

BRIGHTWEBS TIPS

Gerri's Computer Newsletter

December 2005

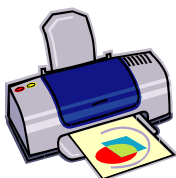


Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you. And may the new year bring joy and blessings to you and yours.

Gerri Sombke

Help, how do I kill a print job?

Ever been trying to get something to print and it doesn't work so you keep pushing the button or clicking on print and your printer suddenly decides to go insane on you? Here's how to cope: First, pull the unused paper out of the printer, then **after the current sheet finishes**, pull the plug on



the printer. Then click on **Start> Printers and Faxes**. In the dialogue box that pops up, **right click** on your printer

and choose **Open**. Then click on **Printer>Cancel All Documents**. The computer will ask "are you sure?" then the list of documents will disappear.

If you don't pull out the paper first, when you pull the plug you can end up with a sheet of paper jammed inside the printer.

You can also just reboot the computer after pulling the printer plug, and that will clear/cancel all documents waiting to be printed as well but you will also lose any work you have open and haven't saved.

What's blogging and why should I care?

The term "Blogging" is a short-

ened form of "Web Logging" and it's like an online journal where people put their thoughts, opinions, ideas, or sometimes focus on a specific topic. Some are funny and interesting, some are just totally self-absorbed. Find an excellent explanation on Wikipedia (link below right) and there's even a Google Blog page. Just type in any topic and the word blog for a long list of links. Think of it as "people's journalism, unfiltered by anyone." For those of you who are political junkies, there's a blog for every persuasion.

Troubleshooting peripherals

Don't forget the basics if you have a piece of hardware that's died suddenly—go back and check all the connections. Unplug everything, then connect it back up again, whether it's the cable modem, your scanner, printer or digital camera. Start from the wall and work your way forward to the computer.

What is Google Earth—what does it do? Is my computer powerful enough to run it?

Google Earth is a free virtual globe with special effects that allow you to zoom in on an area. It overlays satellite imagery and



aerial photography and it's so powerful you can see the swimming pool between my building and the next. Great for looking up addresses too. You need a decent video card and Windows XP or 2000. See more on Google's website.

A big hurrah for Joel Morrish

who goes the extra mile in helping get your computer cleaned up and running. If you need tech support, I highly recommend his services. Call his cell at 604-771-3639 or home at 604-689-3631, but he's mostly only available evenings and weekends. Joel specializes in getting the most out of older computer systems.



MY FAVOURITE LINKS THIS MONTH Happy Browsing!

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog#How_Blogs_differ_from_traditional_sites
(be sure to type both parts of that all on one line, no spaces)
- <http://earth.google.com/>
- <http://www.amusingfacts.com>
- <http://www.urban75.com/Mag/bubble.html>
- <http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/>

Miscellaneous Tips I've Picked Up Along The Way

Getting your toolbars back when they've disappeared

Frequently I will visit a student and find that their toolbars are missing on the browser or their email or word processor. Sometimes people just learn to adapt to life without them, but when I bring them back, they always say, "Wait, show me how you did that."

The process is the same for most programs—click on **View > Toolbars** and then select the options you want. Try right clicking on the menu bar and then selecting **Customize** as well, to give your toolbars just the buttons you need and use.

Mom always told you not to talk to strangers, didn't she?

Next time you're invited to an IM chat (instant message) with someone you don't know, you might remember there's a new worm on the loose that targets users of America Online's AOL Instant Messenger by chatting with them.

According to IM security vendor IMLogic, IM.Myspace04.AIM uses infected computers to send messages to the owner's buddy list, encouraging respondents to download its malicious payload. If its intentions are questioned, the infected machine sends

follow-up messages that include "lol no its not its a virus." An unusual technique, but one that IMLogic says we're likely to see more of.

Open attachments with the program you want to use

Ever have someone mail you a photo and the 'wrong' program tries to open it? Save the photo to your desktop, or somewhere you'll be able to find it, then **right click** on it and choose **"Open With"**. Windows will offer some suggestions, but if you click **Choose Program** and then highlight the required program, you can also put a checkmark in the **Always use this program to open this kind of file** and click **OK**. You can make a permanent change within your preferred software by looking for the Preferences option. In Paint Shop Pro it's in **File > Preferences** but it varies from program to program.

Train your dog to phone home:



The ability to track a lost pet has most dog lovers excited. The PetCell has a "call owner" button in case Rover strays. It also includes assisted GPS, or A-GPS, which works indoors, allowing dog

owners to map their pup's coordinates from any web-enabled device or by dialing a voice-enabled call center. See more at

<http://www.petsmobility.com/>

Reboot solves lots of problems

For troubleshooting, a reboot (shutting the computer down and restarting it again after a couple of minutes) will correct many errors. Sort of helps it regain its scattered wits. Rebooting puts it all back into shape again, ready to handle all your tasks.

SPRING COURSE SCHEDULE

Mark your calendars now!

The Plus50 courses at Langara resume March 23 for 4 Thursday afternoons, or April 25-28 for four mornings in a row.

The series covers Basics, Internet, Email and Shopping and Banking Online and the courses will be offered at 601 West Broadway.

Watch for contact info in the next newsletter. This would make a nice Christmas gift for a partner or parent.



From the Tech Newsletters—there are so many out there, and so much information

:Q: Why does Outlook Express keep asking me to compact my mail?

A: When you delete a message, the computer flags it to remove it later, namely when you compact your folders. Until then it still takes up space and slows down the program. To recover disk space and keep your files as small as possible, you need to compact your folders regularly. This MIT site:

<http://itinfo.mit.edu/answer.php?id=7878>

describes how to compact all your folders:

In the Outlook Express Folder list (if it's not showing folders, click on **View > Layout > Folder List**), select **Outlook Express** so that no mail or news folders are open.

Now select **File > Work Offline** so no

new messages will be arriving.

Finally, select **File > Folder > Compact All Folders**.

This process may take several minutes, so don't use your computer while it's doing this. Your news folders, all of your mail folders and the all-important Folders.dbx have been compacted.

Hint: If an error occurs, such as "cannot compact, folder in use", just close Outlook Express, wait a second or two, then re-open Outlook Express and start again.

To compact a single mail folder like the Inbox: **Click once on the folder** to select. **Select File > Folder > Compact**. Note: It isn't just Outlook Express that works this way—other mail clients do too.

If you've never, or only rarely, com-

packed your mail, there will be a lot of wasted space, and the initial compacting can take quite a while. Start it and go have a cup of tea, or even leave it all day, leaving the PC running; when you come back, it should be done. Future compactings, if done on a regular basis, should only take seconds or minutes.

This also speeds mail filing operations, and can even improve security, by making old mails much harder for a snoop to get at.

It's worth doing--- really! See also: <http://www.google.com/search?q=compacting+express+outlook>

Thanks to Brian Livingston and the Windows Secrets newsletter at <http://www.windowssecrets.com/>