to speed up a possible restart of the program.

Use Regedit to edit:
HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\explorer Add the
DWORD value named: AlwaysUnloadDLL and set it to 1



Virtual Memory

Windows uses your Hard Drive as swap memory but its default configuration can cause a major loss of performance with the memory swap file getting moved around.

Select **System** icon from the **Control Panel - Performance and Maintenance**, select **Advanced** Tab, select **Performance** areas, and click on **Settings**. Under virtual Memory click **Change**. The **Initial** and **Maximum** size should be equal otherwise Windows will keep resizing the file. The optimal memory setting for users with 128 MB+ is approximately 1.5-2 times the RAM size, users with 64 MB should use a 2 times multiple. You should also locate Virtual Memory on your fastest drive or striped RAID volume, placing it on the non-boot drive, can help increase performance. Defragment after setting this to minimize fragmentation and force the swap file to get located on the fastest part of your disk. Third party defragmenters can optimize the swap file. Always make sure your system has enough RAM. 128MB is the absolute minimum, 512MB is preferred. You can bring up the Performance Tab of the Task Manager to ensure that Total Commit Charge is lower than your Total Physical Memory. If not, add ram.



Memory Tweaks

There are 3 tweaks you can make to change how XP uses memory. Open Regedit and Find HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session Manager\Memory Management\

Disable Paging Executive:

XP pages data from RAM memory to the hard drive. We can stop this happening and keep more data in RAM, resulting in better performance. Users with a large amount of RAM (256MB+) should use this setting. The setting we change to disable the 'Paging Executive', is DisablePagingExecutive. Changing the value of this key from 0 to 1 will de-activate memory paging.

System Cache Boost:

Changing the value of the key LargeSystemCache from 0 to 1 will tell XP to allocate all but 4MB of system memory to the file system cache, allowing the XP Kernel to run in memory. The 4MB of memory left is used for disk caching, if more is needed, XP allocates more. Generally, this tweak improves performance by a fair bit but can, in some intensive applications, degrade performance. As with the previous tweak, you should have at least 256MB of RAM before attempting to enable LargeSystemCache.

Input/Output Performance:

This improves performance of large file transfers. If this entry does not appear in the registry, you will have to create a REG_DWORD value called IoPageLockLimit. The data for this value is in number of bytes, and defaults to Zero which equates to 512KB on machines that have the value. Most people using this tweak have found maximum performance in the 8 to 16 megabyte range, so you will have to play around with the value to find the best performance. The value is measured in bytes, so if you want, 12MB allocated, it's 12 * 1024 * 1024, or 12582912. As with all these memory tweaks, you should only use this if you have 256MB or more of RAM.

Use your hard drive less for Virtual Memory:

The Windows 98/ME "ConservativeSwapfileUsage=1" optimization does not work for XP.



Defragment

Make sure you regularly defragment your hard drive with a defragmenter. Windows XP includes one. Keep your drive defragmented as a drive with even 5% fragmentation can be very inefficient.

[Microsoft](#) has a utility called "Bootvis" that can monitor your system bootup and optimize its performance. They removed the files from their site.

[This site](#) has a copy.

[Extremetech](#) has more bootup performance tips



Network Performance

[Tweak XP](#) has a nice tip on adjusting how much network bandwidth is reserved for different programs.

Offload processor tasks to network adapter's with intelligent processors.

Open Regedit and Find

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\Tcpip\Parameters

Edit or Create the REG_DWORD key "DisableTaskOffload" and set it to 0 to Enable the Task Offload. By default, if this key is present, it's set to 1 to disable the task offload.

[Details](#) from Microsoft.



Drive Performance

Some drives have configurable acoustic levels. They sacrifice performance for quiet. You can always turn off acoustic management for maximum performance.



Shortening Menu Delay

You can shorten the delay when menus open up by using Regedit to edit:
HKEY_CURRENT_USER / Control Panel / Desktop / MenuShowDelay By default, the value is 400, but changing it to a smaller value, such as 100, will speed it up.



Note - I am not responsible for any damage but sugesstions are welcomed for more tweaks and improvement

For any query contact me (expert in software management)



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Press Ctrl+Mouse to follow the blue marked links