

# BRIGHTWEBS TIPS

Gerri's Computer Newsletter

September/October 2006

*Just when I think no one is reading this anyway, I get a call from someone offering to send more stamps, and it gets me back into action. Thanks, Mavis, for getting me started again.*

## News from back home?

Here's a great website for listening to or reading news in many languages, including Urdu, Pashto, Hindi, Chinese, Portuguese and more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/languages/>

## Using the Star commands on your phone—from the Telus site:

...And then there's \*66, which comes in handy when you really have to connect with someone as soon as they hang up.

\*66: after dialing a busy number, hang up, lift the handset and listen for a dial tone. Dial \*66, listen for voice prompt and follow the instructions.

Hang up.

When the busy number is free you will hear a series of short-short-long rings. You must pick up your phone during the special ringing cycle for your call to be connected. If the called party picks up his/her telephone before you answer (after receiving the short-short-long signal) you will hear "The line was free but it has just be-

come busy again. You will be notified by special ringing when the line is free, please hang up now."

To deactivate, lift the handset and dial \*86.

See these tips and more at:

<http://tinyurl.com/e62yo>

## Dead links on web pages?

It's quite common for specific pages in a Website to be removed or changed; resulting in a "dead link".

You can usually fix that problem by deleting text after one of the backslashes. That will take you to a higher level of the website, and you can often follow the links there to the document you're after.

For example, above left, if you erase the slashes and the word languages on the BBC link, it will take you to the BBC World Service page.

I think of it as backtracking on a

### **Favourite web link this month:**

<http://www.wikihow.com/Main-Page>

*This site is a free resource that helps people by offering clear, concise solutions to the problems of everyday life. wikiHow currently contains 12,343 articles written, edited, and maintained primarily by volunteers. Check it out and consider sharing your expertise.*

link until I get to some-where useful.

## Increasing text size on the web

Several people have sent me this item as an email. I use a trackball, so I can't vouch for it, but give it a try and let me know if it works for you:

Many people have a problem reading small text, so this is very useful when trying to read small e-mail or web page print.

If you **hold down the Ctrl key** on your key board and **turn the small wheel in the middle of your mouse**, the print size will change - it will either get larger or smaller - depending on which way you turn the wheel. Try it - you'll be amazed at the difference!

*Thanks, Cathy and Stuart for sending this tip.*

## RIP Windows 95 and 98 and ME

As of July 11, 2006 there is no longer any extended tech support from Microsoft for the above operating systems. Actually Windows 95 expired a while ago.

The following website will still offer articles and the Knowledge Base:

<http://tinyurl.com/6zgzo>

What does this mean for you if (continued next page)



you're still running one of these? Well, nothing, if your computer is never used online and you only use it as a large typewriter. But Microsoft is retiring support for these products because they are outdated and can expose customers to security risks.

They recommend that customers who are still running Windows 98 or Windows Me upgrade to a newer, more secure Microsoft operating system, such as Windows XP, as soon as possible. Since Vista is still only in the beta or testing phase, and you don't want to be the first on your block to use new software, I also would recommend that you get yourself a copy of Windows XP and upgrade. It's easy to use and the installation, if done by a competent person, can preserve all your existing settings and data.

### My Favourite Program

Someone asked me the other day which program I used the most and I realized that it was Windows Explorer:

(Start>Programs>  
Accessories >Windows Explorer)

I find that it's easiest to find files via Windows Explorer and when you open a file from the Explorer window, the computer automatically knows which program to use to open it.

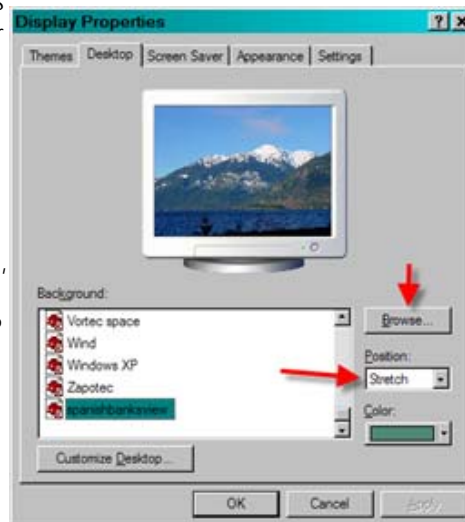
If you try to open a PDF file with a word processor, you will get garbage. If you try to open a picture with an email program, same thing. But if you open Windows Explorer first, the computer knows which program to start with.

And because it's a window into the file storage space of your computer, it's like opening a file cabinet and seeing which documents you have. I like it even better than *My Documents* because you have the left pane showing you all the drives on your system. Give it a try. Call me for a lesson if this seems too confusing.

*What's your favourite? Tell me which program you use the most and why?*

### Putting a picture on your desktop

Changing the desktop picture is



easier than rearranging the furniture or redecorating, and will brighten your computer. Here's how: **Right click** on a blank area of the desktop and **left click** on **Properties**, then on **Desktop**. On the dialogue box, you can arrow down through the choices that are built in to Windows, or use any picture on your system—**left click** on **Browse** and choose any picture you like from the **My Pictures** folder.

You will probably need to click on **Stretch** to make it look right on the desktop—see the preview picture on the little computer screen. Click **Apply** and you're all set.

What about a desktop picture of your grandkids or a favourite niece or nephew?

Don't forget to move the icons around on the desktop to keep the picture clear.

And when you get it exactly right, **Right Click** again on a blank spot, hover your mouse pointer over **Arrange Icons By** and then **left click** on **Lock Web Items on Desktop** so you don't accidentally

rearrange your masterpiece.



### Tiling Windows to Copy and Paste

In a recent class, the students found it most useful to be able to have two windows side by side on the screen—perhaps a web page and an email—so that they could copy and paste from the web page into the email. You can too. Here's how:

Open your email program and start a new message. **Left click** on the Restore button in the top right hand corner of the message window (the middle button). The message will become a floating window.

Now minimize the email program, (the first button), leaving the message window floating.

Open the web page with your browser and do the same thing. You should have two floating windows, perhaps overlapping each other.

**Right click** on a blank spot on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen. Choose **Tile Windows Vertically** and they should suddenly place themselves side by side, filling up the available screen space.

Now you can click back and forth, and you can always tell which one is the Active window by the colour of the Title Bar.

This works with any two program windows, but it works best with the word processor and email and the web.

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and tell your friends about it.  
Thanks and see you next time.*