



BRIGHTWEBS TIPS

Gerri's Computer Newsletter

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browser switching and XP Upgrading

Regarding switching to a new browser, I got the following letter and figured many of you probably have the same question:

Hi Gerri - now that you've got me scared to death - & me just getting brave enough to bank online - how do I change this thing? Remember who you're dealing with - kindergarten level here.

So here's how: Go to <http://www.mozilla.org> and look for the link for Switching From Internet Explorer to Firefox, which spells it out in great detail. Note that they tell you how to install directly and how to save it to your hard drive first, and I ALWAYS recommend saving it to the hard drive first.

Should you install Windows XP Service Release 2?

Most of the experts seem to be waiting until Microsoft gets some of the bugs out. Type in "XP Update" into Google and see how many opinions there are out there on the topic.

It's hard to know what's best, but if you do decide to install it, be sure to make a backup of your system and create a restore point before you proceed.

Windows 98 users don't need to do anything about this one.

And of course you'll need to run

spyware checks to be sure your computer has no creepy crawlies on it before you start.

To make life easier for people on slower dialup connections, Microsoft is offering a free CD--- MS even pays shipping and handling. There also are no license restrictions on the CD: You may freely copy it, share it, borrow it from someone else, whatever. Of course you will need to have a copy of Windows XP running on your system to take advantage of the upgrade.

Since the upgrade can range from 70-200 MB depending on what bits your computer needs, this is a very good thing to order even if you have a high speed connection. See the link in the yellow box.

LONG DISTANCE LUNCH—My sister, who had been working in Vancouver, went back to the UK on a contract assignment, but she and my mom have lunch together daily via the magic of WebCams. Due to the time difference I don't get in on as many chats, but Mom can log on and see my sister face-to-face while they have a visit. Much better than a phone call. Mom figures she probably sees my sister oftener now than when she was in Surrey.

We're using a service called Sightspeed, which costs \$49 US

for the year, but you can do the same thing on Yahoo for free.

The camera costs around \$40 and a headset is around \$20. You don't absolutely have to have the headset, as there is a microphone in the camera, and you can hear over your computer speakers, but you'll get an echo, or rather the person on other end will because they'll hear their voice through your speakers as well as their headset which is distracting. See the web address below to down-load a trial copy of Sightspeed.

Read this newsletter online at <http://www.brightwebs.com/library.htm> and the links will be clickable. Tell your friends!

GERRI'S FAVORITE LINKS FOR THIS MONTH

Gerri's UBC Teaching Schedule
<http://tinyurl.com/4wfbq>

Gerri's Langara Schedule
<http://tinyurl.com/6dtfl>

Microsoft Windows XP upgrade
<http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=914701>

Cuddles, the new hairy shark
<http://www.rense.com/general56/redsh.htm>

Sightspeed Video Messaging
<http://www.sightspeed.com>

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

Some URL reminders

A reminder about URLs in case you've forgotten—they don't have any spaces. If it looks like they do, it's an _ character, made by **holding down your shift key and (at the same time) the key next to the zero** on most keyboards. And they don't have periods on the end, so if I accidentally type one at the end of a sentence, leave it off when you type in the URL.

While we're on the topic, did you know you can backtrack on the URL if you don't find what you want on the page you clicked on? By that I mean erase from the right hand edge of the URL by **clicking your mouse pointer right into the address bar and then clicking your backspace key to erase letters back to the next /**. For example: at <http://www.brightwebs.com/library.htm>, if you erase the **library.htm** part you will find yourself on the main brightwebs home page.

If that doesn't make sense, send me an email and I'll try to clarify it.

Password security: are you one of the many people who use the same password everywhere? Is your password an actual word or just a string of numbers? The absolute

least you should do is **use a different password for financial sites** of any kind such as E-Bay or Amazon.com. You should have a 3rd separate password for online banking too. And **you should NOT let your computer store your passwords for automatic log-in**. There are several reasons why. The first is security. The second is that if the computer is remembering, you won't bother, and when it crashes you've lost the passwords too.

Create safer passwords by turning some of the letters into numbers. Remember when phones were words and numbers such as PENnsylvania 6-5000 or Mutual instead of 68 here in Vancouver, or my childhood number of CAnal 7-9501. Such a password is harder to guess. And of course there's a website dedicated to such numbers at <http://ourwebhome.com/TENP/TENproject.html>

Shareware, freeware, trialware and sillyware: Many sites offer a free trial of very useful software such as WinZip. Others are completely free, such as AVG anti-virus or ZoneAlarm for a firewall. Sometimes the author will ask for a donation of something interesting in return—one

MY FALL TEACHING SCHEDULE

Many of you have noticed that it's not as easy to schedule an appointment with me as it used to be.

While I still do some one-on-one teaching, I'm also teaching at both **UBC and Langara this fall in Continuing Studies**. Come take one of my classes—

At **UBC** I'm teaching *Windows File Management* on Sept. 13, *Internet Level One* on the 16th and *Internet Level Two* starting October 14.

At **Langara** I'm teaching *Understanding Personal Computers* starting on September 18, and *Introduction to Website Design and Navigation* on the 12th of October and *Introduction to HTML* on the 14th. All of those classes are two or three day sessions and I would love to see some familiar faces.

Gerri

I recall asked that in return people resolve to stop whining so much.

Anyway, sometimes the PRO version of that software is worth the money. I use ZoneAlarm Pro and it offers some neat features. And programmers need to eat too. So if you can, send a donation to them.

From the Tech Newsletters—there are so many out there, and so much information**Dan Gookin's TIP OF THE WEEK**

What was the name of that file or DLL that Windows said it was missing? When I get that message, I carefully note the name of the missing file. Then I type that exact name into Google to search for it. That tells me something about the file, and also generally leads me to information on how to cure the problem of the error message coming up in the first place.

<http://www.wambooli.com/wws403.shtml>

Dan also has a good explanation of "spoofing" which is when someone uses your email address to send bad stuff which looks like you sent it..

Cindy O'Neal—or Mrs. Wizard as she is known to those of us who love her newsletter, has some great tutorials on her site, including some with sound files to talk you through file management and downloading and a host of other topics. Highly recommended. You can find her newsletter at <http://mrswizard.com/current.html>

*From **Woody's Email Watch** comes a reminder about Mail2Web, a free service that grabs a copy of your email from your Internet Provider's mailbox (i.e. not from your home or office computer) and displays it on a web page. You can read, reply, forward and delete messages from the web page. Most Internet Providers*

have a 'webmail' service but Mail2Web is sometimes superior, more reliable and faster. It's also good for those times when a large attachment has gummed up your mailbox. Go there via Mail2web and clean up. <http://woodyswatch.com> and <http://www.mail2web.com>

Sandy Berger's Compu-Kiss newsletter has a detailed explanation of how to prepare to install Windows XP Service Pack 2. You can read it at: <http://tinyurl.com/6jozy>

*Sandy is also writing a column for the **American Association of Retired Persons** on their website, and for **Smart Computing Magazine**.*