



HTTP://WWW.BRIGHTWEBS.COM

# BRIGHTWEBS TIPS

Gerri's Computer Newsletter

January 2007

## Scary error messages

When you try to do a shutdown and you get the message "*This program is not responding - End Task, Wait or Cancel*", if you hit cancel, it means "don't shut down after all, I changed my mind" so of course the computer goes back to whatever it was doing before you started to shut down.

If you click Wait, it will continue to try to shut that program down, and generally it will succeed after a bit, but not always. Use that option if you have been working on a letter or something, and haven't had a chance to save it, because Word will back itself up periodically so you might salvage your work.

If you're not doing anything you need to save, you can click on End Task and it will end that 'stuck' program abruptly and usually continue shutting down just fine.

On the other hand, it depends on what program was not responding. It can still mean a virus or a problem, but don't give up too soon.

## One click or two?

Usually on the desktop you double click to start a program,

but once you're on the web, it's usually only a single click on a link.

## Don't click so fast

Do you start clicking to launch your favourite program the very instant that you see your desktop? If so, you're confusing the computer. It's still doing startup tasks, even if you don't see anything happening. Wait until the hourglass has COMPLETELY stopped before you click that first program icon. Your computer will thank you and the programs will start faster.

## Confused by computer ads?

Look at the size of the hard drive and the monitor. For most of us, myself included, any new computer will run much faster than our old one, so unless you're doing lots of video gaming, don't worry about the processor speed or the video card. But a good monitor is much easier on the eyes, and an LCD monitor takes up much less space on your desktop. Also consider add-ons - a Gigabyte of RAM is nice, a CD or DVD burner is also good for storage. Those are the important parts. Laptop computers will have different options, but a good warranty is important.

## Time for a refresher?

Did you get a new computer for Christmas?

I'll be teaching the 4-part **Introduction to Computers** series at Langara again in January and February. Part of the Plus 50 series for home users, the series runs for 4 sessions of 3 hours each, on Friday evenings.

All classes are held at 601 W. Broadway, on the lower level, and there's parking underground or the Oak Street bus stops right outside the door.

*Times and dates are:*

*Computer Basics - 1 eve - Jan 19, 1700-2000*

*Internet FUNdamentals- 1 eve - Jan 26, 1700-2000*

*Communicating Online - 1 eve - Feb 02, 1700-2000*

*Internet Shopping and Banking - 1 eve - Feb 09, 1700-2000*

See the course descriptions at <http://www.langara.bc.ca/cs/programs/HOME.html>

Cost is \$49 per session but you get a 10% discount if you register for all 4 at once.

To register, call Dan Thorpe at 604-323-5266 or email him at [dthorpe@langara.bc.ca](mailto:dthorpe@langara.bc.ca) and please tell your friends about it.

## A holiday safety reminder

My sister in London had her backpack stolen this week and it prompted me to start thinking about what I carry in my purse, so I could make a police report if needed. The answer was 'far too much' and 'I'm not sure'. If you're in the same boat, make a list now of what cards you carry and anything valuable, like a cell phone or chequebook. Date the list and leave it in a safe place at home.

## Mouse getting sticky?

If your computer mouse is wireless and it starts to stick on the screen, it may be time to change the batteries. After you do, you have to push a button on the wireless receiver to reintroduce it to the mouse. There's usually a button on both the mouse and receiver and once you push them, it works again. If your mouse is not wireless, it may need a cleaning. If it's an optical mouse (the flat bottom kind) it may need to be on a plain mousepad instead of a busy patterned one. And don't forget to wipe it down with an alcohol wipe from time to time. The keyboard too, especially if you're recovering from a cold or flu. If you really want to know more than this, check out <http://www.computerhope.com/help/mouse.htm>

## Keep that computer clean!

I realize most of you don't live online the way I do but you still need to make sure your antivirus is up to date and that you're running AdAware or Spybot Search and Destroy regularly. If you're looking for a free antivirus program, check out <http://www.avast.com>

## The YouTube phenomenon

This year's Time Magazine person of the year reflects how many of us

are on the web now and the many ways we use it. YouTube is the world's largest collection of home movies, with elements of journalism and 'Funniest Home Videos' and clips from around the world. Go to <http://www.youtube.com> and type any topic in the search box - you'll be amazed. There's politics and travel and silliness too.

## Word Processing How-To

Recently I was asked how to change the margins in a word processor. It's similar in Word and Wordpad and Open Office:

**File > Page Setup >** set the top, left, bottom and right sides. In Word the default is 1" top and bottom and 1.25" sides, if you still think in inches, which I do. If your copy of Word thinks in centimeters and you want to change it, click on **Tools > Options > General** and look halfway down the list for **Measurement Units**.

You can also change the paper orientation from Portrait to Landscape in the Page Setup menu. This is handy for printing tables of information.

## Back up Your Bookmarks

From Internet Explorer click on **File > Import and Export > Export Favorites** and make sure you're on the top of the list. Click on **Next** and choose **Export to a file or address**. The filename will be bookmark.htm and it will most likely be saved in **My Documents**. Now open **My Documents** and double click on the file. Your browser will open with the file displayed as a web page. You may be amazed at what you have bookmarked. Mine was 21 pages long, with many sites I'll never revisit, although they seemed important at the time. In Firefox, the commands are **Bookmarks > Manage Bookmarks > File > Export** and the resulting file will be called bookmarks.html and

will most likely be saved in the **My Documents** folder. Next issue I'll go over how to print them on paper.

## Where did my menus go?

Have you recently upgraded to IE7 and found all your menus missing? On the top right side of the screen, click on **Tools > Menu Bar**. You can still customize the menu bar by right clicking on a blank spot. We'll be exploring the new interface in my Internet class at Langara. Meanwhile, here's a site with some shortcuts for you: <http://tinyurl.com/ya3d27>

## Authors and editors needed

Anyone with internet access can edit existing Wikipedia pages (<http://www.wikipedia.com>) so if you have particular expertise in an area, here's your chance to show it. If you sign up for a free user account, you can also create new pages for the encyclopedia, which is already larger than the Britannia, although of course not always as scholarly, since, as noted, anyone can edit. But that means anyone can also correct someone else's editing. Sounds like anarchy, but there are millions of vigilant users who correct vandalism almost instantly, and the site is backed up often. Check it out and let me know which pages you've worked on. I know we have some very smart people on this mailing list.

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